

**SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL PHILIP BREEDLOVE**

**COMMANDER**

**U.S. FORCES EUROPE**

**April 30, 2015**

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## **I. Introduction**

It is an honor for me to lead the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Civilians of the U.S. European Command (EUCOM). Those assigned and deployed from the European theater sent into harm's way, in Afghanistan and elsewhere, are particularly within the thoughts of the Command. I want to thank this Committee for all of the support it has offered them.

EUCOM has experienced dramatic changes in the security situation on the European continent over the last 12 months, forming a new European security environment. These changes have significant ramifications for U.S. national security interests and those of our European Allies and partners. As a result, we are assessing the threat to U.S. and NATO Allies in the theater and beyond. Even as we continue to lean forward with our NATO Allies and partners in response to the conditions in this new environment, fully addressing these growing challenges and their long-term implications requires a reformulation of the U.S. strategic calculus and corresponding resourcing levied towards Europe.

In the statement I submitted to this Committee last year, I described in detail how important our NATO Allies and non-NATO partners in Europe are to American safety and security – their importance is even greater today. EUCOM must be able to assure, deter, and defend against Russian aggression; support ongoing and future contingency operations; counter transnational threats; and help build our partners' capability to help us accomplish these missions, thereby enhancing regional and global security.

Our many shared values, interests, and economic interdependence with Europe provides unique opportunities and assets for collective security as well as global security cooperation. The United States depends on our willing and capable Allies and partners throughout Europe to work with us to fully defend our national security interests and to respond to crises around the world. Time and again, our Allies and partners in Europe have proven essential to U.S. military operations by allowing us access, including bases, transit, and overflight rights for U.S. forces as well as providing enhanced legitimacy and operational capability through the participation of Ally and partner nation military forces in undertakings in Europe, around Europe and often far from Europe.

Maintaining our strategic Alliance with Europe is vital to maintaining U.S. national security and is not to be taken for granted. We must reassure our European Allies and partners through the United States' commitment to NATO and the credibility of that commitment

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fundamentally rests upon the capabilities, readiness, and responsiveness of U.S. military personnel stationed in Europe. The forces assigned to EUCOM are the U.S.'s preeminent forward deployed force and fulfill the United States' primary treaty obligation to NATO. Our permanent presence also allows us to maximize the military capabilities of our Allies. Permanently stationed forces are a force multiplier that rotational deployments can never match.

EUCOM must be a stabilizing force on multiple fronts. Nations on Europe's Southern flank are concerned the focus on Eastern Europe may draw attention and resources away from their region, allowing for an unmonitored flow of foreign fighters, economic and political refugees, and unchecked illicit trafficking of goods and humans from an arc of instability stretching across large parts of northern Africa through the Middle East. In the Levant, persistent threats from other countries and non-state actors drives continued security concerns in Israel.

Multiple ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Africa also require EUCOM to use its limited resources to support missions occurring in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) areas of responsibility. EUCOM works closely with our bordering Combatant Commands to ensure there are no seams as we address issues crossing geographic boundaries, supporting CENTCOM and AFRICOM operations to protect U.S. national interests. Each of these security situations reinforces the importance of EUCOM and NATO to our long-term vital national security interests.

After years of force structure and other personnel reductions, fewer than 65,000 U.S. military personnel remain permanently stationed in Europe to secure and advance U.S. national interests from Greenland to Azerbaijan and from the Arctic to Israel. The size of our military presence forces difficult decisions daily on how to best use the limited resources we have to assure, stabilize, and support. I ask you for your support and favorable consideration of the U.S. role in addressing the new European security environment and helping me set the theater. As the Commander of EUCOM, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and Allied Command Operations for NATO, I support the goal of a Europe that is whole, free, at peace, and prosperous. It is with this in mind that I consider Europe's current security situation.

## **II. Assessing the Threat**

As mentioned, EUCOM is working within the framework of a new European security environment, focused on countering three primary security threats: Russian aggression in the East, foreign fighter flow between Europe and the Levant, and transnational threats stemming from North Africa.

### **A. Eastern Flank: Russia and Periphery**

For almost two decades, the United States and Europe have engaged with Russia as a partner, seeking to build relationships militarily, economically, and culturally. In 1994, Russia became a Partnership for Peace member with NATO. That same year, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom signed the Budapest Memorandum, reaffirming commitments made by all parties under the Helsinki Final Act and the UN Charter to “respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine.” Under the 1997 Founding Act, NATO made a political commitment that, “in the current and foreseeable security environment,” the Alliance would carry out its collective defense and other missions without “additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces.” In 2009, the United States sought to “reset” its relationship with Russia, which had been damaged by the 2008 Russian invasion of the Republic of Georgia. During this period, the Department of Defense made security and force posture determinations significantly reducing European force structure based on the assumption that Russia was a partner.

Despite these and many other U.S. and European overtures of partnership, Russia has continued to view its own security from a zero-sum point of view. Since the beginning of 2014, President Putin’s Russia has abandoned all pretense of participating in a collaborative security process with its European neighbors and the international community. Instead, Russia has employed “hybrid warfare” (which includes regular, irregular, and cyber forms of war as well as political and economic intimidations) to illegally seize Crimea, foment separatist fever in several sovereign nations, and maintain frozen conflicts within its so-called “sphere of influence” or “near abroad.” Undergirding all of these direct approaches is the pervasive presence of the Russia propaganda machine, which inserts itself into media outlets globally and attempts to exploit potential sympathetic or aggrieved populations.

Russia uses energy as a tool of coercion. Many former-Soviet bloc and Eastern and Central European states have long been concerned about Russia’s intentions in Europe and they

consider the Ukraine crisis the latest validation of their concerns. Recent Ukrainian and Russian energy negotiations show how Russian coercion threatens broader European cooperation as individual countries must weigh their own security and economic concerns. Russia's coercion using energy has grown along with Russia's threats and outright use of force.

As a result, there are growing security concerns among Central and Eastern European countries that are members of NATO and the European Union or are seeking closer ties with the trans-Atlantic community. Having already experienced the use of Russian military force in the 1990s and in 2008, Georgia is especially threatened by Russian occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Baltic States have demonstrated their concern by increasing military interaction with U.S. and NATO forces, which has resulted in more U.S. and Allied forces in NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission and the deployment of U.S. rotational ground forces to the Baltics and Poland to foster interoperability through training and exercises. U.S. Special Operations Forces training events were also initiated throughout the Baltics and Eastern Europe at the request of the host nations. We must continue to work with NATO to provide enduring support to the security of our Allies and partners in this area.

Russia views Ukraine as part of its sphere of influence, regardless of the views of the Ukrainian people. While Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine are the most current manifestation in a pattern of continuing behavior to coerce its neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe. Beyond its actions in Georgia and Ukraine, other examples of this pattern are suspending participation in the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaties; the ZAPAD 2013 snap exercise along the borders of the Baltics and Poland; intercepts of U.S. aircraft and shadowing of U.S. ships in international airspace and waters; basing Russian fighter aircraft in Belarus; threats to deploy nuclear-capable Iskander-M missiles in Kaliningrad; and pressure on former Soviet states through the manipulation of prolonged, "frozen" conflicts.

#### **B. Eastern Flank: Vulnerability of NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) Countries**

As U.S. partners, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine face a different security challenge from Russia than that facing NATO Allies. All three countries have implemented political and economic reforms to advance democracy and integrate with Europe; however, their ability to make further progress is significantly constrained by Russian interference and pressure. Russia occupies portions of their territory with its military forces, wields economic leverage and energy dependence as coercive instruments, exploits minority Russian populations to serve its interests,

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interferes in democratic processes, engages in bribery and coercion of government officials, and generates a constant propaganda deluge.

Even as these three countries face severe threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity, they continue to make meaningful contributions to international security. Since 2010, Georgia has rotated 14 battalions to Afghanistan in support of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and three additional battalions in support of the RESOLUTE SUPPORT mission, and is currently the second largest contributor after the U.S. Ukraine has been the largest provider of vertical lift capability to U.N. peacekeeping operations around the world and has also contributed troops and resources to ISAF, NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR), and NATO's maritime operations, and Moldova contributes a platoon to KFOR.

In addition to conducting expeditionary operations and while having differing objectives regarding the scope of their integration with NATO, all three countries strive to develop military forces meeting NATO standards and interoperability requirements; however, their efforts face a number of challenges, as all three countries require deep institutional reforms to efficiently generate, organize, equip, and sustain their armed forces. They must also continue and accelerate their transition from Soviet-era systems to modern, NATO-interoperable systems and equipment. These countries have severely limited resources available to address these requirements. Thus, U.S. security assistance to train, advise, and equip the national security forces of Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova is absolutely essential.

Recent Russian activities are forcing our partners to reevaluate their strategic requirements, including reassessing the relative importance of their ability to contribute toward NATO or U.N. operations. These countries must balance the national responsibility of their armed forces to defend their own sovereignty and territorial integrity with that of contributing to regional and global security beyond their borders. For many years, a partner's contribution to regional security was measured, at least in part, by its force contribution to international peacekeeping missions. Now that these nations face an even more aggressive Russia, their ability to protect their own borders and enforce their own sovereignty is understandably more urgent than acting as a force provider for peacekeeping missions abroad.

**C. Eastern Flank: Russian Use of Frozen Conflicts as a Foreign Policy Tool**

Describing the prolonged conflicts in states around the Russian periphery as “frozen” belies the fact that these are on-going and deadly affairs. In Georgia, there are conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. A clear purpose behind Russia’s invasion of Georgia and its continued occupation of Georgian territory is to prevent Tbilisi from pursuing its rightful and legitimate intentions to become a full member of the European and transatlantic communities. Toward that end, Russia has signed a “treaty” with Abkhazia and is pushing for another with South Ossetia to increase its influence while hampering Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration. In Moldova, Russian forces have conducted supposed “stability operations” since 1992 to contain the conflict in Transnistria. In fact, Russia deliberately and actively perpetuates these conflicts by manipulating its support to the participants, while engaging in international diplomatic resolution efforts only to the extent necessary to prevent the resumption of all-out violence.

Russia uses these conflicts to maintain its influence and deny these states’ ability to make their own foreign and security policy choices and chart their own futures. Those pretending to lead these Russian-created quasi-states rely on Russia to maintain the *status quo* and therefore, cannot stray far from Russia’s preferences. These unresolved disputes may not represent active war, but impede the democratic development of the concerned states. Just as the oppressed nations of the Warsaw Pact served as strategic buffers to the Soviet Union, so the current arc of frozen conflicts is part of a security buffer for a modern, paranoid Russia. This fits into a greater “buffer policy” sought by Russia, complemented by other dubious—yet aggressive—claims, such as its militarization of the Arctic and its military exercises on the Kuril Islands over its dispute with Japan.

**D. Western Balkans: Challenges and Unresolved Issues**

Significant challenges to peace and prosperity with the Western Balkans persist. EUCOM engages in a number of cooperative endeavors that provide an area of common interest, building confidence and good relations between former warring factions to reduce the likelihood of renewed fighting in the region. The Balkans Medical Task Force is one specific example of how EUCOM helps foster such cooperation by assisting the Balkan states in building a regional, deployable humanitarian assistance and disaster response capability.

**E. Southern Flank: Turkey as a Lynchpin to Security in the Black Sea**

Persistent instability in the Levant and beyond remains a top U.S. and European national security concern and threatens U.S. interests throughout Europe and the homeland. ISIL controls territory just across NATO's southern border and it actively recruits and trains foreign fighters destined to return to their countries of origin. Extremist actors, exemplified by ISIL, have an inordinate impact on Europe's periphery. The Syrian crisis is destabilizing the entire region, and the regional repercussions are likely to persist for years to come. Israel faces a more complex environment, complicating their political and military calculus and their need for U.S. support.

Turkey is in the unenviable position of having to hold NATO's Southern Flank. Turkey, an important NATO ally, is understandably very concerned by the ongoing crises in Syria and Iraq, which are generating significant security, political, economic, and humanitarian challenges across the region. These challenges include the influx of refugees and foreign terrorist fighters, and increased terrorist activity. EUCOM continues to work with Turkey and CENTCOM to address these multiple threats.

Finally the flow of returning foreign terrorist fighters to Europe and the United States in both the near- and mid-term poses a significant risk, including to our forward based forces in Europe. Foreign terrorist fighters are active in multiple conflict zones, gaining experience and contacts that could lead them to conduct terrorist attacks after returning home. Actively encouraged by ISIL, returned foreign fighters are mounting so-called "lone wolf" attacks. This problem will grow in scope as the flow of returning individuals increases over time.

**F. Southern Flank: Instability in the Middle East and North Africa Region**

The security environment on Europe's Southern Flank, broadly defined as the Middle East and North Africa, is likely to remain unstable and likely grow more complex for the next decade or longer. This environment is characterized by political chaos; ethnic, tribal, and religious tensions; pervasive corruption; and weak security institutions. These factors have created conditions that allow illicit trafficking, to include the smuggling of narcotics, humans, and weapons into Southern Europe and beyond. Transnational criminal organizations continue to take hold and further destabilize the region, posing a growing economic and security risk to countries on Europe's Southern Flank. The threat of highly contagious diseases spreading through unmonitored personnel movements and illicit trafficking channels, such as the Ebola virus, represent another potential threat.

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The countries of southern Europe are currently facing massive migration flows from Northern Africa. In August 2012, Greece began an operation to curb and tackle illegal migration into its country. In October 2013, Italy began a similar operation to patrol the Strait of Sicily and the southern Mediterranean following the death of more than 350 African refugees off the Italian island of Lampedusa. Since its start, Italy has intercepted or rescued more than 100,000 illegal migrants while 3,000 have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea. Dealing with illegal migration adds to the burdens of Allied Navies, particularly Italy's, and pulls them from other missions. Due to concerns raised by European countries along the Mediterranean Sea, FRONTEX launched Operation ORION TRITON in October 2014 to help nations cope with the illegal migration crossings from North Africa and the Middle East. Although most European countries do not perceive the ongoing situation in North Africa as a direct threat to their national security, the majority views the increased illegal migration flow as a serious economic and humanitarian problem. EUCOM continues to work with our Allies on this issue.

Continued tensions between Israel and the Hamas-led government in Gaza resulted in open warfare beginning in June 2014 leading Israel to launch Operation PROTECTIVE EDGE. Scores of infiltration tunnels were found and between June and September 2014 over 2,500 rockets were launched from Gaza into Israel. Fortunately, the Iron Dome system effectively neutralized many of these rockets. EUCOM monitors the situation between Israel and Hamas closely, consulting with Israel and providing logistical support.

### **G. Arctic Region**

The Arctic region is a growing strategic area of concern from both an environmental, resource, and security perspective. Environmentally, changing climate conditions will allow the Northern Sea Route and Northwest Passage to open for longer periods each year, meaning greater access to the Arctic. Less ice coverage will lead to increased shipping traffic and attract more industry and tourism. From a resource perspective, we seek to work cooperatively to ensure exploration and extraction does not lead to conflict. From a security perspective, Russia's behavior in the Arctic is increasingly troubling. Their increase in stationing military forces, building and reopening bases, and creating an Arctic military district to counter an imagined threat to their internationally undisputed territories does not fit the direction or interests of the seven other Arctic nations. Despite Russia's increasing militarization of the Arctic, EUCOM continues to work with our Arctic public and private partners to create a secure and stable region.

This is critical to safeguarding U.S. national interests, insuring the U.S. homeland is protected, and for nations working cooperatively to address challenges through our sponsorship of the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable and combined Arctic specific exercises like ARCTIC ZEPHYR.

### **III. Reassuring our Allies and Deterring Russian Aggression**

#### **A. Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE**

Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE uses U.S. access and strategic reach to develop a unified response to revanchist Russia. EUCOM continues to take positive steps to reassure our Allies along NATO's eastern flank and to deter potential Russian aggression against our NATO Allies and partners. Since the beginning of Russia's intervention in Ukraine, EUCOM's strategy has continued to evolve and demonstrates the commitment of the United States to NATO's overarching principle of collective defense. The cornerstone of EUCOM's strategy is physical presence. Coupled with our visible commitment to maintain capabilities, readiness, responsiveness and our strategic level messaging, our presence demonstrates, to friend and foe alike, our absolute commitment to the sovereignty and security of every Ally.

The credibility and effectiveness of our response to Russian aggression in the East and growing threats in Southern Europe depend not only on the operational scale and geographic scope of our operations, but also their persistence and longevity. A temporary surge in rotational presence, for example, will not have lasting effect unless it is followed by the development and fielding of credible and persistent deterrent capabilities. Forward deployed air, land, and sea capabilities permits the U.S. to respond within hours versus days as crises emerge. We must follow our near-term measures with medium-term efforts to adapt the capabilities and posture of United States, NATO, Allies, and partners to meeting these new challenges. We must accelerate this adaptation because we now face urgent threats instead of the peacetime environment previously anticipated. NATO and our European Allies have recognized the absolute requirement to effectively counter Russian coercive pressure in the East as well as urgent threats in the South.

NATO has adopted the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) designed to meet quickly emerging threats emanating from both NATO's eastern and southern flanks. The RAP features forces that can deploy in days – not weeks, an improved command and control capability (including forward

headquarters), and the regular presence of NATO rotational forces in Eastern Europe for exercises and training. U.S. support to the RAP will be essential to its long-term success. Our European Allies have already offered to serve as primary contributors of land forces to the envisioned Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), but U.S. participation with key enablers is critical to Alliance cohesion and capability. EUCOM is also responsible for implementing other key aspects of our support to the RAP, such as maintaining continuous presence in the East, enhancing the capabilities of Multinational Corps North East, and the establishment of a NATO command and control presence on the territories of Eastern Allies.

### **1. The Baltics and Poland**

As a response to events in Ukraine, EUCOM augmented scheduled multinational and joint exercises and deployments to provide a near-continuous air, land, and sea presence in the Baltic States and Poland, assuring them of the U.S. commitment to NATO. The intent of our actions is to demonstrate the ability and resolve to act together as an Alliance in the face of the challenges from Russia, while avoiding escalation. Our continuous presence and engagement activities in the Baltics and Poland fall under the umbrella of Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE.

U.S. rotational force to the Baltics began on March 6, 2014, when the United States deployed an additional six F-15Cs to augment the four already in Lithuania, fulfilling a NATO Baltic Air Policing peacetime requirement to have quick reaction interceptor aircraft “ramp-ready.” Poland took over the Baltic Air Policing mission on May 1, 2014 with augmentation from the United Kingdom, Denmark, and France. Polish and British aircraft operated from Siauliai Air Base in Lithuania, Danish aircraft from Amari Air Base in Estonia, and French aircraft from Malbork Air Base in Poland. This pattern of enhanced Baltic Air Policing continues with four-month rotations. Simultaneously, the United States established a persistent flight training deployment in Poland, consisting of either fighter or transport aircraft. These deployments continue to be a method to increase allied force interoperability as well as provide assurance to Poland and other regional Allies. Also, beginning in March 2014, United States Air Forces Europe (USAFE) began providing air-to-air refueling support to NATO AWACS aircraft conducting operations along NATO’s eastern flank.

At the end of April 2014, the U.S. Army’s 173<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) quickly deployed company-sized contingents of U.S. paratroopers to Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia to begin expanding land forces training. These deployments established a

persistent U.S. military presence in these countries and demonstrated U.S. assurance and a commitment to Article 5. These exercises, which came at the request of the host nations, work to improve interoperability through small unit and leader training. In October, the 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (1/1 CD) out of Fort Hood, Texas, conducted a Relief in Place (RIP) with units of the 173d in the Baltic States and Poland. Since assuming the mission from the 173d, 1/1 CD has participated in exercises, such as PLAYGROUND and IRON SWORD. Most recently, Soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment stationed in Germany have deployed to the Baltics and Poland, continuing our persistent reassurance to our NATO Allies. Additionally, USAFE elements deployed to Poland to conduct bi-lateral training with the Polish Air Force and rotations will continue through 2015.

In 2014, beyond previously scheduled exercises, United States Special Operations Forces expanded the number and frequency of Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) events in the Baltic States and Poland. Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) has maintained a near continuous presence in the Baltic States and Poland from June 2014 to the present. These training deployments have proven invaluable for our special forces, with indirect benefits for their Allied counterparts. Additionally, EUCOM forces conducted 67 other significant military-to-military engagements with the Baltic States and Poland from April to October 2014.

## **2. Romania and Bulgaria**

Romania and Bulgaria continue to be steadfast U.S. Allies. Access to training areas and transit locations in these nations provide a basis to send a strong signal to Russia, while forging stronger bilateral working partnerships. Romania remains a key Ally, offering tremendous support to ISAF's retrograde from Afghanistan and the RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission by allowing U.S. and NATO forces use of its base in Mihail Kogalniceanu (MK). MK is a key node for multi-modal operations and an ideal example of the bilateral cooperation and strategic access forward deployed forces in the European theater provides.

Romania has offered to host a new Multinational Division Headquarters. Bulgaria has committed to play a greater role in NATO and European defense by 2020, and made contributions to our efforts in Afghanistan. These offers demonstrate Romanian and Bulgarian resolve to be key Allies in deterring Russian aggression and building a stronger eastern flank. In Romania, Bulgaria and Georgia, the Marine Corps' Black Sea Rotational Force provides EUCOM with a limited land-based and contingency response force in the Region, while

additional rotational forces from the U.S. Army will come into Romania and Bulgaria this summer.

Romania's cooperation on such areas as missile defense, the RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission, and Afghanistan retrograde, and Bulgaria's work to expand Alliance and bilateral use of the Novo Selo Training area, are positive contributions to regional and Alliance Security.

### **3. Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine**

Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine continue to offer significant opportunities for cooperation, furthering both regional security, and in some cases, acting as willing and capable partners in coalition operations. In Georgia, NATO and the U.S. have long invested in improving defensive capabilities, continuing multinational exercises that contribute towards both enhanced capability and deterrence efforts in the region. In Ukraine, we have increased our security assistance in response to the crisis, committing over \$118 million in 2014 to help Ukrainian forces better monitor and secure their borders and operate more safely and effectively, and preserve Ukraine's territorial integrity. We also continue to conduct planned exercises such as Rapid Trident to increase interoperability among Ukraine, U.S., NATO and Partnership for Peace member nations. The most recent Rapid Trident iteration in September 2014 consisted of multinational battalion-level field training exercise and saw the participation of 15 countries with approximately 1,300 personnel. An upcoming train and equip program for its security forces demonstrates U.S. resolve towards increasing Ukrainian capacity to provide for its internal and territorial defense.

Despite increasing Russian presence in the region, EUCOM has increased U.S. maritime presence in the Black Sea through Passing Exercises (PASSEXes) and other bilateral and multinational exercises. Since April 2014, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (NAVEUR) has maintained a monthly periodic presence in the Black Sea, and led the Baltics Operations exercise in the Black Sea with numerous Allied and partner nations. Despite Russia's increased and aggressive posture in the region, NAVEUR also conducted exercise SEA BREEZE in September 2014 with multinational support from Turkey, Romania, and Georgia. Active discussions are underway for next year's iteration of SEA BREEZE, which will continue our engagement with the Ukrainian Navy and other Black Sea maritime partners.

**B. European Reassurance Initiative**

I would like to thank this committee for supporting the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). Your support directly enables EUCOM's ability to strengthen its posture along NATO's eastern flank in order to demonstrate commitment to our NATO Allies, and deter further Russian aggression. The ERI will provide temporary support to bolster the security of NATO Allies and partner states in Europe, enable adjustments to U.S. defense posture along NATO's eastern flank, and maintain momentum in conducting operations to demonstrate our commitment to our European Allies and partners. ERI funds will enable the development of infrastructure at key locations in the east to support exercise and training activities for both the U.S. and NATO, as well as support contingency operations. Additionally, ERI will fund improvements to airfields in Eastern and Central Europe along with improvements at training ranges and operations centers. Finally, our plan also includes enhancing available prepositioning, focused on the addition of a rotational Armored Brigade Combat Team set and related assets into several NATO Member nations.

**C. Building Partnership Capacities (BPC)**

Congressional support over the past several years enabled EUCOM to accelerate and expand efforts to build capacity of Eastern European Allies and partners to contribute to operations in Afghanistan. With U.S. training and equipment, these countries made substantial strides in developing NATO-interoperable capabilities to conduct special operations, intelligence analysis and exploitation, counter improvised explosive devices, coordinate close air support, and maneuver in combat. They brought these capabilities to bear in support of ISAF, further developing their interoperability and gaining experience on the battlefield in Afghanistan now in support of NATO's RESOLUTE SUPPORT mission in Afghanistan.

Even prior to the recent events in Ukraine, EUCOM was examining ways to preserve interoperability gains and expeditionary capability following ISAF. EUCOM launched our first "post-ISAF" program in 2014, implementing the Secretary of Defense's 2012 decision to reinvigorate U.S. land forces participation in the NATO Response Force (NRF). The 1<sup>st</sup> Armor Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division (1/1 CD ABCT), based in Fort Hood, Texas, began its 12-month mission as the U.S. contribution to NRF in January 2014. In May 2014, the Brigade deployed 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment (2-5 CAV) to Germany to exercise with our Allies and partners. While here, 2-5 CAV conducted Exercise COMBINED RESOLVE II at

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the U.S. Army Europe's (USAEUR) Joint Multinational Training Command, which trained 1,451 personnel from 13 countries and helped to enhance NRF interoperability and readiness.

The end of ISAF and the events in Ukraine require the U.S. to shift the focus of our foreign military training and equipping programs preparing Allies and partners for deployment to Afghanistan, to restoring and/or building Ally and partner nation capability to address the challenges of hybrid warfare and to territorial defense. However, the BPC authorities and funding available to EUCOM to equip and train foreign military forces are largely limited to preparing forces for counter-terrorism and deployment to Afghanistan. EUCOM needs continued assistance from Congress to provide adequate funding under existing authorities, to build partner capacity and address the complex challenges of the new European security environment.

For example, Section 2282 and other authorities have been invaluable in providing Allies and partners with the equipment needed to deploy to Afghanistan. Much of this equipment – such as night vision goggles; communications; counter-improvised explosive devices; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) systems – is equally relevant to joint combined arms warfare. With the end of ISAF, our Allies and partners are bringing much of this equipment home. To ensure the capabilities we have helped build are enduring and available to meet the urgent challenges we now face, the U.S. needs to be prepared to assist these countries, as appropriate, with sustainment of U.S.-provided systems. The only U.S. government program with this ability is Foreign Military Financing (FMF), which has been reduced for the EUCOM AOR (not including Israel) by more than 50% since FY10. Congressional support for an increase in FMF for the Europe and Eurasian region would greatly assist in helping to address this sustainment challenge. Additionally, to facilitate and enable our Allies and partners to preserve capabilities, there is a need for authorities that allow for multilateral Foreign Military Sales (FMS) to support NATO Smart Defense and pooling and sharing initiatives. The U.S. benefits from a Europe that is whole, free, at peace, and prosperous. Building Allied and partner capability to provide for their own national defense, as well as to deploy in support of global stability and security, will sustain these substantial benefits for the United States.

#### **IV. Stabilizing the Middle East and North Africa**

##### **A. U.S. Support to Israel**

Israel has witnessed a deterioration of security along its borders over the last several years. Spillover from the Syrian civil war, continued threats from Hezbollah rockets, and ISIL pose a threat to the stability of Israel and the entire region. ISIL has especially used violence in an attempt to impose their self-proclaimed religious authority and political control over the Middle East. Given this situation, it is feasible that, with limited warning, war could erupt from multiple directions within the Levant with grave implications to Israeli security, regional stability, and U.S. security interests.

EUCOM primarily engages with Israel through our Strategic Cooperative Initiative Program and numerous annual military-to-military engagement activities. These engagements strengthen both nations' enduring ties and military activities. EUCOM chairs four bilateral and semiannual conferences with Israel. These conferences address planning, logistics, exercises and interoperability. EUCOM also supports the Joint Staff's bilateral engagements, including meetings at the highest levels within the Department of Defense. The U.S.-Israel exercise portfolio includes five major recurring exercises and as a result of continued engagement, U.S.-Israeli military and intelligence cooperation relationships have never been closer or our joint exercises more robust. Through these engagements, our leaders and staff maintain uniquely strong, frequent, personal, and direct relationships with their Israeli Defense Force counterparts.

EUCOM diligently works to strengthen our relationship with Israel, which includes \$3.1 billion in annual FMF, support for Israel's layered-missile defense program—including the Iron Dome and David's Sling systems, and the approval to release advanced military capabilities, including the F-35 and the V-22 aircraft. Finally, EUCOM works closely with CENTCOM to keep abreast of all emerging threats that may cross into EUCOM's AOR.

##### **B. Countering Threats along the Southeastern Flank**

In August 2014, the U.S. Departments of Defense and State, in close consultation with the Government of Iraq, formed a task force to bolster the resupply of lethal aid to Kurdish Peshmerga security forces in northern Iraq. EUCOM has supported CENTCOM by facilitating the integration of European forces and efforts into the larger CENTCOM coalition. EUCOM led the European resupply effort by soliciting, coordinating, and transferring donated arms, ammunition, and material from a multitude of European Allies and partners. By early October

2014, over two million pounds of donated lethal aid had been delivered to the Kurdish Regional Government via 45 airlift missions to Iraq. The vast majority of these donations and a significant portion of the aircraft were provided by European nations under the direction of EUCOM. These efforts are expected to last through 2015.

EUCOM has also led numerous interactions between U.S. interagency partners, the Custom and Border Protection Agency, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. These actions have focused on countering transnational threats, including trafficking of persons and illicit substances, as well as prosecution actions to build partner capacity. EUCOM works in conjunction with the Department of State to monitor and thwart the flow of foreign fighters going to and from Syria and the Levant, dismantle extremist facilitation networks, and build partner nation capacity to counter the flow of foreign fighters on their own.

## **V. Supporting Other Combatant Commands and Contingencies**

### **A. RESOLUTE SUPPORT: Enabling the NATO mission to Afghanistan**

U.S. and NATO forces completed Afghan combat operations in December 2014. On 1 January 2015, ISAF transitioned to the RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission. Our European Allies and partners have borne and will continue to bear the burden of providing the bulk of forces, second only to the United States.

As we conduct the RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission, EUCOM will continue to help prepare our Allies and partners for deployments to support the train, advise, and assist mission, all the while maintaining maximum readiness to protect the force and to conduct full-spectrum operations, as required. Authorities to include allowing EUCOM to provide operational logistics, lift and sustain support for Allies and partners in Afghanistan, and Section 1202 have been invaluable in providing our Allies and partners with logistical support in the form of inter-theater lift, sustainment, and equipment loans. On the training side, the Coalition Readiness Support Program enables us to provide crucial pre-deployment training to prepare 12 of our Ally and partner nations for the missions they will support during the RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission. Section 1206 was absolutely vital in FY14, and previous years, to procure the equipment needed to fill critical shortfalls for nine of our Allied nations. This much needed equipment includes interoperable communications gear, counter-IED and explosive ordinance disposal equipment, medical equipment, and night vision devices.

**B. Operation INHERENT RESOLVE: Supporting military intervention against ISIL**

The United States is considering options for enabling moderate Syrian opposition and EUCOM is in support of CENTCOM on this planning effort and continues to assist in developing options. Operation INHERENT RESOLVE is intended to reflect the unwavering resolve and deep commitment of the U.S. and partner nations in the region and around the globe to eliminate the terrorist group ISIL and the threat they pose to Iraq, the region, and the wider international community. It also symbolized the willingness and dedication of coalition members to work closely with our Allies and partners to apply all available dimensions of national power necessary – diplomatic, informational, military, economic – to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL.

**C. Operation UNITED ASSISTANCE: Fighting Ebola in Africa**

EUCOM has worked in support of AFRICOM's efforts to stop the spread of Ebola from epidemic plagued countries in Africa, providing intra-theater lift, equipment, and personnel through and from the EUCOM AOR through established basing and access. EUCOM has proactively and aggressively engaged a number of European nations to secure permissions for U.S. Forces to use facilities and infrastructure for DoD-directed 21-day controlled monitoring in Europe and to relay the protocols necessary to prevent the inadvertent transmission of the Ebola disease onto the European continent. Furthermore, EUCOM has worked closely with various U.S. Embassies and other Combatant Command personnel to help shape the development of host nation permission requirements, while identifying and allaying European fears via robust information and intelligence sharing efforts.

**D. Protection of U.S. Embassies and Facilities in North Africa and the Middle East**

EUCOM continues to posture both land and air forces for quick reactions to volatile environments in North Africa and the Middle East. Forces, such as the Special-Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Africa (SPMAGTF) currently located in Spain, Italy, and Romania provides a crisis response force of 1,550 Marines. Aircraft stationed in Germany, Italy and elsewhere in Europe are on high alert to react to crises as needed. EUCOM supports this mission through its strategically located facilities and access agreements within Europe. The protection mission is vital, albeit costly, as a large number of embassies and consulates are at risk on the Africa continent and AFRICOM has no bases in Africa that can support forces assigned to the mission.

## **VI. Setting the Theater**

EUCOM needs sufficient resources to maintain readiness, execute assigned missions, and build capability and capacity of our Allies and partners to defend themselves and bolster regional security.

### **A. U.S. Defense Posture**

#### **1. Forces**

Overall reductions in the Department of Defense's budget have meant the reduction of force posture in Europe. Nevertheless, in light of recent, significant changes to the European strategic environment, it is my judgment we must immediately halt any additional reductions to the number of assigned forces in Europe. At the height of the Cold War, there were more than 450,000 uniformed personnel stationed across the European Theater. Today there are fewer than 65,000 permanent military personnel stationed throughout the EUCOM AOR, of which 55,000 are in direct support of EUCOM missions, and 9,000 support the missions of other organizations, such as AFRICOM, TRANSCOM, NATO, and others. The EUCOM assigned forces are tasked with the same deterrent and reassurance missions we have performed for the past several decades. It is important to understand the critical roles these forces play in this theater before the Services recommend further reducing the current force posture in Europe.

On any given day, forces throughout Europe are engaged in a variety of activities and missions to include (1) Training of our forces in order to be ready, if called upon, to conduct full spectrum military operations; (2) Assuring our Allies of our commitment to collective defense; (3) Training and collaborating with our NATO Allies and partners to maintain interoperability; and (4) Working with our Allies and partners to effectively prepare for and support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

In addition to my responsibilities as a warfighting commander, I also often serve in the role of a supporting commander. EUCOM forces are ready to support the needs and missions of four other Geographic Combatant Commanders, three Functional Combatant Commanders, and numerous Defense Agencies, including the ability to appropriately base and provide logistics support functions to forces assigned to operations in the AFRICOM and CENTCOM areas of responsibility.

Some have suggested we can mitigate the impact felt from a reduction in assigned forces through the augmentation of rotational forces from the United States. Rotational forces from the

continental United States to Europe cannot completely fulfill strategic roles. The temporary presence of rotational forces may complement, but does not substitute for an enduring forward deployed presence that is tangible and real. Rotational forces also have an impact on our relationships with various host nations we will count on to enable operations; we might over reach to assume host nations will readily accept our new readiness construct. As I have said previously, virtual presence means actual absence. The constant presence of U.S. forces in Europe since World War II has enabled the United States to enjoy the relatively free access we have come to count on—and require—in times of crisis. Further reductions of both infrastructure and forces will reduce our access to key strategic locations during times of crisis.

## **2. Footprint**

### **a. European Infrastructure Consolidation (EIC)**

Since the end of the Cold War, EUCOM has reduced its footprint in Europe to less than 25% of the total controlled, European real estate inventory once held by the United States. Our current network of U.S.-controlled bases throughout Europe provides for superb training and enables power projection in support of steady-state and contingency operations. As EUCOM begins to implement the Secretary of Defense's direction on EIC, the Department must focus to ensure remaining infrastructure properly supports operational requirements and strategic commitments.

EIC reductions will yield cost savings with the remaining infrastructure sufficient to support steady-state and crisis activities. Upon full implementation of EIC, EUCOM will have 17 main operating bases in Europe. As we continue to implement EIC recommendations, EUCOM will work towards minimizing any negative effects the reduction of bases may have on our strategy, operations, and the political-military relationships the U.S. has built in Europe.

### **b. Key Military Construction (MILCON) Priorities**

EUCOM's FY 2016 military construction program continues to support key posture initiatives, recapitalize key infrastructure, and consolidate enduring locations. I am thankful Congress continues to fund EUCOM's priorities, in particular the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center/Rhine Ordnance Barracks theater medical consolidation and recapitalization project (ROBMC), European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) missile defense projects, and the relocation of the Joint Intelligence Operations Center Europe (JIOCEUR) and Joint Analysis Center (JAC) to Croughton, United Kingdom.

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ROBMC remains one of the command's highest priority military construction projects, providing a vitally important replacement to theater-based combat and contingency operation medical support from the aged and failing infrastructure at the current facility. The official ground-breaking ceremony, conducted jointly by the United States and Germany, took place this past October and signified continued support and commitment from both nations. This project is vital to ensuring the availability of the highest level trauma care to future U.S. warfighters.

Congressional support for the EPAA Phase 1 projects, including approval to replace expeditionary facilities in Turkey with semi-permanent facilities, has been critical to achieving a high degree of readiness at the AN/TPY-2 radar site. In FY 2013 and FY 2014, the command began EPAA Phase 2 projects, including an Aegis Ashore site in Romania.

Another key EUCOM MILCON priority project is the consolidation of the JIOCEUR Analytic Center and other intelligence elements at RAF Croughton, UK. The Department requested planning and design funding for the consolidation during FY 2015, with three phases of MILCON construction in FY 2015-2017 respectively. We anticipate the construction completion will occur in FY 2019, with movement of units occurring in FY 2019/2020.

Phase 1 includes EUCOM's Joint Analysis Center (JAC) as well as Defense Intelligence Agency's Regional Support Center. The planned replacement facility will consolidate intelligence operations into an efficient, purpose-built building which will save the U.S. Government \$74 million per year and reduce significant operational risk associated with current substandard, deteriorating facilities. The RAF Croughton site also ensures continuation of the strong EUCOM-UK intelligence relationships our sponsorship of the co-located NATO Intelligence Fusion Center.

The maintenance of our intelligence relationships with the UK and NATO remains vital to EUCOM's capability to conduct military operations from and within Europe. Phase 2, programmed for FY 2016, adds AFRICOM intelligence activities (currently at RAF Molesworth), the NATO Intelligence Fusion Center, and the Battlefield Information Collection and Exploitation System (BICES), which provides classified communications to our NATO partners.

### **3. Missile Defense**

The changing security environment in the EUCOM AOR makes it critical for the U.S. to take proactive measures and ensure our Allies and partners have the capability and capacity to defend themselves, their region, and support global coalition requirements.

#### **a. Progress on implementation of EPAA**

EUCOM continues to implement the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) to missile defense in Europe, and further develops partnerships and assurances in NATO. Within the next year, EUCOM expects to complete Phase 2 of the EPAA when the Aegis Ashore site, currently under construction in Deveselu, Romania, becomes operational. Phase 2 of the EPAA will provide enhanced medium-range missile defense capability, expanding upon Phase 1 of the EPAA, which has been operational since 2011. The deployment of Aegis Ashore will be the final building block in finalizing the Phase 2 EPAA capability in Europe. While completion of the site in Deveselu, Romania is still on schedule, there have been some delays in construction. EUCOM and Missile Defense Agency leadership have been tracking this progress closely and firmly believe there will be no slippage in schedule. We expect the Aegis Ashore capability to be delivered on 31 December 2015.

EPAA Phase 3, which is primarily composed of a second Aegis Ashore site at Redzikowo, Poland, is on track to support completion in the 2018 timeframe. The broader basing agreement is complete and the implementing arrangement negotiations are on schedule and meeting both U.S. and Polish expectations. EPAA Phase 3 builds upon the pre-existing intermediate-range missile defense capabilities of Phases 1 and 2 of the EPAA. Once in place EPAA Phase 3 will support EUCOM Plans and Operations and represents the U.S. voluntary national contribution Ballistic Missile Defense of NATO.

#### **b. Increasing Allied engagement and commitment**

EUCOM is encouraging Allies and partners to invest in their own air and missile defense capabilities to ensure that they are interoperable with our systems. Building an integrated network of interoperable IAMD systems will leverage cost-sharing and help spread the commitment among willing participants. The Allies are listening, and they are beginning to respond. The allies are also making investments in BMD capabilities, such as the Netherlands-Denmark-Germany effort to study the upgrade of the Smart-L radar systems onboard their Air defense ships, and the comprehensive programs underway in Poland and Turkey to upgrade their

lower-tier air and missile defense capabilities. EUCOM is working with the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and the Department of Defense on developing authorities that will enable the U.S. to sell missiles and other weapons systems with retransfer rights to groups of NATO and other authorized nations.

#### **c. Support to Israeli Missile Defense**

U.S. efforts to enhance the BMD for Israel are well-developed. The threat posed by longer range ballistic missiles, larger raid sizes, and increased accuracy of ballistic missiles and rockets poses a significant challenge to Israel. EUCOM maintains plans to deploy forces in support of the defense of Israel against ballistic missile attack if requested. EUCOM also conducts maritime BMD patrols in cooperation with Israel. In addition, EUCOM conducts regular BMD training exercises with Israel on a weekly and quarterly basis.

In late 2013, U.S. and Israeli representatives signed the “Combined U.S.-Israel BMD Architecture Enhancement Program” (AEP). In addition to providing guidance on combined U.S.-Israel operations, the AEP provides direction on how the United States and Israel will jointly address the full range of potential BMD enhancements developed by both sides.

#### **4. Cyber**

Among the most dangerous threats facing Europe’s new security environment are those that can manifest asymmetrically through Cyberspace. Adversaries can easily hide their identities and locations in Cyberspace, and attempt to exploit our people, our systems, our information, and our infrastructure. EUCOM must defend against these adversaries who can threaten our forces from anywhere in the world, by identifying and securing key parts of our critical infrastructure in what has become our cyber flank. Through a defensible architecture, ready cyber forces, and improved situational awareness, EUCOM will protect this flank just like eastern and southern flanks that see increasing threats today. While doctrine and concepts for operating in cyberspace are still being formulated and debated, our adversaries are aggressively searching for new vulnerabilities to exploit in the cyber flank.

EUCOM’s first Cyber Combat Mission Team (CMT) and Cyber Protection Team (CPT) reached Initial Operational Capability (IOC) this past year providing us with new capabilities to protect our people, systems, information, and infrastructure while holding adversaries at risk. As these teams continue to improve, EUCOM will have an enhanced ability to plan and conduct Cyberspace Operations to enhance our situational awareness and protect our cyber flank.

The Joint Information Environment (JIE) is moving ahead in the European theater as the as a way to reduce risk to missions by providing better situational awareness into networks, improving security, and better integrating information technology across all the Services within the Department of Defense. As a result of this effort, EUCOM has seen improved mission effectiveness through the implementation of unified capabilities, virtual desktops, and an enterprise operations center that is capable of tracking all of our component information technology systems. As EUCOM enters into the next phase of JIE, we are improving our ability to better operate with allies, friends, and partners in a Mission Partner Environment that has enhanced capabilities for information sharing and situational awareness. As demonstrated during Operations ATLANTIC RESOLVE, UNIFIED ASSISTANCE, and INHERENT RESOLVE, USEUCOM's information technology infrastructure must remain relevant, interoperable, and resilient to support a range of missions that transit our theater in support of what our national leaders may ask us to do with like-minded friends, partners, and Allies. As part of JIE, EUCOM continues to enhance our interoperability so that we can rapidly share information, enhance understanding, and dominate any potential adversary.

#### **5. Maintaining U.S. Nuclear Deterrent with NATO Allies**

NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept, 2012 Deterrence and Defense Posture Review, and 2014 Wales Summit Declaration all affirmed that deterrence, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities, remains a core element of our overall strategy, and that "as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance." EUCOM maintains a safe, secure, and effective theater nuclear deterrent in support of NATO and enduring U.S. security commitment within the EUCOM AOR. Through rigorous and effective training, exercises, evaluations, inspections, operations, and sustainment, EUCOM ensures that United States nuclear weapons and the means to support and deploy those weapons are ready to support national and Alliance strategic objectives.

Consistent with NATO's commitment to the broadest possible participation of Allies in the Alliance's nuclear sharing arrangements, EUCOM stands side-by-side with our NATO Allies to provide nuclear forces that are safe, secure, reliable, and effective, and that contribute to a robust deterrence and defense posture that strengthens Alliance cohesion and the transatlantic link. The supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies, moreover, is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States. EUCOM, therefore, works

closely with STRATCOM to assure Allies of the U.S. commitment to the Alliance. For example, by conducting bomber assurance and deterrence missions in support of NATO and regional exercises as part of Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE.

## **6. Information Operations**

Information Operations are essential to EUCOM's ability to shape the security environment and achieve our military objectives. Activities conducted under Operation ASSURED VOICE provide a powerful means to counter Russian aggression, challenge extremist ideology, and prepare for contingency operations. The EUCOM AOR has the highest internet usage rate of any OCONUS Geographic Combatant Command; that characteristic simultaneously presents the Command with an unprecedented opportunity and efficient conduit for influence in the region. We know from experience that our adversaries will seek to gain an edge by using the internet to present false narratives and spread propaganda. We will leverage the advanced technological environment in the EUCOM AOR and use the internet as a principal, cost-effective means to reach target audiences critical to our objectives. These leading-edge capabilities and methods will augment and complement the more traditional military influence measures we currently employ. To effectively move forward, we must clarify the roles, expectations, and authorities required for steady state military influence operations on the internet and continue to advance these activities in close coordination with other departments and agencies.

## **7. Global Mobility Operations**

The footprint within the EUCOM Theater is essential to USTRANSCOM's global strategy and directly supports AFRICOM, CENTCOM, EUCOM, SOCOM, STRATCOM, and NATO operations. TRANSCOM will continue to depend on relationships with European host nations for overflight and access to European infrastructure.

## **8. Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction, Counter Trafficking, and Counter Narcotics**

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), in the hands of a rogue state or non-state actor, continue to represent a grave threat to the United States and the international community. Our Allies, Partners, and NATO share these concerns; we continue to work with them on building capacity and capabilities for countering WMD and pursuing efforts bilaterally, regionally, and in a NATO construct to collaborate on reducing the potential for successful WMD trafficking and

use. We are also working in a whole of government manner to counter the trafficking of other illegal items, especially drugs crossing through Europe into the United States.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Those of us assigned to Europe on behalf of the U.S. work every day to maintain peace with our European Allies and partners, striving to meet the security challenges we face as a nation and as a member of NATO. This includes continuing to demonstrate U.S. leadership and commitment to NATO and supporting the implementation of the NATO Readiness Action Plan.

The resurgence of a revanchist Russia, and the emergence of new risks emanating from across the Mediterranean, places us in a new security environment that drives new ways of thinking. Accurately assessing these changes is critical to ensure we react properly to state and non-state actors who are not complying with international norms. As one of only two forward positioned Combatant Commands, EUCOM is in a front row seat for the action, and our staff, both at the headquarters and component levels, has the expertise and relationships to adapt.

We must continue to leverage and build upon the expeditionary capability and interoperability gained over a decade of operations in Afghanistan and increase opportunities to work together in the future. Many of these capabilities are essential to confronting current security challenges. Our Allies and partners have benefited from our sustained efforts to build partnership capacity with EUCOM and we see this process as a keystone to countering threats like Russian aggression and influence. We need to protect our investment to leverage it in response to near and medium-term threats and challenges. We must also continue exercising with and training our Allies and partners and enabling the NATO Alliance to make the transition from expeditionary and counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, to conducting a full spectrum of joint, combined operations, including high-end combined arms warfare. Our nation's security interests require we preserve their capabilities and their willingness to act so that they remain able to respond to threats to U.S. and European security as well as global contingencies.

While preserving expeditionary capabilities developed over the last decade, we must address and help our Allies and partners address renewed challenges, including along Europe's eastern periphery. Reassuring, stabilizing, and supporting Allies and partners in Europe are vital to protecting American interests both on the continent and at home. As the Commander of

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EUCOM, we need the resources to remain decisively engaged in the EUCOM Theater, to have the stabilized force structure to effectively meet our challenges brought by the new European security environment, and to defend our nation forward. If we do not stand up and take the initiative to set the theater, someone else will. We need credible, enduring capabilities that will assure, deter, and defend while shaping the theater with a coordinated whole of government approach. As long as I have the watch over EUCOM, I will relentlessly pursue a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.