

**Opening Statement of U.S. Senator Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee**

**Room SDG-50
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Tuesday, March 1, 2016**

**To receive testimony on United States European Command
(As Prepared for Delivery)**

General Breedlove, let me join Senator McCain in welcoming you to what may be your last appearance before this committee. We appreciate your 39 years of selfless military service. I know I speak for every member of this committee when I say you will be missed. I would also like to offer my thanks to your wife Cindy and to the rest of your family who have supported you throughout your career.

General Breedlove, the security landscape in your area of responsibility (AOR) has undergone fundamental changes on several fronts. To the east, an aggressive Russia continues to violate international convention in an attempt to fracture the post-Cold-war vision of a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. To the south, Europe faces multiple threats to stability, including the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and North Africa, the prospect of foreign terrorist fighters returning to the AOR, and the overwhelming influx of refugees that shows little sign of abatement. And in the far north, as the Arctic becomes increasingly accessible to international shipping traffic, Russia has intensified their military activity along the Northern Sea Route, in what may be seen as an attempt to militarize a region that should remain peaceful.

To address this multifaceted security situation, your command recently released an updated EUCOM Theater Strategy. The strategy characterizes Russia as the most prominent and imminent security challenge, and it lists deterring Russian aggression as the top priority. This is a significant departure from past strategy documents. Despite these new realities, the U.S. force posture in Europe is still sized for a time when we viewed Russia through a different lens.

The President's budget request for the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) is designed to address this new security paradigm. The ERI request would increase ongoing efforts to reassure allies and partners and focus more intently on deterrence measures. The predominant expenditures are for prepositioning equipment in Central and Eastern Europe and for the heel-to-toe rotational deployment of an armored brigade combat team. However, this force posture will still only represent a fraction of the Cold War presence. General, the committee will be interested to hear your views on the appropriate size and shape of U.S. forces in Europe to effectively carry out these assurance and deterrence missions.

ERI also provides funds for increased and expanded bilateral and multilateral exercises and additional efforts to build partner capacity. The committee will be interested to hear your views on how we can best assist our allies and partners to be capable and credible forces. We would also be interested to hear whether you believe these activities will help to incentivize NATO members to fulfill their Wales commitment to achieve defense spending at 2 percent of their GDP in the coming years.

In light of the hybrid warfare tactics used by Russia in seizing Crimea and secretly supporting separatist forces in eastern Ukraine, it is critical that we have the proper capabilities to provide indications and warnings of Russian military activities. The committee will be interested to hear your views regarding the capabilities you need in order to provide early detection of Russian intents and actions.

The Middle East conflicts and resultant refugee crisis in Europe is something unseen since the founding of the alliance. The security implications of this crisis are enormous, threatening to unravel a vision of Europe that has permeated the last two decades. While not specifically a military challenge, the committee will be interested to hear your views especially regarding the cooperation among allies and partners in addressing this instability, and stemming the flow of foreign fighters returning to Europe.

General Breedlove, I look forward to your testimony on these and other security challenges in Europe.