

**OPENING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JACK REED
CHAIRMAN, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**ROOM SD-G50
DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
Tuesday, March 29, 2022**

*To receive testimony on the posture of United States European Command and
United States Transportation Command*
(As prepared for Delivery)

REED: Good morning. The Committee meets today to receive testimony from General Tod Wolters, Commander of United States European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and General Jacqueline Van Ovost, Commander of United States Transportation Command. Thank you both for your service to the nation, and I thank the men and women serving under your commands at this critical time. General Wolters, I would also like to take a moment to recognize the tragic loss of four Marines during a training accident in Norway. Please convey the committee’s condolences to their families and fellow Marines.

The security challenges for European Command, or EUCOM, have never been clearer. One month ago, Russia unleashed its illegal and unprovoked attack on Ukraine, upending decades of general peace and stability in Europe. Putin’s invasion has inflicted horrific suffering upon innocent civilians in Ukraine, threatened European security, and caused serious consequences for the global economy. The Ukrainian military has performed heroically in the face of this overwhelming violence and the Ukrainian people have shown the world what true courage looks like.

If Putin thought his actions over the past month would drive a wedge between NATO members and within the international community, he was badly mistaken. The conflict in Ukraine has reinvigorated the NATO alliance and, as NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg noted recently, this is a “pivotal moment” for European security. Since the start of the conflict, the international community has implemented a severe and far-reaching set of economic and energy sanctions, increased military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, and reinforced NATO’s military presence along the eastern flank – including the deployment of four new NATO battlegroups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. Germany has announced historic new defense spending; additional nations have indicated an interest to join NATO; and even Switzerland has announced an intent to freeze

Russian financial assets. The international community has united in a way not seen in generations.

EUCOM and TRANSCOM are playing a critical role in this effort. American troops continue to operate enormous forward logistics centers to receive, identify, and transport the majority of security aid intended for Ukraine from across the international community. This has been a herculean task executed with admirable skill on very little notice.

I would ask our witnesses to provide the committee with any updates, and also to help place the current Ukraine crisis in the larger context of our long-term competition with both of our strategic competitors, Russia and China.

Keeping an eye to the future, an important reality we are seeing in Ukraine is that any potential adversary is going to attack our logistics support systems. This idea of “contested logistics” will include obvious threats to our forward bases, as well as the aircraft and ships that resupply those bases. It could also include cyberattacks against the information technology systems that support our deployments—government and commercial—and possible kinetic attacks against ports and airfields supporting our deployments.

I am concerned that our thinking about logistics during conflict has defaulted to our experiences dating back to Vietnam; that we have owned the sea and air lines of communication and have only had to worry about logistics efficiency, not effectiveness. General Van Ovost, I would like to know what steps are being taken to prepare for such threats to our logistics, and how the military services can alter their acquisition programs to take these concerns into account.

Thank you, again, to our witnesses. I look forward to your testimonies.

Let me now turn to Senator Inhofe.