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Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
UNITED STATES SECURITY POLICY IN EUROPE

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Washington, D.C.

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U.S. Senate
Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:06 a.m., in SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John McCain, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Members Present: Senators McCain [presiding], Inhofe, Ayotte, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Reed, Nelson, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, and Heinrich.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN MCCAIN, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM ARIZONA

3 Chairman McCain: Well, good morning. This committee
4 meets a little earlier than usual today since we have a
5 briefing at 11:00 today on the recent unfortunate tragedy of
6 the deaths of an American and another one in a drone strike.
7 The committee meets today to receive testimony on United
8 States security policy in Europe. I would like to thank
9 each of our witnesses for appearing before us.

10 Admiral James Stavridis, dean of the Fletcher School of
11 Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and former Supreme
12 Allied Commander, Europe; Ian Brzezinski, resident senior
13 fellow at the Scowcroft Center at the Atlantic Council; and
14 Stephen Sestanovich, the George Kennen senior fellow for
15 Russian and Eurasian Studies at the Council on Foreign
16 Relations.

17 Just like the United States, Europe confronts a diverse
18 and complex array of crises that are making the world a more
19 dangerous place. Already this year radical Islamists
20 attacked Paris and Copenhagen. Last week in the
21 Mediterranean, over 700 migrants perished tragically in a
22 shipwreck fleeing the conflict and instability of North
23 Africa. And then there is Russia. In 2012, the Defense
24 Strategic Guidance argued that the changing global security
25 environment offered a chance to rebalance the U.S. military

1 investment in Europe while building a closer relationship
2 with Russia.

3 The Obama Administration eliminated two heavy brigades
4 stationed in Europe and pursued a so-called reset policy
5 towards Russia. Two years later, Russia's invasion and
6 dismemberment of Ukraine should remind everyone of the true
7 nature of Putin's ambitions and the fragility of peace in
8 Europe. Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. policy toward
9 Russia was based on a bipartisan assumption that the Russian
10 government sought to integrate peacefully into the
11 international order in Europe and to forego a constructive
12 relationship with the United States based on mutual national
13 interests.

14 The events of this past year have overturned that
15 assumption. For the first time in seven decades on the
16 European continent, a state has sent its military forces
17 across an internationally recognized border and forcibly
18 annexed the sovereign territory of another state. Now,
19 American strategy must adjust to the reality of the
20 revisionist Russia that is undergoing a significant military
21 modernization, and that is willing to use force not only as
22 a last resort, but as a primary tool to achieve its neo-
23 imperial objectives. In Ukraine, Russia has continued to
24 violate the February ceasefire agreement. In fact, news
25 today indicates an increase in the conflict. Rather than

1 comply and withdraw from Ukraine, President Putin has
2 maintained sizable numbers of artillery pieces and multiple
3 rocket launchers in Ukraine.

4 According to the State Department, the Russian military
5 has deployed additional air defense systems near the front
6 lines in Eastern Ukraine, the highest amount since last
7 August, and a disturbing sign that another offensive may be
8 imminent. In response, it is not that the United States and
9 our European allies have done nothing. It is that nothing
10 we have done has succeeded in deterring Putin's aggression
11 and halted his slow motion annexation of Eastern Ukraine.

12 The Ukrainian people do not want U.S. or Western troops
13 to fight for them. They are simply asking for the right
14 tools to defend themselves and their country. Senator Reed
15 and I, along with members of this committee on both sides of
16 the aisle, have called on the Administration to provide
17 defensive lethal assistance to Ukraine. Unfortunately, the
18 President's continued inaction incredibly for fear of
19 provoking Russia is seen by Putin as weakness and invites
20 the very aggression we seek to avoid.

21 Of course there is no military solution in Ukraine, but
22 there is a clear military dimension to achieving a political
23 solution. As three major think tanks wrote recently,
24 "Assisting Ukraine to deter attack and defend itself is not
25 inconsistent with the search for a peaceful political

1 solution. It is essential to achieving it." Only if the
2 Kremlin knows that the risks and costs of further military
3 action are high will it seek to find an acceptable political
4 solution. The failure to raise the cost of Putin's
5 aggression in Ukraine only increases and makes it more
6 likely that this aggression could expand to places like
7 Moldova, Georgia, the Baltic States, and Central Asia.

8 This is even more worrisome in light of Russia's
9 increasing emphasis on nuclear weapons. Putin has
10 personally presided over nuclear weapons drills in recent
11 months, deployed Icelander missiles to Kaliningrad capable
12 of carrying nuclear warheads and claiming the right to
13 deploy nuclear weapons on the Crimean peninsula. Russia
14 continues to violate the IMF treaty as nuclear weapons
15 become more prominent in its military doctrine.

16 Equally concerning, Russia's military buildup also
17 appears designed to deny the United States and NATO access
18 to key parts of Europe, especially the Baltic and Black Sea
19 regions, as a way of trying to make U.S. security
20 commitments to our allies too costly to fulfill. Russia is
21 clearly learning from China in this regard.

22 Russia's intensifying military activity in contempt of
23 international law also extends to the Arctic where it has
24 stood up a new military command with more troops and
25 aircraft military infrastructure and increased military

1 exercises. One exercise last month included nearly 40,000
2 troops and more than 55 ships and submarines. The
3 Administration needs to address this problem as the United
4 States assumes the chairmanship of the Arctic Council over
5 the next two years.

6 In response to the broader challenge that Russia poses
7 to security in Europe hereto, it is not that the United
8 States and NATO have done nothing. We have created a modest
9 rapid reaction force, increased air policing and sea
10 patrols, expanded training and exercises, and deployed small
11 numbers of additional forces to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania,
12 and Poland. The problem is the actions we have taken seem
13 inadequate to the scope, scale, and seriousness of the
14 challenges we face.

15 I would especially highlight the fact that too many of
16 our NATO allies continue to fail to provide for their own
17 defense despite promises at the Wales Summit to "reverse the
18 trend of declining defense budget." Soon Poland and Estonia
19 may be the only other allies meeting our alliance's
20 commitment to spend two percent of GDP on defense.

21 None of us want to return to the Cold War, but we need
22 to face the reality that we are dealing with a Russian ruler
23 who wants exactly that, especially as a way of enhancing
24 Russian relevance amid systemic demographic collapse and
25 economic crisis. The reason for maintaining a strong U.S.

1 military presence in Europe is the same as ever. To deter
2 conflict and aggression, we must forget this lesson at our
3 peril. Ultimately, we must lift our sights and recognize
4 that we are facing the reality of a challenge that many had
5 assumed was resigned to the history books: a strong
6 militarily capable state that is hostile to our interests
7 and our values and seeks to overturn the international order
8 in Europe that American leaders of both parties have sought
9 to maintain since World War II.

10 I hope today's hearings will help us to better
11 understand the magnitude of this challenge and what to do
12 about it. I thank each of our witnesses for joining us
13 today, and I look forward to their testimony. I would note
14 in the audience we have parliamentarians from Ukraine,
15 Kosovo, and Nepal who are with us today. I welcome them to
16 our hearing. I especially want to express my appreciation
17 for our legislators from Ukraine who are here on behalf of
18 their country.

19 Senator Reed?

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE
2 ISLAND

3 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and
4 thank you, gentlemen, Admiral Stavridis, Mr. Brzezinski, and
5 Dr. Sestanovich, welcome. Let me thank the chairman for
6 setting up this hearing to review the security situation in
7 Europe. It will inform our upcoming deliberations on the
8 annual defense authorization bill. On Thursday we will hear
9 from General Breedlove, the commander of U.S. European
10 Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander, and this hearing
11 will be a wonderful way to begin that discussion with
12 General Breedlove.

13 The transatlantic relationship remains central to the
14 United States and global security. Our NATO allies and
15 European partners have been the primary contributors to the
16 United States-led coalition operations in the Middle East
17 and South Asia. In Afghanistan, European countries have
18 deployed more than 260,000 personnel since 2007, accounting
19 for more than 90 percent of the non-U.S. forces
20 participating in the ISAF mission that ended last December.

21 Today, however, our European partners face security
22 challenges closer to home. As noted at the NATO Summit in
23 Wales last September, Russia's aggression against Ukraine
24 has challenged the alliance's vision of a Europe whole,
25 free, and at peace. Russia has engaged in hybrid warfare to

1 seize Crimea and back separatist forces in Eastern Ukraine
2 in violation of the ceasefire agreement signed in September
3 of last year and this February. According to the U.S. and
4 military leaders, Russia continues to flow heavy weapons and
5 equipment into the separatist areas, sparking fears of
6 renewed heavy fighting within the coming weeks.

7 One step this committee and Congress have supported is
8 providing Ukraine the military assistance, including defense
9 weapons, necessary for it to defend itself against further
10 attacks. A recent report by leading think tanks, which Dr.
11 Sestanovich co-authored, argues that "Assisting Ukraine to
12 deter attack and defend itself is not inconsistent with the
13 search for a peaceful political solution. It is essential
14 to achieving it."

15 I hope our witnesses will address whether they believe
16 there is a coalition of countries willing to provide
17 assistance to Ukraine, and whether preparing such a
18 coalition effort would help or harm compliance with the
19 ceasefire agreements. At the NATO Wales Summit, members
20 approved a readiness action plan to enhance the alliance's
21 ability to respond quickly to security challenges. This
22 year's budget request includes \$800 million on top of the \$1
23 billion approved last year for the European Reassurance
24 Initiative, to enhance the United States' military presence
25 and activities in Europe.

1 A key issue over the coming years will be how U.S.
2 forces should be postured in Europe to reassure allies and
3 provide for a collective defense. This will depend in part
4 on whether our NATO allies live up to their pledges on
5 defense spending and the levels of host nation support for
6 U.S. forces in Europe.

7 NATO is facing security challenges along its other
8 borders as well. Countries along the Mediterranean border
9 are grappling with the prospect of tens of thousands,
10 possibly more, of migrants fleeing instability in Libya,
11 Syria, Eritrea, and elsewhere. Efforts to respond to this
12 crisis have been mixed to date, and it is clear more must be
13 done soon because the flow of migrants is not likely to
14 subside given increasing violence in Libya and other
15 conflict zones.

16 To the southeast, the flow of foreign fighters across
17 Turkey's border into Syria and back heightens the risk of
18 future anti-Western attacks like those in Paris and
19 Brussels, and raises the question as to whether ISIL has
20 more broadly infiltrated Europe's cities. In the north,
21 Russia is expanding its military activities in the Arctic,
22 potentially challenging international norms and laws
23 governing that region.

24 I look forward to our witnesses' testimony on these and
25 other security challenges in Europe, and, again, I thank

1 them for their willingness to appear this morning. Thank
2 you.

3 Chairman McCain: I welcome the witnesses. Admiral
4 Stavridis?

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1 STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL JAMES G. STAVRIDIS, USN [RET.],
2 DEAN OF THE FLETCHER SCHOOL OF LAW AND DIPLOMACY, TUFTS
3 UNIVERSITY, MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

4 Admiral Stavridis: Chairman McCain, Ranking Member
5 Reed, members of the committee, it is a delight to be back
6 with you. Last time I was dressed somewhat more glamorously
7 than I am today. It is a pleasure to share some ideas and
8 thoughts on the situation in Europe, which have, as we heard
9 in those statements from the chairman and the ranking
10 member, have taken a turn for the worse in a security
11 dimension over the last 24 months since I left my post as
12 the Supreme Allied Commander.

13 I want to just begin by saying why does Europe matter?
14 I get that question. Does Europe really matter for the
15 United States? We talk a lot about a pivot to the Pacific
16 and so on, and we should globally. But I would argue Europe
17 matters for a wide variety of reasons.

18 First and foremost, we share enormous values, our
19 values: democracy, liberty, freedom of speech, freedom of
20 religion. These come from Europe, from the Enlightenment.
21 Secondly, NATO, this alliance, 28 nations, 52 percent of the
22 world's GDP, three million men and women under arms, almost
23 all of them volunteers, 24,000 military aircraft. This is a
24 terrific partner for the United States in Europe. Third,
25 the bases. Sometimes people will say, oh, those are Cold

1 War bases. Not so in my view. These are forward operating
2 stations of the 21st century. We need them to move our
3 forces into Africa, into the Levant, into the Middle East,
4 into Central Asia. They are irreplaceable.

5 Fourth, the economy. The largest trade flow in the
6 world goes across the Atlantic. It is about \$5 trillion.
7 And so, this economic bridge across the Atlantic is of
8 enormous importance to us. And then finally, as we look at
9 Europe, it is a place full of high tech, of well-trained
10 military. It is a wealth of resources. So for all those
11 reasons, Europe matters.

12 I think the challenges were well laid out by the
13 chairman and the ranking member. It is Russia which has
14 invaded a nation and annexed its territory. We cannot
15 understate the gravity of that experience, and we should not
16 understate how that ghost rattles through the Europe
17 zeitgeist.

18 The ranking member, I think, correctly drew a line
19 under ISIS and its threat to Europe. I am deeply concerned
20 about it not only across the NATO borders in Turkey, but
21 across the sea routes from Italy. Last year, some 200,000
22 migrants; this year on track to double that. Within those
23 numbers will be some group of violent extremists, Islamic
24 radicals who come to strike at highly symbolic targets,
25 probably starting in Italy. The Arctic was well covered by

1 the opening statements.

2 I would add only the Balkans, which we tend not to
3 think about a great deal these days. They were a place of
4 great tension and danger 15 years ago, yet today tensions
5 continue in Kosovo, across its borders to Serbia, and, most
6 notably, in Bosnia, a very fragile tripartite structure.
7 Yesterday Muslim extremist terrorists struck in the Serbian
8 portions of Bosnia. That is still a place where we need to
9 keep a weather eye.

10 So I will close by saying as we look at all this, our
11 own U.S. security presence in Europe is diminished greatly,
12 certainly since the end of the Cold War. We are down 75
13 percent in personnel. We are down 75 percent in the number
14 of bases that we have. We have, in my view, come to a line
15 that we should not continue to diminish that presence
16 further. I would argue in the end we need to stay engaged
17 in Europe for the reasons about which I have spoken as well
18 as for the challenges so well articulated by the chairman
19 and the ranking member.

20 Thank you.

21 [The prepared statement of Admiral Stavridis follows:]

22 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman McCain: Thank you. Mr. Brzezinski?
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1 STATEMENT OF IAN J. BRZEZINSKI, RESIDENT SENIOR
2 FELLOW, BRENT SCOWCROFT CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY,
3 ATLANTIC COUNCIL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

4 Mr. Brzezinski: Thank you, Chairman McCain, thank you,
5 Ranking Member Reed, members of the committee. I really
6 appreciate this opportunity to participate in this hearing
7 on the state of U.S. security interests in Europe.

8 NATO is the institutional cornerstone of transatlantic
9 security, and today that alliance faces challenges on
10 multiple fronts of unprecedented complexity and increasing
11 urgency. To the east, Europe confronts Russia's invasion of
12 Ukraine and increasingly provocative military conduct across
13 the region. To its north, the transatlantic community faces
14 Russia's militarization of the Arctic, a region rich in
15 resources, but also of contested sovereignty. To its south,
16 the alliance faces a treacherous combination of state
17 sponsors of terrorism, failed states, and extremist
18 organizations in an arc stretching from the Middle East
19 across North Africa. ISIS atrocities and refugee flows to
20 Europe are tragic manifestations of that front.

21 And in an age of globalization, NATO cannot afford to
22 be a regionally focused alliance. It must address a global
23 front. It must remain prepared and ready to take on
24 challenges well beyond the North Atlantic area in a world
25 that is increasingly interconnected and volatile.

1 Allow me to focus my remarks on the first front, a sort
2 of returning back to the future driven by Russia's
3 confrontational approach toward the West. Putin's invasion
4 of Ukraine has disrupted the order that has kept peace in
5 Europe since World War II. It is a direct threat to the
6 credibility of NATO and the vision of a Europe whole, free,
7 and secure. It is but one element of a revanchist policy
8 intended to reestablish Russian hegemony, if not full
9 control, over space akin to the former Soviet Union.

10 Toward this end, Moscow has applied the full suite of
11 Russian power to weaken and dominate its neighbors:
12 military force, economic and energy embargos, political
13 subterfuge, information and cyber warfare, separatist
14 groups, and frozen conflicts. The campaign history includes
15 Moscow's attempt to subvert the 2004 Ukraine Orange
16 Revolution, its 2007 cyberattack on Estonia, and the 2008
17 invasion of Georgia.

18 It is a campaign that pursues 20th century objectives
19 leveraging 21st century techniques, and old-fashioned brute
20 force. It rests on a \$750 billion defense modernization
21 plan that is upgrading Russian conventional and nuclear
22 forces. It is a strategy that involves provocative military
23 actions beyond Ukraine intended to intimidate, divide, and
24 test the capabilities of members and partners of the NATO
25 alliance. You know well these actions: the increase in

1 assertive naval and air patrols; violations of allied and
2 partner sea, air, and ground space; harassment of military
3 and civilian aircraft and ships; and a steady stream of
4 nuclear threats from Russian officials, including President
5 Putin himself.

6 Russian military exercises have been an important part
7 of these shows of force. They are notable for their
8 magnitude and the frequency of spot exercises, sudden and
9 unannounced mobilization deployment of forces. As indicated
10 in the attached chart and the ones I think are in the
11 testimony I submitted, over the last three years Russia has
12 conducted at least six major military exercises, and these
13 have ranged from 65,000 personnel to 165,000 personnel.
14 They dwarf in comparison to the size of NATO exercises, and
15 raise in my mind questions about the alliance's political
16 and operational ability to mobilize comparable forces.

17 The West's response to Russia's military assertiveness
18 has consisted of limited, incremental escalations of
19 economic sanctions and military deployments. This
20 incrementalism conveys hesitancy and the lack of unity and
21 determination. It has failed to convince Putin to reverse
22 course. Indeed, it may have actually emboldened him. And
23 for these reasons, continued incrementalism not only
24 promises continued conflict in Ukraine, but also an
25 increased danger of wider war.

1 This is underscored when one considers what will be the
2 likely state of Ukraine and Russia if the West holds to its
3 current policies. Where will Ukraine be in six to 12
4 months? It is likely to experience a further loss of
5 territory. Its economy will be further crippled. Its
6 population and government will be at risk of being more
7 disillusioned. This is a Ukraine more vulnerable and more
8 enticing to Putin's revanchist ambitions.

9 Where will Russia be in six to 12 months? Its economy
10 will likely be somewhat weaker, its leaders marginally more
11 internationally isolated. Under such circumstances,
12 President Putin can be expected to be more irrationally
13 nationalist and more brazen. And that is a Russia more
14 likely to attempt incursions further into Ukraine and
15 escalate its provocative military actions against the West.
16 Under such a scenario, not only are Ukraine's prospects more
17 dire, the prospects of a collision, albeit inadvertent,
18 between Russian and Western forces are increased. The very
19 risk of conflict escalation that current policy has been
20 designed to avert will actually be more likely.

21 Calibrated engagement with the Russian government is
22 needed to explore avenues by which to modulate tensions and
23 to return to Ukraine's territories. However, to be
24 effective these efforts will require more immediate and
25 longer-term initiatives that will impose higher economic

1 costs on Moscow, deter it from further provocative conduct,
2 and reinforce the security of Central Europe. Toward these
3 ends, I recommended that U.S. policy aim to do the
4 following. First, we should impose stronger economic
5 sanctions on Russia. Sectorial sanctions are needed to more
6 aggressively shock the Russian economy by shutting off its
7 energy and financial sectors from the global economy.

8 Second, the alliance should do more to reinforce NATO's
9 eastern frontier. I believe the alliance should station a
10 brigade-level combat capability permanently in Poland and
11 Romania. It should station battalion-level capabilities in
12 each of the Baltic states, and it should provide NATO's
13 military commander, SACEUR, the authorities necessary to
14 deploy forces in real time in response to provocative
15 military actions. NATO has never responded to any of the
16 exercises and provocative actions I mentioned. It has been
17 passive.

18 More has to be done to reinforce Kiev's capability for
19 self-defense. The deployment of U.S. and allied military
20 trainers is a good step that occurred this last month, but
21 it is overdue. And the West should also arm Ukraine with
22 air defense and anti-tank weapons and other capabilities it
23 has been requesting so it can better defend itself. The
24 West should deploy intelligence and surveillance capacities
25 to Ukraine to enhance Ukraine's situational awareness, and

1 it should conduct military exercises in Ukraine just as
2 EUCOM did last summer to help train Ukraine's armed forces,
3 and to demonstrate the West's solidarity with Ukraine.

4 None of these recommendations present a territorial
5 threat to Russia. They would help erase the red line the
6 West has allowed Russia to redraw in Europe. They would
7 present Moscow the possibility of a costly and prolonged
8 military conflict. And let me add, the United States should
9 be also front and center with the Europeans in the
10 negotiations addressing Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
11 Washington's absence from the Minsk process is a clear
12 opportunity cost in the effort to bring this conflict to a
13 peaceful and just end.

14 Fourth, similar security assistance should be offered
15 to other countries threatened by the shadow of Putin's
16 assertive policies. Here I am thinking particularly of
17 Moldova and especially of Georgia because of its strategic
18 location. And finally, the West needs to reanimate the
19 vision of a Europe whole and free. Because of NATO
20 enlargement, Europe has been better able to manage the
21 aggression the continent has experienced over the last year.
22 We need to ensure the alliance's open door policy has not
23 devolved into a passive phrase or empty slogan.

24 Let me close by a simple point -- with a simple point.
25 The most effective way to counter hegemonic aspirations is

1 to deny them the opportunity for actualization. Security in
2 Central Europe is critical not only for peace in Europe, it
3 is also a key element of an effective strategy to forge a
4 normal relationship, if not eventually a partnership, with
5 Russia.

6 Thank you.

7 [The prepared statement of Mr. Brzezinski follows:]

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1 Chairman McCain: Thank you very much. Dr.
2 Sestanovich?
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1 STATEMENT OF STEPHEN SESTANOVICH, PH.D., GEORGE F.
2 KENNAN SENIOR FELLOW FOR RUSSIAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES,
3 COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

4 Dr. Sestanovich: Chairman McCain, Senator Reed,
5 members of the committee, thank you for today's opportunity
6 to join your discussion.

7 Admiral Stavridis gave a number of reasons why Europe
8 matters. I agree with him. I would add one more: what it
9 can contribute to the global balance of power. A united
10 West can have more confidence in our ability to defend our
11 interests worldwide. Divided we can be much less sure.

12 The past year has been a frustrating one for anyone
13 trying to anticipate Russian moves. Time and again, many of
14 us failed to gauge Vladimir Putin's motives. Often we
15 thought he would be ready to unwind this crisis when he was
16 just about to double down. He made promises that he did not
17 keep and created a powerful case for Western sanctions.
18 Putin has personally antagonized American and European
19 leaders in a manner that has few precedents in the history
20 of Russia's relations with the West.

21 After a year like this, where do we stand and what
22 should we think? I would like to focus on four issues that
23 have produced considerable debate. They bear directly on
24 choices that your committee must make. First is the
25 question of Putin's aims and calculations; second is the

1 effectiveness of sanctions; third is the question of helping
2 the Ukraine military; and finally a fourth, fear of where
3 this confrontation is heading. Many people worry that Putin
4 will turn against neighbors especially our Baltic allies.

5 Our debate on all of these issues has brought many
6 truths to the surface, but I think we have not got the whole
7 story. To develop the right strategy, we need a fuller
8 picture. First, on the nature of Putin's commitment to this
9 -- your phrase, Senator, was neo-imperialist policy. We
10 should neither minimize nor exaggerate it. When separatist
11 forces were about to be defeated by the Ukrainian army last
12 summer, we saw that Putin was not prepared to let that
13 happen, but he was also unwilling to deploy large Russian
14 units into Ukraine to defend the separatists.

15 Why do he and his associates lie about having troops
16 there and about the casualties that they have taken?
17 Because neither foreign nor domestic audiences would be
18 happy with the truth. Putin's actions to date do not tell
19 us what his future aims will be. Saving the separatists and
20 himself from defeat does not mean that he is prepared to
21 back them as they try to take more territory. We know they
22 want to do so. They are completely open about this. But we
23 should not assume that Putin will pay any price to support
24 them. We should not assume that Putin cannot be deterred.
25 Many people think he cannot be. This is a misunderstanding.

1 Second, about sanctions, Putin and sophisticated
2 Russian economists are not of one mind about the impact that
3 sanctions have had. Some call it marginal. Others consider
4 it significant. But no one denies that sanctions have had
5 some impact or that over the past year Russia's economic
6 outlook has deteriorated. The only question is whether
7 sanctions affect Russian actions on the ground. I believe
8 sanctions do affect policy. Putin may well hope that if
9 fighting in Eastern Ukraine stays below the peaks it reached
10 last year, the West will start to roll back sanctions.
11 There are many indications of this.

12 But he must also know that if fighting increases, new
13 sanctions are likely and a rollback will be impossible. It
14 is hard for me to believe that this awareness does not
15 constrain Russian support for separatist leaders, and we
16 should make clear how high the cost will be of further
17 enlargement of the separatist enclaves.

18 Third is the much disputed issue of whether and how to
19 support the Ukrainian military. A sudden infusion of
20 Western arms will not turn the tide when fighting is in full
21 swing. It might even lead Russia to escalate its own
22 involvement. And those have been reasons that many have
23 brought forward not to provide lethal assistance to the
24 Ukrainian military. But the problem that the United States
25 and its allies faces now is somewhat different. Their

1 primary goal, as I said a moment ago, is to keep the
2 separatist enclaves from becoming a larger part of Ukraine.
3 Our goal now should be to deter a new wave of violence in
4 Ukraine, and in particular an effort by separatists to
5 expand their holdings.

6 That is a goal that Western military aid can help to
7 achieve. Without its separatist enclaves, Eastern Ukraine
8 will grow. The country's political and economic
9 disintegration will continue, and Russia's involvement will
10 increase. We have to be smart about strengthening Ukraine's
11 army, and we have to be careful, but a Ukraine that can
12 defend itself is essential to a strategy of re-
13 stabilization. Expecting the conflict in the East to freeze
14 itself is wishful thinking.

15 Finally, about where Putin will strike next. His
16 Ukrainian policy is a threat to the security of NATO
17 members. The alliance has been right to reinforce and
18 reassure frontline states, and it must do more. We cannot
19 afford the luxury of unpreparedness. All the same, as long
20 as the Ukrainian crisis continues, my judgment is that
21 Russian military pressure against other neighbors is remote.
22 Being bogged down in Ukraine makes it harder for Putin to
23 pick other fights, yet the unfolding conflict in Ukraine
24 will surely affect his calculus down the road. If Putin
25 emerges the victor in this conflict, if a pro-Western

1 government is kept from succeeding, if Russia's nationalist
2 mood deepens, if the rich and powerful countries --
3 democratic countries of Europe and the United States fail to
4 stay the course, if this is where we end up, Putin will draw
5 his own conclusions. The Putin we face in the future could
6 be even more dangerous than the one we face today, both for
7 his neighbors and for us.

8 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to our
9 discussion.

10 [The prepared statement of Dr. Sestanovich follows:]

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1 Chairman McCain: Well, thank you very much, and thanks
2 to all the witnesses for their very important comments and,
3 frankly, thought-provoking assertions. There is a Michael
4 Gordon piece on April 22nd: "In a sign that the tense
5 crisis in Ukraine could soon escalate, Russia has continued
6 to deploy air defense systems and built up its forces near
7 the border." "This is the highest amount of Russian air
8 defense equipment in Eastern Ukraine since August," Marie
9 Harf, the State Department spokeswoman said. "Combined
10 Russian separatist forces continue to violate the terms of
11 the Minsk II Agreement signed in mid-February." And of
12 course we are seeing indications of renewed fighting, and
13 there are many who believe that Mariupol is the next target
14 for Vladimir Putin. And it also seems, at least to this
15 observer, that the price that Vladimir Putin has paid is not
16 very high, and the benefit, at least in Russian public
17 opinion, has been rather beneficial to him.

18 Mr. Brzezinski stated in his prepared statement and
19 verbal statement, "We should provide military equipment,
20 including air defense and anti-tank weapons, as well as key
21 enablers, deploy intelligence surveillance capabilities, and
22 conduct military exercises in Ukraine as EUCOM did in the
23 summer of 2014." And then in addition to that in your
24 comments, Mr. Brzezinski, you said we should increase
25 sanctions and have rapid response capability, and also

1 assist other countries, specifically you pointed out
2 Georgia.

3 Admiral, do you and Dr. Sestanovich agree with those
4 comments, Admiral, or do you want to add or subtract from
5 those recommendations?

6 Admiral Stavridis: I certainly would not subtract at
7 all. I agree with them. I think that just to put
8 specificity on it in terms of the aid, we ought to be
9 providing lethal, in particular anti-tank weapons, anti-
10 armor weapons. That is a very visible, relatively easy to
11 operate, and sensible system in addition to all the other
12 UAV and so forth, things we should do. I will add one
13 other, which is cyber. We should be assisting the
14 Ukrainians in cyber. They are under continuous attack.

15 Chairman McCain: Dr. Sestanovich?

16 Dr. Sestanovich: I am broadly sympathetic with those
17 ideas. Let me mention, though, that I think in looking at
18 the list of measures, we should focus primarily right now on
19 steps that will increase the operational effectiveness of
20 Ukrainian forces. I am not so sure that having exercises in
21 Ukraine is going to do very much along those lines. I could
22 be persuaded, but I would really want to focus on what you
23 can do to increase the fighting capability of Ukrainian
24 forces.

25 And I mention this for a reason that goes beyond just

1 the deterrence factor and the ability to resist when
2 separatists push out from where they are. I think it also
3 affects the internal politics of Ukraine in an important
4 way. If the Ukrainian government cannot hold the line
5 against separatist offensives, they will lose ground -- it
6 will lose ground politically, and the people who will gain
7 politically are the informal militias often with, to be
8 honest, somewhat extreme ideologies and aims of their own.
9 That is an outcome that will be terrible for Ukraine's
10 future. So we are not looking simply to produce a military
11 result by offering assistance to the Ukrainian military. We
12 are trying to stabilize and support a democratic government.

13 Secondly, I would add about sanctions. I think right
14 now increasing sanctions is going to be a very heavy lift.
15 And the crucial aim has to be to prevent the rollback
16 because that is actually a rather pressing danger right now.

17 Chairman McCain: I agree, and as long as they are
18 dependent on Russian energy, I do not think you are going to
19 see. We forget Crimea. We forget the shoot-down of the
20 Malaysian airliner, et cetera. Mr. Brzezinski, first of
21 all, there is one other area, that is the intense propaganda
22 campaign that Russia is waging in the Baltics in particular,
23 but also Moldova and other countries. And do you have a
24 response to that because I do not think, frankly, that our
25 radio free Europe and other capabilities that we had during

1 the Cold War is in the 21st century. I think it more like
2 20th century.

3 And my other question is, suppose the status quo
4 remains and we do not implement the procedures that you and
5 the other members of the panel have largely supported. What
6 do you think Vladimir Putin's next move is? Is it Mariupol?
7 Is it Moldova? Is it even areas even further?

8 Mr. Brzezinski: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding
9 Russia's information campaign, they are crushing us. Russia
10 spends billions of dollars in sending out cyber messages, TV
11 messages, radio messages. It has lobbyists all over Western
12 capitals pushing out the Russian line, some of it accurate,
13 some of it blatantly false. And we have nothing in
14 comparison, and I actually think this is where we need to go
15 back to the Cold War and think about lessons learned.

16 And we actually had a very sophisticated information
17 campaign. It was led by the United States Information
18 Agency, an independent structure in the U.S. government that
19 actually was responsible for doing nothing but messaging,
20 and it has separate offices in our embassies all around the
21 world. That is the kind of level of effort that we are
22 going to have to put into if we are going to counter this
23 Russian information campaign, and it is a campaign that is
24 going to have to be mirrored by our allies.

25 Regarding Russia's next move, my sense is that Putin is

1 just positioning himself as an opportunist. I was struck by
2 how his strike, unsuccessful albeit, but his strike against
3 Mariupol earlier this year coincided with the Greek
4 elections because he clearly knew that the West was not
5 going to really be able to develop the consensus necessary
6 to respond forcefully to that violation of the Minsk
7 Agreement. It was not going to be able to generate the
8 consensus necessary to impose additional sanctions.

9 So when I look down the road, I actually think that the
10 most likely move by Putin will occur when there is another
11 economic crisis or political crisis in the West or in
12 Ukraine, and Putin will move quickly to seize and exploit
13 that opportunity. I think it will be towards Mariupol if
14 not all the way down towards Crimea. It is possible it
15 could be other parts of Donetsk and Luhansk.

16 A second contingency I keep my eyes on is Kharkiv.
17 Kharkiv is the technological center of Ukraine famous for
18 its aviation and aeronautics industry. There has been an
19 ongoing campaign of terrorist attacks by Russian proxies, by
20 Russian forces operating in that area, bombs going off in
21 metro stops and such. So I think what is happening there is
22 Russia is continuing to see they can soften up that region
23 so it could become like another Luhansk.

24 Looking beyond Ukraine, I am less worried about a
25 strike against the Baltics, but more against Georgia. Why

1 Georgia? Because Georgia is a weak state. It is a small
2 state. We have precedent in 2008 of Russia trying to take
3 over Georgia. And also Georgia is strategically important.
4 It is the cork that goes into the Caspian Sea of oil and
5 gas. It is the pathway for the southern corridor that is
6 going to bring Caspian gas into Europe. And if Putin really
7 wanted to do something strategically significant to mitigate
8 the southern corridor, well, you take Georgia and you shut
9 down the southern corridor that way. That is what I keep my
10 eyes on.

11 Chairman McCain: Thank you. Senator Reed?

12 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, gentlemen.
13 One of the issues that arises along with sanctions is the
14 declining price of oil because of, frankly, the actions of
15 the Saudis. I might suggest it is more powerful than formal
16 sanctions. And there are some indications -- I have spoken
17 to Dr. Sestanovich before -- of the effect within Russia
18 where there are strikes. There are buildings sort of. I
19 think there is too much to suggest that we have reached a
20 turning point, but there is some indications of turbulence
21 because of this situation.

22 So, Admiral and your colleagues, comment on the
23 effectiveness of the sanctions, but also the effectiveness
24 of continued low oil prices.

25 Admiral Stavridis: I think Dr. Sestanovich has it

1 about right. They are neither catastrophic nor are they de
2 minimus. They are kind of in the middle. Mr. Brzezinski
3 has it right in that if you really want to get attention
4 with sanctions, there is another level you have to go to.
5 He mentioned a couple of things. I would throw into the mix
6 more targeted individual sanctions at high level individuals
7 in the Putin circle.

8 In terms of the oil pries, anything that depresses oil
9 prices does, in fact, have, I think, perhaps a higher
10 immediate effect than the sanctions. The two in combination
11 are powerful, and I think over time will be possibly the way
12 in which we finally get Vladimir Putin's attention.

13 Senator Reed: Mr. Brzezinski?

14 Mr. Brzezinski: Sir, my sense is that when we think of
15 sanctions in the West, we have a terrible tendency to try
16 mirror our decision making and political processes upon
17 Russia. You know, when Russia suffers -- when we suffer a
18 negative one, negative half percent GDP growth, we have a
19 political crisis. Governments fall. When Russia suffers
20 negative two or negative three percent growth, they look
21 back on their history, a rich history, a proud history, of
22 enduring great economic and military hardship: Napoleonic
23 wars, Hitler's invasions, and such.

24 They have a much heartier approach to economic
25 endurance than we do, in part because of history, in part

1 also because of the political structure. Russia is an
2 autocracy. It is a one-man state. Not a one-party state, a
3 one-man state. And it is much more capable of enduring that
4 kind of hardship that comes with economic sanctions.

5 I have to say, if I could, that when I think about our
6 unwillingness to impose harsher sanctions, I am very, very
7 surprised. It is rooted very much, I think, in Europe's
8 unwillingness to suffer the blowback that would come with
9 those sanctions. But if you look at the economic balance
10 between Europe and Russia, between the West and Russia, it
11 is pretty surprising.

12 Senator McCain has described Russia as a \$2 trillion
13 gas station. Well, that \$2 trillion gas station has one
14 customer. It is the EU primarily. The EU is a \$12 trillion
15 economy. It is backed by a \$16 trillion economy, the U.S.
16 economy. How is it that a \$2 trillion gas station is able
17 to intimidate an economic entity, the EU and the United
18 States, that is 15 times its size? I think that is rooted
19 in strategy shortsightedness, I think more fecklessness,
20 allowing the neighbor to be invaded and doing not as much as
21 we could. And to a certain degree, corporate greed, an
22 unwillingness to take on the financial costs of what one
23 needs to do for moral and strategic reasons.

24 Senator Reed: Dr. Sestanovich?

25 Dr. Sestanovich: There is no doubt that Russia is an

1 autocracy, but I do not think we should exaggerate the
2 stability of that system. This is a strong but brittle
3 political order. And the kinds of tremors that you referred
4 to, Senator, with the wave of strikes, for example, are a
5 reminder that the legitimacy of an order of that kind is
6 always precarious.

7 About sanctions. They have been much more powerful
8 than we expected because of their interaction with oil
9 prices, just as you suggest. The effect of the oil price
10 drop would have been less if Russian banks and corporations
11 had had an easy option of refinancing through the West. The
12 partial closure of access to Western capital markets has
13 made the problems of Russian state corporations and other
14 businesses that much greater.

15 It is probably right, at least many Russian friends of
16 mine say what Dr. Sestanovich said. Just if you want to
17 sharpen the impact of sanctions, the easiest option
18 available is to add sanctions on individuals. We always
19 think that the broader sanctions are going to have the
20 bigger bite, but people in Putin's circle, who will see that
21 sanctions against them are their reward for being
22 supporters, will, you know, have to ask whether this --
23 whether the boss knows what is doing.

24 One other thing about individual sanctions is that they
25 do not require the same degree of unanimity to have an

1 effect. We can take actions of that sort ourselves, and
2 that can send a powerful message about where we are going
3 with our policy.

4 Senator Reed: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Chairman McCain: Senator Rounds?

6 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
7 thank you for your testimony this morning. I would make two
8 assumptions, number one that the situation in the Ukrainian
9 is not acceptable in its current way. The status quo is not
10 acceptable, and that it should be reversed. And the second
11 assumption would be that the United States should not go
12 this alone. If those two assumptions are correct, does
13 NATO, assuming that NATO is the appropriate entity to take
14 action, does NATO have the current capabilities to respond
15 appropriately to the aggression that has been shown by Mr.
16 Putin? And second of all, does NATO through the individual
17 membership, do they have the political will to get it done?
18 And is that what is slowing it down today?

19 Admiral Stavridis: I think the short answers are yes
20 and no. NATO has the military capability. It over matches
21 Russia in essential every military area, particularly in its
22 high tech, its number of troops, its combat aircraft, et
23 cetera. But it does not -- because it is a consensus-built
24 organization, which means all 28 have to agree with
25 anything, I think it is highly unlikely that the alliance

1 would step into Ukraine in a significant way and respond to
2 Vladimir Putin on the ground.

3 I do think if Putin came after a NATO country, Estonia
4 being the sort of classic scenario that is bandied about, I
5 do believe the alliance would respond strongly and
6 aggressively to that.

7 Mr. Brzezinski: Sir, I would second what the Admiral
8 said fully. Let me go one step further and say that if the
9 alliance -- not the alliance. If we in the West want to do
10 some of the things that the committee has supported, like
11 arm the Ukrainians, and some have argued more severe
12 sanctions, I think we are going to have to move out of
13 institutions like NATO and the EU and go into coalitions of
14 the willing.

15 And that has risks because it underscores a certain
16 amount of disunity, but it has the advantages of actually
17 actions being taken. And I am confident that if the United
18 States were able to pull together a coalition of the
19 willing, and I think it could, for example, in arming
20 Ukraine, I would look to the UK, I would look to Poland, I
21 would look to that Balts, I would look to some of the
22 Scandinavian countries.

23 Voice. Canada.

24 Mr. Brzezinski: Canada? Thank you. That coalition of
25 the willing could provide weapons that are needed by

1 Ukraine. It would demonstrate that such moves are actually
2 constructive, and it would eventually pull the alliance
3 along.

4 Dr. Sestanovich: I would add only that we should not
5 over focus on military support for Ukraine. Military
6 support is extremely important, but the crisis that Ukraine
7 faces is a much broader one. And given the severity of the
8 economic disaster that is happening there, it is not too
9 much to call it an existential crisis.

10 We can build up the Ukrainian military and still find
11 that the Ukrainian economic order collapses. And to deal
12 with that problem, we are, in fact, going to need, as you
13 suggest and as my colleague suggests, multilateral support.
14 We need the IMF to step up as it has, and Congress should
15 understand that what lies between the status quo in
16 Ukrainian and the unthinkable collapse of the Ukrainian
17 economy is probably going to be that institution, plus other
18 creditors helping out. This is going to have to be a pretty
19 broad-based international effort to rescue the Ukrainians,
20 and it is going to be expensive.

21 Senator Rounds: Which in this particular coalition
22 does not exist today.

23 Dr. Sestanovich: Well, I would not actually say that.
24 The core of it exists. There has been a good IMF response,
25 and Western governments have been helpful, but it is

1 probably going to have to draw in Ukraine's creditors. The
2 Ukrainian government is reaching out to try to reach
3 understandings with its creditors so as to build up its --
4 strengthen its balance sheet. But this is something that is
5 an ongoing process, and I do not mean to say that the
6 business of the Armed Services Committee is not the only
7 element of saving Ukraine. I do mean to say that actually.
8 I think it is important for the Armed Services Committee to
9 understand how much the work of other arms of the U.S.
10 government will be crucial in keeping Ukraine afloat.

11 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Chairman McCain: Senator Manchin?

13 Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
14 all of you for being here today. And I just came back from
15 Berlin a few weeks ago, and it was the Aspen Group that met
16 with Ukraine and Russian scholars and leaders. And first of
17 all, the thing I walked away with is the Cold War today is
18 colder than the Cold War when we had declared a Cold War.
19 If anybody could touch on that, how we build the relations,
20 if there is something we did not know about or do not know
21 about it. But seems like there is a very little
22 conversation, dialogue trying to build any relations with
23 the United States and Russia. First and foremost that.

24 Next of all, exporting oil is something we are talking
25 about in our Energy Committee. Do we export crude? We have

1 not done it since the 70s with the OPEC situation we ran
2 into back in the early 70s. Could we use this strategically
3 for our Nation? I think it would be hard for me to explain
4 in West Virginia that we ought to export more crude and it
5 will make prices cheaper at the gas pump. That is a hard
6 lift to explain. Strategically they would back it 100
7 percent if we knew that we were putting -- bring those
8 nations who have oil that they have used their energy for
9 the wrong reasons. So to touch on that one.

10 And finally, we were told at this conference we had for
11 a week that we should be very careful if we arm the
12 Ukrainians, even defensive weapons, because it gives Putin
13 really a reason to do what he would like to do anyway and be
14 more aggressive. So they were very cautious. I took the
15 approach that in West Virginia if a bully is picking on
16 somebody who is undersized or taking advantage, you just
17 want to make sure they have the ability to fight back. So I
18 would have said let us give Ukrainian all the weapons. I
19 have a second thought and a pause button on that one because
20 of what I had heard, and it could just escalate things much
21 worse than what they are today. I do not know if they will
22 get much better, and maybe that is the only recourse we
23 have.

24 So first of all, on the relationship of crude and then
25 basically the Ukraine arming -- arming Ukraine.

1 Admiral Stavridis: I am going to go with West Virginia
2 on the approach. I have difficulty with this argument that
3 says we should not arm them because we will provoke Vladimir
4 Putin. I think he has demonstrated he is the bully in the
5 neighborhood, and I do not think acquiescing to a bully is
6 ever the right way to go. And I say that as a guy who
7 stands a towering five-foot-five.

8 [Laughter.]

9 Dr. Sestanovich: I think, secondly, on the dialogue
10 with Russia, we still have zones of cooperation with Russia.
11 We cooperate with them to some degree in counterterrorism, a
12 bit in counter piracy. We have reasonable dialogue at the
13 moment with the Iranian nuclear negotiation. We will see.
14 We have also seen Russia turn around and give advanced anti-
15 air warfare weapons. So I would say that portion of the
16 dialogue is breaking or about to break further. But we do
17 have some minor areas where we can continue to talk, and we
18 should do so.

19 In terms of the crude oil, I think it makes sense in
20 the broadest context of energy to try and alleviate others'
21 dependence on Russian gas and oil, back to the \$2 trillion
22 gas station that the chairman has, I think, correctly
23 identified. Thanks.

24 Senator Manchin: Mr. Brzezinski?

25 Mr. Brzezinski: Sir, thank you. Regarding energy

1 security, energy security remains a key vulnerability for
2 Central Europe. They are very dependent upon Russian oil
3 and gas. In Poland I think it is 80 percent, 90 percent of
4 its oil from Russia, over 60 percent of its gas from Russia.
5 Ukraine, of course, the numbers are much higher. The same
6 in the Balkans. So we have to make addressing Central
7 Europe and Europe's energy security a key priority, and I
8 think U.S. policy has done that. We helped drive forward
9 the southern corridor that will bring Caspian gas to Europe.

10 I think the next big project really should be fostering
11 the infrastructure necessary to integrate the energy markets
12 of Central Europe together because they all remain certain
13 islands, separate nations, separate energy markets, and to
14 integrate them into that of a wider European energy market.
15 That is a key long-term project.

16 As for U.S. exports, I think it can only help Europe's
17 energy security situation if we unleash our oil and gas upon
18 the global market, but we should have also realistic
19 expectations of how that will affect European security.
20 Most of those exports probably would not go to Europe. They
21 would probably go to Asia and elsewhere where the prices are
22 higher. But by flooding the global market, it would
23 actually push more global oil and gas towards Europe,
24 helping diversify Europe's energy sources, and that has
25 already been the case to a certain degree with LNG.

1 Regarding arming Ukraine, I stand with West Virginia
2 without question. I look at not only is it a strategic
3 requirement because, you know, weakness can actually attract
4 aggression certainly when you have a neighbor like Putin,
5 but I also look at it as a moral imperative. I have to say
6 I look back prior to the attack and remember -- the attack
7 of Ukrainian. And I remember how the Ukrainians actually
8 sent a company of their own soldiers to a NATO Article 5
9 exercise. They have actually sent more soldiers than we
10 have to Steadfast Jazz in Poland and Latvia.

11 And then I think about the protestors on the Maidan who
12 risked their lives, some lost their lives, expressing their
13 desire to be part of Europe, their desire to be part of the
14 EU, and their desire to be part of NATO. And for us to kind
15 of stand and look at our shoes in a way and limit our
16 assistance to MREs and blankets when they are being attacked
17 by an aggressor I think is morally indefensible.

18 Dr. Sestanovich: Well, West Virginia seems to be
19 carrying the day here. But I would say, first of all, we
20 are not limiting our assistance to MREs and blankets, and
21 you know that, Ian. We do need to be smart and careful here
22 because getting involved with weapons assistance can be
23 destabilizing. We need to make sure that is not. I am
24 completely in favor of providing this assistance, but I
25 think that there are no risks involved. There are risks,

1 and that is why we have got to be smart about it. But the
2 risks are very, very great doing nothing, so we have got to
3 watch it.

4 About a Cold War, Admiral Stavridis is right that there
5 are plenty of areas where we still can manage to sit across
6 from the Russians and talk to them. But this is a real Cold
7 War suddenly, and we need kind of strong nerves for it. The
8 message to the Russians has got to be you brought this on
9 yourselves, and the principal responsibility for finding a
10 way out of it to start with is not ours. It is yours
11 because you began this. And that I think it is really quite
12 important for us to have the strength of that conviction.

13 Finally, about energy, I agree with a lot of what has
14 been said here. I would give you an operational suggestion.
15 Secretary Kerry last summer said it is a goal of American
16 policy to reverse -- reduce European energy dependence on
17 Russia. How is it coming? I would like some regular
18 progress reports. I would say that is something to ask
19 about in a persistent way to make sure that our government
20 does better here what it does not always do, and that is
21 follow through.

22 Chairman McCain: Well, Doctor, the risk of
23 destabilization assumes that the situation is stable.
24 Senator Ernst?

25 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you,

1 gentlemen, very much for being here today. We appreciate
2 your testimony. I would also like to extend my
3 congratulations to Senator Cotton, who is not with us today.
4 Late last evening they welcomed an addition to their family.
5 Baby boy Cotton was born last night. Anna is doing very
6 well. So congratulations.

7 Chairman McCain: He should be here this morning then.

8 [Laughter.]

9 Senator Ernst: Yes, her work is over, at least for the
10 time being. Anyway, I would like to shift just a little bit
11 and talk a little bit about Turkey just while I have you
12 here, Admiral, if we could. It seems to me and to many
13 others that Turkey has been maybe not such a strong ally as
14 they should have been. We see that ISIL and al-Nusra seem
15 to have extensive lines of communication within Turkey, and
16 I would contend that there are those within the
17 administration that tend to turn a blind eye to those types
18 of activities going on within their own country.

19 So, Admiral and others, if you could address Turkey and
20 the situation as it stands with these different terrorist
21 organizations. And maybe what the United States and others
22 could do to discourage this type of activity.

23 Admiral Stavridis: Senator, thank you. There is some
24 good news in the overall stature of Turkey in the alliance,
25 and we should remember that. I am going to criticize Turkey

1 momentarily. But we should remember that in every NATO
2 operation -- Afghanistan, Libya, the Balkans, counter piracy
3 -- Turkey has been there. They have sent troops. They have
4 been very engaged and involved. What is happening now, you
5 are absolutely correct, is a different story. Despite
6 having obviously a lengthy and extensive border that abuts
7 both Syria and Iraq, among others, they have, in my view,
8 failed to step up in the anti-Islamic state campaign. They
9 should be much more involved at every level beginning with
10 open access to their bases, more intelligence sharing, more
11 use of their military capability against the Islamic state
12 up and including ground troops, which I think are inevitable
13 against the Islamic state. So in all of those dimensions
14 Turkey is falling short.

15 The reason is they are conflicted about objectives.
16 They really want to see the end of the Assad regime. The
17 Islamic state is nominally fighting the Assad regime. They
18 have failed to recognize that the greater danger at this
19 moment is, in fact, the Islamic state, A, and B, we can do
20 both of those things. We can see the end of Assad and
21 defeat the Islamic state. It requires will, coordination,
22 cooperation. Turkey needs to do more.

23 Senator Ernst: Gentleman, any other input?

24 Mr. Brzezinski: I guess the only thing I would add,
25 and I completely agree with Admiral Stavridis' points about

1 what we could be expecting of Turkey. Also I think we have
2 to take into account Turkey's perspective in its
3 relationship with the West, which I think has caused it to
4 kind of, to a certain degree, and I do not want to overstate
5 this, disenfranchise itself, particularly within the
6 European community. It has been frustrated now by over a
7 decade of basically a cold shoulder from the EU and its
8 aspirations. And so, it has been almost kind of let free to
9 a certain degree, and it is pursuing, not surprisingly, a
10 more independent policy. Our challenge is how to pull
11 Turkey in a constructive way fully into the fold.

12 Senator Ernst: Very good.

13 Admiral Stavridis: May I add one point? It is simply
14 that we should give Turkey credit for dealing with an
15 enormous humanitarian challenge. There are two million
16 Syrians who are being -- the bill for whom is being footed
17 by Turkey, and that is a contribution to humanity. It does
18 not, in my view, diminish their shortfall in reacting
19 militarily.

20 Senator Ernst: Thank you. If we could turn back to
21 Ukraine and Russia just for a moment. We have talked
22 extensively today about arming the Ukrainians, and I take
23 the West Virginia approach also, very much so. But are
24 there other types of programs that maybe we could assist the
25 Ukrainians with? We have talked about, of course, energy.

1 Are there agricultural programs, other types of things where
2 we can just continue to assist them and build up their own
3 economy in the meantime?

4 Dr. Sestanovich: Well, Ukraine could be an
5 agricultural powerhouse rivaling the greatest Midwestern
6 producers. So watch it.

7 Senator Ernst: Yes, they could.

8 Dr. Sestanovich: Watch out what you wish for.

9 [Laughter.]

10 Dr. Sestanovich: Surely the failure to develop
11 Ukrainian agriculture has probably been as big as any
12 failure of the past 25 years in sort of unlocking the
13 potential of the Ukrainian economy. The Ukrainian economy
14 is in such terrible shape that almost anything would help.
15 The good news is that you have a team in place in Ukraine
16 that really gets it, that understands what needs to be done.
17 It is not as though we need to go there and tell them have
18 you thought about Ukrainian agriculture. They know what the
19 potential is and they know what the problems are.

20 They need the resources. They need the political will.
21 They need the time to let some of their measures take hold.
22 But they are pretty serious about what they are doing, and
23 they are implementing the kinds of policies that make some
24 of them nervous actually about the political viability of
25 it. That is why the prime minister calls himself a kamikaze

1 appointment. He figures he ultimately is going to go up in
2 flames. But I think the most important ingredient in this
3 is time. They need to be able to hang in there long enough
4 for the measures -- the very sensible and path-breaking
5 measures that they are taking to have some effect.

6 Senator Ernst: Great. Thank you very much. Thank
7 you, Mr. Chair.

8 Chairman McCain: Senator Shaheen?

9 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
10 you all very much for being here. Most of our discussion
11 this morning is focused on Russia, which is the elephant in
12 the room. But as we look at threats to Europe's security,
13 how concerned should we be about the economic situation that
14 particularly parts of Europe are facing, the rise of
15 nationalist parties in some of the -- Greece, Spain, some of
16 the other countries of Europe, and the potential for that to
17 provide fertile ground for ISIS and terrorist attacks and
18 Russia to agitate in a way that is a threat to European
19 security? How do you assess that with respect to what is
20 happening with Putin? Anybody.

21 Mr. Brzezinski: Senator, I think you have hit on an
22 underlying foundation element of Europe's security
23 situation, and that is the fragility of its economy. The
24 fragility of its economy is contributing to some of these
25 emerging kinds of nationalist xenophobic parties. And they

1 are certainly not constructive.

2 When I think of how this relates to Russia, I watch
3 very much what is going on in Greece because I really feel
4 that that could have a powerful impact on the European
5 economy. There is a grexit. There are going to be
6 shutters, and they are going to go particularly through
7 Southern Europe. And it could even push Europe back into a
8 recession.

9 A Europe that is back into recession is a Europe that
10 is going to be less able to mobilize as a whole to take on
11 the challenges that we are discussing today, be it Russia's
12 aggression to the East, be it the extremism we see in the
13 Middle East, the extremism we see in North Africa and the
14 refugee flows. It is going to be harder for us to act as a
15 transatlantic community in a unified way. And I really
16 believe that I think Putin watches this closely. I think he
17 times to a certain degree his moves according to when he
18 thinks the alliance, the community, the transatlantic
19 community, will be least able to respond forcefully and
20 cohesively.

21 Senator Shaheen: So what more -- I am assuming that,
22 Admiral Stavridis and Dr. Sestanovich, that you both
23 basically agree with that assessment?

24 Admiral Stavridis: I do. If I could just add, I think
25 this is an area where we mentioned earlier that Putin was

1 crushing us in the social networks and strategic
2 communications. The Islamic State is crushing us as well.

3 Senator Shaheen: Right.

4 Admiral Stavridis: And we need a countervailing
5 strategic communications focus there along with all the
6 other things that Ian has talked about. I think it is
7 extremely concerning.

8 Senator Shaheen: So that is what my next question was
9 going to be. What can we do to better shore up what is
10 happening in those areas? Obviously a better social media
11 information campaign that can help respond. What else?

12 Admiral Stavridis: The economic piece is enormous
13 here, and I would start with the T-TIP, the Transatlantic
14 Trade Partnership that is coming. I think that is a way
15 that we can help the European economy directly. Putin hates
16 it because it ties Europe to the United States, and I think
17 it would have a very salutary effect.

18 Thirdly, we ought to continue to do within the military
19 domain the NATO things that you know so well, Senator. I
20 think there is no single point solution here, but we need to
21 continue to be engaged militarily, politically,
22 economically, and in a communications sense. Otherwise,
23 storm clouds ahead.

24 Dr. Sestanovich: Could I just add one kind of
25 encouraging word about --

1 Senator Shaheen: Please.

2 Dr. Sestanovich: -- you know, these bumbling,
3 passive --

4 Senator Shaheen: Encouragement would be helpful.

5 Dr. Sestanovich: -- spineless, underperforming
6 Europeans as we tend to portray them. Putin does watch this
7 carefully, but he exaggerates the impact of it. That is why
8 he has been so surprised by the extent of the European
9 reaction to what he has done in Ukraine. He thought this
10 would basically be forgotten within months. His view has
11 been the European cannot tie their shoes. They cannot do
12 anything collectively. In fact, the European Union has
13 regularly reaffirmed a sanctions policy that Putin never saw
14 coming.

15 It gets me to the question of marketing because what
16 you need from marketing is a good product. And the most
17 important part of developing a consistent public relations
18 line is having a unified policy. So far we have been pretty
19 good at that, and I think if we can hold that we have the
20 solid foundation on which to build a more effective
21 marketing policy. But the crucial ingredient, and I think
22 this is -- this hangs in the balance over the next six to
23 nine months is to keep a policy across the board --
24 military, economic, political support for Ukraine. That can
25 unravel. Putin may not turn out to be totally wrong about

1 the disunity of the West. But if by the end of the year he
2 looks up and discovers that actually he has not been able to
3 divide Europe and the United States, that will be a powerful
4 message for him.

5 Senator Shaheen: So when you say "we," you are talking
6 about Europe and the United States together.

7 Dr. Sestanovich: I am, yes.

8 Senator Shaheen: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
9 have other questions, but I will --

10 Chairman McCain: Senator King?

11 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to
12 be a bit of a contrarian here and try to create an
13 alternative scenario. I am trying to figure out whether
14 this is the Sudetenland in 1938 or Sarajevo in 1914, and
15 bear with me for a minute.

16 Putin has a very weak economy. Domestically everything
17 stinks. He has got an 80 percent approval rating in Russia
18 principally because of nationalism and his strong man image
19 of standing up to the West. Is it not possible that arming
20 the Ukrainians, which would obviously be public in some way,
21 shape, or form, whether it is anti-tank weapons or something
22 else, would be playing into hands? It would be -- he would
23 say, see, I am standing up against America. They are trying
24 to invade our region of the country -- our region of the
25 world. They are putting their troops and arms -- maybe not

1 troops, but arms, and it would embolden him.

2 And the second piece of my question is, you guys, it
3 seems to me, are assuming a static universe. We arm the
4 Ukrainians and nothing else happens. He would obviously
5 respond in some way, and he is sitting on the side of the
6 poker table with most of the chips because this is on his
7 turf.

8 And I guess to throw one other historical analogy into
9 the mix, Cuba. We were willing to take the world to the
10 brink of nuclear because of perceived Russian, not
11 aggression, but placement of weapons in our sphere of
12 influence off of our country. I think we have got to think
13 and put ourselves in his shoes, and I am just concerned.
14 And I have not made any firm decision on this, but I just do
15 not think it is as easy as you say.

16 We arm the Ukrainians. Then what happens? That is my
17 question, Mr. Brzezinski. Do you want to tackle that one?

18 Mr. Brzezinski: First, I would say that arming the
19 Ukrainians is not the sole answer. I think it is a critical
20 element of a strategy.

21 Senator King: But what does he do if we arm the
22 Ukrainians? What is the next -- it is not just going to be,
23 oh, they armed the Ukrainians. What does he do next? What
24 happens next?

25 Mr. Brzezinski: If he moves further into Ukraine after

1 we arm the Ukrainians, the Ukrainians will impose higher
2 costs on the aggressor forces, on the Russian forces. I
3 think that is going to be --

4 Senator King: But he controls the media in Russia.
5 Does he care -- I mean, he is not responsive. As you said,
6 if your economy went down one percent we would have, you
7 know, people in the streets. Over there they are not even
8 going to know that there are more troops dying in the
9 Ukraine.

10 Mr. Brzezinski: You know, again, it is not the sole
11 answer, but if there are more Russians, to put it crassly,
12 dying in Ukraine, I think it is going to cause a political
13 problem for Putin. One thing that I have been struck by
14 watching this crisis politically or this even in Russia, is
15 the steadfast, earnest, determined effort of the Russian
16 government to cover up Russian deaths in Ukraine. They do
17 not have the equivalents of faces of the fallen. They deny
18 that anyone has died. They deny their forces are there.
19 They intimidate families who have lost their sons or their
20 daughters in Ukraine telling them to be quiet. They move
21 them out of their homes. They threaten to take away their
22 death benefits. It is really interesting --

23 Senator King: So is it your position then that we arm
24 the Ukrainians and Putin does not respond. There are no
25 further weapons for the separatists. There are no further

1 troops. I mean, this is a fact -- in fact a status
2 universe. We arm -- there is no response. I find that
3 impossible to believe.

4 Mr. Brzezinski: No, what happens is that, one, the
5 Russians face a more complex situation, a more lethal
6 situation. They face the prospect of a prolonged and costly
7 conflict. That, I think, will probably deter them trying to
8 push further in Ukraine. It also might make it possible
9 they would be more willing to back out of Ukraine, at least
10 out of Eastern Ukraine. It would also demonstrate to Putin
11 the West is serious about sustaining the post-World War II
12 security order, that we are not going to tolerate unilateral
13 revisions of orders by force. I think those are dynamics
14 that we are not trying -- we are not leveraging, and we
15 should be leveraging.

16 Senator King: Others have thoughts about my question?
17 I hope you appreciate that this is not easy.

18 Admiral Stavridis: I totally do, and I think the key
19 word Ian used was "probably." This is a --

20 Senator King: Yes, I heard that word, too.

21 Admiral Stavridis: This is a calculus just like any
22 decision you make, particularly when you use lethal force in
23 any dimension. We always say in the Navy, when you release
24 ordnance, everything changes. You are taking a gamble. But
25 my assessment is that this is the right choice. And in

1 terms of what happens, I think Putin then has a much harder
2 choice. He can either bring Russian forces under their flag
3 into Ukraine and face, I think, overwhelming world
4 approbation, or I think at that point he does start to
5 unwind and reaches for the frozen conflict solution. I
6 think that is probably the best we get out of this.

7 But, no, of course, it is not static, Senator. There
8 will be changes, and it is a risk, and it could go very
9 badly. But I still recommend that we do it.

10 Senator King: Sir?

11 Dr. Sestanovich: Senator, since I am the member of the
12 panel who has expressed the most unease about this, let me
13 try to bring you around to my way of thinking about it since
14 I do support it. I think you mentioned a static universe.
15 You should not assume that the universe is static as long as
16 the United States does not do anything. This is a fluid
17 situation right now in which separatists are trying to push
18 out in all directions, whether it is along the coast, to the
19 North, to the West. They only control about a third of
20 Donetsk Province and half of Luhansk, and they have said
21 they want it all.

22 They are definitely going to try to get the rest of
23 these provinces, and they are going to try to expand their
24 control across along the coast. It is just a certainty. I
25 mean, if there is anything that one can regard as a law in

1 this universe, that is going to happen. So the question --

2 Senator King: And I certainly understand that there
3 are risks on both sides. There is a risk of inaction, and
4 the universe is not static in either way. I do understand
5 that. I am just trying to assess the risks, the relative
6 risks.

7 Dr. Sestanovich: The best scenario in which to try to
8 have some effect of bolstering the operational capabilities
9 of the Ukrainian forces is when there is a lull. And the
10 fact that Putin has agreed, even while not abiding by it
11 much, but there is something of a lull. And that is the
12 moment in which we have to try to make sure that when people
13 start to challenge that lull, to push out from what they
14 hold now to what they want to hold, that they will be
15 stopped, that they will face more resistance.

16 I mean, the thing that finally makes me think, yes, of
17 course you have to support these forces is without greater
18 capability, there is no way that the separatists are not
19 going to push out. So here is the question I would put to
20 you, and I think you should put it to people in the
21 Administration because they plainly do not want to do this.
22 What is your plan for stopping the separatist offensives
23 that are going to go, you know, West, North, and South from
24 the land that they hold now? What is your theory of the
25 case?

1 Senator King: Right.

2 Dr. Sestanovich: If you have got a theory of the case
3 that enables the Ukrainian forces to hold the line, great,
4 you know. Let us hear it. I think if there were such a
5 case that could avoid the --

6 Senator King: The risk.

7 Dr. Sestanovich: -- the uncertainty and the risk that
8 you identified, great. I just do not think there is that.
9 But I would say challenge people in the Administration
10 because my sense is from your -- what you said, that you do
11 not want that to happen. I think they do not want it to
12 happen either, but I do not think they have any answer to
13 how they are going to keep it from happening.

14 Senator King: It seems to me the answer is that we
15 have to game out what happens in both directions. And
16 particularly I am concerned, as I expressed, that when you
17 are playing chess with a Russian, you had better think three
18 moves ahead, not just react and no reaction, and I think
19 that is a very important point. And I am sorry, Mr.
20 Chairman, I have gone over, but a very important point that
21 we also have to game out the results of doing nothing, and
22 see is there a strategy or is the strategy just to not act.

23 Dr. Sestanovich: Gaming it out and doing nothing is
24 totally easy. The separatists will expand their territory.

25 Senator King: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 Chairman McCain: Well, I think, Doctor, you have just
2 answered my question, and I would ask the other two
3 witnesses, and I am sure I know the answer. Is there any
4 doubt that there will be attempts and, for no reason to
5 believe they are not going to be successful under the
6 present scenario to expand the Russian influence through the
7 separatists throughout Ukraine? Admiral, is there any doubt
8 in your mind?

9 Admiral Stavridis: None whatsoever, and I suspect
10 sooner rather than later. And I think the mortars and the
11 artillery are shelling the villages outside of Mariupol
12 right now.

13 Mr. Brzezinski: I completely agree with the Admiral.
14 It is going to happen.

15 Dr. Sestanovich: I think the separatists are
16 determined to have this happen. What we do not know is how
17 much the Russians really want it to happen. I think the
18 Russians are unwilling to let the separatists be defeated,
19 and the game that is going on between them is the
20 separatists want to push out, and then when there is a
21 counter response, they want to say to the Russians you have
22 got to defend us. You have got to keep us from losing any
23 of the ground that we have taken. So what our interest is
24 is to make sure that they cannot actually take new ground
25 because once they do, that will draw in more Russian

1 support.

2 Mr. Brzezinski: Could I follow up, sir?

3 Chairman McCain: Sure.

4 Mr. Brzezinski: Actually I get very concerned about
5 what I feel is a tendency to exaggerate the gap between the
6 separatists and Moscow. I never saw -- was able to observe
7 any significant separatist movement in Eastern Ukraine prior
8 to this invasion. I firmly believe that "the separatists"
9 are not separatists. They are an extension of the Russian
10 polity. They were sent in to destabilize Eastern Ukraine.
11 They were led by Russian provocateurs. They were backed by
12 Russian soft, and they were ultimately backed by Russian
13 conventional forces.

14 So it is not really -- there is not a tension that we
15 can really exploit between separatists and Moscow. They are
16 one and the same. It is an external invasion of Ukraine.

17 Chairman McCain: I would also add that apparently if I
18 were Vladimir Putin, and I do not pretend to understand him
19 totally, but it seems that you achieve a degree of success,
20 and that becomes the status quo. And things quiet down,
21 then Europeans talk about relaxing sanctions and trying to
22 find that out, and things are quiet for a while. And now,
23 at least according to General Breedlove, we are starting to
24 see an increase in activities after a period of lull. It
25 seems to me that that has been pretty successful so far for

1 Vladimir Putin. Doctor, is there anything to that theory,
2 do you think?

3 Dr. Sestanovich: Putin thinks he has got more
4 endurance the Europeans do and that the Americans do. You
5 are right. As I said to Senator Shaheen earlier, his gamble
6 is that whatever miscalculations he has made and how much
7 greater the resistance has been, we will crack first. And
8 so, that is the test for us is not to crack first.

9 Chairman McCain: Thank you. Jack, did you want to --

10 Senator Reed: I just have just a brief comment. I
11 think as has been indicated by the panel and particularly
12 Mr. Brzezinski, that Putin is an opportunist. If there is
13 an opportunity, he takes it. But he is also -- I think, his
14 timing is influenced by things like the Olympics. I think
15 he was very reluctant to get involved in the Ukraine while
16 the Maidan Square demonstrations were going on because he
17 had another audience he was playing to. He was the world
18 leader.

19 And I think similarly at his juncture we might be
20 having a lull because they are in the process of celebrating
21 the end of the Great Patriotic War, and he wants everyone to
22 come and pay homage to him, et cetera. But after that,
23 which is within a few weeks, there is no more, sort of him
24 personally, reason to hold back, so that might be a factor
25 also.

1 But I think, and I will go in a second, I think your
2 point, Doctor, which is this becomes ultimately a test of
3 wills against this individual. And he has the advantage of
4 being an individual. We have a collective will we have to
5 sustain and hold together. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman McCain: And I do not mean to prolong this
7 dialogue too much longer, but it seems to me energy is still
8 a key item. And we could develop within a couple of years
9 an ability to get energy from the United States over to that
10 part of the world, which I think would have a significant
11 impact. That has nothing to do with arms or weapons. And
12 finally, could I ask if there is an agreement on that,
13 Admiral?

14 Admiral Stavridis: I agree with that, Senator.

15 Mr. Brzezinski: Sure.

16 Dr. Sestanovich: Absolutely.

17 Chairman McCain: I thank the witnesses for a very --

18 Senator Shaheen: Mr. Chairman, can I --

19 Chairman McCain: No. Yes.

20 [Laughter.]

21 Senator Shaheen: Can I ask a couple more questions?

22 Chairman McCain: Absolutely.

23 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. I want to go back, Dr.
24 Sestanovich, to your comment about providing lethal weapons
25 because I think there is a lot of agreement on this

1 committee that we should provide those weapons, but you said
2 we have to do it very carefully. So you talked about doing
3 it during the lull. What other things do you think we
4 should be doing as we are looking at providing those weapons
5 to do it carefully?

6 Dr. Sestanovich: Training is crucial. Intelligence
7 capabilities are crucial. Those are the two that would come
8 to my mind right off the bat. And then of course the
9 economic backdrop means that we have to make sure that while
10 we are getting those Ukrainians in smart formation on the
11 front lines in good looking new uniforms, and knowing their
12 tasks, the home front does not just collapse. That is --
13 you know, if there is anything that is more desperate than
14 the military outlook, it is the economic outlook.

15 Senator Shaheen: Yes. I certainly think that is
16 pretty clear to this committee. But let me ask because one
17 of the things that I think that you all have alluded to is
18 the importance of acting unilaterally with the United States
19 and Europe, being united in our approach to the crisis. One
20 of the reports about the European reaction to lethal weapons
21 is that they do not support that, and that, therefore, this
22 could be a potential area where we would disagree in a way
23 that might have an impact. So how do you assess that as you
24 look at the need to provide weapons? Admiral?

25 Admiral Stavridis: Disagreement within NATO is unknown

1 to reign at all, Senator, as you know quite well from your
2 deep experience in NATO. Think back on the Libyan operation
3 where we saw a group of nations leaning forward, very, very
4 involved, a group of nations supportive, and then some who
5 were essentially opposed, but willing to kind of come along.
6 I think that is how this would play out.

7 I do not accept the argument that this would somehow
8 shatter the alliance. I think at the end of the day you can
9 do it within a NATO context with the nations who want to, or
10 as Mr. Brzezinski has said, you could create a coalition of
11 the willing. He listed some states. I agree with that. I
12 think there are mechanisms to deal with that argument.

13 Senator Shaheen: Any other -- Mr. Brzezinski?

14 Mr. Brzezinski: Yes, I would like to make two points,
15 Senator. First, I would add to the Admiral's list of how
16 coalitions fell together into NATO without collapsing
17 alliance. Missile defense is an example. Iran sanctions is
18 another. I have two words of caution on strategy for arming
19 Ukraine or two things we need to think about is, one, I
20 think it is important that we avoid incrementalism.

21 I am a little bit worried that our Administration and
22 our European allies' approach is first we will do some MREs,
23 then we will do some Humvees, then we will do some counter
24 artillery radar and such. I think that is a mistake because
25 I think that just maps out to Putin were the future is

1 headed, and that actually will encourage him, embolden him
2 to act while he is most effective, has the power balance
3 most in his favor in Ukraine.

4 And then second, I think we would be naïve to assume
5 just arming the Ukrainians and the Russians will not do
6 anything. They are going to counter react. So we have to
7 have a plan that goes beyond just arming Ukraine, so that if
8 we provide good, robust security assistance to Ukraine, we
9 are prepared for a sudden Russian offensive. For example,
10 one step half-cocked and ready to go is really harsh
11 economic sanctions that would be driven in either by the EU
12 or by coalition like-minded nations to hit the Russians and
13 then know in advance this is going to happen if they all of
14 a sudden try and counter react aggressively to an effort to
15 provide more needed security assistance to Ukraine.

16 Admiral Stavridis: If I could, I would add, Senator,
17 cyber. We need to add that to our shopping list as we think
18 about how to help the Ukrainians. Thanks.

19 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. I want to switch topics
20 for my time that is left because one of the things that
21 happened last week is that European regulators imposed
22 antitrust charges as Gazprom. Do you think that is going to
23 have any impact on the energy situation?

24 Dr. Sestanovich: Yes. It has been a principal of
25 Russian policy that Europe does not get to impose its rules

1 on its energy trade with Russia. And the result has been
2 that Gazprom has had a very advantageous negotiating
3 position with all European customers. It has been able to
4 insist on separate negotiations with all customers with the
5 result that its prices across Europe vary dramatically
6 according to that bilateral relationship.

7 For Europe to say we care about our policies and we are
8 going to enforce them in our energy trade would be of
9 immense importance. Europe has done that in kind of
10 tentative ways, for example, with respect to energy
11 transportation and pipelines. And it has managed to block
12 the Russian South Stream Pipeline by saying this does not
13 meet our rules. And the Russians have time and again
14 laughed at that and said, oh, no, those rules are not in
15 effect because we can buy off this or that individual
16 customer or transit country.

17 If the Europeans are going to turn around their energy
18 relationship with Russia, they have got to start enforcing
19 their rules, and it is has got to go beyond transportation.
20 If it gets to the issue of negotiating about pricing, there
21 will have been an energy revolution, so that is fundamental.
22 But as you surely know from having EU events, one
23 announcement does make a policy. The Europeans have
24 opportunities for many procedural hurdles, reversals, and so
25 forth.

1 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr.
2 Chairman.

3 Chairman McCain: Senator Ayotte?

4 Senator Ayotte: I want to thank all of you for being
5 here. You know, having been to Ukraine twice last year and
6 having had the privilege of overseeing the presidential
7 elections, you know, I am just wondering, are we at a
8 tipping point because many of us have been calling, and on a
9 very strong bipartisan basis, for providing, you know, the
10 lethal support for Ukraine to defend itself, as well as
11 economic assistance, as well as increased NATO support,
12 additional sanctions.

13 And at some point, I mean, I have just -- it is really
14 appalling to me. It is hard to express how I feel about it
15 because we have been in almost uniformity here in the
16 Congress on this, on things that, you know, we do not always
17 agree on, so many things. On this we have sort of on a
18 bipartisan basis thought this was the right thing to do, and
19 I am just worried.

20 Are we not at a critical moment where -- I feel like in
21 having listened to -- I was at the Munich Security
22 Conference having listened to, for example, the Germans
23 speak about their objections to providing lethal arms. And
24 it is almost like I feel like that in some ways Ukraine is
25 being written off, and I hate to be so cynical about it.

1 But if we do not act soon, where is this going? I
2 mean, is there not a huge urgency for this? I thought there
3 was an urgency last May. But can you help us understand how
4 urgent is this situation where you are -- you know, we have
5 got Ukraine with the economic situation, and in addition
6 having to defend their territory.

7 Admiral Stavridis: I think we are at a critical point,
8 and I think what will happen in the next two to four weeks,
9 maybe the next two to four months, is going to be another
10 bite out of Ukraine by the separatists. I am hopeful that
11 that will be the tip that pushes us over to come in with not
12 only the lethals, but really the entire package of things we
13 have talked about today.

14 As of yesterday, as I mentioned to the chairman, mortar
15 and artillery fire at the villages outside of Mariupol.
16 That is what you do first when you soften up for a land
17 advance. We may be there now. We will know more in the
18 next couple of weeks. We have to get going on this if we
19 are going to have impact.

20 Senator Ayotte: I just wanted to also follow up. One
21 of the things that struck me about this whole thing, and
22 just correct me if I am wrong in my thinking, and it has
23 really bothered me in terms of our foreign policy from the
24 beginning, and that has been the Budapest Memorandum. It
25 seems to me that we are not stepping up to help provide this

1 kind of assistance that we have talked about here. And we
2 signed this agreement. As we look at, for example, even the
3 context of Iran, other goals that we have of nuclear
4 nonproliferation, does this not in the big picture undermine
5 -- I just still do not understand why other countries would
6 want to give up their nuclear weapons when their territory
7 is invaded, and yet we -- you know, our signature on that
8 memorandum seems to mean nothing in this context. Are you
9 worried about that in the picture as we look at our larger
10 foreign policy here?

11 Mr. Brzezinski: Senator, I agree with you. I think
12 there are two important issues at stake here in the
13 violation of the Budapest Memorandum. I was a volunteer in
14 Ukraine working in Kiev when that was signed, and I remember
15 the impressions in Kiev intimately. It was celebrated in
16 Ukraine as an affirmation of the West's commitment to its
17 independence and its sovereignty. It was even seen as an
18 affirmation of its attempts to become a European -- an
19 integrated member of the Europe Community of Democracies,
20 because they were giving something up that was recognized as
21 kind of potentially very important to their own security,
22 nuclear weapons.

23 Now 25, 30 years later, we are in a situation in which
24 that memorandum has been blatantly violated. And every
25 country around the world that has or is aspiring to weapons

1 of mass destruction is looking at it very carefully. What
2 are the consequences if you give up such aspirations or such
3 weapons? Well, you become more vulnerable? Will someone
4 back you up? Not necessarily clear that they would.

5 And then I think it is a real hit to the West's
6 credibility because it was really seen a document driven by
7 the United States and Great Britain, Europe and the United
8 States. That is what the Ukrainians back when I was there
9 in 1994 were looking to for assurances. Not to Russia, but
10 to the United States and to Europe, and they are not getting
11 it. And it has really undercut our standing, the
12 credibility of our security commitments.

13 Dr. Sestanovich: Senator, I agree with you, but if it
14 does not loom large in my thinking it is because it seems to
15 me the case for supporting Ukraine is so strong.

16 Senator Ayotte: Right. Well, it is compelling.

17 Dr. Sestanovich: No matter what.

18 Senator Ayotte: I mean, it is compelling.

19 Dr. Sestanovich: Yes. And I do not think we should in
20 any way have the view that if there had been no Budapest
21 Memorandum, we would be less interested in this case, or
22 that we would be less interested in other cases where there
23 is not that same issue.

24 You are right that the commitment of the United States
25 has been shown to have been made perhaps without full

1 thought as to what we really meant by it. But I think -- to
2 me it is not the central issue. The broader question is the
3 interest that we had in the entire order that we were trying
4 to create in Europe after the Cold War.

5 And this is -- the reason this is a fundamental threat
6 to that interest has less to do with the disposition of
7 Soviet nuclear forces. The truth is the Ukrainians did not
8 really want to keep those things, and it has much more to do
9 with more fundamental considerations of war and peace and
10 our future relations with Russia.

11 Senator Ayotte: Well, I hope -- I know my time is up,
12 but I know how dedicated the chairman has been to this
13 issue, and how passionate he is, and I share his passion for
14 this. And I hope that -- I hope that the Administration is
15 listening to the testimony of all of you today. Thank you.

16 Chairman McCain: I want to thank the witnesses for
17 being here today. It has been very helpful. The meeting is
18 adjourned.

19 [Whereupon, at 10:51 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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