

[H.A.S.C. No. 119-8]

**U.S. MILITARY POSTURE AND
NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES
IN EUROPE**

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
APRIL 8, 2025



U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

61-589

WASHINGTON : 2026

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U.S. MILITARY POSTURE AND NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN EUROPE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Tuesday, April 8, 2025

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2218, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Mike Rogers [chairman of the committee] presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE ROGERS, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM ALABAMA, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The meeting will come to order. Today, we continue our posture hearings with EUCOM [United States European Command]. I want to thank the witnesses for being here. And, General Cavoli, as this will be your last appearance before this committee, I want to thank you for your incredible service to our nation over a very long time. Thank you, sir.

Today, we gather with heavy hearts after the loss of four American servicemembers in a tragic training accident in Lithuania. I want to thank our Lithuanian and Polish allies for their sparing no resource to recover the fallen.

Now, let me open with something fundamental: Vladimir Putin is not our friend. He is an unreformed KGB [Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti] agent who believes the collapse of the Soviet Union was "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century." His desire to reconstitute the Soviet Union drove him to attack Georgia in 2008, invade Crimea and the Donbas in 2014, and then launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Those that blame NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] enlargement or suggested Russia was somehow provoked into attacking Ukraine are wrong. The Ukrainian people have fought bravely over 3 years to defend their freedom, but I agree with President Trump it is time to stop the bloodshed. President Biden never had a plan in the war. By slow-rolling weapon deliveries and imposing loophole-ridden sanctions, he allowed the conflict to grind to a stalemate. President Trump has broken that deadlock. Ukraine has agreed to a ceasefire as a first step, showing their desire for peace. Russia, however, has refused to do the same and continues to slaughter innocent victims. Just last week, Russia bombed a playground, killing nine children. Murdering innocent Ukrainian children does not advance peace.

President Trump was right to warn Putin that, if he doesn't start negotiating in good faith, then the U.S. will ratchet up pressure and impose unprecedented sanctions. Because, as President Trump

knows, Putin only respects strength, and he has acted accordingly, he sanctioned the Nord Stream 2, he withdrew from the INF [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces] treaty after Russian violations, he sent additional U.S. troops to Poland, and he armed Ukraine with antitank missiles, not blankets. That is why Putin didn't invade Ukraine during President Trump's first term, and that is also why Putin must prove he is serious about peace, and soon. We cannot allow Russia to drag out these negotiations.

Now, while I agree that China is our pacing threat, we must remain tough and unwavering in the face of Russia's enduring threat because the reality is Russia maintains the world's largest and most diverse nuclear arsenal. And despite suffering massive losses in Ukraine, the Russian army is now larger than it was before the war. The Russian military is also reconstituting faster than expected, and its industrial base is now on war footing and being supported, unfortunately, by China, North Korea, and Iran.

Given these threats, I am concerned by reports that some at DOD [Department of Defense] are considering not only giving up NATO command but also significantly reducing our posture in Europe. I am especially concerned that Congress has not been consulted.

U.S. leadership in NATO is essential to ensure American forces, including our nuclear weapons, always remain under U.S. command. And cutting our presence in Europe now, especially on NATO's eastern flank, would only weaken leverage with Putin.

Thanks to President Trump's leadership, our European NATO allies are finally getting serious about investing in the alliance's collective defense. For the first time, it appears Europe is willing to shoulder most of the burden, and that is how it should be. And it is not just Poland, Romania, Finland, and the Baltic states. Allies across the alliance are ramping up their defense spending. But Europe's rearmament will take time. Pulling back prematurely would risk inviting further Russian aggression, potentially even against NATO. That is why I strongly support maintaining the current U.S. force posture in Europe at this time. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on how the U.S. and our NATO allies can ensure credible deterrence against Russia.

With that, I yield to my friend, the ranking member, for any opening statement he may have.

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

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to echo your opening comments thanking General Cavoli for his leadership. I am sad this will be your last time before us. You have done an amazing job in difficult times in Europe and also recognizing and offering condolences for our lost servicemembers in Lithuania. The chairman and I had the opportunity last year to visit our troops in Lithuania, and it is an incredibly important effort, and it is a huge tragedy for the force.

The obvious focus of this hearing with Europe is Ukraine, and I do want to offer a little bit of good news. Ukraine is holding the line against all odds, as they have for now over 3 years. We are

in a real position to blunt Russia's momentum in Ukraine. It is a huge accomplishment, something that hasn't been talked about a lot. It is now more important than ever we stick with Ukraine to stop Putin's invasion of Russia in its tracks and crucially force him to the table.

I agree with the chairman. I even agree with the Trump administration. We need to find an end to this war. But you don't find an end to this war by undermining support for Ukraine and praising Putin in Russia. That empowers Putin for all the reasons that the chairman said. Putin has big ambitions in Europe. Those ambitions can be blunted if we are strong, if we deter him. But when Trump came into office, cut off intel support, cut off aid to Ukraine, berated Zelenskyy, wouldn't even admit that Russia started this war, while, at the same time, praising Putin and Russia, that opened the door wide for Vladimir Putin to walk right through.

The pressure doesn't need to be on Zelenskyy in Ukraine. Trust me, I think most people on this committee have been to Ukraine at one time or another. There is plenty of pressure on Ukraine being brought by Russia every single day. The pressure needs to be put on Putin and Russia to force them to the table, and that is what this administration has refused to do to date. It is prolonging the war and empowering Russia, and that needs to change because the larger question for this hearing -- and I agree with the chairman on the concerns about talk about downsizing in Europe and everything that goes into it -- is does this administration believe in the fundamental principle that has made our country strong for the last 80 years, and that is the partnership and alliance in Europe, sticking with Europe. Sticking with the countries that believe in greater political and economic freedom is to the benefit of the United States of America, and those countries are the countries in Europe, our allies, the European Union. It is not Russia, and it is not Putin.

One of the most embarrassing things I have ever seen is when the Vice President went to Europe and, instead of talking about Ukraine, he lectured Europe about freedom of speech, that that was the big problem with Europe. Well, to begin with, the idea that this administration cares at all about the freedom of speech is ridiculous. As we speak, they are purging the government of all manner of different words that they don't like. We had the great example of how pictures of the Enola Gay disappeared from the Department of Defense website because they had an algorithm that said the word gay was problematic. Now, that is kind of funny when you stop and think about what the Enola Gay means, but, even that stupid mistake aside, why are we banning the word gay from discourse? Books are being banned across the Department of Defense, one a biography of Jackie Robinson because, Lord knows, we can't have people hearing about that. So the notion of someone from this administration lecturing anybody on free speech is offensive to anyone with an ounce of common sense, and it sure as hell should have been offensive to Europe.

But let's remember: was there anything mentioned in that speech about how Russia treats free speech? About the fact that they have eliminated all free media? That they kill and jail their political opponents?

Yes, we should stand for free speech. We should stand for economic and political freedom. But if we are going to do that, we should stand with Europe, not with Russia and Putin. And that is what is really at stake right now: are we still willing to do that?

And the question of, well, how have we benefitted from this. Economically, we have seen the greatest increase of wealth of any nation in the history of the world in the last 80 years. Now, I will grant you that wealth has not been distributed as fairly as it should have been, but we have benefitted economically. We've also benefitted militarily. Our European partners have stood with us in every conflict that we have fought since World War II. After 9/11, they stood with us. I have worked very closely with the Special Operations Command, with everyone who has been fighting against Al Qaeda and ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] and all those terrorist groups. Our European partners are crucial to that.

Meanwhile, Russia is partnering with Iran. They are partnering with North Korea. They are partnering with China. When I hear people in the administration say, oh, we have got to pivot away from Europe because of the Middle East, you know. Asia, that is what is important. Russia is in the middle of that, and this administration does not show that they understand this in the slightest.

We need to stand up for our European partners. Yes, there are clear things. The dollars matter. It is good that Europe is stepping up. But they stepped up on Ukraine. The U.S. is somewhere like 13th or 14th in terms of percentage of GDP that we have contributed to this from all of our partners. I personally think the main reason that they stood up was because Russia invaded Ukraine. Presidents have been pressuring them forever. That is what focused their mind, and that is good.

Yes, we need to avoid getting into a war with Russia. Yes, we need peace in Ukraine. But you do not get there by belittling President Zelenskyy, by attacking Ukraine, by undermining support for Ukraine, and praising Vladimir Putin in Russia.

So we need to stand up for the alliances that have stood so well for us for 80 years, and that, I think, is what this committee really needs to hear from our witnesses today is how are we going to do that so that the division that the chairman correctly outlined that Putin has for the world does not come to pass, that we deter him, we stop the war, and we protect economic and political freedom, as we have done for a very long time.

I look forward to the witness's testimony and to the questions, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I think we made it very clear how we feel about this. I thank the ranking member.

Now I would like to introduce our witnesses. We have Ms. Katherine Thompson, who is performing the duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense for International and Security Affairs; and General Cavoli, who is Commander of U.S. European Command.

With that, Ms. Thompson, we will start with you. You are recognized for 5 minutes for your opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF KATHERINE THOMPSON, PERFORMING THE
DUTIES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTER-
NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE**

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you, Chairman Rogers. Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and it is my honor to appear alongside EUCOM Commander General Cavoli.

Before I begin my formal statement, I would like to take a moment, as well, to echo the chairman and ranking member's comments to honor the memory of the four American soldiers who died in Lithuania on March 26th while conducting tactical training. My prayers are certainly with them and their families.

I would also like to thank the people and government of Lithuania, Poland, and Estonia, who provided exceptional support during the recovery operation. These nations showed our soldiers the highest level of respect during the dignified transfer back to the United States, and we thank them for those efforts.

President Trump has directed the Department of Defense to reorient the United States defense strategy so that it puts America's interests first. In Europe, that means working with our interagency partners to bring an end to the war in Ukraine. It also means finding new ways to strengthen NATO so that the alliance can be as effective in this century as it was in the last.

To be sure, neither of these efforts will be easy, not for us and not for our allies. But taking these measures is essential. It is doable, and doing so will leave both the United States and our allies and partners better off.

President Trump has spoken often and clearly about achieving lasting peace in Ukraine. This is vital to stop the bloodshed. It will also set Europe on a trajectory towards security and stability like the region has not seen for many years. This is not only good for Ukraine, but it is also good for our NATO allies. And, of course, it is, most importantly, good for Americans who benefit from a stable and secure Europe.

Already, the President's team is making progress in this regard. Under his leadership, both Russia and Ukraine have come to the negotiating table and already we are seeing initial ceasefire take hold. The contours of a lasting peace are coming into view.

President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have stated clearly that the United States will not put boots on the ground in Ukraine. At the same time, they have made clear that Europeans must take the lead in supporting Ukraine's defense requirements in the years ahead and our allies are taking steps to that effect. Last month, for instance, the United Kingdom hosted the Ukraine Defense Contact Group. The U.K. and France have also committed to lead additional efforts to ensure a lasting peace in Ukraine.

As the President and Secretary have said, far more will be required of them and other allies. But it is a promising start, and our allies deserve credit for taking these initial steps.

Given the sensitive nature of ongoing negotiations, I will limit my remarks on this subject to this statement. I look forward to being able to share more as peace negotiations proceed. NATO

played a central role in America's strategy throughout the Cold War. If not for the alliance, it is not clear that the Cold War would have remained just that: cold.

But then the Cold War ended, and, as it did, our NATO allies forgot how important it was to invest in their defense. Instead, they grew accustomed to the peace that defined Europe at the height of the unipolar moment, and they divested of their militaries accordingly. But peace can never be taken granted, and it must be maintained, and that requires all of us, allies and the United States alike, to do our part.

Unfortunately, that has not been the case for too many of our NATO allies. In the east, some of our allies, as the ranking member pointed out, did not forget the necessity of investing in their defenses. Even today, allies like Poland and many of the Baltic nations already spend more on defense than the United States does as a percentage of GDP, and they are going even higher and are on track to reach President Trump's target of 5 percent.

These are model allies, but they can only do so much on their own. Western and Central Europe are home to several of the world's largest and wealthiest economies. These allies are more than capable of raising powerful militaries. Tragically, however, they have chosen not to do so. Instead, for decades, they have shown themselves content to free ride not just at the expense of American taxpayers but at the expense of their fellow allies' security. President Trump has been clear this is not acceptable. As a matter of justice, Americans are tired of subsidizing European's defenses and, by extension, their vast welfare states.

But this is also a matter of prudence. Over the last few years, the international threat environment has grown far more dangerous, and we must all do our part to restore through strength.

This is why Secretary Hegseth has reoriented DOD [Department of Defense] squarely on warfighting and lethality, and this is why he has called for a factory reset of the NATO alliance. As the Secretary said at the gathering of the NATO Defense Ministers in February, it is time for our NATO allies to take primary responsibility for Europe's conventional defense. Relying on the United States for critical but more limited support, including, of course, our extended nuclear deterrent. That means that our NATO allies must take the lead in providing Ukraine with the security assistance it needs going forward to achieve lasting peace. At the same time, they must generate, field, and sustain the forces required to deter aggression against the alliance itself, including the seas around it, like the Red Sea.

If our allies do these things, there is no question that NATO can be as effective in this century as it was in the last, and all of Europe can realize peace and stability for decades to come. But our allies will only be able to achieve these goals if they raise defense spending to 5 percent of their respective GDPs, as President Trump has emphasized.

At the same time, our allies must focus these resources on where they are needed most, on Europe's defense, not on the Indo-Pacific and not on the host of other missions that NATO has taken upon itself recently to field in recent years and to detract from the alliance's proper focus on warfighting, lethality, and deterrence.

President Trump has avowed to achieve peace through strength, and the Department of Defense will do its part. Now it is time for our NATO allies to do theirs and, in the process, set conditions for a lasting peace in Europe. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Thompson can be found in the Appendix on page 65.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Thompson. General Cavoli, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL CHRISTOPHER G. CAVOLI,
COMMANDER, U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND**

General CAVOLI. Thank you, Chairman. Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to be here again today representing the men and women of U.S. European Command. It is an honor to be here with Sergeant Major Rob Abernethy, who has been with me the entire command term in EUCOM, and I am glad to be sitting here next to the person performing the duties of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Ms. Thompson.

Thank you for your condolences for the soldiers we lost in Lithuania, ladies and gentlemen. Our heartfelt condolences go out to their families. They came from all over the United States, from Georgia to Michigan, all the way to Guam. And they represented the very best that we have to offer, and they were off on a night mission to recover another vehicle. They were mechanics, and they were tragically lost in a bog.

The people of Lithuania and the government of Lithuania responded to that in the most heartwarming and reassuring fashion. A week ago Sunday, I went to Lithuania to inspect the operation to try to recover the vehicle and the soldiers. The Minister of Defense of Lithuania was on that site every single day until those soldiers were recovered. There was a Mass, a Holy Mass, held by the Archbishop of Vilnius, who is a Lithuanian-American from Chicago. There were 2,000 people at that church service, and the stated purpose of the Mass was to pray for the families of the servicemen who were, apparently, lost.

I was touched by it, and I think all Americans would have been touched by it. It is the spirit that undergirds the alliance that the chairman and the ranking member talked about.

Before I begin, please let me thank this committee for all your support to our servicemen and women and their mission. We continue to face historic times in the European theater. Russia's war in Ukraine, which is now in its fourth year, has revealed Russia to be a chronic threat. And in the coming years, it is going to be a growing threat, one that is willing to use military force to achieve geopolitical goals and is actively waging a campaign of destabilization across Europe and beyond.

Further exacerbating this Russian threat are the deepening partnerships among our adversaries in Russia, Iran, the Chinese Communist Party, and the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea]. These linkages increasingly pose a global risk.

But U.S. EUCOM and the NATO alliance have risen to the challenge. NATO deterrence has held. War has not spilled into NATO territory. With support from a broad international coalition, U.S.

EUCOM led the charge in helping Ukraine. We established Security Assistance Group - Ukraine, which is now commanded by Lieutenant General Curtis Buzzard. And for 38 months of this war, SAG-U [Security Assistance Group-Ukraine] has delivered critical munitions, arms, and equipment from the U.S. and our allies. These efforts have been indispensable in enabling the Ukrainian Armed Forces and have empowered them to mount a courageous defense. And now NATO has taken up this task. NATO has established in record time an organization to take over much of SAG-U's mission.

The threat of war also led the NATO alliance to embark upon a historic campaign to fundamentally overhaul and modernize its military capabilities. After years of underinvestment, too many years, our allies are finally optimizing the alliance for high-end warfighting. And within NATO, we now have the plans, the forces, the command and control, and we have the focus to meet that mission. And there's still much to do, but our allies are investing in defense at a rate we haven't seen since the Cold War: a 40 percent increase overall since February of 2020.

So throughout this intense and challenging transformation of the alliance's warfighting structures, the presence of U.S. EUCOM forces has been essential to the alliance's modernization efforts. We've converged U.S. headquarters with NATO command structures. We've increased combined training and exercises, and we've been accelerating European modernization and readiness. So through U.S. leadership, we are laying the groundwork for European leadership and, thus, for more years of peace and prosperity for the United States.

There is a long road ahead. Sustained vigilance and pressure will be required. We have done all this to protect vital U.S. interests. Our strengthened allies will increase our strength, and our deep relationships with them give them the access, the basing, and the intelligence to defend our country forward. The first line of defense of our homeland begins in EUCOM where our Naval forces prevent Russian submarines from breaking out into the Atlantic and threatening the United States. The ballistic missile defense of Israel begins in EUCOM from ships positioned in the Eastern Mediterranean. And in EUCOM, it is our job safely to evacuate Americans from the Levant. We are America's force forward in the world.

So, ladies and gentlemen, this is my last annual testimony to you. As I am closing 38 years of service, it has been the honor of a lifetime to serve with our brilliant members during these historic times, and I continue to be inspired by their commitment to our nation's forward defense. I thank you, our Congress, for your unwavering support of our servicemen and women, to their well-being, and your support to their mission.

America is the greatest country in the world, and it is, in large part, because our Armed Forces are the greatest in the world. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Cavoli can be found in the Appendix on page 69.]

The CHAIRMAN. I thank both the witnesses. I recognize myself for questions. General Cavoli, given Russia's armed forces are mobilized for long-term confrontation, what is your best military advice

on whether or not DOD should maintain the current force posture in Europe for the foreseeable future?

General CAVOLI. Chairman, it is my advice to maintain that force posture as it is now. We have reviewed periodically since, in 2022, we originally surged forces forward. We have periodically reviewed the force structure at both the military level and the policy level, and I have consistently recommended throughout that period to maintain the forces we surge forward and I would continue to do so now, if asked, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, you referenced in this in your opening statement. I would like for you to reiterate it. How does the U.S. force posture in Europe contribute to the defense of our homeland, as well as our operations in CENTCOM [United States Central Command] and AFRICOM [United States Africa Command]?

General CAVOLI. Sir, thanks. Yes, it is an important part of why we are there. First and foremost, Russian strategic forces, Russia continues to have very powerful strategic forces, thousands of nuclear weapons, and the delivery methods to deliver those. Those are not pointed just anyplace. Those are pointed, those are there, they exist for America. And our defense against those strategic forces, whether in the air or undersea, begins in the European continent.

For example, Russian submarines are mainly stationed with the Northern Fleet up in Murmansk up in the area east of the northern Nordic countries. They come out of their harbors, and they go south between Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom, the famous GIUK [Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom] gap. We have to bottle them up north of that gap. If they break out into the Atlantic, for a variety of reasons, it gets tougher to track them. And from those positions, they can hold the country at risk.

So our maritime efforts, which are greatly aided by the efforts of our allies, their maritime patrol aircraft, their antisubmarine helicopters, their destroyers, all of our efforts together, but built around America's exquisite capabilities, that's the first line of defense against Russian subs.

If we look to the south, we participated in the defense of Israel early this year. U.S. Central Command led a brilliant campaign with the Israelis and some other allies to protect against Iranian attacks against Israel. The ballistic missile defense part of that comes off of EUCOM ships in the Eastern Mediterranean. The refuelers come out of EUCOM. The air space control comes out of EUCOM. We do the same for AFRICOM and everybody else.

It is really because of our proximity and our familiarity with the area. The bases that we have in Europe and the legal permissions we have with nations hosting us give us the ability to project power quickly in our interest, on behalf of our U.S. unilateral interest.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, General. Ms. Thompson, given everything you have just heard, does the Department support maintaining its current posture of U.S. forces in Europe for the foreseeable future?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman. The Department, right now, is undergoing a global force posture review, and so we are taking into account not only the dynamics in EUCOM but in all of our theaters and evaluating that based on President Trump's stated interests and sizing our force and our re-

sources appropriately to that. No decisions have been made at this time as part of that global force posture review. It is ongoing.

The CHAIRMAN. I think the ranking member and I have made it very clear in our previous correspondence to the Department and I think in opening statements, you should be focused on maintaining the surge posture that we have had in Europe since the conflict was started by Russia for the foreseeable future.

General Cavoli, you noted in your written statement that the inadequate U.S. defense production capacity and problems within four military cell systems are making it hard for Europe to buy U.S. weapons. What challenges does this pose to your command responsibilities in EUCOM?

General CAVOLI. Thank you, Chairman. In my oral statement, in my opening statement, I talked about a historic transformation of allied command operations, the operational force in NATO. So we have designed these plans to defense NATO territory, and, from that, we derive a force structure requirement, a description of what exactly force is and how many of them we need. So this is sort of the spending list, the shopping list, for defense spending in Europe now.

Increasingly, nations are putting money up against that shopping list. 23 nations are spending above 2 percent right now. We are grateful for that, but there has got to be something in the store to buy. There is a lack of production capacity right now, and that is the first problem.

The second problem is --

The CHAIRMAN. I'm sorry. My time is expired. I am going to have to yield to the ranking member.

General CAVOLI. Thank you, Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Yes. Just to drive home that point with the chairman, our production capacity is a major problem. Even if we do spend more money, I think the summary of what you just said, you know, it is great you have the money, you have to have something to buy. And part of the challenge here, we don't have a budget yet from the President. I am not going to be harshly critical of that. When you had your first term, we didn't get the budget from President Biden until mid May either. Once we see that budget, a lot of these questions will be in a better place.

But, General Cavoli, can you tell us what is going on in the war in Ukraine right now? We seem to have forgotten those details. It is still ongoing. Russia is still attacking. But how is Ukraine doing in terms of holding off those attacks, in the east primarily?

General CAVOLI. Sure, Congressman. Starting on the ground, if I could take just a moment and sketch down an imaginary map, if we look into the northeastern part of the battlefield up near the Russian province of Kursk, that is the northern extent of the front line of troops.

As you know, last summer, late last summer, Ukraine pushed into Russia there and established a salient of several hundred square kilometers in a sort of surprise move. They have continued to hold that. The Russians vowed to kick them out by the end of last September. The Ukrainians are still there. There is still a certain number of brigades. I could go into the details in --

Mr. SMITH. Sure. Russia has been throwing a lot of troops and taking a lot of casualties, particularly in the last month or 2. Has that stalled across, you know, from Kharkiv down to Kherson, basically the front; or are there places where Russia is making progress?

General CAVOLI. So Russia has stopped making progress in Kursk right now. They haven't been able to dislodge the Ukrainians. If we come all the way down the front along Chasiv Yar and the towns in Luhansk, if we go down to Pokrovsk and Donetsk, the Russian attacks seemed to have petered out. They have decreased in the last couple of weeks significantly in number, but the size and scope of the attacks seems to have petered out, as well. The Ukrainians are in good positions. They are in good defensive positions. They have improved some of their readiness and manpower situation. They are, indeed, producing large numbers of Russian casualties.

In a couple of minor places, the Ukrainians have actually gained some ground back, but I do not see the Ukrainians being in imminent danger of collapse. I do see the Russians struggling to make the kind of gains they were making last autumn.

Mr. SMITH. In your opening statement, Ms. Thompson, when you said that the ceasefire continues to hold, there is no ceasefire; let's just be clear about that. The war is very much ongoing. I mean, as the chairman noted, I mean, Russia just bombed Kiev and, you know, killed a whole bunch of people. What do you mean the ceasefire is holding when the war goes on?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question, Congressman. I can speak more to the specifics when we go into closed session. I am happy to share more. But I would point to the progress that the administration has made --

Mr. SMITH. But you would acknowledge the war is still going, there is no ceasefire at the moment.

Ms. THOMPSON. So, again, from the administration's perspective, what we would say is the goal is to get both sides to the table to have peace negotiations so that the war doesn't continue. That is priority number one, and I would point to the progress we have made on the energy infrastructure ceasefire and, again, happy to provide more color in closed session. But I would point to that as the starting point and, you know --

Mr. SMITH. As a general rule, to create the notion that there is some kind of ceasefire over there, is wildly inaccurate and misleading.

And one other question on the budget. You mentioned that we want Europe to get to 5 percent of GDP. The U.S., as I understand it, is right around 3 percent of GDP, and the budget hasn't come out yet. Is it the President's intention to try to get us to 5 percent of GDP? In just top-of-the-head math, that would mean a defense budget of somewhere around \$1.5-1.6 trillion. Does the administration intend to get to a 5 percent GDP number in the U.S.? And if not, how does that square with demanding that Europe do that?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question. And I think I would point you to President Trump's framing of the 5 percent comment, first and foremost, which is that his view is that our European and Canadian allies should be at 5 percent and the expectation is not

necessarily for a stronger U.S. commitment. The U.S. has already committed, you know, over \$350 billion in effort to the war effort in Ukraine. We have been the top spender in NATO for the better part of at least a decade.

And so the goal, from President Trump's perspective, for the 5 percent target is to ensure that our European and Canadian allies make up the deficit that has, essentially, existed for the better part of a decade.

Mr. SMITH. So, no, we don't intend to try to get to 5 percent in the U.S.?

Ms. THOMPSON. On specifics for the budget, I would point you to the comptroller, and budget decisions are not finalized, so I wouldn't want to speak to that and get ahead of the decision space there.

Mr. SMITH. I am out of time. I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I would point out that we are in NATO, and everybody in NATO should get to 5 percent, just like President Trump said, including the United States.

The gentleman from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, both, for being here. And amen, Mr. Chairman. And I am just so grateful to have both of you serving. It is so reassuring to the American people.

And as a veteran myself and as a father of four sons who have served overseas in the military, I want to offer condolences to your team on the loss of the four American servicemembers who recently passed away with our allies in Lithuania. Staff Sergeant Troy Knutson-Collins, Staff Sergeant Jose Duenez, Staff Sergeant Edwin Franco, and Private First Class Dante Taitano. I especially identify. I spent many, many summers in National Guard training at Fort Stewart, and I know the quality and the competence of the people serving there.

Reading about how our European allies came together to help the recovery efforts is a strong demonstration of the efforts to stand side-by-side in times of need, and I am grateful that our NATO allies are really coming forward. And I particularly appreciate, Madam Secretary, the President's efforts to encourage our allies to reach the 2 percent, and they are, but with his encouragement.

And so it is so encouraging, as we try to achieve peace through strength. And, indeed, to me, it is so important because we are in a conflict we have not chosen, and that is dictators with rule of gun invading democracies with rule of law. It began February 24, 2022, War Criminal Putin invading Ukraine. Then on October 7, puppets of Iran invaded Israel. It is such a clear connection of the dots, and both of them being backed up by the Chinese Communist Party.

And then keeping that in mind with European Command, what we see, I believe, is War Criminal Putin is making every effort to resurrect the failed Soviet Union. He really never left with Russian troops in Transnistria, Moldova. They were supposed to leave, but they did not, and so they occupied part of Moldova.

Additionally, we know they rigged the elections in Belarus. Then there was the invasion of Georgia and the annexation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. And then you had the invasion of Ukraine with tens of thousands of people killed in 2014 and 2022, and then you had the rigging of the national elections October 26th in Geor-

gia where the effort was made to replace the very courageous President Salome Zourabichvili. And over and over again, we can see. And then we see even more recently the efforts to rig the elections of Romania, but, fortunately, they were not successful.

General Cavoli, you mentioned in your presentation that War Criminal Putin is on pace to replace all the combat material that was damaged or lost throughout its invasion of Ukraine. What are the implications that this new supply of munitions and combat vehicles is helping Russia modernize its military?

General CAVOLI. That's exactly what it is doing, sir. It is helping them modernize their military. They had very extensive modernization plans and expansion plans. The Russians, about a year and a half ago, announced an intention to grow their armed forces to 1.5 million up from 900,000, a significant increase, to establish new commands, especially in the ground forces, in the northeastern part of Europe. That is on the border of NATO with Finland and the Baltics. They are on the path to doing that. They are not going very quickly because they are devoting so much to the effort in Ukraine. We will see how much effort they will be able to put into it after the work. It depends largely how the war ends, but that modernization program is intended to go right back and challenge NATO on the borders of NATO.

Mr. WILSON. And, indeed, for the United States, how important is it for us to produce conventional combat vehicles for future combat?

General CAVOLI. Oh, I believe combat vehicles and tanks maintain an important place on the battlefield, and our ability to produce them is going to have a lot to do with our ability to have a strong army component to our joint force.

Mr. WILSON. And, General, I am very encouraged that, actually, the Ukrainians have done so well in reducing the capabilities of War Criminal Putin when the dictator, Bashar al-Assad, of Syria was asking for assistance in November, it wasn't given and he had to flee to Moscow. And so the people of Ukraine should be given credit that now there is a potential liberation for the people of Syria, and we already know the unintended consequence of what War Criminal Putin did of having Finland and Sweden join NATO. So over and over again, it is so encouraging.

A key point, too, is NATO now, NATO countries in the EU provide more aid and have provided more aid than the United States, but thank goodness for President Trump that he's there to provide peace through strength. Thank you.

Mr. WITTMAN [presiding]. I thank the gentleman from South Carolina. I will now recognize the gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Wittman. And thank you, General Cavoli, particularly, for your heartfelt comments regarding the fallen and also, again, the really sincere efforts by our allies to assist in every way possible. To me, in some ways, that speaks more loudly about the value of an alliance that has been around for so long and is founded on shared values and interests.

In your narrative about the state of play with Ukraine right now, I mean, one aspect which I think sometimes gets overlooked a little bit in the U.S. is the fact that Ukraine has not just held the line

in the Black Sea, it has actually pushed the Russian navy to the furthest eastern end of the Black Sea. They have sank a third of the Black Sea fleet, including its flagship, Moskva; sank a Kilo submarine in Sevastopol.

Again, in terms of the state of play right now, we saw sea-launched missile attacks over the weekend by Russia, which actually has not happened much since Ukraine, without a navy, has been able to push back the Russia fleet. Can you comment again in terms of just how extraordinary that achievement is without a navy and also whether or not the safe passage of grain shipments are now going to be at risk because Russia now seems to be sort of taking advantage of the lull.

General CAVOLI. Congressman, thanks for the opportunity to comment on one of the most amazing maritime feats in years. So you put your finger right on it. Not only does Ukraine roll back the presence of the Black Sea fleet, they don't even have a navy. They have given us all a view of a future where unmanned surface vehicles, basically sea drones, have the potential to wage at a large scale against a traditional manned navy. Really remarkable.

They have had some help from us, from our European allies. But I should stress that a great deal of their expertise is indigenous. It is grown with their own engineers, their own lessons learned. It is remarkable.

They did clear out a passage lane for safe passage of grain ships from Odessa down to the Turkish Straits, and that has been what has been securing the free passage of grain. The Black Sea Grain Initiative, you know, long defunct. So that is very encouraging.

Russia did launch some surface launch cruise missiles the other day. They have been doing that. They have the capability to do that all the way from the Caspian, if you want to know the truth. So it is not unusual for them to do that. They don't have a very good ability to hit moving targets with those missiles, though, so I think there is a lot of space where we can help the Ukrainians here to continue to protect.

Mr. COURTNEY. Great. Thank you. I mean, to Mr. Smith's point, the notion that, Ms. Thompson, the ceasefire is taking hold, the fact that, again there were sea-launched attacks, maybe not on moving vessels, but they certainly hit cities in Ukraine over the weekend that clearly shows that whatever holding the administration may think is happening, in fact, I would argue we are going in the reverse direction in terms of where we were before the negotiations.

Mr. Chairman, there is an article in the April 7, just yesterday's Kyiv Post, headline: "Russia Mocks Trump's Ceasefire Deal with Sea Launch Missile Attack on Ukrainian Cities" be made part of the record.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Without objection.

[The information referred to can be found on page 89.]

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you. So, General Cavoli, you talked about the value of the alliance in terms of tracking a Russian submarine. Again, I represent Groton, Connecticut, which we have 15 attack subs that are sort of part of that team sport that our NATO allies do to protect the homeland, and General Guillot talked about that last week. Again, quickly before I am done, could you maybe just

again describe how the NATO antisubmarine warfare effort, which is a team sport, really is so important?

General CAVOLI. Yes, absolutely. I will do it in generalities, Congressman, because so much undersea warfare is held pretty closely by nations, to include ours, of course.

Yes. So sub hunting consists basically of submarine looking for submarine, maritime patrol aircraft using various means to look for submarines, and helicopters looking for submarines, and then surface vessels, usually destroyers or frigates, using their assets. And we combine all four of those dimensions to surge in specific areas that we, you know, that our intelligence helps us to figure out.

We don't have the world's monopoly on all that equipment, and it is very exquisite equipment. We don't have as much of it as we wished we had. Our allies do. Our Norwegian allies, our U.K. allies, the land space in Iceland where we base maritime patrol aircraft out of Keflavik. The refueling ships to keep our destroyers at sea, Danish frigates, all of this comes together and gets orchestrated --

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time is expired. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Turner.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your great opening statement and your great articulation of the importance of our support for Ukraine, the importance of our support for NATO, the importance of NATO's integration into our own national security. I appreciate also the ranking member's statement. I appreciate the chairman's statement with Chairman Wicker concerning the importance of the Supreme Allied Commander's position. To General Cavoli, thank you for your great service as Supreme Allied Commander and the work that you have done.

General Cavoli, we have nuclear weapons in Europe, do we not?

General CAVOLI. Yes, we do. The number and the modification of them is classified, but their existence is not.

Mr. TURNER. It is important that the United States has those nuclear weapons there, correct?

General CAVOLI. Yes. They fall under my command and control for that purpose, sir, as the Commander of EUCOM.

Mr. TURNER. And so it is important that the United States have the position of Supreme Allied Commander because we have nuclear weapons in Europe.

General CAVOLI. Sir, if those nuclear weapons were going to be offered to the alliance for nuclear deterrence or for nuclear operations, that would come under the command of the Supreme Allied Commander. The way we are currently set up, I, as the commander of EUCOM, own the weapons, and I hand them to myself as the Supreme Allied Commander. That is possible because I am the same person, and I am American.

Mr. TURNER. So I really appreciate that you just did that straight line for every one because the idiocy of the fact if there was any discussion about the aspects of relinquishing the command or even the rumor of relinquishing the command is just beyond me because you both indicated that we have nuclear weapons in Europe, that it is important we have nuclear weapons in Europe, and that it is

important that you have the command because you are an American and they are under your command.

So beyond all the other aspects of its importance, which is important, all of which are incredibly important to our national security, that alone ought to just end all of the debate. So thank you for making that with such unbelievable clarity.

There have been individuals who have, unbelievably, also stated that they don't understand why we have bases in Germany to defend Germany. In your opening, you were describing that you don't go to work every day to defend Europe, that your part of the overall arching aspects of the extended breach of the United States' national and international security apparatus.

Would you please give us some description again of the fact that the work that you do, that you are EUCOM but you don't sit around every day and wait to see whether or not that someone who is trying to invade Germany, that our bases in Germany actually, where there are Americans, are working everyday on international security operations for the United States and on international security issues around the world.

General CAVOLI. Congressman, as the Commander of U.S. European Command, I have U.S. missions. I take all of my instructions and direction from the United States from the Secretary of Defense, and I am there exclusively to pursue U.S. interests and to defend U.S. interests. In as much as I am located in Europe with that force, it is almost always in conjunction with allies, but I am doing it from a U.S. perspective for U.S. interests.

Mr. TURNER. But you were describing Israel. You do things in the Middle East. You do things all around the world. You are not just sitting there defending Europe.

General CAVOLI. No, sir. If you, you know, look at the Mediterranean Sea, three very important U.S. combatant commands come together there. There is U.S. AFRICOM, Mike Langley, there is U.S. CENTCOM with Erik Kurilla, and there is EUCOM. And the intersection of the boundaries of those three organizations demands that we work together.

EUCOM has the most bases and the most developed infrastructure to be able to support the other two, so, obviously, I spend more time supporting General Langley in Africa than he spends, you know, supporting me in Europe. This is a result of the infrastructure, the bases, the forces we have located there, and, very importantly, the government-to-government agreements we have that permit us to use non-U.S. territory to stage our operations.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, thank you. That was very important, General. I appreciate that.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Garamendi.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your clarity of your statement, as well as for the ranking member, Mr. Smith.

General Cavoli, thank you for your service. You have been at this a long time, and the clarity of your testimony today is extraordinarily important to all of us about the role of EUCOM and the defense of Europe and also the defense of the United States.

My question really goes to Ms. Thompson, and I would like to have clarity about the administration's belief or not that our NATO European partners are critical to U.S. national security.

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question, Congressman. I would point you to Secretary Hegseth's comments on his first trip overseas, which was to the NATO Defense Ministerial, and where he acknowledged that NATO is the most successful defense alliance in history and that he made clear that we are not abandoning our European allies. In fact, our efforts and President Trump's efforts, particularly on the defense spending front, is meant to bring our European allies alongside us, to develop a status quo --

Mr. GARAMENDI. I got all that from your testimony, but my question was different. My question is is or are the European allies critical to our national American security?

Ms. THOMPSON. I would say a strong defense and deterrence in Europe is certainly in our national interest, particularly as the Department has an aim to focus on homeland defense. And, certainly, as the chairman and ranking member recognized, the looming threat of conflict with China in the Indo-Pacific, having partners in Europe as allies and partners that are strong on defense and deterrence and are capable only helps further those interests for us.

Mr. GARAMENDI. The lack of clarity in your answer is noted. However, it is also clear that the statements from the administration, including the Secretary and the Vice President, would indicate that the administration does not value our NATO allies, calling them pathetic and other demeaning words and also missing the monthly NATO meeting would indicate that perhaps the administration's view does not coincide with your roundabout statement.

So the question is does the U.S. still value the partners that we have in Europe?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question, Congressman. And, again, I would say, as the Secretary and the President have emphasized, we do value our partners in Europe to the extent they are willing to step up and be strong allies and partners with us, and that means pulling their weight. And that is the tough message and the honest message that this administration has been delivering, and we believe it is important to be honest with our allies and that that only builds a stronger relationship for us and for our European allies and partners.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Maybe that is not correct. Maybe it actually weakens our partnership when you demean, when you discourage, and when you place them in a lower value.

Moving beyond that, I just note the self-inflicted wounds that the administration has put in place in Europe and the extraordinary additional burden that places on our military leadership trying to hold it together. I want to also thank Mr. Turner for the clarity that he brought with regard to the command of NATO.

General Cavoli, there are many facilities in Europe, some of them on the eastern side in Poland. Are there any plans to change the footprint of the U.S. military on the eastern front?

General CAVOLI. Congressman, we move forces around frequently in Europe. Our air forces are hopping all around, our maritime forces. Even our ground forces move from place to place. But the

principal locations where we have forces right now, that is where they are and that is where I am planning to keep them.

Very generous, some of the countries on the eastern flank. Poland, \$3.2 billion in infrastructure to provide housing for our servicemen who are rotating through there. Lithuania has built a city for an armored battalion.

I think that got at your question, sir. If not, please let me know.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I will in the classified. Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time is expired. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee, Dr. DesJarlais.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Thank you, Chairman. I would like to get through a couple of questions for General Cavoli. General, last month, the Defense Innovation Unit announced that EUCOM and INDOPACOM would be the first to receive new generative artificial intelligent capabilities under the Thunderforge initiative for operational planning and decision support. From the command level perspective, how do you envision this technology enhancing EUCOM's capabilities?

General CAVOLI. Oh, it is going to be fantastic if it works out the way it is supposed to, Congressman. It is an ability to use artificial intelligence to do complex models and then to run scenarios in it. So, effectively, to do the sort of wargaming that used to involve a bunch of majors hunkered over a map in the middle of the night arguing back and forth, we will be able to automate that and do thousands and thousands of iterations. It will really help clarify some of our planning.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. What kind of guardrails are you putting in place to ensure it augments, rather than replaces, human judgment, especially in high stakes or escalatory scenarios?

General CAVOLI. Well, I expect my subordinate officers to come to me with the decisions and the recommendations, not the computer. It is going to be an integral part of our staff process and the way we do them now. It could conceivably help to replace some manpower, but, in the beginning, it is designed to enable manpower.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay. And, General Cavoli, I appreciate you raising the alarm about the, roughly, dozen European ports near or co-located with logistic hubs that have significant Chinese investments. I think this is a critical issue that doesn't get the attention it deserves in Washington. What is your assessment of the risk this poses in a crisis, and, when you bring these concerns directly to our allies, are they receptive to your concerns?

General CAVOLI. Yes. The concerns are obvious, sir. We could lose access at a critical time to a port. In our exercise program, we are very careful and very deliberate to exercise a wide variety of different port facilities so that we understand the way they work and their ownership and everything and so that we exercise our rights to use them.

When we talked to our allies about them, they almost always immediately respond if we have concerns about the ownership. In some cases that we could talk about in closed session, allied government have intervened and stop a tender because it was going to put a critical piece of infrastructure potentially into the wrong hands.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. And you also pointed to CCP-linked 5G infrastructure across parts of Europe as an area of concern. Beyond diplomacy, what tools do we have either bilaterally or through NATO to mitigate the surveillance and influence risk this poses?

General CAVOLI. Beyond diplomacy, sir, I think I would do best to answer that in closed session.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Yes, sir. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Moulton.

Mr. MOULTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Russia has launched 1,460 guided aerial bombs, 670 attack drones, and more than 30 missiles in the last week, killing at least 21 civilians, including nine children. Ms. Thompson, do you think that that means we have seen an initial ceasefire take hold, to quote you?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question, Congressman. I would point out that this is an ongoing peace negotiation process. We are at the beginning stages --

Mr. MOULTON. I am asking if you think that qualifies as a ceasefire taking hold.

Ms. THOMPSON. Again, I am happy to provide additional color on what we --

Mr. MOULTON. Yes or no? Does that mean a ceasefire has taken hold?

Ms. THOMPSON. I am happy to provide more clarity on this situation --

Mr. MOULTON. You are unwilling to answer the question. You should answer questions when you come here, Ms. Thompson. Ms. Thompson, you said that the Pentagon is undergoing a worldwide force posture review based on President Trump's stated interests. We know a lot of things happen in this administration based on the whims of the President which he intends to change day to day. Do you think a force posture review should be based on the President's stated interests or on sound military advice?

Ms. THOMPSON. So, first and foremost, our global posture review is informed by the President's national security priorities and then, subsequently, on our interim National Defense Strategy guidance and then, ultimately, what will be this administration's national defense strategy --

Mr. MOULTON. Okay. So just to be clear, the National Defense Strategy is secondary to what the President wants.

Ms. THOMPSON. Again, I would say --

Mr. MOULTON. Ms. Thompson, you said that President Trump will restore peace through strength and, quote, we must all do our part to restore peace through strength. Does it show strength to blame Zelenskyy for starting this war?

Ms. THOMPSON. I think the goal from President Trump is to bring both sides to the table, both Russia and Ukraine --

Mr. MOULTON. Does it show strength to describe Russian President, Vladimir Putin, a war criminal, as a genius, as savvy for his invasion of Ukraine?

Ms. THOMPSON. Congressman, given the sensitive nature of negotiations, again, I don't want to provide any additional --

Mr. MOULTON. I am just asking if you think it shows strength to praise Putin over our own intelligence agencies, to say that we

trust Putin more than the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]. Does that show strength?

Ms. THOMPSON. Congressman, again, I would point to our overarching goal and, certainly, President Trump --

Mr. MOULTON. I am just asking you if it shows strength. I get the overarching goals. You can point to whatever you want. I am asking you to answer the question. Does it show strength to call Zelenskyy an incompetent dictator while praising Putin as a, quote, strong leader?

Ms. THOMPSON. I think what shows strength is President Trump's ability to get both sides to the table, which is a facet that he has already achieved, and what this administration continues to --

Mr. MOULTON. That is nice that you think that shows strength, but what I am asking is does it show strength to say Zelenskyy started the war, that he's an incompetent dictator, and that Putin is a strong leader? Do you think that that statement shows strength, yes or no, Ms. Thompson?

Ms. THOMPSON. Congressman, for further questions on specifics on what President Trump has or hasn't said and the implications of that, I would point you to the White House. I represent the Department of Defense and how --

Mr. MOULTON. Oh, you work with the Department of Defense. Great. So do you think it shows strength to disclose top secret targeting information to our enemies hours before pilots are going to fly over enemy targets on a platform known to be targeted by our biggest adversaries? Do you think that shows strength?

Ms. THOMPSON. Congressman, again, those are discussions that I am not privy to, and so --

Mr. MOULTON. No, no, you don't need to be privy to the discussions. I am just asking you if you think it shows strength to disclose top secret information.

Ms. THOMPSON. I think what shows strength on the topic that we are here to discuss, which is force posture in Europe --

Mr. MOULTON. I am not asking about that. I am asking about whether we should disclose top secret information. You represent the Department of Defense. Are you going to hold the troops under the command of DOD accountable to keeping classified information safe, or do you think it shows strength to tell our troops that it is okay to disclose top secret information, that they will not be held accountable if that happens?

Ms. THOMPSON. Congressman, I can only speak for myself, and I personally practice all of the information security protocols of the Department. And it is the expectation of the Department in this position to do so, and I certainly do.

Mr. MOULTON. And do you hold yourself accountable for that?

Ms. THOMPSON. I personally hold myself accountable for compliance with information security. Absolutely.

Mr. MOULTON. Well, that is a far cry from what we are seeing from the Secretary of Defense who said that accountability is back but has refused to hold himself accountable.

General Cavoli, how many Lithuanians showed up for the Mass to celebrate the lives of our servicemembers?

General CAVOLI. Congressman, I couldn't give you an exact number. I don't know what the police counted. But it is the National Cathedral. It is in this main square --

Mr. MOULTON. Several hundred, close to a thousand, what is it?

General CAVOLI. Certainly over a thousand.

Mr. MOULTON. We only have one president who spent \$26 million of taxpayer-funded golf vacations in first 69 days since his inauguration. And, yet, he couldn't leave a Saudi golf tournament to show up for the dignified transfer of those soldiers' remains.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska, Mr. Bacon.

Mr. BACON. Thank you both for being here. I appreciate you both, and I applaud your service, General Cavoli, and congratulate you. I served in Europe. I was a commander at Ramstein, commander at Third Air Force. I know the importance of NATO. It has been the bedrock or the foundation for our security for seven decades. I know the threat that Russia poses. I studied it my whole career.

So my first question for Ms. Thompson, I have significant concerns about our approach to relations with Russia. I do not like how we are treating Russia with kid gloves like they are our friend. And, often, we use very harsh words towards our allies in Europe and Ukraine in particular.

Does this administration see Russia as a potential partner in things, such as resolving tensions in the Middle East? I am just trying to get to motives.

Ms. THOMPSON. Congressman, what I would say is, as the interim National Defense Strategy guidance points out, you know, Russia, Iran, North Korea, China still pose great threats, and we live in an extremely dangerous security environment. And so I would acknowledge that up-front just to get to the crux of your question.

What I would say is the goal for President Trump in peace negotiations is obviously to bring both sides to the table. And to do that, you know, we have to make sure that both scales are balanced to get both parties in a room and talking. And so, you know, what I would say, from what you are seeing from the administration, is that, at the end of the day, the goal is to get both sides to the table and keep both sides at the table so that we can get to the overall objective that I think we all share, which is an enduring peace in Ukraine.

Mr. BACON. Does this administration believe that an improved bilateral, including economic relations between the U.S. and Russia, is worth pursuing once peace in Ukraine has been achieved?

Ms. THOMPSON. Sir, unfortunately, I can't speak to those dynamics. I would direct you to the State Department for, you know, any sort of follow-on diplomatic elements that would come after this. The Department of Defense is squarely focused on supporting President Trump's efforts to reach an enduring peace.

Mr. BACON. I just wish we had more clarity when it comes to Russia and Ukraine. Who is the good guy? Who is the bad guy? Who is the invader? Who is the victim? And who is committing the war crimes? I applaud the efforts for peace, but we can't whitewash

Russia's behavior to get them to the table. I think we all see that what they are doing, and we should be very clear about it.

My next question is to General Cavoli. I am deeply concerned about the security situation in Eastern Europe with the ongoing invasion of Ukraine by War Criminal Putin. I believe that if he is not stopped in Ukraine, he will continue to turn his attention towards other former Soviet states, like Moldova, or going next to the Baltic nations, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania.

Will the U.S. maintain its presence in these countries to ensure that Russia is deterred from further aggression?

General CAVOLI. Sir, clearly, that will be a policy decision that will be made as time goes on. We are in a good position right now.

Mr. BACON. Is it correct the Department is considering pulling out two rotational brigades out of Europe?

General CAVOLI. Sir, as I said earlier, there is a constant review of this all the time. Usually, the dynamic is services are asking to recover some forces. They have readiness concerns, modernization concerns. So those discussions continue right now.

Mr. BACON. I think it would be a grave mistake to pull forces out of Europe right now. I mean, this is a time to deter Russia, and I think withdrawing forces is a sign of weakness and it lowers our deterrence.

I have one more follow-up question for you, General Cavoli. While I agree with the administration that focusing on China as our top threat is essential, I worry that we must not take our eye off of Russia and Europe. I believe adamantly that Putin will take any sign of U.S. weakness in Europe as a chance to continue his campaign of aggression in former Soviet territories.

What is the overall U.S. military posture in Europe going forward?

General CAVOLI. The overall posture for the U.S. military will be to accomplish the objectives that we talked about a few minutes ago in my opening statement and in some of my responses to questions. First and foremost, to defend the United States of America forward. Second, to arrange for and to support U.S. operations and other combatant commands and throughout Europe. And then, of course, to fight and deter as part of NATO to deter Russia.

So we participate in NATO's deterrence strategy. We are a vital part of that. I expect that to continue going forward.

Mr. BACON. Could you, in my last remaining seconds, just talk about the importance of the Baltic states. I am the Baltic Security Caucus chairman, and they are right on the front lines.

General CAVOLI. Yes, they are right on the front lines. They are absolutely one of the places that the Russian Federation has focused their attention on. Their preliminary attention, setting up a narrative of disputed territories and things like that, passport diplomacy with Russian language people, subversion campaigns and sabotage campaigns, all of those things.

So they are certainly on the front line. They know it. They respond. They spend all over 2 percent. Estonia is over 3 percent. They have all devoted a huge fraction of their national power --

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time is expired. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Carbajal.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses for being here today. General Cavoli, thank you for your service. You are going to be missed. I hope you continue to serve in a way that continues to contribute, as you have done for so many decades, to our country. I wish you the best in your next chapter, and thank you so much for being here.

I think the Russian threat, and even the Chinese threat to a degree, are so far removed from us here in the United States that it is hard for the people here to understand the reality or the severity. I have traveled to several NATO countries, including the Baltics, and let me tell you the threat is real and it is at top of mind for people there.

General Cavoli, were you once an infantryman?

General CAVOLI. I don't think you really ever stop being one, sir, but when I became a General they took away my branch insignia. Yes, I was an infantry officer.

Mr. CARBAJAL. As a Marine, I can relate. Do you speak Russian?

General CAVOLI. I do.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Have you worked with Russians in your career?

General CAVOLI. Yes, sir.

Mr. CARBAJAL. You are also coming up on 40 years of a distinguished career service in the Army, which, during that time, included director of Russia and the joint staff, and you are a foreign area officer with a concentration on Eurasia. Based on this experience, what is your assessment of the threat that Russia poses to the homeland and NATO?

General CAVOLI. Sir, there could be a long and complicated answer to that question, but, instead, I will just go back to my opening statement. Russia is a chronic threat to the United States and will be a growing threat in the future.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you. Ms. Thompson, based on the situation that General Cavoli has described, does it seem appropriate to try to reduce our force posture and presence in Europe at this time?

Ms. THOMPSON. Congressman, thank you for the question, and I would just reiterate that we are in the process of a global posture review and no decisions have been made in any theater. What I will say, as well, is that, you know, of course, as part of this global force posture review, we are taking into account competing requirements, as you highlighted correctly the threats not only posed by Russia and the EUCOM AOR [area of responsibility] but also by China in the Pacific and then, certainly, concerns in our own SOUTHCOM [United States Southern Command] AOR on homeland defense and NORTHCOM [United States Northern Command], as well.

Mr. CARBAJAL. We all want this war to end, but it must end on Ukraine's terms. Members of the administration, including the Secretary of Defense, have suggested Ukraine should give up hope of reclaiming all territory seized by Russia. How can that be achieved when this president continues to play neutral facilitator but not really because he keeps praising Russia, he keeps putting down Ukraine, he keeps aligning himself with Russia. Even the tariffs that we are dealing with don't include Russia. How can we trust this president?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question, Congressman. I will address the first part of the question. On the economic piece, I would direct those questions to the White House and to State and Commerce for the specifics on that because I don't want to speak for them on the tariff implications particularly.

But on DOD lanes in particular, our lane, our goal is to help support the President and his efforts to bring both sides to the table, keep them at the table, and reach a lasting peace. That requires work on both sides of the scale both with Ukraine and Russia, and it requires balance, as you point out. And that is the efforts that we are working toward right now, and the Department of Defense is poised to support both of those efforts, including continuing to support Ukraine where it will affect those negotiations, as well.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Ms. Thompson, you keep providing answers that are just canned and don't really answer many of the questions that have been asked by our colleagues today. So, quite frankly, I am just not going to waste my time. I wish I was as lucky as you when I was starting in my career with not as much experience to be elevated to such a significant post where you are now performing the duties of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Office of the Secretary of Defense. I wish I were so lucky.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Luttrell.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Cavoli, 38 years. Are you moving on to another post, or are they putting you out to graze?

General CAVOLI. I am retiring, sir. Thank you.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Well, you are never going to remember what I am about to say to you, but one day you are going to look up and you are going to say I remember somebody saying something to me one time. After 38 years of service, you have been wearing that armor for a very long time. All right. And when you step away from this post and you are introduced outside these walls to the civilian world once again, there is a black hole, a deep, dark, black hole that you haven't seen since you started your service. Okay. And I have read your portfolio, and you are one of the most impressive individuals I have ever had the chance to sit in front of. But this thing is very real, okay, and when and if this happens to you, because the window of opportunity is about 5 years. I have been out for about 10 years, and I think I was in it for about 5 years. And I have talked to my veteran brothers and sisters, and they all have the same problems because, once you start your next journey, nobody is going to show up on time, nobody is going to complete their work like they are supposed, nobody is going to answer you like you think they should. It is just going to be different, and you are going to look up and you are going to realize you are the anomaly and that's okay.

Don't ever hesitate to reach out to your brothers and sisters that you served with and just have those conversations because what you have done is exceptional. And when you turn the page for the next chapter of your life, you will be starting over, and that will be very challenging. But as a leader, someone that has gone

through so much, the next chapter is just one step forward until the day the good Lord calls you home. Okay. And this may or may not make sense to you. I can assure you if you're talking to -- whatever you do, don't run for politics. Don't ever think about running for Congress. Stay away from this place. I promise you, if you do, just hear me out on this one.

I wanted to say that to you and thank you for, I mean, I don't know if they are going to give you an award for 38 years. I consider you like an overachiever. But good luck. My questions are for the classified setting, so thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a Gold Star Family member myself, I associate myself with the remarks of the chair, the ranking member, and particularly Mr. Wilson, who mentioned by name those soldiers that were lost from representing our country well, as well as their homes, Illinois, California, Guam, and Michigan.

General Cavoli, in your experience, if there are four servicemen missing under those circumstances, wouldn't the Commander-in-Chief be notified within 24 hours?

General CAVOLI. You know, sir, I don't want to sound evasive in any way, but I don't know. We report echelon to echelon, and my job is to --

Mr. KEATING. So that would be reported up from you, certainly, if I am --

General CAVOLI. It is reported through staff channels and, typically --

Mr. KEATING. Yes. It just sounded remarkable that, over 24 hours later, the President of the United States, when questioned, didn't know anything about this. So I wonder about the communication, at least at your level, it went up the ladder. So it is good to know that, and it is good to know, too -- I saw those films from Lithuania of the people in the streets, even outside the Cathedral, little boys crying. And I believe there were reports, too, I don't know. You were there. Wasn't the President of Lithuania there, too?

General CAVOLI. He was present for the procession for the dignified transfer.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you. Ms. Thompson, you know, you said we should step up and match, I mean, the European allies. They should step up and match our example, match what we are doing.

Was our President, did he partake in any of those services?

Ms. THOMPSON. Congressman, thank you for the question. I, unfortunately, can't comment on that because --

Mr. KEATING. You don't know?

Ms. THOMPSON. I don't speak for the White House.

Mr. KEATING. No, no. People know. Do you read the newspapers? Do you listen to commentary? Where was the President during the services?

Ms. THOMPSON. I am not aware of the President's schedule --

Mr. KEATING. Really? Someone in the Defense Department where the Secretary of Defense was supposedly tasked for that job. The

President flew over that on his way to a Saudi golf tournament at one of his golf courses. You didn't know that?

Ms. THOMPSON. Sir, I only knew --

Mr. KEATING. You didn't know that?

Ms. THOMPSON. Sir, I only knew that the Secretary of Defense had planned to attend and that, you know, he was --

Mr. KEATING. Well, I guess we are really siloing information then, if you weren't aware of that. General Cavoli, you mentioned about the importance, and I couldn't agree more, and it is more important now. If we don't understand it in Ukraine, we will never understand it, of the deep relationship that we have with our European allies in particular. And, you know, there was a lot of talk with a recent Houthi attack. But wasn't it true the prior attacks that U.K. and other allies participated in attacks against the Houthis, as well? So there was alliances there. We were working with allies in prior attacks.

General CAVOLI. I believe so, Congressman. I would have to defer to General Kurilla on that for the exact details, but I am aware that there was a --

Mr. KEATING. U.K., in particular, fighters were there, as well.

General CAVOLI. Yes. I can't give you numbers or the exact --

Mr. KEATING. No. But they were there helping us, showing that deep relationship. And I can only question the deep relationship with the Signal chat breach of intelligence that occurred, here's, you know, this deep relationship from Stephen Miller, who was on that chat -- why ever he was there I have no idea -- but he was there, and he said we need to extract some economic gain for doing this. Vice President Vance said, "I just hate bailing out the Europeans again." Ms. Thompson, your boss, Secretary Hegseth, said "I fully share your loathing of European freeloading. It's pathetic."

Do you think that speaks to a deep relationship, Ms. Thompson?

Ms. THOMPSON. Congressman, thank you for the question. I think the sentiment that you are describing speaks to a frustration that the American people hold for the deficit as President Trump --

Mr. KEATING. In fact, you used the word freeloading in your testimony this morning.

Ms. THOMPSON. I said free rider just to --

Mr. KEATING. Oh, free riders. I'm sorry. Thank you for correcting me. You are right. So even though General Cavoli said that there has been a 40 percent increase just in the last few years and it is in pace to meet the requirements in Europe. But free riding, that's your term, is that correct, that you used this morning?

Ms. THOMPSON. Yes. And the description from that --

Mr. KEATING. No. I am speaking for your testimony. Now, do you think free riding of our allies, do you think that over 1,000 international allies, including European allies, were killed in the U.S.-led war on terrorism, 9/11, the only time Article 5 has been utilized. So the deaths of over 1,000 servicemen and women from our allies, that is free riding to you? That is free riding?

Ms. THOMPSON. Congressman, my remarks and certainly those echoed by the administration are speaking in the context of the NATO problem set and the --

Mr. KEATING. No. This was NATO allies, Article 5.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time is expired. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. McGuire.

Mr. MCGUIRE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to start by also offering my condolences and prayers to the four soldiers lost in Lithuania. That would be Staff Sergeant Duenez, Staff Sergeant Franco, PFC Taitano, and Sergeant Knutson. And I would also like to say thank you to our witnesses for being here today. We really appreciate it.

I very much want to thank and appreciate the Trump administration, President Trump, Secretary Hegseth. And, Ms. Thompson, you have been to the Southern Border. I visited military bases. Recruitment is up. We are getting these divisive ideologies. You know, in the military and as a veteran, if somebody saved your life on the battlefield, you wouldn't care if they were pink or blue, male or female, Democrat, Republican, Independent. We are all on the same team. And for special operations forces, we are always behind enemy lines, we are always outnumbered, and we always win because, if we don't win, we don't come home. And so these divisive ideologies that have plagued our military, I am so glad that we are focusing more on the job, and that is making our military lethal again.

But your efforts, Ms. Thompson, are working. Morale is up. I have been to the Southern Border. I visited military bases. Recruitment is up. We are getting these divisive ideologies. You know, in the military and as a veteran, if somebody saved your life on the battlefield, you wouldn't care if they were pink or blue, male or female, Democrat, Republican, Independent. We are all on the same team. And for special operations forces, we are always behind enemy lines, we are always outnumbered, and we always win because, if we don't win, we don't come home. And so these divisive ideologies that have plagued our military, I am so glad that we are focusing more on the job, and that is making our military lethal again.

I very much agree with President Trump and the chairman. It is time to end hostilities in Europe with Ukraine and Russia. I very much agree with the chairman, as well. I would like to see all members of NATO do 5 percent. I know that is a big ask, but, you know, we have to have peace through strength.

And I am going to start with, Ms. Thompson and General Cavoli, I have a few questions I would like to get your yes-or-no response. Since President Trump assumed office in January of this year, have our European allies and partners increased their defense spending or shown actual plans to do so?

General CAVOLI. Yes.

Ms. THOMPSON. Yes.

Mr. MCGUIRE. Thank you. General Cavoli, can you please provide some examples of how they have done that?

General CAVOLI. Spain, today, announced that they are going up to 2.3 percent of GDP. That is a big lift in Spain where defense spending was not very favored for a long time and where there was, for a very long time, a very weak coalition government. That is just today's example, Congressman. We could go on and on.

Denmark has recently announced plans to go to 3.2 percent of GDP and to spend two additional billion euros on Arctic security. Those are just two examples in the past couple of days, weeks.

Mr. MCGUIRE. Thank you. Would the strides these allies are making be sufficient enough to meet the implementation requirements of their regional plans under NATO?

General CAVOLI. Not yet. They will be. So there is a long process called the NATO Defense Planning Process, Congressman. That is where we take the force structure requirement of the plans and assign it out to nations to build for. That has been concluded. All nations have accepted all their capabilities targets. Now it is time to build, and this is where we come to the question of industrial capacity.

Mr. MCGUIRE. Certainly. And I remember you guys mentioning that capacity and we have got to have something to buy, and that is something that this committee and our chairman fully supports and we have had many discussions on that.

Let's see. General Cavoli, we have already touched on this, but if you could clarify. Some of our allies on NATO's eastern flank have demonstrated their commitment to President Trump's call to increase their GDP spending on defense and improve capabilities, including Poland and the Baltic states. Poland itself has increased its interest in American defense products. Do you believe the current FMS [foreign military sales] system in the Pentagon operates sufficiently enough to ensure that U.S. defense equipment reaches foreign buyers on time?

General CAVOLI. No, sir. We have a lot of work to do in that regard.

Mr. MCGUIRE. Thanks. General Cavoli, one last thing. Last week, Defense News published an article highlighting President Putin's announcement of the new Perm nuclear submarine of the Yasen-M class. The article also highlighted some of the issues being faced by the Russian industrial base not unlike our own.

General Cavoli, can you provide a brief overview of the current state of the Russian undersea capability in your area of responsibility?

General CAVOLI. Could I do that in closed session, please?

Mr. MCGUIRE. Sure.

General CAVOLI. Thanks.

Mr. MCGUIRE. And then, if you could, and this may be closed session, as well, but how does the United States compare to Russia in terms of its undersea capabilities?

General CAVOLI. I am very confident in the United States Navy, sir, but we can go into details in closed session.

Mr. MCGUIRE. I appreciate your testimony today, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Pennsylvania, Ms. Houlahan.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you all for being here today. And, Ms. Thompson, I wanted to start with you. We are here to talk about the European theater. We are here to talk about our commitments to Europe and the NATO allies. I wanted to raise concerns about remarks that we have recently experienced over the last 3 days in terms of the tariffs that are going to be levied across the entire world, including, of course, many of our allies in Europe.

Senator Rubio recently argued that these tariffs would not meaningfully affect European defense budgets or NATO's cohesion, and he suggested that tariffs would be justified without undermining readiness of our allies. I worry very much that, based on your open-

ing testimony asking our NATO allies to spend more, build more, that tariffs cannot possibly not affect readiness, can you please expound with me on your perspective from the DOD on how might the imposition of significant tariffs impact our European allies and their ability to meet NATO defense spending requirements as levied by this administration?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question, Congressman. And it is an important dynamic that you bring up, so I appreciate you highlighting it. What I would say, from the Department of Defense's purview and lane, because I don't want to speak for the broader implications of tariffs on diplomatic relations or their effects because that's more in Commerce or Treasury lane, but what I would say from the Department's perspective is what we want to make sure is that any levers we are pulling don't impede our objective, as the Secretary stated in his first visit to NATO, which is a strong Transatlantic industrial base on both sides of the Atlantic that includes bolstering not only our own production, our own defense industrial base, but also Europeans investing in theirs. And we want to ensure that they are certainly able to do so in their comparative --

Ms. HOULAHAN. So I am going to stop because I don't think that you can differentiate between the Defense Department and Commerce in this sense. This is absolutely the industrial base. The defense industrial base is directly connected to Commerce, and our Commerce is directly connected to that of our allies and our friends. And I think that we can't possibly believe that our actions on the national level to impose very, very high tariffs and levies upon our allies could not affect their readiness and their ability to produce and manufacture and even buy from the United States those weapon systems, amongst other things.

I am really frustrated, to be honest, with your testimony, which has consistently been evasive and consistently tried to say that it is not within your lane to comment on things. And I guess I went back to try to understand your position and your tenure, and I have got to be honest, you know. It appears as though you have been in this job a very short amount of time, and it appears as though you have been here a very, very short amount of time. And so I would ask the administration why you are the person that they asked us to talk to about these issues because it just doesn't seem as though you have the knowledge to be able to answer the questions. I will echo my colleague's frustration that I don't want to waste my time on these questions.

General Cavoli, I am so, so sorry about the soldiers that we lost in Lithuania. I am very, very sorry, particularly for the soldiers themselves and their families, but I'm also particularly saddened that is the partner nation with Pennsylvania, and so I take it very, very seriously that we have an amazing alliance with the Lithuanians and worry very, very much that our men and women, Pennsylvanians, will be in harm's way possibly if we don't find the way to peace and we don't find the way to address Putin's aggression not just with Ukraine but his intent with the rest of the European continent, I believe.

I also do want to thank you so much for your service, sir. And I really do hope that you have opportunities to enjoy the remainder

of whatever life brings you. I am very, very grateful to you. With that, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Harrigan.

Mr. HARRIGAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you and, to both of our witnesses, thanks for your testimony today. And, General Cavoli, I never thought I would say this, but I absolutely echo the comments of my two Navy SEAL colleagues here in expressing well wishes for your retirement.

General Cavoli, I have got a couple of questions for you today. One of the things that you testified about is that this really is an industrial war and that we are behind in industry; is that correct?

General CAVOLI. This is an industrial-scale war, sir. It is using a lot of old-fashioned equipment that requires heavy industry. And when we look at our own ability, yes, we need the ability to produce more weaponry more quickly.

Mr. HARRIGAN. And would you also agree that this is a technologically-different conflict, as well?

General CAVOLI. Yes, it is, sir. There is a very interesting mix of legacy equipment and high-tech, and it really seems that the side that is able to combine those two advantageously and then out-adapt the other side's countermeasures and counter-countermeasures, that side gains the advantage for an enduring period.

Mr. HARRIGAN. Is it your understanding that 80 percent of the Russian soldiers who are being killed in the Ukraine conflict are being killed by FPV [First-Person View] drones?

General CAVOLI. Yes, I have seen those figures, sir. I think it is probably pretty hard for us to make sure we are accurate on those, given our ability to be there and count and everything. But it is certainly well over half, and it is certainly a large number and it is a number that has increased steadily over the course of the conflict.

Mr. HARRIGAN. And I would say that these low-cost high-impact systems are fundamentally rewriting the rules of the battlefield. Would you agree with that statement?

General CAVOLI. Yes. The equipment, Congressman, that is software-defined, where a greater part of its capability is defined by its software, those are super easy and super inexpensive to modify and adapt, and so you can take a piece of hardware and, by manipulating the software, you can stay ahead of the enemy's countermeasures. It is a remarkable thing we are witnessing on both sides. The Ukrainians have proven especially adept at putting engineers down at the lowest level, observing what the soldiers do with the equipment, making modifications, and putting it right back in the fight. It is a big advance.

Mr. HARRIGAN. Thanks for that. And just generally, when I walk into this room, I don't walk into this room as a Republican. I hope my Democratic colleagues don't walk in here as Democrats. I know sometimes we all do, but I walk in here as an American. And I think, however we feel about the Ukrainian conflict, particularly as a former special operator, that I think it would be unwise to not learn the lessons of this conflict.

And one of the concerns that I have, particularly as we have talked about our defense industrial base being behind, the dif-

ference between high-cost exquisite capabilities and low-cost ubiquitous capabilities and the capacity to actually build those capabilities.

One of the concerns that I have, given the fact that 80 percent of Russian soldiers are being killed by FPV drones, is that we have little to non-existent capability in our country to produce these drones. Would you agree with that statement?

General CAVOLI. Well, we do have some capability, sir. I know a lot of people are working on it. I think, as it goes to the U.S. military, I would refer you, respectfully, to General George, the Chief of Staff of the Army who is working very hard to distribute smaller drones at the lowest level and to proliferate them across formations. He has got a program that he calls transformation and contact where he uses brigades that are deployed either into the Pacific or into Europe to accelerate his distribution and his deployment of these drones.

I know that he needs some changes in the way funding works, but I would leave it to him, sir, on that.

Mr. HARRIGAN. And I think I am aware of these, but I think we are talking about, you know, thousands quantity. Am I correct in saying Ukraine will produce approximately \$4 million FPV drones this year?

General CAVOLI. Yes. That is right, sir.

Mr. HARRIGAN. So we are very far behind that level of production capability for something that is achieving decisive impacts on today's battlefield.

General CAVOLI. Right. They are producing drones like most countries produce ammunition, in massive quantities for expenditure.

Mr. HARRIGAN. Should we be doing the same thing in the United States of America?

General CAVOLI. I believe we should be doing that, and I believe we are increasingly going to be doing that. It's not my responsibility to speak about those programmatics, sir.

Mr. HARRIGAN. Thank you, General. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman. Excellent line of questions. The gentlelady from California, Ms. Jacobs.

Ms. JACOBS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Thompson, do you believe the European Union was formed to hurt America?

Ms. THOMPSON. I do not.

Ms. JACOBS. Okay. I ask because the President publicly said yesterday that the European Union was formed in order to screw the United States and even floated the idea of using military force to take Greenland from Denmark, a NATO ally, because we, quote, need it for national security.

Those kinds of statements suggest a U.S. stance that our European allies and institutions are adversaries or fair game for coercion. In your view, do such positions reflect a coherent U.S. strategy towards Europe?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question, Congresswoman. What I would say is, as far as our approach to our allies and partners, is, one, first and foremost, of honesty. We want to be honest with our partners, and we also want to be honest about the fact that they need to step up. And that is what I was emphasizing in

my testimony when I referenced the administration's priority to bring European and Canadian allies within NATO to 5 percent, and we have already seen great strides in that process, and then also have our European allies lead out, particularly on the future of security assistance to Ukraine. And I would also underscore that, you know, Denmark and our bilateral relationship with Denmark is certainly a part of that equation, and we want to have a robust security relationship there, particularly for the reasons that you identify as far as Greenland being critical to homeland defense. And we would share that view.

Ms. JACOBS. Okay. Great. Well, it is good to know that our approach is about honesty. I guess I am glad the President publicly honestly said what he thinks about our European allies.

Ms. THOMPSON, are you aware that Europe pays for 84 percent of NATO's infrastructure at U.S. bases and that Poland is spending over \$300 million annually to support U.S. troops directly?

Ms. THOMPSON. I am certainly aware of Europe's contributions to NATO, at least on the defense side. I know there is different streams of funding for defense contributions or for NATO contributions on the state side, as well.

Ms. JACOBS. Okay. And so how do you square that with calling them free riders?

Ms. THOMPSON. So I think the commentary that I made and then, certainly, that the administration has made really stems from this chronic underspending of being under the 2 percent threshold. The way it was pledged in 2014 was made in a security environment that was, arguably, a lot more secure than the security environment that we face today, certainly from the adversaries that the U.S. is facing. And I think, from that perspective, there is rightly placed frustration in wanting our European allies to not only meet the spending commitment that they made in 2014 but also live up to the overarching Article 3 pledge of contributing to the collective security of the alliance, which includes defense spending.

And I would also argue that the security environment that we face today, as bipartisan officials have recognized across administrations, 2 percent as a threshold for spending is no longer sufficient to meet the demands of the security environment, which is exactly why President Trump has set the target he has set. And it is really, really encouraging, I have to say, for many of our allies to now be over the 2 percent threshold. We want to see those time lines get pulled to the left even further and to see them make further progress.

And I would also just take the opportunity to highlight the eastern allies who are on track to meet 5 percent very, very soon.

Ms. JACOBS. Thank you. And, General Cavoli, from a military standpoint, what is the impact on our operations and partnerships when our allies hear American leaders suggest that the EU was formed to screw us or to entertain ideas of invading an ally's territory or for calling them free riders when they are contributing a lot to supporting our troops? How does this affect trust and cohesion among our allies that we depend on for our collective security?

General CAVOLI. Ma'am, thanks for the question. Clearly, it strays well out of my lane. But I talk to all of the chiefs of defense

in Europe all the time, and our military-to-military relationships remain quite strong and are very solid, ma'am.

Ms. JACOBS. Have President Trump's comments come up in any of your conversations with other military leaders?

General CAVOLI. Rarely.

Ms. JACOBS. But have they in the context of Europe and this being formed to screw them or what the President is trying to do in Greenland?

General CAVOLI. Ma'am, it is rare enough that I am searching to be sure to give you a complete and honest answer. I can't remember an incidence of that off the top of my head. You know, military guys, we really try to stay carefully to the military construct and to the military lane because it is not our job in any of the nations in NATO, so I can't think of an example off the top of my head. If I do think of one, I will be sure to tell you.

Ms. JACOBS. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Messmer.

Mr. MESSMER. Thank you, Chairman. General Cavoli, in dealing with U.S. missile defense and President Trump's Golden Dome executive order, what might not be known is that Europe already has a U.S.-provided Golden Dome in the form of the Aegis ashore sites in Romania and Poland. These missile defense systems have performed well in the Middle East. The Aegis air defense functionality in Europe is not activated due to regional political concerns. Given the willingness of Russia to deploy novel hypersonic weapons in Ukraine, is your best military advice that we activate these air defense capabilities to counter that threat?

General CAVOLI. Sir, I have, as the Supreme Allied Commander, made that recommendation to the North Atlantic Council.

Mr. MESSMER. Thank you. Also, can you explain how the missile defense architecture that we have invested in Europe could protect the U.S. homeland?

General CAVOLI. Oh, sure. Some of the radars involved provide some of the very first warnings. And there is quite a bit more, but I think I would be more comfortable discussing it in closed session, sir.

Mr. MESSMER. Fair enough. Okay. Given the increase of drone threats to critical infrastructure at military bases in Europe, how is EUCOM planning to integrate directed energy technologies into its counter-drone defense?

General CAVOLI. First of all, we are eager to do that, Congressman, because a lot of the other kinetic solutions are pretty problematic to use, you know, in congested areas and bases that are in congested areas. We are planning to use a layered defense and a full suite of different capabilities, some of them electromagnetic interference, some of them directed energy, as you said, some of them just kinetic projectiles.

It is important to remember that we have got to do that in close connection to civil authorities from the host nation and each nation has different regulations for spectrum management, for the release of weapons, and things like that. So we work through this daily. It is a pretty big initiative.

Mr. MESSMER. Would that be a more cost-effective counter-measure to some of the million-dollar missiles that we use to shoot down a --

General CAVOLI. DE[directed energy]? Yes, sir. I mean, I think everybody is looking for that new way to shoot down aerial objects that doesn't require us to launch multimillion-dollar missiles at a thousand-dollar drone type of thing.

Mr. MESSMER. Yes. Very good. In my district in southwest Indiana, General Cavoli, the Crane Army Ammunition Activity mission where nearly 25 percent of the DOD's conventional munitions are stored. A large amount of equipment and munitions stored there has been withdrawn via the Presidential Drawdown Authority and sent to Ukraine. How important is it from a combat commander's perspective that we modernize and restock these munition storage facilities?

General CAVOLI. Our stockage levels are extremely important to a combat commander, sir. And to the extent that they are depleted by operations or by donations to another country, such as Ukraine, they need to be replenished. There is a program to do that, well-funded previously by the Congress, and it is an important thing for us to consider.

Mr. MESSMER. Okay. Thank you. Also, General Cavoli, spectrum is a valuable finite resource that is used by the DOD. There are some in Congress who want to require the DOD to vacate spectrum allocations. Could you speak to what the impact would be on EUCOM if the DOD was forced to vacate the spectrum allocations and what would be the effects on missile defense?

General CAVOLI. Yes, sir. So I think most of the discussion is around the S band, and we use that -- I could go in a little bit more detail in classified session, although I am, you know, not exactly an electrical engineer, but I could talk to you more about it in classified session. It would affect missile defense and air defense.

Mr. MESSMER. That would affect the potential for defending our country in Europe and the continental U.S., as well.

General CAVOLI. That is right.

Mr. MESSMER. Very good. I will yield back the rest of my time. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. Crow.

Mr. CROW. Thank you, Chairman, and thank you both of you for being in here today. I wanted to join my colleagues in expressing deep sympathies for the families of those servicemembers who we lost in Lithuania. And, General Cavoli, thank you for responding very rapidly and working with our allies to make sure that we had recovery operations going.

I also want to join my colleagues in thanking you for your incredible service during your tenure. You met challenges throughout Europe that we haven't seen since World War II. You did so with extreme competence, diligence, and discipline, and that was seen by many folks on the Hill, as well as our allies, and we are very grateful for your leadership.

Turning to Ukraine, in the initial stages of the war, the Ukrainians were able to destroy a very large percentage of the conventional land forces of Russia; is that accurate?

General CAVOLI. Yes, sir.

Mr. CROW. Over half by most estimations.

General CAVOLI. Right. We would have to think of it as a rolling figure because they were growing at the same time as they were losing, but, yes, those are about the kind of numbers. We are looking at about almost 4,000 tanks, Russian tanks, destroyed by Ukraine in this --

Mr. CROW. Okay. But, since that time, Russia has, with surprising speed, been able to recapitalize and rebuild both its industrial base but also its conventional forces and replace a lot of that equipment and personnel; is that accurate?

General CAVOLI. Absolutely.

Mr. CROW. How would you characterize China's involvement in that recapitalization, both the industrial component, as well as the military component?

General CAVOLI. We could talk a lot more about this in closed session, sir, and perhaps we will have the opportunity to. But there has been contributions. Some of them have been indirect by absorbing much of Russian-sanctioned oil exports and gas exports. They have been able to continue to provide funds that have enabled Russia to continue to build their military.

Some have been more direct, some have been through commercial ventures that may or may not be supported by the Chinese Communist Party. And beyond that, I think I would be safe just to talk to you about in closed session.

Mr. CROW. And we will convene in closed session, but both directly and indirectly, economically and, to some degree, militarily, China has chosen sides here.

General CAVOLI. Oh, certainly. You know, I think there is an important side note, Congressman. Sometimes, I have been asked, well, they are only giving them moral support, and I typically respond. But that is the most pernicious type of support --

Mr. CROW. But it is more than moral support, would you say?

General CAVOLI. And it is.

Mr. CROW. Yes. Okay. So they have determined that it is in their interest to support Russia in this conflict.

General CAVOLI. It would appear so.

Mr. CROW. Okay. Ms. Thompson, this administration has taken a hard line on China in a number of big ways, trying to reestablish and balance that relationship. Would you agree that China has chosen sides in the Russia-Ukraine conflict?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question, Congressman. Yes. With the caveat, right, that you highlighted, which I think is actually really, really important and that it aligns with their interests. Insofar as perpetuating this conflict or other conflicts aligns with their interests, I think that is where we will see the adversary alignment and that is why it is so important from the context of this administration to get the work streams correct so that the U.S. can focus on deterrence in the Indo-Pacific, avoiding conflict there, while our European allies really step up --

Mr. CROW. So the Chinese have determined it is in their interest to support Russia both directly and indirectly.

Ms. THOMPSON. I would echo General Cavoli's comments: it appears so.

Mr. CROW. Okay. And so given that, would you agree that it is in our interest to support Ukraine if China has determined it is in their interest to support Russia?

Ms. THOMPSON. I would perhaps take it a step further, Congressman, depending on how you look at it, which is I think that's the impetus for trying to get to peace in Ukraine so that we don't continue to burden that relationship or continue to allow the interest to overlap, particularly given the situation, and I know I don't speak for INDOPACOM, but particularly given what we --

Mr. CROW. So you're not willing to say, though, it is in our interest to ensure Ukraine is successful in this conflict?

Ms. THOMPSON. From our vantage point within the administration, I think that is why the prioritization imperative is placed on peace.

Mr. CROW. But the lack of ability to say that it is in America's interests for Ukraine to prevail in this continues to be staggering to me because our adversaries, our competitors, have been very clear about the sides that they have chosen here and who they think is in their best interest to prevail militarily. And, yet, we are unwilling to do that. And there is a lot of talk about peace through strength, but if you're not willing to actually say the thing, if you're not willing to actually call it out and take sides, I don't see how we can be strong in that regard.

So I will continue to urge, along with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, that the administration is very clear in its rhetoric about who we will support here. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. The chair now recognizes another Coloradan, Mr. Crank.

Mr. CRANK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it. General Cavoli, thank you for being here. Most Americans probably aren't aware that some of the first shots in the Russian invasion of Ukraine were in space when Russia knocked out a satellite network providing communication support to Ukraine. And according to a recent report, Russia is fielding new anti-satellite weapons, expanding on-orbit counter-space capabilities, and training in military space elements to combat the United States.

According to General Whiting, Commander of U.S. Space Command, "winning the space fight is foundational to defending the nation." Can you provide an update of the role that on-orbit warfare is playing in your theater?

General CAVOLI. Sure, Congressman, with the caveat that I think, as you know, it is really hard to talk about space operations and capabilities in open session. So if you would like to talk about it a little bit more in closed session, we could.

I would also refer you to General Whiting and to General Saltzman, who are genuine experts in this question. I'm a customer, I'm a consumer of their efforts.

Yes, our space capabilities are absolutely essential to the way we do operations. Our adversary space capabilities are absolutely essential to the way they do operations, and they understand how important space is to us. So it is very much a contested environment and a contested capability, and I would be delighted to talk more about it in a closed session, sir.

Mr. CRANK. In your opinion, are Russia and China's space-based capabilities stronger, weaker, or the same compared to the start of the war in Ukraine?

General CAVOLI. They grow constantly. They are both working very hard to improve their capabilities and to expand their capacity, and they have been doing that with the war in Ukraine and I imagine they would have without the war in Ukraine, as well.

Mr. CRANK. Okay. And then, finally in your testimony, you highlighted how EUCOM partners with cyber command to "deter advanced persistent threats." Can you describe where those threats come from and what they are targeting?

General CAVOLI. Yes. They were non-governmental threats, sir, criminal activity, ransomware, and things like that, that have national security implications, and so they matter to us. We help our allies with defending against those. There are also state-based threats, and each one of our main adversaries, that group of four that I named in my opening statement, each one of those is quite active in the cyber sphere.

Mr. CRANK. How can Congress help strengthen your hand in those fights?

General CAVOLI. Sir, by supporting U.S. cyber command. All of their subordinate organizations have relationships with the combatant commands. The 16th U.S. Air Force is my cyber component for EUCOM. That makes a big difference when you support cyber command. Also, when you support the National Security Agency because that work is so closely tied to cyber work.

Mr. CRANK. Thank you. I would like to thank both of our witnesses for coming today but for your service to our country and for all that you do to keep us safe. Thank you, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MOYLAN [presiding]. The gentleman yields. The chair now recognizes Mr. Ryan from New York.

Mr. RYAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you both for being here. General Cavoli, I want to add to the well-deserved praise and recognition. I couldn't imagine a more critical time for your leadership and could not imagine a better leader, and the whole country is thankful to you. And I think I just want to, on behalf of my constituents in particular, thank you.

Your leadership not only as EUCOM commander but as SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander of Europe] has been indispensable. And as I am sure everyone in this room knows, that position has a deep historical significance starting with General and, ultimately, President Eisenhower as our first Supreme Allied Commander. In a way that is truly staggering to all of us, including, you know, the chair has weighed in on this, as has the ranking member and many others, the plan that was floated in March to restructure combatant commands and give up U.S. command of that role, I think, would be a massive step backwards. You have talked a little bit about it in front of the Senate last week. One of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle, Mr. Bacon, has said, "It signals a weakening commitment to NATO, and I think it is wrong." Former SACEUR, Admiral Stavridis, said for the United States to give up the role of Supreme Allied Commander of NATO

would be seen in Europe as a significant signal of walking away from the alliance.

Can you speak a little bit about, given your unique view into that role, how would Russia and Putin specifically view us backing away from that role?

General CAVOLI. Thanks, Congressman. First of all, thanks for pointing out the role General Eisenhower had as the first SACEUR. You might imagine his likeness, his photographs, a bust of him are all over the headquarters. There is one sitting behind my desk that looks over my shoulder checking my homework every day. So if you want to feel a little bit of pressure ever, just take a job that Ike had. Big shoes to fill indeed.

Everybody relies on SACEUR. Our allies want American leadership. Our allies like to have an American as SACEUR. From our perspective, we gain quite a bit of influence from it. I have a very loud voice inside Europe as a result of my position, and I think those are to our advantage.

Of course, what the United States decides to do is always going to be a policy matter and there are other considerations that our civilian leaders will take into consideration as they think about these things.

What do the Russians see? I think that, of all the nations in the alliance, the Russians have the most respect for the strength of the U.S. military. They respect all the militaries and especially the collective military, but we are the military that stands out as something for them to worry about. And so an officer who has the ability to command U.S. forces probably is a bigger problem for them than not.

Mr. RYAN. I can only imagine, truly, what General and former President Eisenhower would think about us even considering walking away from that position. I think it is embarrassing and pathetic, which leads me to my follow-up question for you, Ms. Thompson.

Given your opening, albeit very short and heavy on buzzwords posture statement where you used the term "factory reset," which I have no idea what that means in the context of something so critical and nuanced as what we are talking about, but, given that, I wanted to ask you what you mean by that. And, specifically, in January of this year actually, January of 2025, Senator Mike Lee called explicitly for the United States to leave NATO; is that correct?

Ms. THOMPSON. Again, I --

Mr. RYAN. Would you know since you were his national security advisor up through January?

Ms. THOMPSON. I left on January 20th, 2025. So if it was after that, that was not something that I would have seen.

Mr. RYAN. Well, do you think we should leave NATO then?

Ms. THOMPSON. Again, I represent the Department of Defense. I can only speak on behalf of the Department of Defense, and Secretary Hegseth has been very clear we are not stepping away from --

Mr. RYAN. So what does he mean then on behalf of the Department of Defense by factory reset? Is it us walking away from the leadership of NATO, and you heard some of the consequences of

that? Is it us abandoning NATO? At a minimum, if we are going to make such a major change, I know you are doing your posture review, but I think we owe the American people transparency around something that would be so impactful to our security.

Ms. THOMPSON. So, first and foremost, on the SACEUR question, if the question is is the Department considering that change, my definitive answer is no. Second part, on factory reset, the Secretary, in his remarks to the North Atlantic Council and to the Ukraine Defense Contract Group was very clear that, by factory reset, what we mean is returning the focus of the alliance to defense and deterrence of Europe to the core mission and, to be frank, to Eisenhower's original mission set and call for the alliance, which is conventional defense and deterrence in Europe. Certainly, that is what we are expecting of our European allies with the U.S. as the nuclear strategic deterrent backstop, as well. But factory reset really does mean returning to the core fundamental mission of the alliance, which is defense and deterrence --

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. The gentleman's time is expired. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. Hamadeh.

Mr. HAMADEH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our panel for coming today. The conflict in the Ukraine is a convergence of tensions not only with Russia but also Iran, North Korea, and China, as well. Now, we have an America First mandate to first protect the homeland and to use the strength to deter war. That is a mission that the Biden administration failed to achieve. Now we are divided across the Asian, European, and Middle Eastern theaters, and we have faced tough choices. There simply aren't enough brave young men and women, sons and daughters, to be everywhere all at once.

Now, America First doesn't mean America alone. And, yet, a continent divided by Chinese and Russian economic penetration cannot stand. Now we must seize the chance to realign our NATO commitments, defense manufacturing, and our trade policies to find new ways to make Europe's economy a denied environment for those plotting harm against America and its allies.

Now, my first question is to you, Secretary Thompson. Now, we are directing immense resources to our defense industrial base here, and, as you know, all the semiconductor industry, as well as President Trump has really advocated in his first term also and in his second term already. And what I am concerned about right now is, at the same time, China threatens our momentum by trying to purchase some of our most advanced machines that are coming out of the Netherlands that are capable of producing these chips.

Now, how does Chinese infiltration of European supply chains threaten our security here at home?

Ms. THOMPSON. Congressman, it is a great question and I think, you bring up a very important dynamic. And, this is something that we do continue to encourage our European allies to focus on, which is the economic security considerations.

Particularly, as we look to strengthen the transatlantic industrial base on both sides of the Atlantic. This is a major consideration that would affect our ability to co-produce, co-develop, et cetera with our European allies.

And, we want to be able to do that. But, those conditions, certainly on the front on China, do impact our ability to do that.

And so, it is a consideration that we will continue to raise with them, and encourage them to address so that we can develop together.

Mr. HAMADEH. Sure. But, is it just conversations right now?

Ms. THOMPSON. That is all I can report on at this time. I am sure my colleagues in Acquisition and Sustainment would have more to say on the tangible operational side, because they deal with the technical exchanges.

And so, I would defer respectfully to them and their leadership and their expertise on that.

Mr. HAMADEH. Very good. And, I have full confidence in the Trump Administration to protect our key defense industrial base, as well as our chip manufacturing. That feeds so much into it.

And, General, thank you for your lifelong service, and I know it is going to continue afterwards, especially when you become a veteran. But, I appreciate all of what you have done to our country.

And, my question to you is regarding Europe. Is Europe doing enough to control, or to help the situation contain what is going on with the Houthis in Yemen?

General CAVOLI. So, the EU has a mission called Aspedes, which has ships in the Gulf to protect commercial shipping, sir.

Obviously, the United States has felt the need to do the same alongside it. Together, it is hard for me to say if it is enough.

I refer to General Kurilla, who follows that much more closely.

Mr. HAMADEH. Sure. But, we also know that the Russians have been helping the Houthis as well. Is that correct?

General CAVOLI. I would like to answer that in closed session, please, sir.

Mr. HAMADEH. No worries. And, how much of the Iranian Houthis and Chinese threats to Europe, how much can that affect the United States?

General CAVOLI. I guess indirectly, massively. Directly, probably it, we don't have that much shipping, I don't think, that comes through the Suez.

However, our warships transit that all the time. So, it would affect our ability to conduct military operations for sure.

I am not sure. I am not an economist. I couldn't comment on how big the impact would be on us economically or something.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from New Jersey, Ms. Sherrill.

Ms. SHERRILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. And, I want to thank our witnesses for being here today.

General Cavoli, you said in your opening statement that Russia is in the process of significantly rebuilding its military by recruiting more soldiers, building more vehicles, and creating more munitions than we have seen before.

Ms. SHERRILL. So, if the war in Ukraine were to end today, do you believe that the Russian military would continue to represent a significant threat to the U.S., Ukraine, and our European allies in the coming years?

General CAVOLI. Yes, ma'am. It would take them a little bit of time to reorient their conventional force and reposition it. But, not that much time.

And then, they could pose a conventional threat. Very important for me to add, however, that they have never stopped having their strategic capabilities.

Their nuclear submarines, their long range aviation, their cyber, their space, all of that is alive and well, and largely unaffected by the war in Ukraine.

Ms. SHERRILL. Thank you. And, if Russia was able to retain and control significant portions of Ukrainian territory once the war ends, do you believe Russia would consider that a victory and consider launching a similar invasion of Ukraine or another European country in the future?

General CAVOLI. It is hard for me to predict the future, ma'am. But, I think, it is very safe for all of us to say that wouldn't prevent them from doing it in the future.

It would certainly leave the door open for them. Yeah.

Ms. SHERRILL. Thank you. And, as the Trump administration chooses to abandon Ukraine and let Russia rebuild its military, they are also considering cutting the U.S. military presence in Europe.

So, General Cavoli, how would cutting U.S. forces from EUCOM, impact your ability to respond to a crisis or potential conflict with Russia?

General CAVOLI. Ma'am, it would reduce, it would increase the amount of time it took to respond. It depends, of course, on what forces were hypothetically to be removed.

It depends on what kind of action we are required to counter Russia. But, clearly, moving things to the other side of the Atlantic increases the time space challenge.

Other than that, I don't want to be evasive, but it is really a very situation dependent question.

Ms. SHERRILL. And, would removing, I guess, to be more clear, our brigade combat team from Poland, or having our forces stationed in Germany or Italy, slow your response to a Russian assault on our Eastern European allies?

General CAVOLI. Yes. I have consistently testified to that.

Ms. SHERRILL. Thank you. So, as we move forward, can you just talk a little bit too, as you mentioned about what you think the key strategic aspects are of Russia's military?

General CAVOLI. So, in the broadest sense, ma'am?

Ms. SHERRILL. That provides the biggest threat to the United States?

General CAVOLI. Yes, their nuclear arsenal.

Ms. SHERRILL. What about their cyber capabilities?

General CAVOLI. I believe, their nuclear arsenal poses a bigger threat. Their cyber capabilities are more likely to be used, but, in most cases wouldn't have the catastrophic effect that the nuclear threat would have.

But, of course, that again, depends on what nuclear weapons we are talking about, what cyber attacks. But, in general, I would say the nuclear capabilities, and then, I would say the space and cyber sort of on a level.

But, conventionally, their strategic advantage continues to be mass that they can put in direct proximity to NATO forces that challenges us to respond in time across the spaces required.

So, basically, they can put a force into place that would cause us to have to react in a timely fashion. And, that time space problem is really the essence of conventional deterrence on the continent.

Ms. SHERRILL. And, given the recent conflict in Ukraine, what has been kind of, what will be the hardest for Russia to rebuild in the aftermath of that?

General CAVOLI. I would like to answer that in closed session, because it goes into some technical stuff. What I can say, is I don't think it is that hard to rebuild their mass.

They have manpower available. They demonstrate the willingness to conscript it. And, it doesn't take that long to reconstitute the size of their whole force or even to increase it.

They still have equipment in storage that they could pull out and renovate. And, they have increased their ability to produce legacy hardware tanks and armored personnel cars and things like that.

So, there are some things that are easy. The things that are hard, it would be better to answer in closed session, ma'am.

Ms. SHERRILL. Thank you. And, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Guam, Mr. Moylan.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, as my colleagues did, I also would like to start in recognizing the four soldiers that were lost on March 25, in Lithuania. Mentioning their names, Staff Sergeant Troy Knutson-Collins of Battle Creek, Michigan, Staff Sergeant Jose Duenes of Juliet, Illinois, Staff Sergeant Edwin Franco of Glendale, California, and Private First Class Dante Taitano, a son of Guam.

These brave men were lost too soon in a tragic accident. And, our hearts and thoughts and prayers go out to their families and loved ones during this challenging time.

And, I asked for my colleagues and the audience to please have a moment of silence.

[Moment of silence.]

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And, for my first question, General Cavoli, last year we had a discussion, and I thank you for that, and, I truly appreciate sir, your service. And, I understand what you are going through with the EUCOM and you are doing a fantastic job, sir.

And, previously we talked about how the U.S. territories in the Pacific will seek their protection with Article Five. But, that is not the case and would not. But however, Article Four gives the authority for consultation and non-obligated support.

And, I just want to know on what the situation now we have with EUCOM's situation, our strategic situation, are our allies, sir, still willing to support us in the Pacific?

And, with your experience through this situation, how can we better coordinate with your partners on security cooperation, and international organizations, and regional security in Pacific and Asia, General?

General CAVOLI. Thanks, Congressman. First, thanks for your kind words about our servicemen.

Yes. So, many of our European allies have direct security interests in the Indo-Pacific. France has possessions there, the U.K. So, they have direct interest.

And, they do have military presences abroad there to help those out. They also do stage exercises in order to make sure they maintain the defense of their territories.

They also work very closely with the Department of Defense and with U.S. INDOPACOM, to coordinate occasional presence. A U.K. aircraft carrier is about to start a global mission.

They are going to go through the Indo-Pacific. They are going to do so in close coordination with Admiral Paparo. So, this gives us additional capacity out there as they come and go and they continue to do that.

However, the alliance is focused on the defense of the alliance territory as defined as you pointed out in Article Six. That does not prevent them from operating outside my AOR. SACEUR's AOR does not include the United States.

But, the only time the alliance has declared Article Five in its history was the morning after 9/11 when they declared that it was an attack on all of us and sent NATO AWACS [Airborne Warning and Control System] planes to help our operation Noble Eagle to defend our skies in the aftermath of those 2001 terrorist attacks.

Mr. MOYLAN. All right. Thank you, General. And also, with the expansion of the ballistic missile system we have in EUCOM, I am wondering, especially with the Aegis ashore, and the sites in Romania and Poland, the Golden Dome that we are looking at, what is this experience and these lessons learned that we can reflect to help us in the INDOPACOM area?

General CAVOLI. So, at an unclassified level, we are able to collect an awful lot of information about adversary rockets and missiles during the course of the conflict in Ukraine.

A lot of that is given to us by our Ukrainian colleagues. You know, we gave them radars to defend themselves. They give us back invaluable data that we are able to study.

So, that is only one example, sir.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you, General. Ms. Thompson, just one quickly, we have just got a few seconds.

I appreciate what SECDEF [U.S. Secretary of Defense] is doing, and he went to EUCOM for a specific reason. Where does he go next?

Ms. THOMPSON. I believe, he went to the Indo-Pacific.

Mr. MOYLAN. That is right. I got to visit him there. Who was the last SECDEF that came to the Indo-Pacific, to Guam, before our current Secretary of Defense?

Ms. THOMPSON. I actually don't know off the top of my head. But, I know, it has to have been 10 years at least? Is that right?

Mr. MOYLAN. It was Rumsfeld.

Ms. THOMPSON. Oh, that is right.

Mr. MOYLAN. I am glad that the interest of the United States where our Secretary of Defense is going from, not just from the West coast to the East coast, but from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

So, I thank you. Thank you for your testimony. General, sir, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Cisneros.

Mr. CISNEROS. Thank you Mr. Chairman. And, I also want to give my prayers and sympathies to the families of the servicemembers who lost their lives.

And, General Cavoli, thank you for your years of service as you kind of approach the end of a fantastic career that you have had. So, thank you, sir, for everything.

So, when I was Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel Readiness, I had a meeting with one of my counterparts from Latvia, who was really concerned about how they could build up their reserves.

I mean, to the point they were worried about the Russians and the possibility of them coming there, that they were actually drilling, you know, elementary school children. Preparing military drills, ensuring that they are learning that in elementary school to get them ready as they matured and got older.

Obviously, I think, all the Baltic states, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, they are all very concerned about the Russians. And, the invasion in the Ukraine probably did not ease their tensions.

But, how are we preparing our Baltic allies, getting them ready for the possible threat of a Russian invasion?

And, really, and maybe this might be more for there, but I mean for the classified briefing. But, what is the possible threat of later on, if the Russians are successful in Ukraine, that they will continue their aggression on other former Soviet states?

General CAVOLI. Thank you, sir. So, we help them in a variety of ways. First, how does NATO help them? NATO's new defense plans give a structure for them to plan and to nest their national defense plans inside.

So, those plans go together with the NATO plans. And, this really helps a defense planner clarify a whole bunch of things about how much of what he needs, where, et cetera, et cetera.

Second, the command structures that have been outlined, and the relationships that have been outlined as a result of the plans or inside the plans, gives them permanent relationships for units to build readiness with and headquarters to build the procedures with.

So, that is one big advantage that helps them a great deal. Bilaterally, we work very closely with those allies, because they are so intent on buying American stuff.

So, it is one thing to buy a HIMARS [High Mobility Artillery Rocket System], it is another thing to know how to use it. That is pretty simple. But, it is another thing entirely to know how to integrate that capability into your war fighting methodology.

And so, for example, I have got a battery of HIMARS, American HIMARS in Estonia that has been working for well over a year and a half with them on how exactly they are going to incorporate their long range fires into their operational methodology after this.

I just was on the phone with, I just received a letter from the Chief of Defense of Lithuania, who is interested in having a similar program, some sort of a HIMARS Academy. I could go on and on.

On a third level, we also do special security assistance initiatives. So, there is the Baltic Air and Missile Defense Initiative, there is the Baltic State Security Initiative.

And, those are focused appropriations for us to be able to help them buy the American stuff that matters to us. Focused on air and missile defense, and domain awareness in the air right now, of course, because that is the most important thing.

I guess, I could go for hours. There are some classified things we do as well, Congressman.

Mr. CISNEROS. All right. Ms. Thompson, can we still be confident that we are going to keep troops in Europe there, and keep supporting NATO?

That the United States will step up if, in fact, Russia does invade the Baltic states?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question, Congressman. On the first piece, I would just emphasize again, we are in the midst of a global posture review. So, certainly, we are taking these priorities and these considerations into our analysis as we conduct that.

And then, I would also emphasize the Secretary was very clear that we remain committed to NATO. And, that includes all facets of the treaty.

And so, I would say yes. And, I would also just add perhaps a bit of color to what General Cavoli was talking about, specifically with the Baltics, and just emphasize that we have been so appreciative in this Administration so far, of how our Baltic friends acutely understand the threat perception.

And, we hope that and we have encouraged our Baltic friends to communicate that threat perception to the Western and central European powers, as well as we try to encourage the alliance as a whole, to focus on defense spending.

Mr. CISNEROS. All right. And then, I got 30 seconds. But, so, very quickly, General Cavoli, you and your counterparts in INDOPACOM and AFRICOM, are always, you know, I don't want to say at odds, but always fighting for assets to kind of come into your areas of your command and areas of operation there, responsibility.

How are we kind of working through that to get to this point there, to kind of ensure that we are not asking for too much, but, you know, you are getting what you need?

General CAVOLI. Sure, sir. Our job is to articulate our requirements based on the task we are given, sir. And, the Secretary of Defense, with the advice of the Chairman, allocates to the resources.

There is another step though, right? Erik Kurilla and I have known each other our whole lives. We can communicate. There are things that I can do to help alleviate some of his challenges and vice versa.

Mike Langley's headquarters is right next door to my headquarters in Stuttgart. We talk back and forth and --

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Kansas, Mr. Schmidt.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, I would like to add my condolences as well, to those expressed by my colleagues, of the families who have loved ones and friends of the lost soldiers.

And, General Cavoli, from the home state of the first Supreme Allied Commander, General Eisenhower, I would like to extend our congratulations and gratitude to you for your service.

And, would just note that we have had an unbroken line of American leadership at the top of NATO from its inception. And, I for one, expect and hope that is going to continue into the foreseeable future.

But, we are engaged in a, I will call it a public rethinking of America's role in the world. Everybody in this room certainly spends their lives, their careers, their talents focused on this at a granular and strategic level every day.

But, because we have been effective at that for so long, many Americans have not had to engage in those discussions out and about. And, their support is critical as we make the decisions that move us ahead.

So, with that in mind, General, I would like to ask a couple of questions that are intended to inform the public discussion, not only the particularized discussion.

Can you talk for a bit about the level of importance, the nature of importance, of continuing to have a heavy ground presence on the European continent in terms of our security planning going forward, whether it is armory, infantry, or otherwise?

General CAVOLI. Sure, sir. So, the alliance, we collectively require a heavy ground presence. That is specifically to be able to overcome that singular Russian advantage of being able to put its forces on our borders, as an alliance, before the initiation of hostilities.

That causes a time/space problem for us in terms of reinforcing. So, the positioning of this large force has to be appropriate to the situation, right, to the level of threat.

Whether that ground force comes from America or someplace else, is really, SACEUR doesn't care as long as it functions.

There are some capabilities that the U.S. is very careful to make sure we continue to contribute, because they are exquisite and in some cases unique. And, we understand that and those will have to be there all the time otherwise.

So then really, the question is, what is the preponderance of U.S. versus other nations' heavy ground force that is committed?

And, that is something we balance all the time. And, that is something that will change as our European allies pick up the capabilities' targets we have just assigned them in the NATO defense planning process and commit the money that they have devoted in a profitable and a productive acquisition program to get the stuff they need.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Thank you, General. And, at risk of sounding like I am reading from the history books, I am old enough to remember Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait.

And, if my memory is correct, it was our ability to rapidly move the Seventh Corps from Europe to the Middle East, that allowed us to launch Desert Storm with the rapidity that we did.

Can you speak a little bit, your point about whether there are American heavy ground forces or European allies in Europe, how does having American heavy ground forces pre-deployed in the European theater, affect our planning and our ability to respond to

American interests in the Middle East or in other proximate areas outside of Europe immediately?

General CAVOLI. It is fundamental to it, sir. There are three principal components if it is important to us. Access, basing, and overflight.

So, our ability to base our forces some place, and to have the ability to access those forces to deploy them, and then to have the agreements to overfly nations, all of those things happen. They are usually based on pretty deep relationships.

If you want it to be there when you need it, it has got to be, you know, you have to have prepared for that moment. So, that, those three things, access, basing, and overflight, are really a shorthand way of saying that gives us the ability to put forces forward in readiness waiting to be deployed.

Now, to what extent do we need to do that, that is largely a policy question. But, that is the strictly military advantage of having forces forward for our own purposes.

We do deploy them all the time. We have been, you know, leaning toward and then backing off of noncombatant evacuation operations throughout the Mediterranean area for a couple of years. We provide forces on short notice to General Kurilla to be able to use in Central Command.

I could go on, but, I think, I have, I hope I have answered your question.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from New Hampshire, Ms. Goodlander.

Ms. GOODLANDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to begin by joining my colleagues in expressing my heartbreak over the loss of our four fallen servicemembers and my sincere condolences to their families.

I also want to join in expressing my gratitude to you, General, for your long and faithful service to our country. You know, we don't agree always in Congress, we often disagree these days.

But, one thing I want to say at the outset is we have heard a lot of noise. But, we have actually heard a lot of agreement in this hearing from across this dais.

Agreement on basic principles and commitments that I think, are worth reiterating. Because, people from Warsaw to the Kremlin should hear it loud and clear.

Does the United States of America have a national security interest, General, in the survival and the strength of the NATO alliance?

General CAVOLI. I believe it does.

Ms. GOODLANDER. And, Ms. Thompson?

Ms. THOMPSON. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. GOODLANDER. And, what about the survival and strength of our European allies, including Ukraine?

General CAVOLI. Yes.

Ms. THOMPSON. Yes.

Ms. GOODLANDER. Thank you. I think, it is important that we reiterate these basic principles. And, General, could you elaborate on what is the nature of that national security interest that we have in the NATO alliance and in the survival and strength of Ukraine?

General CAVOLI. Yes, ma'am, absolutely. So, a lot of interests are, a lot of the benefits are rooted, common interest, common values, common histories, things like that.

I am not going to go into those, just because that is subjective, debatable, and people have different opinions on it.

As a military matter, some of the most advanced militaries in the world are in the NATO alliance. And, some of the militaries in the world that we can be surest will work with us and are militarily interoperable with our forces, are in the NATO alliance.

It is surprising when you go outside of Europe, how much the absence of something like NATO, the structures, the interoperability, is noticed immediately.

Ms. GOODLANDER. Thank you, General. This may be more for a closed setting, but, you shared with us in your written testimony and several times today, that Russia's war in Ukraine is the most visible sign of Moscow's great power ambitions.

So, I want to give you an opportunity to tell us a little bit more about how you think about Vladimir Putin's ambitions. What would satisfy Vladimir Putin?

Would taking the eastern half of Ukraine satisfy his ambitions? Or, would it embolden him?

General CAVOLI. Well, you know, I think, if we go back and look at the history of his tenure as the President of Russia, you can follow his ambitions. They are pretty consistent, but they expand.

Clearly, he has not yet been satisfied with the amount of Ukraine that he has taken over, because he is continuing to try to fight forward. How the conflict ends, you know, may disprove that. We don't know yet.

But, he certainly is interested in controlling the nations that are in his immediate neighborhood, by whatever means necessary. And, we have seen that demonstrated consistently over time.

Could he stop tomorrow? We don't know.

Ms. GOODLANDER. General, you testified to the importance of our intelligence cooperation with our European allies and with Ukraine. You said that our ability to gather intelligence is enabled by enduring relationships that cannot develop episodically and that must be sustained.

As someone who comes from the intelligence world, thank you for recognizing the important role that our intelligence cooperation plays. Is pausing our intelligence cooperation with European allies a good thing for America's national security?

General CAVOLI. No. We want continuous sharing of intelligence. We normally do it, as you know, ma'am, on a bilateral basis.

We have very strong agreements with the nations in the alliance about bilateral intel sharing. And, we are very grateful for it.

Ms. GOODLANDER. Was the pause last month in our intelligence cooperation and sharing with Ukraine helpful or harmful to America's interests in your area of operation, in your region?

General CAVOLI. That one I have to answer in closed session, ma'am. Because, I just have to answer that one in closed session.

Ms. GOODLANDER. Thank you, General. With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Maryland, Ms. Elfreth.

Ms. ELFRETH. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, in General, I too echo my deep condolences for the lives lost, and the servicemembers and their families.

And, echo my colleagues in congratulations and thanks. As the daughter of an infantryman, he only retired as an SFC [Sergeant First Class], but I greatly appreciate your 38 years of commitment to this nation's security. It doesn't go unnoticed from this committee. So, thank you very much.

General CAVOLI. Not to correct you ma'am, but there is no such thing as only an SFC.

Ms. ELFRETH. I think, I am aligned and agree with you. So, I want to dig in General, you mentioned the contributions of our allies in your command, in EUCOM, such as Poland, as to the security of Europe and the subsequent security of this nation.

You also mentioned Denmark, as recently increasing its financial contributions here, but also, critically expanding its patrol of the Arctic. Can you please just briefly expand on the importance of that particular allyship with Denmark?

General CAVOLI. Sure, yes. Denmark, ma'am, is one of our strongest allies. The bilateral relationship from the Danish perspective, is far and away their most important bilateral security relationship.

I have known the Prime Minister of Denmark for quite a while, and she would initiate any conversation with that comment. They have been very reliable allies.

They have got a high-tech military, not a big one, but it is high-tech. They have extremely competent Special Forces and Naval Special Forces. And, they contribute those liberally to the operations under my command as the Supreme Allied Commander.

So, yes, a very strong ally. We love all our allies, but, I would say that Denmark's a very strong one.

Ms. ELFRETH. You don't have favorites, but I appreciate that.

Ms. Thompson, reflecting on that, wouldn't you agree that the President's threats to possibly utilize military force to seize Greenland, a territory of Denmark, could only threaten that key allyship and again, our shared ability to address the threats, particularly from Russia in the Arctic?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you, Congresswoman. What I would say, is I would focus on the bilateral relationship piece that General Cavoli hit on.

I think, that there is a lot of cooperation here, including on Greenland in particular, on the landmass particularly. We already have space capabilities there and I think, that there are opportunities.

And, the Secretary and his pull aside with the Danish Minister of Defense had a really positive conversation about where we could take the bilateral defense relationship. So, I think, there is room for growth and positivity there.

Ms. ELFRETH. Okay. General, you have shared that Russia poses a chronic and growing threat. And, that they are focused on a "campaign of destabilization across your command."

You also spoke about the intersection of how you work with the other combatant commands, particularly around the Mediterra-

nean. I want to switch our conversation to yet another domain that being of cyber.

And, can you help us better understand the cyber wars that Russia is waging against Ukraine, our allies in NATO, your command in Europe?

And can you speak to your collaboration with Cyber Command, which is headquartered just to stone's throw from my district?

General CAVOLI. Yes, ma'am. I think, the simplest way to get at this question is to describe roughly the two buckets into which, in which we can consider Russian cyber operations to fall. Right?

Some of them are about the content. It is information operations, it is influence operations. It is the campaigns to spread their version of information around Europe and the world.

Those are very, very active. Those don't necessarily involve cyber work, but can be injected through cyber vectors. But, it can be as simple as a television channel.

On the other hand, there is also the technical cyber work that they do, which is designed to penetrate our networks, to get into systems, to produce effects. Sometimes it is to take information and sometimes it is to leave us problems, and they do a lot.

I depend very, very heavily on U.S. Cyber Command through 16th Air Force, in order to be able to combat those things and to help our allies combat them.

Ms. ELFRETH. Thank you very much. And, Ms. Thompson, wouldn't you agree that the continuity of leadership and expertise for any command, but particularly when it comes to combating cyber war, is essential to the security of EUCOM and our national security? Just yes or no.

Ms. THOMPSON. Yes.

Ms. ELFRETH. Okay. I contend that the recent firing of a Four Star General, Commander of U.S. Cyber Command and National Security Agency Director, General Timothy Haugh, with no succession plan in place, and no word if his replacement, poses a significant threat to EUCOM, Ukraine, NATO, and our homeland.

Can you please speak, Ms. Thompson, briefly to the Secretary's timeline in announcing the replacement for Cybercom?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you, Congresswoman, for the question. I have to say I am not privy to those decisions and it is outside of my jurisdiction in International Security Affairs.

What I would say, is obviously Cybercom, as you have pointed out, is essential to not only the EUCOM AOR, but also Homeland Defense, which is a major priority.

So, I would just leave it there. Thank you.

Ms. ELFRETH. I would contend this is an astonishing volatility in lacking continuity. It is posing a real threat, unnecessary threat to our national security.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Tran.

Mr. TRAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, I too am very saddened by the loss of our soldiers. And, I send my condolences to their family.

General, I salute and thank you for your years of service. Thank you so much. And, I appreciate you both being here to testify today.

Tariffs have been in the news a lot lately with President Trump leaving tariffs against our allies and adversaries alike. Like many people, I am deeply concerned about how these attacks will impact our military and diplomatic partnerships with our closest allies and partners.

Ms. Thompson, with the Trump Administration's imposition of tariffs on EU goods, which I expect could disrupt global supply chains critical to American defense manufacturing, how is EUCOM preparing for possible delays for cost increases in defense equipment sourced from Europe?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you for the question, Congressman. I will start by saying, and again, I want to say this very respectfully, I am not trying to be evasive. It is just the effects of tariffs, specifically on the diplomatic relationship side or on the economic side are a little bit outside of my jurisdiction.

What I would say from the defense perspective, is we are acutely focused on making sure that we can have a strong transatlantic industrial base on both sides of the Atlantic, which includes reforms on both sides of the Atlantic.

We certainly want the European Union to be open to continuing to partner with the United States as the defense relationship goes.

And, both of us, both the European Union and ourselves, have reforms that we need to make to ensure that the economic environment in the defense industrial base context is certainly robust enough that we can make successful investments together.

Mr. TRAN. But, you do recognize that these strains will cause an effect on our industrial base, yes?

Ms. THOMPSON. It is something that we will be looking at and taking into consideration as we pursue the defense industrial base effort in particular.

Mr. TRAN. All right. General, what measure is EUCOM taking to address potential strains in defense collaboration and ensure joint operational effectiveness?

General CAVOLI. So, we continue with our exercise programs. We continue with our consultations with our allies.

We continue to work very closely. EUCOM continues to work very closely with NATO, with the Allied Command Operations.

And, we move forward just in a straight military fashion, sir.

Mr. TRAN. And, as European nations aim to enhance their defense industries and reduce dependency on U.S. arms, how does EUCOM assess the potential impact on NATO's collective defense posture?

General CAVOLI. Well, first we need our allies to re-arm in general. If they re-arm with stuff, we want them to re-arm with equipment that works with ours.

In many cases, the easiest way to do that is to buy U.S. So, during the course of this conflict, Congressman, the orders, the value of foreign military sales orders, that is, our allies' orders to buy American equipment, have increased by 600 percent.

There right now are 4,000 sales cases worth \$265 billion that European nations are lined up to buy from the United States as arms manufacturers.

As the Allied Commander, I encourage that, right? I want more capability and capacity as fast as we can get it.

Mr. TRAN. Have you seen any impacts of the recent tariffs impacting the 600 percent increase in those sales?

General CAVOLI. Sir, I have not. I have been here for the last week and a half testifying to the Senate now here.

Mr. TRAN. The deepening strategic partnership among China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, poses an increasing challenge for the United States and its allies in Europe. I am particularly concerned by Russian and Chinese economic and military partnership causing strain on individual European countries within the NATO Alliance.

General, how is EUCOM working with European partners to deter or expose CCP [Chinese Communist Party] efforts to fragment NATO cohesion through strategic investments?

General CAVOLI. Sure, sir. The first way is through intel sharing. Right?

We have a number of different, we have many, many bilateral intel channels. But, we also have a few lesser known multilateral intel sharing fora. And, in those, we talk about these things.

The Department of Defense, EUCOM, also works closely with our State Department colleagues and missions throughout the alliance, because they really have the lead in helping our allies avoid malign Chinese investments.

Finally, as I mentioned to a member earlier, our exercise program specifically uses infrastructure that we want to be sure of the reliability of.

So, we vary what we do and where we do it so that we are always testing the reliability of our infrastructure. And, when we find a problem, we talk to our host nation about it right away.

Mr. TRAN. Thank you, General. Thank you, Ms. Thompson. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Bell of Missouri.

Mr. BELL. Thank you, Mr. Chair and the Ranking Member. Ms. Thompson, General Cavoli, thank you for being here. And also, General, I want to add to the chorus of thanking you for 38 years of service.

I would be remiss if I did not express my deepest condolences to the families of the four servicemembers who tragically lost their life serving our nation in Lithuania.

But again, thank you for your service and on behalf of my district in the St. Louis region, we want to thank you. And, since you got a little time, if you ever want to come out, we are known for our beer. You can have that now, right? We are known for that and the Cardinal's game.

So, while our European allies have been working to increase their defense spending to meet the 2 percent NATO defense spending target, the Administration's recent decision to impose tariffs on nearly every NATO country and ally partner, could undermine these efforts and potentially slow our collective progress.

General Cavoli, how do you foresee these tariffs impacting the defense spending of our European allies?

General CAVOLI. You know, I don't know, Congressman. Sir, in an economic sense, I am not an economist, so I can't, you know, walk through the trail of how it will work.

I do know that our allies are determined to increase their defense capability and capacity no matter where they buy things from or no matter how they get it. That is nearly a universal sentiment in the alliance right now. And, to spend more than 2 percent, as you go around. You hear a lot of that.

Mr. BELL. And, are these countries now less likely to meet the 2 percent target due to these tariffs? And, will this hurt our European allies, including the Baltic states who outspend the U.S. spending, you know, as a percentage of GDP?

General CAVOLI. Sir, if they are unable to access our market, or if they have to pay more than expected for equipment, certainly that is going to affect how much capacity they can build, how quickly.

I don't know how the tariffs will exactly do that though.

Mr. BELL. In the past 6 months, Russian and Chinese ships have been implicated in sabotaging undersea cables. This comes as no surprise given Russia's ongoing efforts to target Ukrainian power cables, telecom links, and gas pipelines, since its invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

General, how is European command addressing the threat of sabotage or disruption of undersea cables in European waters, and what steps are being taken to mitigate the risks posed by state actors, particularly Russia and China?

General CAVOLI. So, European command, sir, first, as with some of the other responses, shares intelligence, when we get intelligence on this to support our allies as they defend their own infrastructure.

We also defend our own U.S. critical infrastructure that is overseas. Interestingly, the biggest collective defenses of critical national infrastructure don't involve the U.S. hardly at all.

So, last year I started an operation called Baltic Century, where we brought together under NATO Command, voluntarily donated ships and crews as well as coastal defense radars from the Baltic allies, the allies in the Baltics and the Nordics.

And, we sewed those together into a single operation that surveils and increases our understanding of what is going on on the surface and below the surface of the Baltic Sea. For the longest time, there were no U.S. ships involved in that.

There are no U.S. ships involved in it today. I think, I have 40 Marines who have temporarily helped with a couple of radars. And, I think, they may have departed already.

So, this is an example of our allies taking that upon themselves as they should, and happily.

Mr. BELL. And, if I could get one more question in, General. Can you discuss the implications if the Administration withdraws U.S. troops from Syria, how might this affect our counter-terrorism efforts in the Eastern Mediterranean?

General CAVOLI. So, it would mainly, from my perspective, affect our ability to collect intelligence. And, I have to leave that at that in open session, sir.

You know, I concern myself very much with the Russian presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. That has been greatly weakened by our --

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Whitesides.

Mr. BELL. Thank you, General.

Mr. WHITESIDES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for being here at this pivotal time for U.S. interests in Europe.

Obviously, this is a time of immense change in your AOR, the shifting U.S. posture, the continuing war on Ukraine, not to mention the recent additions to the NATO alliance.

It is clear to many of us on this committee that continued strong support for Ukraine is not only vital to U.S. security interests, but to the continued strength and vitality of our alliances and partnership in Europe.

General Cavoli, in the years since Putin's unprovoked invasion, I have been heartened to see that former Soviet States who had previously been deferential to Russia, were beginning to push back on Putin's bullying tactics.

Obviously, the U.S. posture toward Ukraine has changed a great deal in the last 3 months. In your opinion, how would a U.S. withdrawal from global leadership in support of Ukraine, impact the smaller nations' ability to demonstrate independence from Russia?

Specifically, in your opinion, will it have an impact on the democracy movement in Belarus?

General CAVOLI. Congressman, it is a great and important question. A lot of answering it would go well outside of my wheelhouse.

I will say that all nations are watching very closely what the U.S. does any place all the time. You know, we are such a mover on the global stage that everybody is constantly observing and calculating against that.

That is especially true in those states that have the opportunity to get out from under Russia's shadow. Armenia would be an excellent example of that.

Sir, they are watching closely.

Mr. WHITESIDES. Thank you, sir. On a similar note, I wanted to ask you about the following subject. So, Putin's regime is constantly engaged in egregious cyber crime and offensive cyber operations against us, our allies, against companies, infrastructure, you name it, which is why I was very distressed to hear that this Administration initiated a pause on offensive cyber operations against Russia.

I am honestly at a loss to understand how giving Putin's cyber criminals a free pass, serves our national security or economic interests.

General, does a cessation of offensive cyber operations, either temporarily or ongoingly, against Russia, create any risk for our troops and operations in Europe?

General CAVOLI. Sir, any details would have to be spoken about in closed session. Of course, the cessation that you are talking about did not pose risk to my troops.

If they had, I would have made that clear immediately.

Mr. WHITESIDES. Thank you, sir. I just want to say on behalf of Congress and the nation, we are so grateful for your service. And, you are what makes America great.

So, thank you so much. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, thank you so much for being here, sir. You are a tremendous service to our country. I am an old Army guy, enlisted. I wanted to be Navy, but my ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery] scores were too high.

So, I appreciate your service and it just can't be overstated, the debt that our country has to your family. So many decades of sacrifice, thank you, sir.

General CAVOLI. Thank you, sir. Since you are a former enlisted member of the service, I should point out that Sergeant Major Abernathy, sitting right behind me, is leaving after many years of service this year as well. And, we thank him for it.

Mr. HIGGINS. Well, and, NCOs are always quite certain that if the officers don't show up, eventually somebody will notice. But, if the NCOs don't show up, well, the Army is in trouble.

So, General, Ukraine, I would just like to chat with you about Ukraine. And, if you could, for America and for some members of this committee that need clarity, could you describe from your perspective, which is quite unique and experienced, what does victory look like?

Can you share with us what, how you would envision victory? Should we continue to invest American treasure to seek some resolution of the Ukrainian war and Russian invasion of Ukraine?

Clearly we seek some definition of victory. Could you possibly share that?

General CAVOLI. Absolutely, Congressman. And, without getting into the realm of policy, which Ms. Thompson is obviously much, much better prepared to talk about than I, but, I think, you have to start by saying victory for whom, right?

And, whose victory? What is a good outcome for the United States look like, is one part of that.

Mr. HIGGINS. Okay.

General CAVOLI. What does a good outcome for Ukraine look like? When you think about Ukraine, you know, you can think about it in increments.

The first step to winning is not losing. Right? So, Ukraine has to defeat Russia's efforts to continue to take their territory.

Then, after that, you have a national question, how much of it do we want to take back? And, what is the cost benefit analysis of what it will take to take that back?

And, I think, the Ukrainians calculate that every day and plan against that every day. So, you know, it is a complicated question.

But, I think, an important part of it is, we have to ask ourselves, you know, what are the benefits for us in the various outcomes?

Mr. HIGGINS. So, to the gentleman's point, and thank you for sharing your perspective there in this setting. You are limited in how you can respond, I am quite sure.

But, it is important for America to observe that we do seek resolution of this war. And, this Congress and this committee in particular, carries quite a heavy burden on, you know, making responsible decisions on behalf of the American people that we represent.

So, defining victory to some of us at this point, has become as clear as just a cessation of war. The cessation of the killing.

And, for some of us it was difficult to envision any scenario where Ukraine defeats Russia. It seems to be a fantastic projection of the wildest imaginations of what potentials could be.

So, sustaining the war, it would be sustaining the killing of Ukrainian men and women, and the destruction of Ukrainian territories. And, it seems to us that Russia can bear the brunt of this conflict for quite a long time.

And, I would ask the good lady's perspective of, give us a window on ending this thing, and how can we look forward to some sustained peace in a way that Ukraine could measure some prevail?

Ms. THOMPSON. Thank you, Congressman. And, I can certainly provide additional color to this in our closed session from a policy perspective.

But, President Trump, as you have rightly hit on, his goal is to end it as soon as possible. And, that is why we are undergoing the peace process that is currently in discussion.

And, I would say, you know, again, the goal is to end that peace process in an enduring fashion so that we are not at this table again in the short, medium, or long-term period of time.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, ma'am. Chairman, my time has expired.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Vindman.

Mr. VINDMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I want to pass on my condolences to you, the entire EUCOM family, and the families of the fallen four dogface soldiers from Third ID. That is a tremendous loss.

Next, I want to say, as a retired Army officer myself, I want to congratulate you on your upcoming retirement and recommend avoiding electoral politics if you want peace and quiet.

Right now, our adversaries are challenging the United States interests around the globe, and Russia's continued illegal war in Ukraine is far from over.

In your written testimony, you focused on the chronic threat that Russia poses to the United States and the importance of land deterrence. And, it has been a really persistent threat for decades now in one iteration or another from the Soviet Union to the present.

General Cavoli, how many troops do we need in Europe to deter Russia at its current end strength?

General CAVOLI. Sir, our current capacity is deterring Russia right now. Of course, the answer to that question always depends on where Russia goes in the future, right?

How do they configure themselves? Where do they place themselves? What are their intentions? For what we are doing right now, it is obviously working. But, they are quite occupied elsewhere.

I would point out, I wouldn't measure it also strictly by end strength, the numbers of human beings. It really comes down to what capabilities are we able to bring to bear, how quickly, and how does that nest into the alliance's efforts which are evolving and increasing?

So, over time, I would expect our contribution to drop. It is going to take some time, however.

Mr. VINDMAN. So, I want to address the issue that my colleague from Louisiana just discussed. And, kind of part of what victory looks like is a free, and sovereign, and secure Ukraine.

And so, so far that has come at no cost in American lives as far as uniform servicemembers. Although, there have been obviously many volunteers that have gone over and felt the need was great, and sacrificed tremendously.

In the context of my definition, and kind of how you see victory, is victory for Ukraine possible?

General CAVOLI. Congressman, not losing is definitely possible. And, I think, that is the first step.

Mr. VINDMAN. So if we are talking about a free, secure, sovereign Ukraine, the actions that we have taken so far, I mean they have not lost yet, but how do we take it to the next level?

If we want to get a meaningful peace that provides for a free, sovereign, secure Ukraine, what do we need to do in addition to what we have done so far?

General CAVOLI. Well, I think, there is a military contribution to that, sir, of course. But, I think, that the principal questions would probably be outside of my lane, sir.

Mr. VINDMAN. Well, I am talking in your purview, and briefly obviously, do we need to provide them more stuff?

General CAVOLI. We need to continue to provide them the defensive mechanisms to prevent the heinous attacks that we have seen.

Mr. VINDMAN. Provide more intelligence?

General CAVOLI. Intelligence, air defense, weapon systems, and then artillery systems and ammunition. Those are always the important things that they need.

Mr. VINDMAN. And, those would pressure Russia to come to the negotiating table in a more balanced fashion to achieve the victory that I described, which is a free, secure, and sovereign Ukraine?

General CAVOLI. Those could be a contributor to that effort.

Mr. VINDMAN. Okay. I want to transition a little bit and talk about, you mentioned your relationships going back decades with your counterparts in different COCOMs, General Kurilla for instance.

There are other relationships that, for instance, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I am sure you have known him, you have worked with him. You closely coordinate with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the functional combatant commanders like Cybercom, with the Senior Advisor to NATO.

Those folks have all been fired in the last couple of months, is that correct?

General CAVOLI. Yes sir.

Mr. VINDMAN. Yes. And so, have you ever seen this type of sort of chaos, or sort of lack of coordination?

In your 38 years, have you ever had to deal with that kind of shuffling of personnel that are your counterparts that help enable your mission?

General CAVOLI. I have had to deal with shufflings and things like that before, yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. McCormick.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good to see you again, General. It has been a couple years now that we have known each other and I have seen you around the world in several different places.

I know you are going to miss dealing with crayon eating Marines and better-looking uniforms, I might add, better commercials.

But, with that said, it is interesting, the first time I ever saw you at a hearing, I asked you a very specific question about can we win in Ukraine?

You didn't even hesitate. You said absolutely. And, I agree with you. And, for those people who are doubters, I make the case first of all, that we have, between us and Europe, we have a \$50 trillion economy, versus \$2. Versus \$2.

We control sanctions. We control the economy. We control energy production. And, we can undermine Russia in so many ways economically. Not even to mention militarily. Germany has a \$5 trillion economy versus \$2 for Russia. There should be no competition here.

But, the problem is when we went to Command and Staff, and we went to go to Water College, and we do all our advanced training, we always learned how to execute a war full throated, not half-assed. Not going partial measures and then drawing it out like we have every war since Korea, in my opinion.

We did this with Iraq. We did it with Afghanistan. We continue to draw it out. We went half measures and it went way too long.

And, I feel like we are doing the same thing here. Instead of just saying all in, end this thing within one year, it is over. That is Clausewitzian warfare. Now, of course, we take nukes off the table. I understand the deterrence there.

But, do you think we still, a year after we had our first, a couple of years after we had our first conversation, do you still think that what I just said is viable, and has application in this process to ending this war?

General CAVOLI. I do, sir. The role of assistance to Ukraine, the pace of assistance to Ukraine, the magnitude of it, has an outsized impact in this war.

Mr. MCCORMICK. So, Ms. Thompson, I just say, if I could give you feedback to the President. These are two military guys who have been in this business for a long time, and actually there is a whole lot more than that.

We can end this war in many ways. I love what the President is doing to put pressure on Russia to end this. But, he is in the power seat. He is the most powerful man in the world.

With sanctions, with energy production of things that he is doing, also with the development of our businesses there, which Russia would have a hard time attacking if we are there.

But also, the fact that the President has been very strict in saying, hey, I got the bigger button. I have the bigger military. I have more economic power than anybody in the universe. We can end this.

The President is the big man in the room. And, I would love to see him put pressure on Putin, because he has that leverage.

Getting back more to tactics and away from strategy. We have new munitions. We have the glide bombs. We have wire guided munitions now, very similar to what the TOW is, but they have loitering capacity with the new drones.

What are we doing to both develop that and also to counter that in technologies? Obviously, you are not going to talk about anything classified.

But, do you feel like we are moving at pace for our newly developed weapon systems?

General CAVOLI. Yes. Congressman, a General never feels like we are moving at an adequate pace when it comes to development and new weapon systems, especially in conflict.

We continue to help our Ukrainian partners in their development of this stuff. But, they have really, you know, they have become the world experts in one-way drones. And, they are very, very good at it. They are also very good at countering it. And, are doing that.

Our ability to learn from them is an important thing. A few minutes ago, a member asked about lessons learned and how we are incorporating those.

You know, one of the, if you can find a silver lining in this tragic, dark cloud of this war, we are learning an awful lot about the future of warfare and about Russia's capabilities as well.

Mr. McCORMICK. I think, you are on. We have great applications to Taiwan and the straits as well, when we are talking about legacy systems versus the newer technologies that are going to impact the battlefield.

I am almost out of time, but, I want to take this time as you are nearing retirement, just to say that no matter what happens, no matter how bad your uniform looks compared to the Marines or anything like that, you have one thing that you can always hang your hat on, and you have the coolest title ever, the Supreme Allied Commander.

Nobody can take that from you for the rest of your life. God bless you. Semper Fidelis. Good luck in your next career.

General CAVOLI. Thank you, sir.

Mr. McCORMICK. With that, I yield, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlemen yields. We will now conclude this open session and take up the closed session in room 2212 at 10 minutes after one o'clock. We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:10 p.m., the committee proceeded in closed session.]

A P P E N D I X

APRIL 8, 2025

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

APRIL 8, 2025

STATEMENT BY
KATHERINE THOMPSON
PERFORMING THE DUTIES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FIRST SESSION, 119TH CONGRESS

APRIL 8, 2025

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on our defense policy in the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) area of responsibility. It is my honor to appear alongside EUCOM Commander General Christopher Cavoli.

President Trump has directed the Department of Defense (DoD) to reorient U.S. defense strategy so that it puts Americans' interests first. In Europe, that means working with our interagency partners to bring an end to the war in Ukraine. It also means finding new ways to strengthen the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) so that the Alliance can be as effective in this century as it was in the last. To be sure, neither of these efforts will be easy—not for us, and not for our allies. But taking these measures are essential, it is doable, and doing so will leave both the United States *and* our allies and partners all better off.

Ukraine

President Trump has spoken often and clearly about achieving lasting peace in Ukraine. This is vital to stop the bloodshed. It will also set Europe on a trajectory toward security and stability like the region has not seen for many years. This is not only good for Ukraine. It is also good for our NATO allies. And of course, it is good for Americans, who benefit from a stable and secure Europe.

Already, the President's team is making progress in this regard. Under his leadership, both Russia and Ukraine have come to the negotiating table, and already, we are seeing initial ceasefires take hold. The contours of a lasting peace are also coming into view. President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have stated clearly that the United States will not put boots on the ground in Ukraine. At the same time, they have made clear that Europeans must take the lead in supporting Ukraine's defense requirements in the years ahead, and our allies are taking steps to that effect. Last month, for instance, the United Kingdom hosted the Ukraine Defense Contact Group. The UK and France have also committed to lead additional efforts to ensure a lasting peace in Ukraine. As the President and Secretary have said, far more will be required of them and other allies. But it is a promising start, and our allies deserve credit for these initial steps.

Given the sensitive nature of ongoing negotiations, I will limit my remarks on this subject to this statement. I look forward to being able to share more as peace negotiations proceed.

NATO

NATO played a central role in America's strategy throughout the Cold War. If not for the Alliance, it is not clear that the Cold War would have remained just that—cold. But then the Cold War ended, and as it did, our NATO allies forgot how important it was to invest in their defenses. Instead, they grew accustomed to the peace that defined Europe at the height of the “unipolar moment,” and they divested of their militaries accordingly. But peace can never be taken for granted. It must be maintained—and that requires that all of us do our part.

Unfortunately, that has not been the case for far too many of our NATO allies.

In the East, some of our allies did not forget the necessity of investing in their defenses. Even today, allies like Poland and many of the Baltic nations already spend more on defense than the United States does as percentage of GDP—and they are going even higher. These are model allies, but they can only do so much on their own. Western and Central Europe are home to several of the world's largest economies. These allies are more than capable of raising powerful militaries. Tragically, however, they have chosen not to. Instead, for decades, they have shown themselves content to free ride not just at the expense of American taxpayers, but at the expense of their fellow allies' security.

President Trump has been clear—this is not acceptable. As a matter of justice, Americans are tired of subsidizing Europeans' defenses, and by extension, their vast welfare states. But this is also a matter of prudence. Over the last four years, the international threat environment has grown far more dangerous, and we must all do our part to restore peace through strength. That is why Secretary Hegseth has reoriented DoD squarely on warfighting and lethality. And it is why he has called for a “factory reset” for the NATO Alliance.

As the Secretary said at the gathering of NATO Defense Ministers in February, it is time for our NATO allies to take primary responsibility for Europe's conventional defense, relying on the United States for critical but more limited support, including our extended nuclear deterrent. As stated above, that means that our NATO allies must take the lead in providing Ukraine with the security assistance that it needs to achieve lasting peace. At the same time, they must generate, field, and sustain the forces required to deter aggression against the Alliance itself, including the seas around it, like the Red Sea.

If our allies do these things, then there is no question that NATO can be as effective in this century as it was in the last—that all of Europe can realize peace and stability for decades to come. But our allies will only be able to achieve these goals if they raise defense spending to 5% of their respective GDPs as President Trump has demanded. At the same time, our allies must focus those resources where they are needed most—on Europe's defense. Not on the Indo-Pacific. And not on the host of other missions that NATO has taken upon itself in recent years and detract from the Alliance's proper focus on warfighting, lethality, and deterrence.

President Trump has vowed to achieve peace through strength, and the Department of Defense will do its part. Now it is time for our NATO allies to do theirs, and in the process, set conditions for lasting peace in Europe.

KATHERINE THOMPSON

Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense International Security Affairs, Office of the Secretary of Defense



Katherine Thompson has spent over six years working on Capitol Hill in the national security space, most recently serving as the National Security Advisor to Senator Mike Lee (R-UT). In her capacity as National Security Advisor, Katherine led the Senator's national security team and advised on all matters relating to foreign policy, national defense, and intelligence. Katherine started her career on Capitol Hill with Senator Lee as a Legislative Correspondent in 2018 and became the Senator's Military Legislative Assistant in 2020.

Katherine has also served as Foreign Policy Advisor to Senator Josh Hawley (R-MO) prior to returning to Senator Lee's office in 2023.

Katherine's writings on national security policy have appeared in National Review and the Federalist. Katherine received a BA in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics from the King's College NYC and is currently a candidate for a Master's Degree in War, History, and Diplomacy from King's College London's Department of War Studies.

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UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
GENERAL CHRISTOPHER G. CAVOLI, UNITED STATES ARMY
UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND

8 APRIL 2025

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished members of the House Armed Services Committee, as the Commander, U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) it is my distinct honor to testify before you again on behalf of our dedicated service members and their families in the European theater.

Since the end of World War II, the security and prosperity of the United States have been linked with security in Europe. Transatlantic trade amounts to \$6.9 trillion annually, the most we share with any nation or organization in the world. In Europe, our "Access, Basing and Overflight" agreements give us the ability to intercept threats before they approach the United States, to project U.S. combat power globally, and to deter Russian aggression against NATO.

The Alliance's military forces are in the process of an historic transformation to be fit for deterrence now and in the future. USEUCOM has a direct role in accelerating NATO's modernization, readiness, and warfighting capabilities, which will drive the Alliance to assume greater responsibility and leadership for European security.

The Euro-Atlantic Security Environment

The United States today confronts the most challenging threats in the European theater since the end of the Cold War. Russia's brutal war in Ukraine just entered its fourth year, and Russia remains willing to use military force to accomplish its geopolitical objectives. These include ambitions to expand its territorial control; broaden its influence regionally and globally; and diminish U.S. leadership and influence. Russia is actively conducting a destabilization campaign within Europe intended to create strategic dilemmas for the United States. Furthermore, Russia's ongoing effort to develop a massive military larger than its pre-war force, combined with its propensity to absorb military, political, and economic costs to achieve its strategic goals, indicate that Russia poses an enduring threat to the United States, our NATO Allies, and global security. This threat is intensified by Russia's strengthened relationships with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and

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the Republic of Iran (Iran). Together, this group of adversaries seeks to undermine U.S. and Allied advantages and challenge our vital interests at home and abroad.

Russia continues to pursue strategic objectives that undermine the United States. While the war in Ukraine has been Russia's focus and the most visible sign of Moscow's great power ambitions, Russia's strategic objectives are centered on attaining unencumbered influence in its near-abroad and greater international power while diminishing the leadership and influence of the United States. The Kremlin openly communicates its desire for an alternative to NATO as the European security architecture, to expand Russia's military, and to increase force presence in key locations along NATO borders. Following the old Soviet playbook, Russia is engaging in a calculated destabilization campaign through cyberattacks on infrastructure, public sabotage, targeted violence, weaponized migration, election interference, and information operations. These activities have serious consequences for the freedoms and prosperity we enjoy in the United States. Taken together, they confirm the chronic threat that Russia poses to U.S. interests.

Within this broader context, the war in Ukraine is fundamentally about creating opportunities for Russia to gain geopolitical advantages and denying them to NATO. The scale of violence on the battlefields in Kursk, Donetsk, and Bakhmut demonstrates Russia's willingness to employ brutal means in pursuit of its goals. Now entangled in an extended, large-scale war, the Russian regime has refashioned its military, economic, and social structures to sustain what it describes as a long-term confrontation with the West—systemic changes that illustrate Russia's intention to confront us into the foreseeable future.

Russian Reconstitution

Despite extensive battlefield losses in Ukraine, the Russian military is reconstituting and growing at a faster rate than most analysts had anticipated. In fact, the Russian army, which has borne the brunt of combat, is today larger than it was at the beginning of the war—despite suffering an estimated 790,000 casualties. In December 2024, Moscow ordered the military to

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increase its strength to 1.5 million active service members and is recruiting approximately 30,000 troops per month. Russian forces on the frontlines of Ukraine are now at over 600,000, the highest level over the course of the war and almost double the size of the initial invasion force.

Russia is not just reconstituting service members but is also replacing combat vehicles and munitions at an unprecedented pace. Russian ground forces in Ukraine have lost an estimated 3,000 tanks, 9,000 armored vehicles, 13,000 artillery systems, and over 400 air defense systems in the past year—but is on pace to replace them all. Russia has expanded its industrial production, opened new manufacturing facilities, and converted commercial production lines for military purposes. As a result, the Russian defense industrial base is expected to roll out 1,500 tanks, 3,000 armored vehicles, and 200 Iskander ballistic and cruise missiles this year. (Comparatively, the United States only produces about 135 tanks per year and no longer produces new Bradley Fighting Vehicles.) Additionally, we anticipate Russia to produce 250,000 artillery shells per month, which puts it on track to build a stockpile three times greater than the United States and Europe combined.

Not all of Russia's military capability has been degraded by the war. Russia continues to hold the largest nuclear weapons stockpile in the world. Russia's nuclear arsenal is composed of an estimated 2,500-3,500 high- and low-yield warheads, which can be tailored for use on the battlefield or employed strategically. Recently, the Kremlin updated its nuclear policy, which is intended to communicate a lower nuclear threshold and outlines the range of contingencies that could justify the use of nuclear weapons. Russia also maintains robust chemical and biological weapons programs and has repeatedly used the chemical weapon chloropicrin and riot control agents as a method of warfare across the frontlines of Ukraine, in violation of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Within its air and maritime capabilities, Russia has sustained only minor losses in Ukraine. The Russian Aerospace Force currently retains over 1,100 combat-capable aircraft that include Su-57 stealth fighters and Tu-95 and Tu-160

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strategic bombers. Aside from some losses in its Black Sea Fleet, the Russian Navy remains intact, with over 60 submarines and 42 surface vessels capable of launching nuclear-tipped Kalibr cruise missiles.

Russian commanders still emphasize quantity and mass over skill and operational acumen. However, the poorly resourced and disorganized Russian forces we saw during the initial invasion have improved significantly. Russian formations are gaining combat experience. The military has demonstrated its ability to learn from the battlefield, disseminate new concepts across organizations, and counter Ukrainian tactical and technical advantages. It has implemented rapid cycles of adaptation and is developing new capabilities to accelerate force modernization. In November 2024, the Russian military conducted its first strike on a Ukrainian military facility with the new Oreshnik intermediate-range ballistic missile. Russian officials have stated this missile could be equipped with a nuclear warhead. We have seen Russian forces employ new, domestically produced electronic countermeasures against Ukrainian jamming technology to improve strike efficacy. Additionally, Russian ground forces are integrating reconnaissance and one-way attack drones into their offensives on the battlefield. Russia is also expanding its undersea capabilities through the addition of Severodvinsk-II class nuclear-powered cruise missile attack submarines, Dolgorukiy II-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, and other undersea reconnaissance capabilities both in the European and Indo-Pacific theaters. These new capabilities show that the Russian military is intent on gaining tactical and operational advantage for the future battlefield.

To support Russia's growing military apparatus, the Kremlin has established economic policies to restructure its financial institutions and defense industry. In September 2024, Russia announced a 25% increase in defense spending, which represents 6.3% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This marks the fourth consecutive year that Russia increased its defense spending to fund the war in Ukraine and resource plans that expand its active military. All told, Russia's defense budget will account for 40% of all government expenditures which is at its

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highest level since the Cold War. As a direct result of its defense spending, Russian investments in its industrial base have reduced national unemployment to 2.4%. The Russian economy is on a war footing and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Russia's Strategic Partnerships

Further complicating the global security environment and threatening the United States are Russia's deepening strategic partnerships with our adversaries. Russia's increasing collusion with the CCP, the DPRK, and Iran serves as a force multiplier for Moscow's geopolitical goals. The group shares Russia's vision of a multipolar world and is providing an economic lifeline to Moscow. To avoid Western sanctions, the CCP and Russia are increasing the use of national currencies to conduct trade outside of SWIFT, using non-traditional finance options for business transactions, and employing financial techniques to bypass secondary sanctions. Half of Russia's energy exports currently go to China, and Russia's use of a "shadow fleet" allows it to circumvent the U.S. and G7+ partners' oil price cap policy.

Just as concerning as stronger economic ties is the increasing military collaboration between these nations. Russia's introduction of 12,000 North Korean troops into the Kursk oblast this past fall constituted an egregious escalation of the conflict. It also has global ramifications, creating the opportunity for North Korean soldiers to gain experience from modern combat and take their lessons back to the Indo-Pacific. The DPRK is providing millions of artillery shells, missiles, and weapon systems to fuel Russian operations in Ukraine, with more than 13,000 containers of supplies delivered to Russia in the past year. In exchange, Russia is almost certainly transferring missile technology to Pyongyang. The two countries further solidified their relationship by signing a mutual defense treaty in June 2024, reaffirming their wide-ranging cooperation. Iran also continued its material support for Russia, donating over 400 short-range ballistic missiles and hundreds of thousands of artillery shells. Beyond the munitions, Iran expanded its own industrial capacity to sell thousands of Shahed one-way attack drones. Tehran also provided Moscow with the licenses and technology to manufacture

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thousands more Shaheds in Russia. And, similar to the DPRK, Tehran also signed the Iranian Russian Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Moscow in January 2025.

Russia's "no limits" partnership with the CCP is creating military opportunities for our adversaries to directly hold U.S. interests at risk. In the past year, Russia and the CCP conducted two combined bomber patrols—from Russia—one over the Bering Sea and another over the Sea of Japan. These patrols marked the first time Chinese bombers departed from the same airbase with Russian bombers, the first time Chinese bombers entered the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone, and the first time Chinese nuclear-capable H-6N bombers took part in a combined patrol. In the maritime domain, the CCP and Russia conducted their fourth annual combined naval exercise, while their coast guards conducted their first combined patrol in the northern Pacific. As the Arctic ice cap recedes, both the CCP and Russia are looking to exploit the new navigable waterways. Meanwhile in the land domain, Russia and the CCP continue to expand the scope of their regularly conducted, combined-military exercises and increase their training on more sophisticated weapons platforms.

The CCP also seeks to create opportunities in Europe to exert its global influence and fracture the West. For instance, the CCP's strategic investments with individual European countries cause potential strain within the NATO Alliance. CCP state-owned enterprises continue to make substantial investments into European commercial ports, handling over 10% of Europe's port capacity. Fourteen European ports near, or co-located with, logistics hubs that move equipment and forces have significant CCP investment, which creates risks for the United States and NATO Alliance. While many European countries recognize the national security risks associated with CCP state-owned enterprises, Beijing is pushing to expand telecommunication services, green-energy companies, and electric vehicle industries within Europe. These investments may create economic growth, but they also pose security risks and offer openings for China and Russia to degrade U.S. interests and sow disunity among Allies.

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The deepening economic and military partnerships between Russia, the CCP, the DPRK, and Iran are indicative of a more intricate and global threat. These close partnerships underscore that the United States is increasingly likely to face multiple threats simultaneously. Moreover, our adversaries are learning from the war in Ukraine and accelerating the exchange of military technologies. These dynamics will shape the future threat environment, not only in Europe, but also in the Indo-Pacific and the Middle East.

Threats on the Periphery

Russia is exploiting the volatility in high-risk regions of Europe to expand its influence at the expense of the United States. In Georgia, the pro-Russian Georgia Dream party has aligned Tbilisi closer to Moscow. In Moldova, Russian influence in the November 2024 presidential election intensified as Moscow engaged in fraudulent vote-buying, election related cyberattacks, and false bomb threats against polling stations, as well as employing trained agitators to incite disorder. Since the spring of 2024, Russia has been working to steer the Western Balkans away from Euro-Atlantic integration through key-leader rhetoric, information operations, diplomatic outreach, and economic influence. Russia also courted Serbian and Bosnian-Serb officials who moved closer into the Kremlin's orbit following their participation at the October 2024 BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia.

Russia's intention is clear—it seeks to destabilize European security, increase its regional and global power, and decrease U.S. global strength. Russia is willing to sustain the high costs of a prolonged war in Ukraine; engage in a destabilization campaign against the West; build threatening relationships with the CCP, the DPRK, and Iran; and cause instability in other regions of the world.

USEUCOM's Strategic Imperatives

USEUCOM contributes to U.S. strength, safety, and prosperity through three strategic imperatives: Defend the homeland forward; Project U.S. combat power globally; and Deter Russian aggression.

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By virtue of USEUCOM's strategic location in Europe, our fundamental mission is to defend the homeland forward. As an example, USEUCOM operates in the northern Atlantic Ocean to prevent Russian nuclear-capable undersea forces from maneuvering within cruise-missile range of the United States. Preventing a Russian breakout across the Atlantic requires USEUCOM, along with our Allies, to posture, integrate, and employ a suite of capabilities to deter and block Moscow from threatening the homeland.

Defending the homeland also requires deep intelligence structures and relationships that provide us with invaluable and sensitive information critical to U.S. national security. Our ability to gather this intelligence is enabled through enduring relationships with our European Allies. These relationships cannot develop episodically; they must be sustained by enduring U.S. engagement.

Projecting U.S. power is a fundamental task for USEUCOM. U.S. power projection platforms in Europe require "Access, Basing, and Overflight" agreements from the countries we seek to operate in and from. These legally binding and politically agreed arrangements enable the United States to project U.S. combat power not just within Europe, but globally. For example, the arrangements we have in Europe proved crucial in 2024 for the United States' support of the defense of Israel. USEUCOM directly supported U.S. Central Command's (USCENTCOM) efforts in the Israel-Hamas conflict by providing Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) capable ships to the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as sharing sensor data that enables USCENTCOM BMD protection capabilities. These cross-Combatant Command operations demonstrate the efficiencies that USEUCOM's force projection capabilities provide against DoD's many global priorities. The politically binding nature of the agreements that enable USEUCOM's power projection capability require the host nations in Europe to know that we will honor and respect their interests and that we will not violate their hospitality. This requires trust and confidence between both the United States and individual European nations. In exchange, we enjoy unparalleled responsiveness in crises.

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Finally, USEUCOM deters Russian aggression against NATO. Credible deterrence requires the presence of combat-capable forces and a sufficient force presence to convince Russia that any military action harmful to the interests of the United States will be met with force. Therefore, USEUCOM must prepare the forces assigned and allocated to us to fight and win; and develop key infrastructure throughout the theater to support readiness and operations.

USEUCOM Postured Across Europe

Our brave service members professionally represent the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard, and Special Operations Forces, all of whom remain steadfast in our mission to deter an expanding Russian threat. Their dedicated efforts secure the United States forward, advance American national interests, and advance the shared interests we maintain with our Allies.

USEUCOM currently commands nearly 80,000 American service members throughout the European theater. This is a reduction from the 105,000 service members postured in Europe after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 and represents about 20% of the U.S. forces that were stationed in Europe during the Cold War to deter the Soviet Union.

Deterrence is most challenging in the land domain. Russia continues to reconstitute its conventional forces, and possesses advantages in geography, domain, and readiness. A conventional fight with Russia will be decided on land, and it would likely begin with a comparatively large Russian force positioned on a NATO border in order to negate traditional U.S. and NATO advantages in, and preferences for, long-range, standoff warfare. Therefore, NATO, including USEUCOM, must be postured to blunt Russia's ability to rapidly mass numerically superior land forces.

In the air domain, USEUCOM and Allies require a combination of standoff and survivable, distributed capabilities to identify, target, and engage attacking forces at the outset of conflict in a heavily contested environment. USEUCOM established one F-35 squadron at Royal Air Force (RAF) Lakenheath in the United Kingdom, which is now fully operational. A

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second squadron of F-35s will be complete this summer and will achieve full operational capability this fall. These two squadrons will replace fourth-generation aircraft currently stationed in Europe with more advanced fifth-generation capabilities. To enable aerospace lethality, USEUCOM continues to work with our Allies and partners to implement the U.S. Air Force's Agile Combat Employment (ACE) concept. Once fully realized, ACE is envisioned to support American and Allied aircraft with shared infrastructure in multiple locations throughout Europe, enabling our air forces to become more dynamic and survivable against our adversaries' air and anti-air defense capabilities. This includes integrating U.S. and NATO command-and-control structures that provide early warning and detection against Russian conventional and nuclear-capable forces. Should Russia mobilize its conventional forces, the NATO Alliance will be able to activate its defense plans and respond with force. If NATO's alert system detects Russian nuclear activity, USEUCOM provides an essential component of the U.S. nuclear umbrella that helps to guarantee our Allies' security.

In the maritime domain, surface, sub-surface, and land-based capabilities protect the homeland forward, ensure transatlantic-power projection, defend key maritime terrain and lines of communication, and represent a critical leg of our nuclear triad. The USS Oscar Austin, the fifth Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer committed to the European theater, arrived in Rota, Spain this past October. The USS Oscar Austin expands our anti-air and anti-submarine warfare capabilities across the European theater. USEUCOM awaits the arrival of its sixth Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer soon, as well as receiving a new Auxiliary General Ocean class surveillance ship to expand our underwater surveillance and detection capabilities. These maritime capabilities complement the U.S. Marine Corps' presence in the High North, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, and Mediterranean to enable sea control from the shore. USEUCOM also conducts air and maritime patrols in the High North alongside our Nordic Allies and the United Kingdom. These operations demonstrate freedom of navigation in Arctic waters and support international maritime law.

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In the cyber domain, USEUCOM receives direct support from U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) through the Joint Force Headquarters – Cyber. It is responsible for the planning, oversight, and management of cyber operations within the theater. Additionally, each service component has a robust cyber capability to protect its networks from external threats. Finally, USEUCOM collaborates with USCYBERCOM to enhance both offensive and defensive cyber capabilities, leveraging coordination with our Allies and partners. This initiative aims to deter advanced, persistent threats and bolster the resilience of the NATO Alliance.

In the space domain, our newest service component, U.S. Space Forces Europe and Africa, continues to build its capabilities since activation in December 2023. Capitalizing on our space capability advantages requires forward-positioned equipment and Guardians to operate it. These capabilities, particularly assets that are strategically tethered in Europe and supported by our Allies, provide us the ability to deliver space effects globally against all our adversaries. Our space component has rapidly built relationships with NATO Allies to increase Allied contributions to our collective security from space-based threats. It remains integral to creating a networked, joint-space architecture responsible for protecting space assets and to deliver space-related benefits across the entire globe.

USEUCOM's Special Operations Forces (SOF) maintain a persistent presence across 28 European countries. These forces focus on tasks to bolster deterrence and set conditions to prevail in conflict, recently expanding our relationships with Nordic nations. Moreover, Special Operations Command Europe and NATO Allied Special Operations Forces Command recently merged under U.S. command, which improves European SOF capability under the leadership of a single U.S. commanding general.

USEUCOM's Operations, Activities, and Investments (OAI)

USEUCOM's OAIs send a clear and credible deterrent message to Russia and other U.S. adversaries that the United States is ready, willing, and able to defend U.S. interests in the Euro-Atlantic area. Our OAIs don't just deter adversaries and promote stability, they also

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reassure our Allies and partners of the U.S. commitment to security. This commitment is global: USEUCOM also conducts OAs in support of other U.S. Combatant Commands in order to deter interconnected threats from Russia, the CCP, the DPRK, and Iran.

USEUCOM's OAs are vital to our ability to build well-trained, interoperable, and combat-ready forces. We do this alongside our NATO Allies through an extensive joint and multinational exercise program. Continuing these exercises to build interoperable, combat-ready, and lethal forces is critical to expanding NATO's warfighting capabilities. To improve preparedness for conflict, USEUCOM and NATO are developing realistic training scenarios for these events that simulate the plausible pathways to conflict that provide a credible threat for our forces to train against. All told, these training exercises represent a mind-set shift toward collective defense and warfighting for high-intensity conflict alongside our NATO Allies.

U.S. investments through the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) support USEUCOM's ability to build readiness and deter aggression. EDI funding supports the rotational deployment of U.S. forces to Europe, generates readiness through exercises and training, expands the pre-positioning of combat-credible forces, improves military infrastructure, and builds interoperability with our NATO Allies and European partners.

In executing EDI-funded projects, we seek to share costs with our Allies. For example, Poland leveraged NATO Security Investment Program funds to build a \$325 million storage facility for a U.S. armored BCT equipment set at the Army Prepositioned Stocks site in Powidz. The Polish Army will also maintain the equipment in accordance with the U.S.-Poland Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

In addition to deterring Russian aggression against NATO on behalf of the DoD, USEUCOM coordinates and executes U.S. security assistance to Ukraine. Since 2022, USEUCOM's Security Assistance Group – Ukraine (SAG-U) has delivered to Ukraine \$65.9 billion in munitions, weapons, vehicles, and other assistance. SAG-U's mission is to support security-assistance activities, coordinate training, oversee efforts to supply and equip the Armed

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Forces of Ukraine (AFU), and enhance Ukraine's situational awareness. This security assistance has enabled Ukraine to defend itself from Russian attack, providing opportunities for the Joint Force to learn and adapt from observed battlefield successes and challenges.

In December, NATO stood up the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU), which has assumed the mission to create enduring, predictable, and coherent support to Ukraine through the coordination of Allied logistics, training, and planning efforts. This also means NATO is responsible for defending logistical nodes on NATO's eastern flank that the Allies use to support and train the AFU. The creation of NSATU is a huge step for NATO to assume a greater role in supporting Ukraine's self-defense.

Our NATO Allies have also made substantial contributions to Ukraine's defense, allocating more than \$60 billion in military assistance to support Ukraine's war effort. In some cases, NATO Allies donated their entire inventory of certain weapon systems. To backfill these systems, our Allies purchased upgraded replacements from U.S. companies. From FY 17-21, the FMS portfolio for our European Allies averaged \$11 billion annually; but in FY 24 it was \$68 billion—a 600% increase. However, insufficient production capacity across the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) is delaying the replacement of these systems and creating strategic risks for not only our NATO Allies, but also U.S. forces. Despite foreign governments investing more into the U.S. DIB, many critical systems—such as HIMARs, F-35s, Patriots, and infantry fighting vehicles—are not delivering on time. The problem of slow production is compounded by frustration with an overly expensive, slow, and increasingly mistake-prone Foreign Military Sales (FMS) system, and Allies are increasingly likely to look elsewhere for armaments. USEUCOM engages with our Allies on this issue daily and is working with the DoD on FMS and broader armaments cooperation to encourage the U.S. defense industry to produce sustainable capabilities and deliver them quickly.

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Strengthening NATO

Our NATO Allies have embarked upon an historic effort to modernize the Alliance's systems and readiness for collective defense, and they are demonstrating resolve in reorienting towards that traditional mission. Considerable progress has been made over the past year.

The three Regional Plans approved at the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius continue to serve as the blueprint for the modernization efforts. First, these plans define a force structure requirement that outlines the exact military capabilities that NATO will need to execute the plans—and assign specific capability targets for each Ally. Nations now have an objective, plans-based “shopping list” for their defense spending and are using this framework to drive their national procurement processes. To meet these requirements, nations are investing at an unprecedented rate.

Second, the Alliance has restructured its command-and-control systems to better synchronize multi-domain operations for high-intensity conflict. Headquarters are linked to specific terrain which enhances interoperability with assigned units and generates readiness for large-scale territorial defense.

Third, Allies have delegated operational decision-making and many basic military authorities to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe that had previously been withheld at the political level. This now grants Allied military structures the ability to act and react at the speed of relevance in the current security environment. There are already instances of these new authorities rapidly enabling activities, such as the ongoing efforts in the Baltic Sea to protect critical undersea infrastructure and employment of the Allied Reaction Force in the Western Balkans.

USEUCOM is accelerating NATO's modernization for collective defense and ownership of European security through the ruthless prioritization of warfighting capabilities and readiness within the Alliance. The United States leads the combined militaries of 32 Allied nations across the Euro-Atlantic. USEUCOM's warfighting-focused and plans-based approach builds the

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Alliance capability required for collective defense while enabling the U.S. Joint Force greater strategic flexibility to address other global priorities.

Conclusion

USEUCOM maintains the capability and capacity to defend the homeland forward, project U.S. combat power globally, and deter Russian aggression against NATO in support of U.S. interests. Moscow's ongoing war in Ukraine, destabilization campaign against the West, societal mobilization for war, and growing strategic partnerships with our adversaries all indicate that Russia will continue to threaten U.S. security and economic interests well into the future. Therefore, the United States and NATO need to continue to prepare to meet this threat. USEUCOM is helping to prepare the Alliance by increasing European ownership of European security; prioritizing warfighting in everything we do; and building readiness to execute the defense plans. All of this requires U.S. leadership, continued investment in advanced capabilities, and a sustainable transition to an Allied-led defense in Europe. The global threats we face today are significant, perhaps never more so than since the end of the Cold War. Through USEUCOM, with the strength and professionalism of our forces and NATO's commitment to collective defense, our investments in Europe today will secure the peace for our future.

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General Christopher G. Cavoli

General Christopher G. Cavoli assumed duties as Commander, U.S. European Command, July 1, 2022 and Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), July 4, 2022.

Commissioned into the Infantry in 1987, Gen. Cavoli has served in a wide variety of positions throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. He's commanded the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment; 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division; 7th Army Training Command; and 25th Infantry Division. Most recently, General Cavoli commanded U.S. Army Europe from Jan 2018 to Jun 2022, during which time he also incorporated responsibilities for Army operations in Africa into his command's portfolio.

Gen. Cavoli's non-command billets include Deputy Commander of Regional Command West in Herat, Afghanistan, and Deputy Commanding General for Operations at the 82nd Airborne Division.

Gen. Cavoli's staff experience includes service as the Director for Russia on the Joint Staff; Deputy Executive Assistant for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Director of the Chief of Staff of the Army's Coordination Group.

He has held fellowships at the National Defense University, the George C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies, and the Army Chief of Staff's Strategic Studies Group.

Gen. Cavoli is a Foreign Area Officer with a concentration on Eurasia, and speaks Italian, Russian, and French. He holds degrees from Princeton University and Yale University.

His awards include the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Ranger Tab, and Master Parachutist's Wings.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

APRIL 8, 2025

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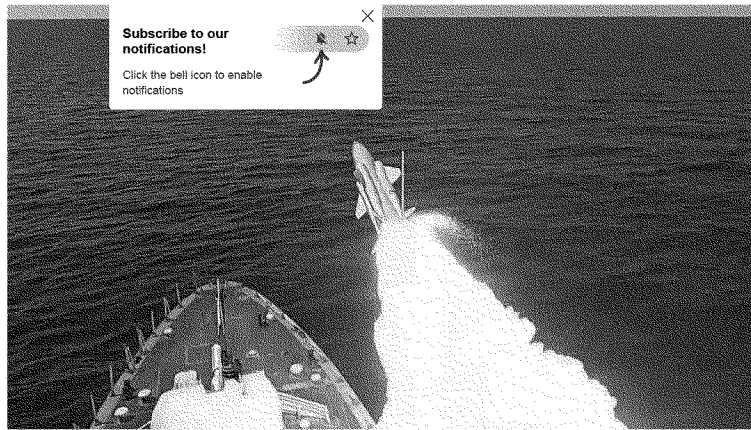
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PEACE PLAN TRUMP ZELENSKY

Russia Mocks Trump Ceasefire Deal With Sea- Launched Missile Attack on Ukrainian Cities

A Donald J. Trump deal about no one shooting in the Black Sea basin went belly-up on Sunday with a thumping Russian navy salvo of cruise missiles that pounded Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities.

by Stefan Korshak | April 7, 2025, 4:21 pm

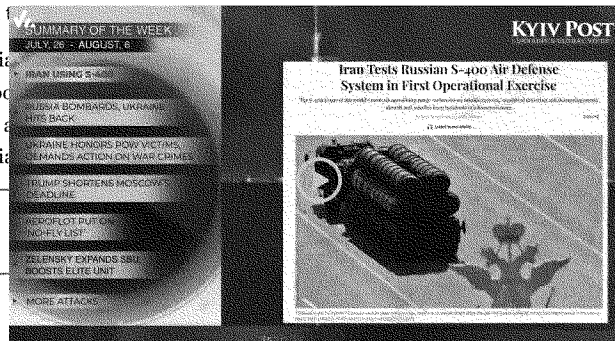


This grab taken from a handout footage released by the Russian Defence Ministry on July 21, 2023 shows a Russian Black Sea Fleet warship firing a cruise missile during drills in the Black Sea. (Photo by Handout / Russian Defence Ministry / AFP)

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Russian warships on Sunday mocked a ceasefire claimed by the White House to be in effect between Kyiv and Moscow and covering the entirety of the Black Sea, with the massed launch of naval cruise missiles at the Ukrainian capital and other civilian

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The Russian cruise missile offshore of the Black Sea, reported variously as eight to 12 Kalibrs operating in the eastern Black Sea. The missiles were fired in groups of four and flew at a low level, the Ukrainian UNIAN news agency reported.



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Ukrainian military spokesmen said that air defense units spotted, in total, nine X-101 or X-55SM bomber-launched cruise missiles, eight sea-launched Kalibr missiles, six Iskander-M ballistic missiles, and 132 drones of various types entering Ukrainian airspace. The bombers launched missiles from airspace above

Russia's S
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✕ missiles were fired from Russia's Bryansk
wns of six bomber-launched cruise
missiles, six ship-launched cruise missiles, one ballistic missile, and 40 attack
drones.



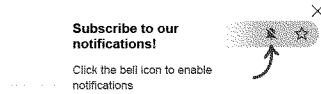
OTHER TOPICS OF INTEREST

Madyar: Ukraine's Birdman Hunting Worms From the Sky

Stalking his quarry of Russian "worms" like a raptor, Robert Brovdi and his elite teams of drone operators, are now the emblem of Ukrainian entrepreneurial ingenuity in warfighting.

Another 53 simulator drones were tracked and ignored, and Ukraine's Kyiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy, and Mykolaiv regions were affected by the Russian attack, the air force statement said. Kyiv Post reporters observed anti-aircraft missile launches and ground explosions during the Russian attack on the capital.

The White House, on March 25, announced Russia and Ukraine had agreed to a ceasefire in the Black Sea. Until the Sunday launch of cruise missiles against Ukraine by Russia's Black Sea fleet, the Kremlin had not openly contradicted the US government claim that Russia had promised not to engage in combat activities in the Black Sea basin. Ukraine has no navy.



Since Russia's Black Sea Fleet evacuated its main base in Sevastopol, Ukraine in October 2023, major sea engagements have been rare in the Black Sea, because Russian warships have been careful to stay outside the range of Ukrainian shore-based anti-ship missiles.

The March 25 deal, according to the White House, also committed Ukraine and Russia not to attack each other's energy infrastructure. Both Russia and Ukraine since then have repeatedly accused each other of carrying out power grid attacks.

The most visible violation of the energy ceasefire claimed by the US to be in effect, took place on place on March 27, with a Kremlin drone strike hitting the northern Ukrainian city of Poltava. Multiple Russian explosives-toting robot aircraft pounded an industrial district, leaving thousands of homes and businesses without electricity. Russia's defense ministry, on April 2, accused Ukraine of using artillery and drones to hit power lines and transformers in Russia's western Kursk region, cutting power to 1,500 households.

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Officials in the US believe that the Russian administration say a deal brokered by the US and all hostilities is near final agreement, but the Russian side said it would agree to a peace deal but only if it has extra conditions it wants to discuss. Ukrainian officials have said Russia is negotiating in bad faith.

On Friday, a Russian Iskander-M ballistic missile hit an apartment block in the south-eastern city of Kryvyi Rih, killing 20 civilians and injuring at least 35 more people. Russia's defense ministry said it had attacked a restaurant used by Ukrainian officers. Ukrainian media and local accounts said the strike hit civilians and their homes and was consistent with a long-running Kremlin policy of trying to force Ukraine to surrender by attacking civilians.

Speaking to reporters on Air Force One, in comments published by AP on Monday, Trump said: “We’re talking to Russia. We’d like them to stop. I don’t like the bombing. They’re bombing. It goes on and on. And every week people of... thousands and thousands of young people are being killed. And, uh, it’s a horrible thing.”

Trump's comments made Sunday evening en route to Washington came some twelve hours after the Russian Black Sea missile launches, and three days after the bloody Kryvvi Rih missile strike.

Ukrainian  Kryvyi Rih were especially high because the Russian missiles that detonated over several apartment buildings. The youngest child killed in the attack was three and the youngest treated for injuries was three months old, Ukrainian news reports said.

Bridget Brink, US Ambassador to Ukraine, set off an internet firestorm on Sunday with an “X” post on the Kryvyi Rih attack, saying that she was “horrificed” by the strike and repeating a Trump mantra: “The war must end” – without mentioning it was Russia that launched the child-killing missile.

In a comparatively mild Ukrainian response to Brink’s omission, lawmaker Maryana Bezuhla, on Sunday called on parliament to declare Brink persona non grata – and so she could be kicked out of Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr [Zelensky](#), in weekend comments on the US response to the Kryvyi Rih attack, said that he was disappointed that the US Embassy in Kyiv did not acknowledge Russia had launched the missile, and that he hoped that Washington would pressure Russia to negotiate peace in good faith.

Kevin Hassett, White House Economic Council Director, told ABC news on Sunday that the reason the United States had on Thursday hit almost every country on Earth with new tariffs, but not Russia, was that negotiations for peace were in progress with Russia and that were the US to introduce new conditions into those talks reaching a peace would become more complicated.

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“There’s, uh, obviously an ongoing negotiation with Russia and Ukraine, and I think the president made the decision not to conflate the two issues. It doesn’t mean that in the fullness of time Russia isn’t going to be treated wildly different (sic: differently) than every other country. They’re in the middle of a negotiation,” Hassett said. “Would you, would you literally advise that in the middle of a negotiations that affects so many American and Ukrainian and Russian lives? You wouldn’t.”

The US on Friday did not make an exception for Ukraine from new tariffs, hitting the former Soviet republic with a blanket 10% tariff on Ukrainian goods imported to the US. European countries the White House has said must increase defense expenditures to deploy peacekeepers to Ukraine, would in the future, face a new 20% across-the-EU tariff, US officials said.

Zelensky, on Saturday, in nationally televised remarks, said that Kyiv saw American placement of tariffs on Ukraine while not doing so on Russia, during a peace talks process, as an unfriendly step but not seriously damaging to the Ukrainian economy. US-Ukraine trade is insubstantial (\$3.5 billion/year) and arms transfers by Washington to Kyiv, were they to take place, would not be affected by the Trump tariffs, the Ukrainian leader said.

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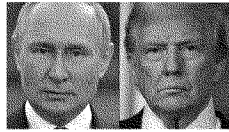
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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

APRIL 8, 2025

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WILSON

Mr. WILSON. General Cavoli, in your testimony you stated how the US is building up its collective security to combat space threats by working alongside our European allies.

Can you speak on the types of capabilities Russia currently possesses in the space domain, and our ability to meet those threats with our allies? Can you also speak on the types of capabilities Russia currently possesses or is trying to obtain?

General CAVOLI. Russia currently possesses ground-based anti-satellite (ASAT) systems, including electronic warfare (EW) systems, high-power ASAT lasers, and direct-ascent missiles. To date, Russia has fielded a wide range of ground-based Electronic Warfare systems to counter Global Positioning System, radar, and communications satellites. Additionally, Russia has several ground-based lasers intended to disable satellite sensors, such as the Peresvet, which is designed to blind enemy optical tracking systems for the purpose of masking the movement of strategic missile systems. By 2030, Russia may also field higher power laser systems that threaten the structures of the satellite itself, and not just the sensors. Russia is developing ASAT missile systems to destroy U.S. and Allied satellites in all orbits. Under the guise of inspection and service missions, Russia continues to research and develop sophisticated orbital capabilities that could serve dual-use purposes. Over the last five years, Russia has deployed satellites that have performed outside their stated mission areas, conducted maneuvers that threatened U.S. satellites, and tested space-based ASAT weapons. Critically, Russia is also developing a new satellite meant to carry a nuclear weapon as an anti-satellite capability.

Mr. WILSON. General Cavoli, you mentioned how the European Deterrence Initiative supports EUCOM's ability to deter and build readiness. Having the ability to rotate forces ensures that we maintain a constant presence of combat-credible forces.

Can you explain the importance of the US being able to maintain this capability?

General CAVOLI. The United States' ability to rotate forces and maintain a constant, combat-credible, presence in Europe through the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) is crucial for several reasons. First, a visible and robust U.S. military presence in Europe serves as a powerful deterrent against potential adversaries. It signals a commitment to the defense of our NATO Allies and partners, making any aggressive action by our adversaries a much riskier proposition. The ability to rotate forces enhances this deterrent effect by demonstrating that the United States can quickly reinforce its presence. Second, maintaining regular rotations and training exercises with our Allies builds interoperability, enhances our collective warfighting abilities, and strengthens the Alliance. Further, maintaining a forward presence in Europe allows the United States to project power globally in support of U.S. interests in other areas of responsibility (AORs), like CENTCOM or AFRICOM. Europe serves as a strategic hub for operations in these regions, and a robust U.S. presence there enhances the ability to respond quickly and effectively.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SCOTT

Mr. SCOTT. From your perspective, how does the National Guard enhance EUCOM's ability to project stability and reassure allies in regions like the Baltics or the Black Sea?

General CAVOLI. Through the State Partnership Program (SPP) in Europe, National Guard service members mentor NATO Allies on meeting the NATO Regional Plan capability targets. These efforts focus on enhancing capability and capacity of SPP partner nation militaries. The trust established through the long-term relationships developed by this program bolsters defense capability throughout USEUCOM's area of responsibility. For example, National Guard leaders play a critical role as we look to our NATO Allies and European partners to increase burden sharing of defense requirements, especially in the Baltics and the Black Sea. Because of the conversations and relationships fostered by National Guard leaders, many European nations are already committing to increasing defense spending, investing in defense

and enhancing defense capacity building, and creating a stronger, and more reliable, defense posture in Europe.

Mr. SCOTT. Are there specific skill sets or capabilities within the National Guard that EUCOM is looking to expand or tap into further to meet future operational demands in Europe?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM relies on the National Guard to engage with partners nations to develop relationships that are tailored to partnered-country requirements. For example, in addition to providing training in areas like land operations, air defense, cyber defense, or space defense; National Guard service members provide expertise in areas like interaction with civilian agencies, Noncommissioned Officer development, and Division-level Command and Control. As the operational demands evolve and host nation requirements change over time, USEUCOM will continue to leverage the National Guard's capabilities and relationships as much as possible through the State Partnership Program.

Mr. SCOTT. How does EUCOM leverage the unique capabilities of the National Guard to strengthen partnerships with NATO allies and enhance deterrence in the European theater?

General CAVOLI. The trust established through the long-term relationships developed by the State Partnership Program bolsters defense capability, influences defense spending increases, and provides opportunities for access, basing, and overflight in support of U.S. interests. USEUCOM also leverages the relationships built by the National Guard to influence partnered-country investments in the NATO capability targets.

Mr. SCOTT. With Europe's reliance on imports and potential disruptions from conflicts-like Ukraine's grain export issues-how does EUCOM assess risks to food security as a destabilizing factor? Are there specific agricultural choke points you're monitoring?

General CAVOLI. EUCOM does not actively monitor specific agricultural chokepoints but does maintain situational awareness of the overall political and economic environment, which would indicate any potential risk to future security. USEUCOM is also tightly linked with our NATO Allies and partners, which are the first lines of defense for addressing food insecurity. We also actively monitor natural and man-made disasters that could potentially impact Europe. For additional details about specific agricultural choke points, I would refer to the subject matter experts at the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. SCOTT. Russia uses its grain and fertilizer exports as geopolitical tools. From EUCOM's vantage point, how is this shaping alliances or pressuring NATO partners, and could USDA data on alternative supply chains strengthen your response options?

General CAVOLI. Russia uses its grain and fertilizer exports as a geopolitical tool, but it has a limited impact on the NATO Alliance. Most European countries have strong agricultural sectors capable of mitigating adverse impacts due to Russian sanctions on European food producers. Some NATO Allies are more vulnerable to Russia's manipulation of its grain and fertilizer exports, and USEUCOM has historically relied on interagency partners' efforts to support those Allies in achieving agricultural independence.

Mr. SCOTT. As the Arctic warms, opening new land for farming, how does EUCOM see this shifting regional power dynamics? Are you tracking foreign actors-like China or Russia-eyeing agricultural expansion in the Arctic?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM tracks Russia's current economic and military activity within the Arctic and continues to assess Russia's actions in response to environmental changes. Russia is attempting to capitalize on emerging economic opportunities caused by warming in the areas of agricultural, energy, mineral, and other natural resource extraction. Additionally, Russia views shipping through the Northern Sea Route as key to its future economic prosperity. Thawing permafrost and newly accessible transportation routes are providing new areas for cooperation and competition in the Arctic. However, warming will also present challenges, such as coastal erosion and flooding. Russia has sought to work with partners, including China, to develop this region and exploit its economic opportunities.

Mr. SCOTT. Europe's a hub for cutting-edge agricultural technology. Has EUCOM detected adversaries targeting this sector for intellectual property theft, and could USDA collaboration help safeguard it?

General CAVOLI. To date, USEUCOM has not detected adversaries targeting agricultural technology for intellectual property theft. The food and agriculture sectors are susceptible to a variety of physical and cyber intrusions, to include attacks on the irrigation and global navigation satellite systems used to cultivate and manage farmland. If adversarial actions are detected, USEUCOM will work with its interagency partners, including USDA, to counter them.

Mr. SCOTT. Given Europe's dense farming networks, has EUCOM picked up any signals of potential agricultural sabotage-like engineered crop diseases-as a hybrid warfare tactic? What's the contingency if that threat materializes?

General CAVOLI. There is no current report that indicates state, or non-state, malign actors are actively planning agriculture sabotage in the USEUCOM area of responsibility. If the threat materializes, EUCOM will work with our U.S. and Allied agency partners to share intelligence and warning through established reporting mechanisms to develop countermeasures.

Mr. SCOTT. If EUCOM could tap one USDA resource-whether it's expertise on resilient crops, trade flow analysis, or rural infrastructure insights-to support your mission, what would it be?

General CAVOLI. USDA shares important resources and tools, such as trade analysis, that help support USEUCOM's mission. Other USDA expertise is welcome as it relates to infrastructure resilience and European food security.

Mr. SCOTT. Europe's mix of farmland and forests offers cover for illicit activities-smuggling, troop movements, etc. How does the agricultural landscape influence EUCOM's operational strategy, and could USDA's satellite or land-use data sharpen your situational awareness?

General CAVOLI. Europe's physical geography, including open farmland and canalizing forests, are important factors that are considered in mission planning processes. USEUCOM has access to robust intelligence about Europe's terrain and uses the USDA Texture Classification System methodology to assess European soil types, layers, and characteristics as part of its Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment.

Mr. SCOTT. How is EUCOM working with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to integrate their national air defense systems into a cohesive NATO IAMD framework?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM works with the Baltic nations via the Congressionally approved Significant Security Cooperation Initiative to acquire interoperable Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) capabilities. These are designed to complement NATO operations, actions, activities, response plans and associated defense designs. New and existing Baltic IAMD capabilities, including command and control, communications, computers, and intelligence, are integrated into NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defense Network. This ensures the full range of Alliance IAMD capabilities (that would otherwise exceed Baltic nation Gross Domestic Product limitations) that can be employed to deter aggression and defend the Baltic nations as required.

Mr. SCOTT. Given the Baltic states' limited indigenous medium- and long-range air defense capabilities, what is EUCOM's plan to address these gaps, either through rotational deployments, permanent basing, or support for local acquisition of systems like NASAMS or Patriot?

General CAVOLI. Through the Baltics Significant Security Cooperation Initiative, USEUCOM ensures Baltic nation Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) capabilities complement U.S. and NATO operational plans. Further, USEUCOM works with Baltic nations to acquire IAMD systems and build interoperable defense capabilities with the U.S. and NATO Alliance. Rotational deployments of U.S. and other Allied forces reinforce Baltic and NATO IAMD capabilities and serve to hone combined operations, demonstrate resolve, and strengthen deterrence.

Mr. SCOTT. How does EUCOM prioritize missile defense enhancements in the Baltics, particularly against the backdrop of competing demands across the European theater?

General CAVOLI. The Department of Defense's train and equip funding for our Baltic Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) program remains USEUCOM's number one priority to the Significant Security Cooperation Initiative. USEUCOM expects to complete the Baltic IAMD program with \$35M in FY26 and can then address other critical needs.

Mr. SCOTT. What role do joint exercises like Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) or NATO's Air Defender play in testing and improving IAMD readiness for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania? How is EUCOM supporting the Baltic nations in developing early warning and command-and-control capabilities to enhance their contribution to NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence System?

General CAVOLI. Joint and combined exercises are essential for maintaining readiness, ensuring responsiveness, realizing seamless integration at speed, and executing effective command and control. USEUCOM efforts integrate Baltic capabilities into U.S. and NATO command and control infrastructures, such as NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defense Network and the U.S. Shared Early Warning system. USEUCOM helps develop early warning and command and control capabilities for all Baltic nations through the Baltics Significant Security Cooperation Initiative. This effort ensures Baltic nation capabilities complement U.S. and NATO plans and

operations and are interoperable with the full range of U.S. and Alliance IAMD systems.

Mr. SCOTT. What is EUCOM's assessment of the rotational deployment of U.S. air defense assets (e.g., THAAD or Patriot batteries) to the Baltic states as a deterrent against Russian air and missile threats? How does EUCOM balance the need for a persistent IAMD presence in the Baltics with the broader demands of reinforcing other NATO allies in Eastern Europe?

General CAVOLI. Rotational deployments of U.S. Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) assets leverage joint IAMD capabilities from multiple domains (i.e., Baltic Air Policing). Also, rotational deployments are ideally executed as national force contributions to NATO operations that reinforce Baltic IAMD capabilities for deterrence against Russian air and missile threats. USEUCOM considers the full range of operational requirements throughout the entire area of responsibility and works with NATO to array and employ in-theater forces to achieve objectives and manage risk.

Mr. SCOTT. How is EUCOM preparing the Baltic nations to counter emerging threats, such as unmanned aerial systems (UAS), cruise missiles, and electronic warfare, which could bypass traditional air defense networks? What role does EUCOM envision for next-generation technologies-like directed-energy weapons or AI-driven IAMD systems-in bolstering Baltic defenses over the next decade?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM considers current and emerging threats, as well as potential innovations for employing next-generation technologies, as an essential part of building Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) capabilities. USEUCOM pursues a layered approach to IAMD that leverages the full range of joint capabilities to include electronic warfare, cyber, and space. Developing and leveraging next generation technologies is essential for countering air and missile threats both in mass and sophistication. Effects-based passive and active defense and attack capabilities, enabled by artificial intelligence with improved intelligence and warning, support ever decreasing engagement decision timelines and execute time-sensitive targeting of adversarial air and missile threats.

Mr. SCOTT. What mechanisms are currently in place under U.S. law (e.g., the Arms Export Control Act) to facilitate rapid third-party transfers of U.S.-provided weapons and ammunition among Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during a crisis? How does EUCOM coordinate with the U.S. State Department to streamline approval processes for such transfers, and are there pre-existing agreements with the Baltic states to expedite these in wartime scenarios?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM is prepared to support the execution of third-party transfers. However, because third-party transfers are policy considerations, I recommend referring this question to the Department of State, which is the authority on third-party transfer policy and arms control.

Mr. SCOTT. How does EUCOM assess the operational need for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to share U.S.-supplied munitions, such as Javelin missiles or HIMARS rockets, given their geographic proximity and shared threat environment?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM assesses the requirement for interoperable U.S.-supplied munitions as critical to Baltic Defense. As the region lacks strategic depth, the Baltics are dependent upon a narrow land corridor and vulnerable sea and air lines of communication for NATO reinforcements. Therefore, collective defense needs to be integrated, agile, and responsive. USEUCOM continues to coordinate with the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and the security assistance enterprise to ensure technical and procedural interoperability of Javelin and High Mobility Artillery Rocket System munitions. Additionally, USEUCOM is working to ensure the exchangeability of Baltic target packages so they can seamlessly share target sets across the Alliance.

Mr. SCOTT. What contingency plans has EUCOM developed to ensure that third-party transfers can occur seamlessly if one Baltic state faces a munitions shortfall during a conflict?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM is prepared to support the execution of third-party transfers. However, because third-party transfers are policy considerations, I recommend referring this question to the Department of State, which is the authority on third-party transfer policy and arms control.

Mr. SCOTT. What logistical hurdles does EUCOM anticipate in transferring U.S. weapons and ammunition between the Baltic states, particularly given the region's limited transportation infrastructure and potential for disruption in a crisis? How is EUCOM working with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to preposition stockpiles or establish cross-border supply chains to minimize delays in transferring critical munitions?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM anticipates significant logistical challenges in the Baltics due to constrained rail capacity, road networks not designed for heavy mili-

tary traffic, and the potential for adversary disruption targeting of key nodes. USEUCOM is working with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to establish secure, pre-positioned, stockpiles of critical munitions within their borders. Simultaneously, USEUCOM is developing streamlined cross-border customs agreements to facilitate rapid movement, including utilizing multi-modal transport solutions. These efforts, coupled with infrastructure improvements, coordinated with our Baltic partners, aim to ensure timely delivery of vital support in any contingency. Despite these operational realities, the accession of Finland and Sweden present opportunities for Allies to assume increased burden sharing for prepositioned war reserve materiel and reinforcement across vital movement corridors.

Mr. SCOTT. What are the primary sources of delay EUCOM foresees in executing third-party transfers during a crisis-e.g., bureaucratic approvals, transportation bottlenecks, or enemy interdiction-and how are these being mitigated? In a scenario where Russian forces disrupt Baltic airspace or ground routes, how would EUCOM ensure the timely delivery of U.S. weapons and ammunition between the three nations?

General CAVOLI. Efforts are underway to speed up cross-border processes, such as customs and regulations, through digitization and collaborative exercises with partners like the State Department. To enhance logistical capabilities, the Reinforcement & Sustainment Network (RSN) is being developed and improved with support from NATO and Allied Nations. This network is being rigorously evaluated for resilience against potential enemy interference, using a framework focused on robustness and redundancy. Specifically, regarding potential Russian disruption in the Baltics, the plan relies on a strong RSN, pre-positioned supplies, and diversified transport alongside close Allied coordination. USEUCOM would anticipate delays in potential third-party transfers stemming from bureaucratic hurdles like export controls, limited Baltic infrastructure capacity, military mobility capacity and residency in commercial sector, and the potential for Russian interdiction of key transport routes. If airspace or ground routes are disrupted, USEUCOM will prioritize maritime and strategic airlift options utilizing alternate ports and airfields outside the immediate conflict zone. Ultimately, a resilient network of pre-positioned supplies and diversified transport methods will ensure continued support to our Baltic Allies despite Russian interference. In addition, USEUCOM is working with our Allies to build cyber resiliency in key aspects of logistics infrastructure.

Mr. SCOTT. What joint training initiatives is EUCOM conducting with the Baltic states to prepare their forces for the rapid transfer and use of U.S. weapons and ammunition from a neighboring country? How does EUCOM ensure that Baltic military leadership is aligned on protocols for requesting, approving, and executing such transfers under time-sensitive conditions?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM's Army service component, U.S. Army Europe and Africa, hosts a European HIMARS Initiative to bring together all European HIMARS users to share best practices and cooperate on rocket artillery fielding and operations. The Ministers of Defense of all three Baltic nations are in lockstep on this issue, and we continue to encourage them to work with the Department of State to ensure any protocols necessary for third-party transfers are in place.

Mr. SCOTT. How does EUCOM integrate NATO's logistics and command structures into the process of third-party transfers between the Baltic states to avoid duplication or delays with Alliance-wide efforts? Are there discussions with other NATO allies, such as Poland or Germany, to act as intermediaries or facilitators for U.S. weapons transfers to the Baltics during a crisis?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM's approach is built on seamless integration with NATO's logistics frameworks, utilizing the Alliance's Strategic Airlift Capability, and coordinating movement requests to optimize efficiency in third-party transfers. USEUCOM participates in NATO's Combined Joint Operations Area-Center planning, ensuring our efforts complement and support the broader Alliance defense posture in the Baltics. Discussions with key Allies like Poland and Germany are ongoing, as they are designated as potential staging areas and transit hubs for U.S. assistance. This collaborative approach, formalized through existing NATO agreements and enhanced by bilateral discussions, ensures a unified and responsive Alliance effort.

Mr. SCOTT. Drawing from recent conflicts (e.g., Ukraine), what lessons has EUCOM applied to improve the speed and efficiency of third-party transfers of U.S. munitions to allies like Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania?

General CAVOLI. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine highlights the critical need for pre-positioned stocks and streamlined approval processes-lessons USEUCOM has directly applied to bolstering Baltic security. USEUCOM increased the volume of U.S. munitions pre-positioned within the Baltics and neighboring Poland, reducing reliance on lengthy transfer timelines during a crisis. Furthermore, USEUCOM estab-

lished standing agreements with key transit nations and expedited export control procedures, mirroring successful models observed in support of Ukraine. Also, USEUCOM is investing in enhanced digital logistics visualization and communication systems to provide real-time data for munitions flows, supporting rapid response and adaptability tailored to evolving battlefield needs. Lastly, USEUCOM is working alongside our NATO Allies to mature an Alliance-wide distribution network capable of overcoming geographic and military mobility challenges. NATO Allies' access to national commercial mobility networks is key to ensuring sustainment at the point of operational and strategic need.

Mr. SCOTT. Has EUCOM conducted simulations or tabletop exercises with the Baltic states to identify and address potential delays in these transfers during a hypothetical Russian invasion?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM has not run specific simulations or tabletop exercise (TTX) focused solely on rapid transfer delays to the Baltics during a Russian invasion scenario.

Mr. SCOTT. In the event USEUCOM captures enemy weapons, will USEUCOM have to undergo the lengthy Civil Asset Forfeiture process under United States law or can the enemy weapons be immediately provided to NATO partners? What logistical hurdles does EUCOM anticipate in cataloging, securing, and processing captured enemy weapons for forfeiture under wartime conditions in Europe? Is USEUCOM expected to comply with U.S. forfeiture procedures of enemy weapons, such as documenting the chain of custody, while operating in a dynamic combat environment?

General CAVOLI. The Law of War rather than Domestic Civil Asset Forfeiture laws would govern U.S. Forces' transfer of captured enemy weapons during an armed conflict. Captured enemy equipment is considered war materiel and falls under a different set of rules governed by international law (specifically, the law of war) and U.S. military regulations. Under international law, enemy property becomes the property of the capturing state. Under U.S. law the Secretary of Defense could, with the Secretary of State's concurrence, transfer most captured weapons to Allies during multinational operations. U.S. domestic statutes governing arms transfers provide the executive branch with broad discretion in making arms-transfer decisions. NATO currently has no specific policies or doctrine addressing the transfer or receipt of captured enemy weapons. In determining whether a specific transfer would be allowable, NATO would look to the laws of the host nation where the weapons were captured, those of the sending state which captured and seeks to transfer the weapons, and international law. Non-proliferation and other legal obligations would apply depending on the type of former enemy property being transferred. Cataloging, securing, and transporting captured enemy weapons for forfeiture during combat operations could present logistical hurdles, by necessitating dedicated resources and robust tracking systems. Integrating captured weapons into NATO logistics and inventory systems would also require interoperability solutions. Despite the dynamic environment under wartime conditions, USEUCOM would nevertheless expect to maintain and document chain of custody and adhere to reporting requirements, thus ensuring accountability.

Mr. SCOTT. Considering the significant investment by the Romanian government in the modernization and expansion of the Mihail Kogalniceanu (MK) Base, how does this investment align with U.S. strategic interests in Eastern Europe, and what role does this base play in enhancing regional security?

General CAVOLI. Romania's investment into Mihail Kogalniceanu (MK) airbase is one example of a NATO Ally investing in its own infrastructure that enhances collective NATO capability along NATO's eastern flank. Aircraft from across the NATO Alliance will be able to stage, refuel, and rearm from Romania before executing training or operational missions located in other parts of Europe. The credibility of NATO's deterrent capability will increase as more sorties from across the Alliance are flown out of MK Airbase.

Mr. SCOTT. How does the current U.S. troop presence in Romania contribute to NATO's collective defense posture, particularly in light of recent reports suggesting potential troop withdrawals from Eastern Europe?

General CAVOLI. The rotational Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Romania supports deterring Russian Aggression as part of the overall Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE efforts that ensure an optimized balance of power on NATO's Eastern flank. Additionally, it also integrates and trains with European forces, which accelerates those forces' ability to provide for their own defense. Although the Allies have considerable strength in brigade structure, they lack key brigade enablers the United States considers organic in our forward stationing of units. The United States Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System in Romania is a land-based missile defense facility designed to detect, track, engage and destroy ballistic missiles in-flight outside the

atmosphere, thereby enhancing the defensive posture and protection of European NATO Allies and U.S. deployed forces in the region.

Mr. SCOTT. What role does U.S. Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capability in Romania play in supporting NATO's early warning systems against potential Russian threats, and how does this capability enhance regional security?

General CAVOLI. U.S. airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities assist NATO early warning systems by providing indications and warning of Russian military activities and movements in the vicinity of Russia's Western and Southern military districts, Crimea, and the Black Sea. Although not categorized as ISR, an Aegis Ashore site in Romania also supports NATO early warning of ballistic missile threats. Our broader capability set, including ISR, strengthens regional security by enhancing deterrence, improving collective defense, and enabling multinational coordination for better decision-making.

Mr. SCOTT. In light of ongoing discussions about U.S. troop deployments in Europe, can you confirm the U.S. commitment to maintaining a robust military presence in Romania, and what future plans are in place to ensure continued cooperation with Romanian forces?

General CAVOLI. Regarding current and future troop deployments in Europe, I respectfully refer you to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. On the topic of continued cooperation, USEUCOM and Romania have deepened our relationship through increased security cooperation, addressing shared priorities such as deterrence and defense, countering Russian influence, and enhancing NATO's defense capabilities. The U.S. and Romania have 18 defense agreements, which include measures for protecting classified military information, payment processing, and enabling military operations. USEUCOM participates in several multilateral military exercises with Romania and supports Romanian efforts to develop advanced air combat capability, indirect fire support, ground-based air defense, and maritime domain awareness through various programs and Foreign Military Sales cases. Furthermore, the Alabama National Guard maintains a robust State Partnership Program with Romanian forces, engaging in numerous activities across land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace.

Mr. SCOTT. The Department of Defense has been working for at least a year on finding a solution to enable the cross border use of HIMARS systems and munitions acquired by the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. This is clearly required for seamless cross-border NATO operations in the Baltics. Can this committee get your personal commitment to make it a priority to find a solution that would enable the cross border use of HIMARS systems and munitions by the 3 Baltic countries?

General CAVOLI. Yes. NATO's operational plans have given renewed impetus to integrated cross-border fires planning, and USEUCOM supports those efforts with technical and tactical expertise.

Mr. SCOTT. What missions do U.S. forces stationed in Germany conduct to support counterterrorism campaigns?

General CAVOLI. In the USEUCOM AOR, Counter-Violent Extremist Organizations are almost exclusively a Law Enforcement (LE) problem set requiring LE authorities. However, CT authorities serve as a pretext to build and sustain select strategic partnerships with national level Special Operations Forces (SOF) CT formations. U.S. SOF based in Europe also provide various intelligence and operational support capabilities to both CENTCOM and AFRICOM CT Campaigns.

Mr. SCOTT. What would ground launch cruise missiles in Germany do to support US European Command's efforts to deter further Russian aggression?

General CAVOLI. Stationing an Army Long Range Fires Battalion (LRFB) in Germany would provide a key deterrent capability against Russian aggression. The LRFB capabilities are designed to strike targets well beyond the range of existing rocket artillery and missile systems. The United States is uniquely capable of providing long-range fires capability. The LRFB's presence in Europe would position an important capability forward that adds depth to USEUCOM's defense of the homeland. Also, the high-end capabilities resident within the LRFB would restore the balance of ground-launched fires in the region following Russia's violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

Mr. SCOTT. What additional ways can Poland contribute to NATO's deterrence mission?

General CAVOLI. Poland is leading the way in increased military spending across NATO Allies, which directly contributes to NATO's deterrence mission. In the last ten years Poland has increased its military spending by over 200 percent and are currently at 4.1% GDP. Poland developed its Host Nation Defense Plans and works

closely with our United States Army Europe command and Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum to ensure its plans are integrated with NATO Regional Plans.

Mr. SCOTT. Do the evolving threats from missiles and drones require new and additional defenses in Europe?

General CAVOLI. Yes. USEUCOM recognizes the speed at which missile and drone threats are evolving. We are leveraging the DoD processes for increased capability and capacity to address all IAMD threats, as well as working with industry and developers on innovative solutions for next-generation technologies. USEUCOM pursues a layered approach to IAMD that leverages the full range of joint and all-domain capabilities including electronic warfare, cyber, and space. The U.S. and our Allies cannot afford to rely solely on active defense, as we will quickly get behind the cost curve for engagements. Rapid development and fielding of systems capable of defeating threats in all phases of flight is required to stay ahead of the rapidly evolving threats.

Mr. SCOTT. What are specific ways you see China posing a military threat inside your AOR?

General CAVOLI. While there is minimal Chinese Communist Party (CCP) military activity within USEUCOM's area of responsibility (AOR), the access and influence that China derives from its commercial seaport projects could interfere with USEUCOM and NATO's military capability to respond in a crisis. China's state-owned enterprises have considerable investment in commercial seaports in the USEUCOM AOR and are responsible for handling 10 percent of Europe's port capacity. Fourteen such ports are near, or co-located, with hubs used to move NATO equipment and forces. Additionally, China-Russia military cooperation has the potential to grow in USEUCOM's AOR, which would increase the CCP's threat.

Mr. SCOTT. How can Non-Governmental Organizations like Blue Yellow Lithuanian partner with USEUCOM?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM supports working alongside the interagency and Non-Governmental Organizations. For instance, USEUCOM closely coordinates through our Offices of Defense Cooperation located in U.S. Embassies and the Foreign Policy Advisor program, which assigns State Department officers to USEUCOM and our component commands. Non-Governmental Organizations, like Blue Yellow Lithuania, can work within the existing Non-Governmental Organization processes to partner with USEUCOM. I would respectfully refer additional questions about the processes to the Department of State.

Mr. SCOTT. What steps is EUCOM taking to strengthen Moldova's defense capabilities, particularly through programs like the National Guard State Partnership Program with North Carolina?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM leads the strategic implementation of U.S. defense cooperation with Moldova and partners with the North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) as a critical element to its success. NCNG provides direct support to non-commissioned officer development; maintenance and logistics; and brigade-level combat and support operations. NCNG integrates with the Moldovan Armed Forces to mature its annual training plan, which now culminates in a large-scale exercise incorporating European Allies, which USEUCOM uses to validate growth and development in key strategic areas.

Mr. SCOTT. Given Moldova's proximity to Ukraine and the ongoing conflict, how is EUCOM assessing and addressing potential security risks to Moldova, including the situation in Transnistria?

General CAVOLI. Based on current Russian force disposition and focus on Ukraine, USEUCOM does not consider Moldova to be at imminent risk of a Russian military incursion or aggression from Transnistria. The main security risk to Moldova from the Russia-Ukraine conflict is derived from Russian missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles violating Moldovan airspace. Moldova has noted several of these violations since 2022 and has taken steps to acquire new radars and air defense systems with support from European and other Western partners. Moldova also continues operations to secure national elections from Russian interference efforts, which aim to install a Kremlin-friendly government that would support Russian efforts in Ukraine and elsewhere in the region.

Mr. SCOTT. How is EUCOM supporting Moldova's efforts to modernize its military, especially in transitioning from Soviet-era equipment and doctrine to NATO-compatible standards?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM enables Moldova's defense modernization by supporting its acquisition of NATO-interoperable equipment. As the first country to authorize sales of lethal equipment to Moldova, USEUCOM partners with the European Union and NATO to encourage investments and activities that enable Moldova to divest its antiquated Soviet-era equipment. To ensure Moldova is trained and organized to use this infusion of equipment, the command provides a forward deployed

company-level advisory team focused on mentoring noncommissioned officers and developing disciplined initiative at tactical levels. USEUCOM has also embedded a senior advisor in the Ministry of Defense who mentors and assists in the development of NATO-compatible institutional changes necessary to support a modern force.

Mr. SCOTT. What measures is EUCOM implementing to help Moldova counter hybrid threats, such as disinformation, cyberattacks, or economic coercion, potentially originating from regional actors?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM collaborates with CYBERCOM to enhance both offensive and defensive cyber capabilities, in coordination with our Allies and partners. This initiative aims to deter advanced, persistent threats and bolster the resilience of the NATO Alliance and our European Partners. Additional details are available at a higher classification. With reference to disinformation and economic coercion, USEUCOM, in coordination with the U.S. Embassy Chisinau, counters adversary disinformation by providing truthful and factual messaging that supports our interests in Moldova. Messaging includes highlighting adversary predatory and coercive economic behavior, as well as the benefits of economic ties with the United States and western Allies. USEUCOM messaging is executed both unilaterally and with local partners using social and traditional forms of media. Discussions about countering hybrid threats are typically held at higher classification levels. To address this question more thoroughly, I prepared an answer to this question in a classified annex.

Mr. SCOTT. As Moldova pursues closer ties with NATO through the Partnership for Peace program, what role does EUCOM play in facilitating joint exercises or training to enhance interoperability?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM facilitates Moldova's participation in joint and combined exercises and training by providing funding for its armed forces to participate through the provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code, section 321: Training with Friendly Foreign Countries, International Military Education and Training, and Foreign Military Financing. This funding enables USEUCOM to fund Moldova's participation in exercise alongside U.S. forces and to bring U.S. service members to Moldova to participate in subject matter expertise exchanges or training.

Mr. SCOTT. How does Moldova fit into EUCOM's broader strategic priorities in Eastern Europe, especially in balancing deterrence against potential aggression and fostering regional partnerships?

General CAVOLI. Moldova's status as a European Union candidate and location between NATO's eastern flank and Russia make it strategically significant. Countering Russian destabilization efforts in Moldova, including Russia's military presence in Transnistria and political interference in Moldovan elections, directly supports regional stability and defends NATO's eastern flank. Bolstering Moldova's resilience against hybrid threats and promoting Transnistria conflict resolution are vital to containing Russian aggression and furthering broader Euro-Atlantic security. This approach safeguards a strategic access point and prevents further malign influence in the Black Sea region. As Russia rebuilds its armed forces, its modernization program is intended to challenge NATO on its borders. A secure Moldova contributes to a stronger, more unified NATO that is aligned with USEUCOM's overarching goals.

Mr. SCOTT. How would Russia and China interpret U.S. base closures and troop withdrawals in Europe?

General CAVOLI. Based on our current assessment, Russia would likely view the removal of U.S. forces favorably. Russia considers the United States as the dominant player in the international system and seeks to degrade the U.S. position in Europe, particularly by undermining Euro-Atlantic institutions, such as NATO. China seeks opportunities in Europe to exert its global influence and fracture the West. It might view U.S. base closures as an opportunity to expand ties and influence over European countries. China might aim to use expanded ties and influence to try to frustrate European support for a U.S. redirection to Asia.

Mr. SCOTT. What unique advantages do U.S. bases in Europe provide that Indo-Pacific or Middle East bases don't?

General CAVOLI. The legal agreements that underpin U.S. basing in Europe enable the United States the access, basing, and overflight permissions to put forces in European countries and stage them for deployment. As a result, U.S. bases in Europe offer many policy options to move U.S. forces around the globe that are necessary to protect the homeland and respond to crises. Also, access, basing, and overflight enables the United States to project power in support of other theaters outside of Europe. USEUCOM routinely supports other combatant commands, such as CENTCOM and AFRICOM, with forces that are either based in Europe or through

staging U.S. forces that are deployed from the United States before onward movement to another theater.

Mr. SCOTT. How would losing air and naval installations like Ramstein, Sigonella, and Souda Bay impact U.S. Force projection globally?

General CAVOLI. The loss of bases at Ramstein, Sigonella, and Souda Bay would severely hinder U.S. force projection. These bases are crucial for rapid response, logistical support, and command and control across Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Their loss would weaken deterrence, complicate logistics, and strain U.S. resources. The United States would face increased reliance on less strategic locations and potentially longer, more vulnerable supply lines.

Mr. SCOTT. Has the intelligence and data provided by Ukraine on Russian technology, captured equipment, battlefield operational guides, weapon performance, and countermeasures against U.S. and Allied systems saved U.S. taxpayer dollars? Will it have saved the lives of U.S. service personnel in a war against an enemy peer nation?

General CAVOLI. The intelligence and data collection concerning the future of warfare and Russia's capabilities is a silver lining in this conflict. Russian operations in Ukraine have provided the United States with insight into Russian forces' combat capabilities; tactics, techniques, and procedures; and equipment capabilities and employment tactics. As a specific example, since at least 2011, Russia has invested heavily in developing new advanced precision guided munitions, some of which it has employed in operations in Ukraine. Recovered materiel provides insight into these new capabilities, many of which Russia would use in future conflicts, and demonstrates areas where Russia is investing into its defense-industrial complex. This intelligence continues to inform U.S. capabilities and requirements development. Discussions about lessons learned from the ongoing conflict are typically held at higher classification levels. To address this question more thoroughly, I prepared an answer to this question in a classified annex.

Mr. SCOTT. Given the USCG's unique authorities and capabilities, how does EUCOM coordinate with the USCG to optimize the use of cutters, aircraft, or other assets in the European theater, particularly in areas with limited U.S. Navy presence?

General CAVOLI. When a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) cutter, aircraft, or personnel are available to support initiatives in Europe, there is a focused effort to connect USCG assets with our European partners, as well as U.S. Navy presence where possible. Examples of recent USCG assets in the USEUCOM area of responsibility (AOR) include U.S. Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) HEALY in Summer 2024, and USCGC CALHOUN, which completed a port call and Kely Leadership Engagement with the French Commander in Chief for the Atlantic in April 2025. Although the USCGC CALHOUN departed the AOR early, it also had patrol plans to participate in a Norwegian Coast Guard Search and Rescue exercise, as well as an Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing focused Arctic patrol. Additionally, the Coast Guard's Intel Branch (MIFCLANT) and Joint Inter-Agency Task Force - South (JIATF-S) in Key West, Florida work closely with the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre - Narcotics (MAOC-N) in Lisbon, Portugal. The MAOC-N supports European partner, African partner, and U.S. Navy intelligence sharing, which has directly led to European and African partner interdictions of illegal narcotics and other illicit maritime activities within the European and African AORs. USEUCOM works with the USCG Atlantic Area Commander in Portsmouth, as well as through the NAVEUR/AF USCG LNO to facilitate joint initiatives with USEUCOM.

Mr. SCOTT. What role does the USCG play in supporting joint exercises or operations with NATO maritime forces in the EUCOM AOR, and how are USCG capabilities integrated into these multinational efforts?

General CAVOLI. There is limited USCG participation in NATO maritime forces joint exercises. There has been recent discussion regarding more USCG involvement in NATO related activities, but I am not aware of any current efforts to integrate USCG and NATO initiatives.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MOULTON

Mr. MOULTON. What do you believe is America's current plan to win in Ukraine?

Ms. THOMPSON. The President has been clear that the United States' top priority is putting an end to the war and stopping the needless bloodshed on both sides. The Administration has engaged with Ukraine and Russia on several occasions. The President has stated all options are on the table as part of negotiations and both sides will need to compromise to reach an enduring peace. The Department continues to support the Administration's efforts to bring about an enduring peace.

Mr. MOULTON. As the Original Classification Authority for EUCOM Command, and in accordance with your Security Classification Guidance, can you provide the classification of the following: Prior to an imminent, kinetic, EUCOM strike, targeting a foreign actor: 1. The exact launch time of any portion of the strike package a. Accompanied by the weapons system to be used b. Accompanied by the weapons launch platform 2. The time on target for a specified weapons system 3. The time on target for a weapons launch platform Note: Please provide an unclassified response, if the question cannot be fully answered in an unclassified manner please provide additional details at the necessary classification level.

General CAVOLI. The Secretary of Defense holds the highest level of classification authority within the Department of Defense (DoD) and has the authority to set classification/declassification for any information that originates from the entirety of the DoD, including information within the USEUCOM AOR. Within USEUCOM, security classification policy for the planning and execution of operations in Europe is contained in USEUCOM Command Guide (ECG) 5201.02 (USEUCOM Security Classification Guide). Operational and intelligence details are classified from Confidential to Top Secret when linked to an actual target, strike, or planned operations. Original classification determinations for USEUCOM originated information can only be made by the Original Classification Authorities (OCA) designated within ECG 5201.02. USEUCOM designated OCAs only have the authority to declassify and downgrade classified USEUCOM originated information.

Mr. MOULTON. Were you consulted prior to the firing of VADM Chatfield?

General CAVOLI. I was not informed by the Acting Chairman prior to VADM Chatfield's removal as the U.S. Military Representative to NATO. The Joint Staff's General and Flag Officer (G/FO) Matters office instructed USEUCOM J1's NATO G/FO Manager to confirm that the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee was formally notified of the U.S. Military Representative to the NATO Military Committee removal. This notification process involved coordination with the U.S. Military Delegation to NATO and the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Mr. MOULTON. Based on VADM Chatfield's performance and her work with your headquarters, do you have any reason to believe that there was cause to fire her?

General CAVOLI. The U.S. Military Representative to the NATO Military Committee (USMILREP) is the senior U.S. military officer at NATO Headquarters in Brussels and represents the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) to the Military Committee (MC), NATO's highest military authority. The MC provides strategic direction to both the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, who commands Allied Command Operations, and the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, who leads Allied Command Transformation. The USMILREP works within the MC structure and reports back directly to the CJCS. The MILREP's chain of command is distinct and separate from that of SACEUR.

Mr. MOULTON. Has EUCOM ever made operational plans for the use of Greenland? Has EUCOM ever asked Denmark for operational authority to use Greenland? Have you been asked to prepare any future plans for the use of Greenland if Greenland is acquired by the United States?

General CAVOLI. USEUCOM does not have contingency plans for operational use of Greenland. Greenland establishes the western boundary of the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom Gap. This gap poses a unique strategic challenge in the maritime and air domain that USEUCOM accounts for in its plans. Also, the air and port infrastructure on Greenland can be used to support logistics of cross-Atlantic movement of personnel and equipment flowing from the United States into Europe. USEUCOM closely coordinates with NORTHCOM/NORAD to share access to Greenland for operational use in the event of a contingency operation. SPACECOM also retains assets that are forward positioned on Greenland. I would refer you to NORTHCOM/NORAD and SPACECOM for additional details about their possible planning efforts.

Mr. MOULTON. Have you been asked to prepare, or have you prepared, and military plans for a military invasion of Greenland?

General CAVOLI. I have not been asked to prepare plans for a military invasion of Greenland nor have I prepared such plans. I respectfully refer any additional questions related to policy about Greenland to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Mr. MOULTON. Democrats and Republicans frequently criticized the Biden team for not having a plan to decisively win the war in Ukraine. Since the arrival of SECDEF Hegseth, has this DoD or White House provided you with a plan to win the war in Ukraine?

General CAVOLI. As the President has stated on multiple occasions, the United States wants a permanent ceasefire to end the bloodshed in Ukraine. Please refer additional questions about U.S. military plans and policy related to Ukraine to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Mr. MOULTON. What do you believe is America's current plan to win in Ukraine?

General CAVOLI. America's current plan in Ukraine is to reach a ceasefire or peace deal to stop the bloodshed. To achieve this, Ukraine must continue to fight from a position of strength and not capitulate. The goal remains preventing a Russian victory, and Ukraine is effectively holding its lines to achieve that objective.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. KELLY

Mr. KELLY. Recent GAO findings have highlighted gaps in the availability of Amphibious Ready Groups and Marine Expeditionary Units due to maintenance planning and execution delays of the Navy's amphibious ships. During the February 2023 earthquake in Turkey and Syria, and the Russian buildup on Ukraine's border in early 2022, EUCOM did not have a MEU/ARG assigned due to amphib availability. Describe the strategic impacts, along with an assessment of severity, of amphib / MEU availability to deterrence credibility in your theater.

General CAVOLI. The Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU) can play an important role in deterrence in Europe, offering a unique combination of capabilities that contribute to regional stability and discourage potential adversaries. ARG/MEUs are essentially "floating bases" that can be positioned strategically near potential hotspots. This forward presence demonstrates commitment to Allies and partners, and allows for rapid response to crises, whether natural disasters or military contingencies. This rapid response capability is crucial in deterring aggression, as potential adversaries must consider the swift arrival of a capable force. Next, ARG/MEUs are incredibly versatile. They can conduct a wide range of operations, from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to amphibious assaults and sustained land operations. This flexibility makes them unpredictable and difficult for adversaries to plan against. They can adapt to evolving situations and provide tailored responses, further enhancing their deterrent value. Additionally, ARG/MEUs can project power ashore, establishing a foothold, and can conduct operations inland. This capability is vital for deterring potential land-based aggression, particularly in littoral regions. The ability to quickly land a substantial force, including ground troops, aircraft, and logistics, presents a significant obstacle to any adversary contemplating territorial expansion. Lastly, the deployment of an ARG/MEU sends a clear message of resolve to both Allies and potential adversaries. It signals a commitment to regional security and a willingness to act if necessary. This demonstration of resolve is a key component of deterrence, as it aims to convince potential adversaries that the costs of aggression outweigh the benefits. Although the focus is often on land operations, ARG/MEUs also contribute to sea control and maritime security. Their presence helps to safeguard vital sea lanes and deter piracy and other maritime threats. This contributes to overall regional stability, which in turn supports deterrence efforts.

Mr. KELLY. General Cavoli, could you speak to the role of the State Partnership Program within EUCOM? Specifically, how does this program strengthen our relationships with allies and partners across Europe, and what strategic value does it bring in terms of interoperability, regional stability, and shared readiness objectives? Additionally, how has the program adapted to address the evolving security landscape, particularly in response to Russia's increasingly aggressive behavior and growing alignment with China and North Korea?

General CAVOLI. The long-term relationships established through the State Partnership Program are critical to reaching our defense objectives in Europe. They have helped bolster defense capability, influence increased European defense spending, promote burden sharing, and provide opportunities for greater access, basing and overflight in support of U.S. interests. Both Austria and Switzerland are now partners through this program. As neutral nations, this created a formal military partnership that cannot be obtained otherwise and opens new opportunities and access. As European nations collectively seek to strengthen their militaries and take a larger role in their own national defense capabilities, these recent inductions into the program have encouraged other historically neutral nations in Europe to also seek a military partnership with the United States.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GIMENEZ

Mr. GIMENEZ. In your written testimony you discuss how quickly Russia has been able to reconstitute and rapidly replace lost vehicles and equipment through productions in its commercial and industrial base. This committee has had several hearings and will have many more on our own Defense Acquisitions process, to ensure we're not getting in our own way of innovation, development, and production of the

weapon systems we need to deter threats like China, Russia, and several other actors you mentioned. What recommendations would you make to improve our current Defense Acquisitions process?

General CAVOLI. There have been several studies undertaken over the years to reform the Defense Acquisition process. USEUCOM would endorse any new system that would provide greater speed, efficiency, and improved delivery of the critical capabilities required for our mission. Some ways of doing this could be to simplify regulations and empower program managers; embrace the use of readily available commercial technologies; enhance transparency and improve communication between the Department of Defense, Congress, and industry stakeholders through the acquisition lifecycle; and provide better tools and training to the workforce. However, specific policy proposals to improve the Defense Acquisition process should be developed by policy experts and the decisions made by policy makers.

Mr. GIMENEZ. In your pre-provided commentary, you discuss the Chinese Communist Party's investments into industry in Europe, and how those investment's have the potential to fracture the NATO Alliance and US partnerships. As a member of not only this committee, but also the Special Select Committee on China, I am very concerned with the CCPs malign influence around the world. What does the US need to do to deter our partners in NATO from getting further intertwined with Chinese investments and influence?

General CAVOLI. Within USEUCOM, we continue to monitor Chinese activity as members of the China Watcher's community of interest. Additionally, we work closely with our inter-agency partners to share information on Chinese Communist Party activity in Europe. For further details on specific policies regarding Allied and partner investment into Chinese-controlled infrastructure projects, the Departments of State, Treasury, and Commerce will be better suited to address your question.

Mr. GIMENEZ. In your testimony, you note the \$65.9 billion in munitions, weapons, vehicles, and other assistance that has been provided to Ukraine since 2022, along with contributions from our NATO allies. At this critical inflection point, what should U.S. assistance look like toward Ukraine? Should we abandon this fight, and if so what signal would this send to Russia?

General CAVOLI. At the present inflection point of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the Administration is working with Ukraine and Russia to secure a ceasefire and enduring negotiated settlement. The Administration's policy is that U.S. assistance supporting Ukraine remains mostly unchanged allowing Ukraine to present their strongest position at the negotiating table. The U.S. provides military advice, intelligence, and key weapons systems and munitions including high-end air defense systems and interceptors, armored vehicles, precision ground and air munitions allowing Ukraine to defend across the frontlines in eastern Ukraine. Russia's conclusions about diminished U.S. support to Ukraine requires extensive geopolitical analysis of all the factors affecting U.S.-Russian relations. I am not a participant in developing U.S.-Russia policy and am not fully aware of all of the Administration's deliberations and policies related to Russia. I would refer you to the Department of State for a complete answer.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. RYAN

Mr. RYAN. Commercial capabilities for AI and data integration are able to provide a common operating picture and enable effective C2 in order to increase joint warfighting capability and AI-augmented decision to significantly increase the scale, speed, and accuracy of the targeting process. How are you using commercial capabilities to meet these needs, particularly with regard to supporting certain CJADC2 requirements and fill current capability gaps?

General CAVOLI. Maven Smart System, and its underlying data and artificial intelligence capabilities are the software backbone of our efforts to modernize and achieve Combined Joint All Domain Command and Control (CJADC2). Last October, EUCOM transitioned our common operational picture to Maven Smart System, which allowed us to increase from the only three live data sources that fed our previous common operational picture, to over 200 live data sources today. We are building on this progress to create our Decision Advantage Environment by digitizing other operational and staff processes through Maven. It also enhances our ability to make better informed decisions across all the joint functions, in addition to the targeting process, at the speed of modern war. My Chief of Staff is leading an effort to onboard other commercial capabilities by working closely with the Defense Innovation Unit and others to further enhance our Decision Advantage Environment with artificial intelligence.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. DAVIS

Mr. DAVIS. Yes or no, is it a threat to our national security if we are spending so little on our own industrial base that we have to rely on foreign nations to supply our weapons systems?

Ms. THOMPSON. Over-reliance on foreign nations can pose risks to military readiness and national security, but a collaborative industrial base with allies and partners is vital for burden-sharing, resilience, and interoperability. The key is fostering a robust domestic base that is balanced with and reinforced by strategic international partnerships to leverage shared innovation, production capacity, and access to critical materials. I look forward to working with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, if confirmed, to ensure we have a strong, resilient defense industrial base that strengthens our collective security through partnerships with allies and through increased domestic investment.

Mr. DAVIS. Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, located in my district, is home to two F-15E combat squadrons, which deploy over 50 percent of the time. To sustain a ready force and address the threats to our servicemembers in the Middle East, we need to transfer the F-15Es stationed at Royal Air Force Lakenheath back home.

General Cavoli, now that all F-35 squadrons at Lakenheath are projected to reach full operability by next year, do you expect to work with the Air Force and relieve the fourth-generation aircraft, including the F-15Es stationed there so they can fulfill their core mission?

General CAVOLI. I understand that the U.S. Air Force is planning to change the proportion of its land-based fighter squadrons in Europe from fourth generation to fifth generation and would welcome changes at RAF Lakenheath to transition the F-15E to F-35. The Department of Defense stationing process will ensure collaboration between Headquarters Air Force, USEUCOM, and other stakeholders involved, to achieve a deliberate plan for the capability adjustment.

Mr. DAVIS. General Cavoli, what should the United States do to counter the accelerating Russian buildup, as Russia increases its defense spending by 25 percent while we are not committing to meet the 5 percent NATO target we have set for our European allies?

General CAVOLI. There are multiple policy options that could be pursued to counter Russia's buildup, but I refer the policy-related questions to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Within the military domain, USEUCOM counters Russia's buildup through defending the homeland forward, projection of U.S. combat power, and deterring Russian aggression. Defense of the homeland from Europe is largely a function of posture. USEUCOM is strategically located in Europe to detect, identify, and eliminate Russian threats before they range U.S. territory - especially across the Greenland, Iceland, United Kingdom Gap. USEUCOM also capitalizes on the access, basing, and overflight privileges with our European Allies and partners to flexibly project combat power across the globe. Lastly, USEUCOM's support to NATO's modernization effort is accelerating NATO's deterrence capability. However, the insufficient production capacity across the Defense Industrial Base is causing delays in U.S.-produced war materiel from being delivered to our NATO Allies.

Mr. DAVIS. Since coming to Congress, I have fought to equip Ukraine with the resources it needs to protect itself against Russia's unprovoked invasion. Of the \$175 billion Congress has approved in our fight for democracy, over 70 percent, or \$123 billion, has directly funded the American defense industrial base.

General Cavoli, can you explain how replenishing our domestic defense industrial base and revitalizing production demand through supporting our allies can help keep the American people safe?

General CAVOLI. The number of Foreign Military Sales cases managed by USEUCOM rose by 600% from the annual average from FY17-21 to FY24. Last year alone, our NATO Allies and European partners invested over \$68 billion in the U.S. defense industry to purchase new equipment and munitions that will be used for collective defense. For our NATO Allies to commit more to the NATO Force Model and take on a larger burden of European security, they need sufficient quantities of equipment and munitions. Until the U.S. and European defense industrial bases are capable of producing the required materiel, the threats in the European theater will be able to pose significant risks to U.S. security and our interests. U.S. forces will be required to defend the homeland forward until our NATO Allies have generated the capabilities necessary to take on Europe's security requirements.