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UNITED STATES SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

STATEMENT OF  
GENERAL TOD D. WOLTERS, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
COMMANDER  
UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND

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Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, on behalf of the dedicated men, women, and their families preserving peace in the European theater, it is an honor to testify before you today a second time as U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) Commander. It is a privilege to continue to serve alongside our dedicated patriots in a mission essential to national security. Their selfless service and determined commitment is an inspiration. Together, with likeminded Allies and Partners, our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, Guardians, and civilians work tirelessly to deliver peace and secure the United States' interests.

For the last eight decades, many European nations have been key allies and partners for the United States and today they collectively serve as exporters of global peace and security. The interim National Security Strategy articulates how a free, and prosperous Europe, defended by Allied nations and a credible North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Alliance, remains foundational to our security in a competitive geopolitical environment. USEUCOM aligns operations, activities, and investments to meet the challenges of Strategic Competition with Russia and the People's Republic of China. Through our strategy, we compete for long-term sustainable advantage, deter attacks from potential aggressors, and prepare our Allies and Partners to respond decisively. Standing alongside our Allies and Partners, USEUCOM remains ready, should deterrence fail, to fight now and win. We value the collaborative work across the Joint Force to implement this strategy and express gratitude for continued Congressional interest and support.

In Europe, political uncertainty, energy competition, malign activity, and the global pandemic stress the rules-based international order and strain European states' resources. Strategic competitors seek to exploit these conditions using all instruments of their national power to gain advantage and create instability. This nexus challenges national governments and multi-national institutions like NATO and the European Union (EU). To address these issues, USEUCOM strategy prioritizes supporting NATO's deterrence and defense of the Euro-Atlantic

area, countering Russian malign influence, strengthening strategic relationships, and enabling U.S. global operations.

## **RISKS AND CHALLENGES IN THE USEUCOM AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (AOR)**

The USEUCOM AOR encompasses 51 countries and territories, including Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, and the Caucasus. It contains significant maritime domains, encompassing the Arctic Region, the North and Central Atlantic, and the Mediterranean Sea. COVID-19 has presented challenges for nations across the globe, including those in Europe, and our deepest condolences are offered to all those impacted by this pandemic. In USEUCOM, we continue working diligently alongside Allies and Partners to ensure this health crisis does not become a security crisis. Thus far, our collective team has been successful, and we are buoyed through recent developments in vaccine production and distribution across the USEUCOM AOR.

### **Russia**

Russia's nuclear arsenal and strike capability provides Russia an opportunity to remain an enduring, existential threat to the United States, our Allies, and our Partners. A central concern is Russia's non-strategic nuclear weapons stockpile and the Kremlin's potential to use these weapons in crisis or conflict. President Biden agreed with President Putin to conduct a Strategic Stability Dialogue, which will allow the United States to raise our concerns about Russia's nuclear forces and doctrine. Beneath this threshold, Russia engages in malign activities across the globe, attempting to create instability, undermining the rules-based international order, and failing to meet obligations under international agreements. These activities continue despite widespread international condemnation and economic sanctions. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his regime's coercive and aggressive policies suggest Russian leadership will take risks to maintain power, counter Western influence, and seize international opportunities to increase the perception of Russia as a great power.

Russia seeks to maintain a sphere of influence by retaining and employing capabilities above and below the level of armed conflict to coerce neighboring sovereign nations and fracture

NATO. Today, Russia continues meddling in the politics of former Soviet Republics, abrogates its responsibilities under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and retains an active presence on sovereign soil in Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia against the will of those countries. To support their efforts at political subversion and economic intimidation, Russia employs unconventional tools, ranging from disinformation campaigns, malicious cyber activities, and the use of private military companies. These tools support a range of semi-covert, malign actions to intimidate, weaken, and divide our Allies and Partners in the European theater and beyond. By probing Western response thresholds to expand the space below the level of armed conflict, Russian leadership habitually risks misinterpreting warnings and creating unintended escalation.

Over the past decade, Russia consistently remained among the world's top five military spenders. Despite a forecasted decrease in Russian Gross Domestic Product due to the pandemic, Russia will continue its military modernization efforts. These robust capabilities and modernized forces have been displayed during operations in Ukraine, Syria, and Libya. As a result, the Kremlin has growing confidence in its military leadership and menu of hybrid, conventional, strategic, and non-strategic nuclear capabilities needed to underwrite its 21<sup>st</sup> century security approach. Today, Russia underpins its military force posture with Integrated Air Defense Systems (IADS), cyber and electronic warfare systems, counter-space, and long-range precision fires capabilities; all critical to seizing and maintaining the initiative across the competition to conflict spectrum.

### **People's Republic of China (PRC)**

The PRC's aggressive economic and diplomatic activities in the USEUCOM AOR signal Beijing's desire to build influence in Europe and challenge the established rules-based international order with an alternative model. Beijing pursues economic leverage over targeted nations through bilateral deals to build infrastructure, and secures agreements to its advantage in global trade and market access. Chinese foreign direct investment and government-backed

business ventures provide Beijing an avenue to assert influence at the expense of enduring U.S., Allied, and Partner interests. Seventeen Central and Eastern European nations participate in the China-led, *17+1 Cooperation Framework* though there are indications that participants are more skeptical about its merits. Many European countries, including the *17+1*, take part in China's *One Belt One Road Initiative*.

The PRC is focused on seizing the "high ground" in critical and emerging technology sectors with military application, including Artificial Intelligence, advanced robotics, quantum technologies, and hypersonics. In addition, the PRC's efforts to expand 5G networks into Europe through state-backed firms like Huawei and ZTE pose security risks. These networks place intellectual property, sensitive technology, and private personal information at heightened risk of acquisition and exploitation by the Chinese government. This ongoing initiative, coupled with China's growing interest and investment in European ports and critical infrastructure, complicates steady state and contingency operations. We articulate this risk to our European defense counterparts and highlight shared values, interests, and equitable business practices that distinguish the U.S. as a partner of choice. European nations are becoming increasingly aware of, and concerned about, the risks associated with Chinese capital and investment from the PRC. We must hold the PRC accountable for its predatory and unfair practices and make sure that our technologies are not facilitating the PRC's military buildup or human rights abuses.

### **Poland and the Baltics**

Poland and the Baltics remain a strategic focal point. For NATO, this region remains at risk of Russian aggression based on historical grievances and geographic position. Polish and Baltic geopolitical alignment with the West reminds the Kremlin of its limited sphere of control, isolation of its Kaliningrad exclave, and NATO's appeal to regional states. The Kremlin considers the Baltic's ethnic Russian population as justification for intervention. Russia actively targets this population with extensive propaganda and malign influence operations, while also conducting cyber operations to weaken Alliance resolve. Because Russian forces in the Western Military

District and Kaliningrad hold a geographic and numerical advantage over regional NATO forces, it is critical that timely indications and warnings are available to position combat-capable forces to deter and, if deterrence fails, blunt attack.

Regional Allies continue to demonstrate their commitment to collective defense.

Enhanced Forward Presence bolsters NATO's posture in the east with four multinational battle groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. NATO air and missile defense forces reinforce collective security and stability through Baltic air policing operations and air defense exercises. Poland demonstrates resolve to meet Alliance commitments through defense budget increases, burden-sharing with the U.S. via the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, and ongoing modernization efforts, to include Patriot and F-35 weapon system acquisitions. Poland also hosts the U.S. Army's V Corps forward headquarters in Poznan, Poland, providing a needed level of command and control to synchronize U.S. Army, Allied, and Partner nation tactical formations operating in Europe.

## **Black Sea Region**

### *Ukraine*

Following the purported annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia and its proxies continue to undermine Ukrainian defense, economic, and political sectors, attempting to pull Ukraine back into the Kremlin's sphere of influence and obstruct its integration with Western institutions. The ongoing conflict in the Donbas region, instigated by Russia, continues to destabilize Ukrainian security. Ceasefire violations occur often despite the established Minsk agreements. Russia continues to subvert the Ukrainian government through malicious cyber activities, supports illegitimate elections in Eastern Ukraine, and remains postured for the use of force in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov. Contrary to Russia's intent, these coercive actions energize Ukrainian society and reinforce aspirations to membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions. Ukraine continues to fight corruption and enact defense reform to meet conditionality requirements associated with the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI).

## *Turkey*

Despite political tensions and disagreements, Turkey remains a strategic U.S. Ally, critical to NATO and U.S. interests in Europe, Eurasia, North Africa, and the Middle East. Turkey possesses the second largest military in NATO and borders a volatile region. In addition to hosting thousands of U.S. personnel at sites across Turkey, the Turkish Armed Forces contribute to NATO missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and the Mediterranean Sea. U.S. forces in Turkey also support NATO ballistic missile defense and facilitate regional counter-terrorism operations.

Ankara continues to view the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), the Democratic Union Party (PYD), and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) as security threats. U.S. support for the SDF remains an area of difficulty in our bilateral security relationship. Turkey's purchase of the Russian produced S-400 air defense system ended Turkey's F-35 acquisition, further integration into NATO's IAMD Command and Control network, and resulted in sanctions for conducting significant transactions with Russia's defense industry through the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.

However, Turkey retains a pivotal role in countering Russia. Ankara's relationship with Moscow remains competitive and transactional, with Turkish engagement often aimed at constraining Russian behavior. Both nations view the Black Sea region within their natural spheres of influence, and each continues to oppose the other in Libya. Turkey can best counter Russia through bilateral cooperation with the U.S. and multilateral cooperation with NATO.

## *South Caucasus*

The Kremlin exerts influence over South Caucasus countries through the manipulation of regional tensions and unresolved military conflicts. The Kremlin believes chronic instability in this area enables Russian regional hegemony. Russia maintains leverage over Georgia by occupying Abkhazia and South Ossetia, blocking free movement of people and goods within Georgia's territory, detaining and harassing civilians living in and near occupied areas, and undermining Georgia's NATO membership aspirations. After brokering a ceasefire arrangement between

Armenia and Azerbaijan in November 2020, Russia increased its military presence in the region by deploying 2,000 troops to Nagorno-Karabakh as peacekeepers. Russia continues to sell military systems and hardware to both sides in the Nagorno-Karabakh.

## **Balkans**

The Balkans remain a strategically significant region where Russian, and now Chinese, malign influence and existing ethnic tensions foster instability. Russia uses social and political tensions to impede Euro-Atlantic alignment and integration. China's emergence as an alternative patron for economic and defense cooperation, under suspect terms, further disrupts the region. Nonetheless, North Macedonia's NATO accession in March 2020 is a regional success story.

Despite Kosovo declaring independence in 2008, Russia, China, and other states (including some EU and NATO members) have yet to recognize its sovereign nation status. Kosovo and neighboring Serbia have yet to normalize relations. We encourage both parties to maintain dialogue towards a peaceful solution. Kosovo's principal stabilizing force remains NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR), which includes a small, but significant U.S. contribution that bolsters U.S. political leverage in the region. KFOR enables the security conditions required for normalization of Serbia-Kosovo relations and the planned 10-year transition of the Kosovo Security Force from 2018 to 2028.

Serbia seeks balance between East (Russia and China) and the West, but finds its EU ambitions hindered by Russian-stoked internal corruption, structural and economic challenges, EU-Russia sanctions, and the requirement to normalize Kosovo relations. Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to face political and ethnic instability. Fueled by Russian influence, obstructionists seek greater autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina's Serb-majority political entity, Republika Srpska, to weaken state authorities and frustrate further alignment with Western institutions. Nationalist politics and entrenched ethnic divisions between Bosniaks, Bosnian-Croats, and Bosnian-Serbs challenge Bosnia and Herzegovina's ability to chart a path of lasting stability and eventual NATO membership.



China seeks to expand influence in this region primarily through economic means. Chinese investments focus on large-scale transportation, energy, and information infrastructure. USEUCOM is concerned about Chinese motives as these initiatives expose EU and NATO member states to coercion and adversely affect the security of critical infrastructure. Furthermore, China continues to expand its defense and security ties with Serbia, particularly via high-level visits, unmanned aerial vehicle technology dependency, and joint exercises.

### **Central Atlantic and the Arctic Region**

The Central Atlantic encompasses the maritime approaches to the Homeland and the transatlantic Sea Lines of Communication. Rarely navigated by Russia since the 1990's, advances in its submarine fleet and expanding maritime strategic goals have reinvigorated Russia's access to the broader Atlantic Ocean. As a global common, the Atlantic Ocean must remain open and free to facilitate commerce between Europe, the United States, and other international markets. It is imperative that we maintain our competitive advantage in the Central Atlantic through bolstered U.S. and Allied presence to defend the Homeland forward and maintain free and open transatlantic sea lines of communication.

We ensure these vital sea lines of communication remain open by securing the Greenland, Iceland, and United Kingdom gap, enabling access between the Atlantic and Arctic. USEUCOM coordinates with USNORTHCOM in these regions to provide a comprehensive approach to regional and homeland security. In the Arctic, Russia continues to militarize the region by introducing offensive capabilities that pose risks to U.S. and Allied forces and limit regional access. Collaborating with Allies and Partners, we work to enhance interoperability and proficiency, while demonstrating collective resolve to counter malign behavior. The Arctic remains a geopolitical zone of competition, driven by the opening of commercial shipping routes and increased access to resources including energy, minerals, and fisheries. We expect these activities and region focus to increase as the effects of climate change continue to be realized.

The existing rules-based order benefits all Arctic nations by facilitating sustainable economic development, fostering cooperation, and ensuring a stable conflict-free region. As a strategic corridor, a more open and active Arctic region will increasingly connect the U.S. Homeland, Europe, and the Indo-Pacific. China, declaring itself a “near-Arctic” power, invests in both Russian energy and the Northern Sea Route and seeks economic footholds among Arctic nations to gain influence over regional governance. In concert with our Allies and Partners, via a whole-of-government and whole-of-nations approach, USEUCOM must continue to maintain a credible Arctic deterrence to ensure that growing competition in this dynamic region does not lead to conflict.

### **Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO)**

We continue to support U.S. interagency counter-VEO initiatives. These organizations remain a transnational threat with decentralized command and control, finance, and facilitation networks spreading from conflict zones into Europe. In particular, VEOs threaten to attack the U.S. and European Allies, including through weapons of mass destruction. Extremists exploit instability in North Africa, Iraq, and Syria to husband resources in the face of coalition counter efforts. VEO inspired and organized attacks in Europe further complicate integration efforts, potentially isolating refugee and migrant communities and making some members of these populations more vulnerable to recruitment. Despite diminished capabilities, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and other VEOs desire to conduct external operations, requiring global vigilance to prevent a resurgence and preclude future attacks against the U.S. Homeland, Europe, and our Allies and Partners.

### **Israel**

Israel remains a critical U.S. partner facing complex and evolving security challenges. Iran continues to expand its regional influence, to provide lethal support to regional partners including Lebanese Hezbollah and Palestinian militant groups, and to develop options to threaten and attack Israel. Iran and its partners have made significant gains in asymmetric capabilities,

including advanced ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and armed unmanned aerial systems. Tehran remains committed to modernizing its military and continues to improve the range, lethality, and accuracy of its ballistic missile systems. However, Tehran's malign influence also presents opportunities as regional actors find common ground with Israel in the face of a common adversary. Recent bilateral agreements with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan represent notable progress in normalizing relations and improving the regional security environment.

In compliance with the 2020 Unified Command Plan, we continue close coordination within the Department of Defense to ensure an orderly and deliberate transfer of the operations, activities, and investments focused on Israel to USCENTCOM. Ongoing initiatives include a robust series of exercises, senior leader engagements with the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), coordination with the IDF to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge over any military threats to Israel, and naval support to defend Israel against growing Iranian ballistic missile threats. This assistance demonstrates the United States' unwavering commitment to Israel, enhances regional stability in the Levant, and deters the Iranian ballistic missile threat. Ultimately, our focus on a seamless transition will support U.S. interests and assist in the defense of Israel.

## **USEUCOM OPERATIONS, ACTIVITIES, INVESTMENTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Strategy Implementation**

Along with Allies and Partners, USEUCOM confronts challenges by competing to secure long-term sustainable advantage, deterring potential aggressors, and preparing to respond decisively. As the coordinating authority for the Russia Problem Set, USEUCOM advises the Secretary of Defense on force structure, resources, and synchronization of Department of Defense activities to deter Russia and counter its global malign activities. We work tirelessly with Allies, Partners, and the U.S. interagency to address the evolving challenges posed by our adversaries. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we display vigilance in this complex security

environment, and—should deterrence fail—remain ready to respond with lethal and resilient force in all domains.

Congress provides critical support to the USEUCOM AOR through the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI). EDI enhances our theater posture to deter adversaries and compete in a contested logistics environment, while assuring Allies and Partners. Increases in forward-stationed and rotational forces strengthen our contact, blunt, and surge layer capabilities, providing us the ability to compete and win in a multi-domain crisis or conflict. EDI investments improve our response using more robust theater infrastructure and prepositioned stocks. Funding for exercises, training, and building partner capacity bolster the readiness and interoperability of U.S. and Alliance forces. Together, these advances enable our deterrence and defense efforts through rapid deployment and sustainment of forces.

### **Support NATO's Deterrence and Defense of the Euro-Atlantic Area**

USEUCOM's primary mission is to compete, deter, and respond to aggression with the full weight of the NATO Alliance. NATO continues adapting to meet the challenges and complexities of our dynamic security environment. Together, we continue improving our speed, posture, transparency, and alignment. Through new strategic concepts, establishing new commands, continuing investment in critical military capabilities, implementing enhanced readiness, and pursuing a robust array of operations, missions, and activities, we demonstrate our combined ability to deter and defend. The cohesion of these efforts has not waned during our collective response to the global pandemic.

In 2020, NATO released the Concept for the Deterrence and Defense of the Euro-Atlantic Area (DDA), NATO's first deterrence and defense concept since 1967. Nested with the 2019 NATO Military Strategy, this concept guides Alliance approaches towards threats from Russia and international terror groups. To support this effort, NATO bolstered deterrence efforts in the space and cyberspace domains by establishing a cyberspace operations center at the Supreme

Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Mons, Belgium and integrating its Space Center into Allied Air Command at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

Two new commands, Joint Forces Command Norfolk and the Joint Support and Enabling Command, enhance Alliance adaptation to the dynamic geopolitical environment. These headquarters focus on transatlantic lines of communication and coordinating support functions, enabling the deployment and sustainment of NATO forces during crisis or conflict. The EU, NATO, and USEUCOM continue to sustain progress improving infrastructure and transit permissions facilitating the rapid movement of forces and logistic support across the Euro-Atlantic.

NATO nations continue to invest in critical military capabilities, contributing to common defense and supporting the Alliance. For the past six years, European NATO nations consistently increased defense expenditures and future projections remain positive despite the COVID-19 pandemic. NATO is increasing interoperable combat power through major acquisitions to include cyber capabilities across the Alliance; High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) long range fires capability in Romania; fourth and fifth-generation aircraft in Bulgaria, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, and Poland; along with embarking the United Kingdom's aircraft carrier, HMS *Queen Elizabeth*.

NATO's ability to compete and win through crisis and conflict continues to improve with implementation of the Readiness Action Plan and NATO Readiness Initiative. This effort provides an improved ready, responsive, and reinforced posture. Complementing the NATO Response Force, the Readiness Initiative provides additional ready forces able to respond rapidly to aggression by designating 30 battalions, 30 air squadrons, and 30 naval combat vessels for potential use in 30 days.

NATO members contribute to theater anti-submarine warfare operations and provide critical host nation support to forward-stationed U.S. forces across the region. Allies and Partners contribute forces to ongoing NATO and U.S.-led coalition missions advancing our common

interests in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Iraq, and Syria. Furthermore, Allies and Partners underwrite infrastructure investments and defray costs of U.S. military construction through the NATO Security Investment Program. Additionally, we expect improvements by individual European nations and the EU to enhance military mobility, increasing their responsiveness and combat capability. The EU, in consultation with NATO, projects to invest 1.69 billion euros over the next 7 years for civilian and military dual-use transportation infrastructure improvements across the continent.

Our Allies responded in solidarity to alleviate suffering during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing airlift, field hospitals, medical expertise, ventilators, and other critical supplies. The Alliance established a NATO Pandemic Response Trust Fund to stockpile medical equipment and supplies necessary during the second COVID-19 wave in Europe. Multiple Allies received critical ventilators and medical supplies from this initiative in late 2020.

USEUCOM plans to demonstrate joint capabilities during the upcoming U.S.-led exercises DEFENDER-Europe and ASTRAL KNIGHT. These multi-domain exercises directly complement NATO-led exercises such as STEADFAST JUPITER that maintain maritime air defense, anti-submarine warfare, and maritime interdiction capabilities. Ongoing enhancements to multinational information sharing systems enable USEUCOM execution with NATO and non-NATO partners. Ultimately, military exercises with our Allies remain an integral part of demonstrating Alliance readiness, interoperability, and capability.

The participation of USEUCOM forces in NATO operations and activities demonstrates U.S. commitment to the Alliance. Our soldiers serve in Poland as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence mission in one of four battlegroups deterring Russian aggression in Poland and the Baltics. U.S. Air Forces in Europe support NATO Enhanced Air Policing missions, safeguarding the sovereignty of Allied airspace against Russian incursions. We plan to support Standing NATO Maritime Group Two in 2022 with U.S. naval capability to counter maritime challenges in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and the Baltic Sea. Operation ATLANTIC SENTRY,

conducted by U.S. Aegis destroyers based in Rota, Spain, and the Aegis Ashore system in Romania provides the foundation of NATO's ballistic missile defense capability.

We leverage Dynamic Force Employment (DFE) to demonstrate operational unpredictability to adversaries, improve deterrence, and support our Allies. Recent DFE operations include posturing USS *Roosevelt* to the High North, Bomber Task Force missions throughout the AOR, a combined arms battalion deployment for DEFENDER Europe 20, and an F-35 deployment to exercise with Allies. Additionally, USS *Eisenhower* Carrier Strike Group presence in European waters this spring is a tremendous message to Allies and Partners about our commitment to deter and a critically important interoperability and training opportunity. Each force presence and operation demonstrates our ability to generate significant combat power across the AOR, while improving posture and warfighting readiness. This operational flexibility enhances cross-combatant command coordination and resource sharing, allowing for seamless transition and handover across Unified Command Plan boundaries to quickly deploy forces for emerging requirements.

Rotational Army, Marine, and Special Operations Forces (SOF) maintain a presence in strategic locations across the theater. These forces work alongside Allies and Partners to deter aggression, counter malign activities, build host nation defense capability, and enhance interoperability. For example, in Eastern Europe a rotational armored brigade combat team and combat aviation brigade participate in Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE to hone Alliance warfighting skills. Additionally, rotational Marine Forces in Norway reinforce NATO's Northern periphery while training in Arctic conditions with our Norwegian allies. Rotational forces are critical to our ability to deter Russia and assure Allies.

### **Counter Russian Activities and Malign Influence**

Every day, USEUCOM and NATO compete to deter the increasingly capable military underwriting Russia's power and counter the malign behavior that guides efforts to enhance perceptions the Kremlin is a responsible actor. Aside from USEUCOM's own capabilities, we

leverage our Allies and Partners and the unique attributes our U.S. interagency team brings to deterrence and defense.

As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO must remain a nuclear Alliance. NATO's nuclear capability preserves peace, prevents coercion, deters aggression, and instills confidence in the transatlantic bond. The Alliance's strategic forces guarantee security and backstop U.S. operations in Europe. NATO continues to adapt its nuclear posture to ensure these capabilities remain credible, resilient, and adaptable. USEUCOM fully supports modernization and recapitalization of our nuclear forces. Sustained Congressional funding for these programs demonstrates commitment to our operations and solidarity with NATO.

In the ground domain, we expect to establish a U.S. division-sized capability through the combination of forward-stationed forces, rotational forces, and Army Prepositioned Stocks (APS). APS equipment facilitates increased agility and lethality by enabling rapid integration of rotational combat units into operations. During Exercise DEFENDER-Europe 20, U.S. Army Europe and NATO Allies successfully exercised at the battalion and brigade levels, and we plan to assemble a divisional formation on NATO's Eastern flank in Exercise DEFENDER-Europe 24, the first since the end of the Cold War.

In the maritime domain, Carrier Strike Group and amphibious presence are key elements of a lethal and agile theater posture. U.S. Sixth Fleet provides maritime command and control capability across the USEUCOM AOR, while U.S. Second Fleet complements and contributes to reinforcing NATO's Western, Northern, and Southern flanks. Last fall, the guided missile destroyer USS *Roosevelt* completed a 50-day patrol in the High North where it joined five other nations in NATO's Allied Maritime Command-led anti-submarine warfare exercise DYNAMIC MONGOOSE 20. Additionally, U.S. and U.K. warships conducted exercises in the Barents Sea, the first of its kind since the mid-1980s. While Russia attempts to impose costs with increased out of area deployments not witnessed since the Cold War, the reality is our crews are gaining invaluable real-world operational experience, demonstrating operational flexibility, and developing



tactical undersea warfare advances for the next generation of Sailors. The \$539M EDI investments in wide area search systems, new sonobouy capabilities, and improved communications systems are enhancing our competitive advantage. This enables the U.S. and Allies to meet Strategic Competition objectives in the maritime environment and improve our overall maritime domain awareness.

In the air domain, we are improving our mix of fighter aircraft to enhance Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD), support Allies' efforts to enhance their air defense systems, and increase long range strike capability for deterrence. For example, Exercise ASTRAL KNIGHT 20 integrated U.S. air and missile defense capabilities with the Polish Air Force. In Bomber Task Force missions, U.S. bombers launched from bases in the U.S. and Europe, fly vast distances across the AOR while integrating with NATO and partner nation forces. We seek to enhance current posture, complicate adversary decision-making and impose costs while assuring our NATO Allies via Agile Combat Employment. Agile operations supported by Combined Joint All Domain Command and Control, and domain awareness capabilities with improved communications infrastructure, demonstrate a credible combat deterrence force network from potential airfields across the continent. This expansion of European contingency air operation and deployable air base sets enhances the survivability of our forces.

We remain laser focused in space, a domain whose importance to USEUCOM, NATO, and the globe cannot be overstated. Leveraging U.S. Space Command capabilities, we ensure our ability to plan and execute multi-domain operations. Additionally, we work with the U.S. Space Force, Allies, and Partners to further integrate space capabilities into joint and combined operations and activities.

In the cyber domain, USEUCOM's Joint Cyber Center coordinates with Joint Forces Headquarters Cyber and U.S. Cyber Command to counter Russian malign cyber activities and enhance our Allied and Partner capabilities. Recognizing the worldwide cyber capabilities of China, Iran, and North Korea, we work with other combatant commands and interagency partners

to enhance global cyber defenses and our ability to impose costs on malicious adversary behavior. In the information environment, the Russian Influence Group (RIG) provides a key platform for competing with Russia. We co-chair this effort with U.S. Department of State's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. Congressional funding for these unique cybersecurity and hybrid warfare programs (i.e. electronic warfare, special operations, and information domain operations), particularly through the State Department's Countering Russian Influence Fund - Foreign Military Financing (CRIF-FMF), enables the RIG to challenge adversary narratives and disinformation. Congressional funding for these unique information operations enables USEUCOM to challenge adversary narratives and disinformation.

Our Special Operations forces work with European Allies and Partners to build capacity, counter malign activity, and improve resilience. These unique capabilities enable USEUCOM to identify, attribute, and counter Russian malign influence. Furthermore, our Special Operations personnel provide invaluable contributions in sensing the operational environment, enhancing our ability to deter through enhanced indications and warnings.

Along Russia's border, key U.S. partners see a brighter future to the West and resist Moscow's efforts to hold them in the Russian sphere of influence. Ukraine seeks a closer partnership with the U.S. despite an ongoing Kremlin-sponsored malign influence campaign and violence by Russian supported forces in the Donbas region. The U.S. supports the Ukrainian Armed Forces through mentorship and advice from the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine and with military and civilian advisors embedded across Ukraine's defense sector. With Ukraine a recognized operational partner to NATO, Allies and Partners also assist Ukraine's defense efforts, including the U.K.'s Operation Orbital and Canada's Operation Unifier. The U.S., U.K., Canada, Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden comprise the Multinational Joint Commission, which coordinates Allied and Partner FMF and USAI security cooperation funding. This funding, along with the Joint Military Training Group-Ukraine effort, help build Ukrainian military capability, competence, and interoperability. Continued USAI and FMF funding enables

Ukraine to defend its sovereignty against well-armed Russian-backed forces. Department of State and Department of Defense continue working closely on resource coordination.

As part of a whole-of-government approach, our Joint Interagency Counter Trafficking Center supports interagency efforts to combat Russian malign activities, primarily by assisting federal law enforcement activities. This initiative provides USEUCOM with additional areas for competition. Through these partnerships, USEUCOM leverages a range of interagency driven effects including criminal investigations and convictions, seizures, sanctions, and designations.

Our approach in competition considers escalation management and control to maximize deterrence and defense. In conjunction with this emphasis, we make extensive use of authorized military-to-military channels with Russia to safely deconflict activities, when necessary, and maintain strategic stability.

### **Advance and Strengthen Strategic Relationships**

Our strong bilateral and multilateral ties with European Allies and Partners enable advancement of our shared interests. Our military-to-military relationships across the Euro-Atlantic area remain strong, signaling the resilience of our collective defense.

Turkey remains a key U.S. and NATO Ally. We recognize Turkey's leadership role as a strategic NATO ally. Turkey hosts U.S. service members conducting a wide array of NATO, bilateral, and unilateral missions including radar and tanker support to ongoing operations. Additionally, Turkey contributes forces to NATO missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 in the Mediterranean Sea. In 2020, Turkey supported a U.S. Bomber Task Force with tanker and fighter assets.

In the South Caucasus, Georgia remains a steadfast partner and contributor to global security. Georgia's commitment of approximately 860 soldiers to the Resolute Support Mission, the largest non-NATO contributor to NATO's Afghanistan mission, indicates the enduring strength of our strategic partnership. We assist Georgian forces in preparing for this mission through the Georgia Deployment Program. Georgia hosted NOBLE PARTNER 20 -- a Georgian Defense

Force and U.S. Army Europe exercise -- to enhance Georgian, regional partner, and U.S. force readiness and interoperability in a realistic, multinational training environment. We support Georgia's efforts to generate and sustain capable defense forces through the Georgia Defense Readiness Program, which enables Georgia to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In the Arctic, changing environmental conditions present new opportunities for exploration, trade, and interaction. USEUCOM supports whole-of-government efforts to preserve the region, address shared challenges with other Arctic nations, and secure U.S. interests. We leverage close relations with European Arctic nations and our coordination with USNORTHCOM to build awareness while strengthening the call for open and non-invasive impacts in the region. These bilateral and multilateral strategic relationships enhance Alliance efforts to deter Russian aggression and advance shared interests.

We strengthen our strategic relationships through security cooperation initiatives. U.S. National Guard forces maintain vibrant relationships and unique access with Allies and Partners through the State Partnership Program (SPP). With more than 500 engagements through 22 active programs annually, the SPP cultivates regional expertise and strengthens personal relationships to improve readiness and alignment across the AOR. Programs such as the Black Sea Maritime Initiative and enhancing Baltic IAMD represent potent, regionally-focused components, of a resilient theater posture.

### **Enable U.S. Global Operations**

Europe and the U.S. remain the foundation for upholding a free and open international order. Our unique geographic location enables global operations, including U.S. interagency and multinational operations, through synchronization and agreements for access, basing, and overflight permissions within Europe. We work within the whole-of-government approach to maintain these permissions under bilateral agreements and to resist Russian and Chinese strategic investments. Absent these agreements, the U.S. could not meet treaty obligations or effectively protect vital national interests. The shared values, trust, civilian leadership of the

military, and longstanding relationships we have in Europe enable the U.S. to generate coalitions for worldwide operations in support of shared national interests.

Last year, Allies and Partners proved essential in our efforts to deter Iranian aggression. European support enabled the rapid posture shift of U.S. forces in response to potential contingencies in the Levant. Key partners provided indispensable access, basing, and overflight permissions enhancing our protection of American citizens and diplomats. This highlights how Allies and Partners enable U.S. global operations that preserve and defend our national interests.

### **Conclusion**

Maintaining a capable U.S. presence in Europe strengthens our national security by encouraging peace, unity, and cohesion between Europe's individual nations. Competitors, notably Russia and China, present formidable, enduring challenges to preserving a Europe that is free and peaceful. U.S. service members in Europe continue to generate global peace alongside our Allies and Partners in the face of these obstacles. Our strategy addresses the dynamic security environment by ensuring we effectively compete for long-term sustainable advantage, deter attacks from potential aggressors, and prepare our Allies and Partners to respond decisively.

We appreciate Congressional interest in these challenges and your continued pledge to meet them through engagement, funding, and authorities; particularly your efforts to support the European Deterrence Initiative and International Security Cooperation Programs. These authorities enhance U.S. and Alliance readiness and posture to respond in crisis or conflict. We sit in a strategically significant part of the world and the dedicated men and women of the command continually remember the trust our nation places in us. Together with the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, Guardians, and civilians of USEUCOM, your support demonstrates our Nation's continued commitment to defend the Homeland forward and preserve peace for the one billion people living in the Euro-Atlantic region.