

House Armed Services on Challenges in Europe

04/26/2023 10:30 AM EDT

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today and their service to our nation. It's been over a year since Vladimir Putin launched his illegal and brutal invasion into Ukraine. The cost of the war has been staggering 10s of 1000s dead including over 8000 innocent civilians, over 13 million Ukrainians driven from their homes. Nearly 72,000 alleged Russian war crimes including indiscriminate killings, torture, kidnappings, and sexual assaults.

10s of billions of civilian infrastructure are destroyed, including half of Ukraine's energy supply. But despite the relentless and appalling attacks against them, the Ukrainian people have held strong. Through innovation and grit, they've driven Putin's war machine back reclaiming much of the territory lost in the early days of the invasion. The American taxpayer has been a key enabler to that success.

We've approved over \$100 billion in military, economic and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and our NATO allies. This unprecedented level of support requires an unprecedented level of oversight. As we move toward the mark up the NDAA. This Committee will ensure that oversight is in place and is robust.

This war has lasted longer than many of us thought it would. But that's because many of us thought the Ukrainians were no match for Putin forces. We couldn't have been more wrong. I'm hopeful to come in counter offensive will provide a final stinging defeat for Putin.

But that will require the president to stop being so reluctant to provide Ukraine with the capabilities it needs to be successful. His hesitation over being too escalatory has only prolong the war and driven up cost in terms of dollars and lives. Continued reluctance and indecision only empowers Vladimir Putin. And it sends all the wrong signals to z and the Chinese Communist Party.

Z is watching how America responds to this conflict very closely. If America loses its resolve and Ukraine, it sends a clear message that we won't be there to defend Taiwan. That is not the message we should be sending the CCP. Finally, the war in Ukraine has opened Europe's eyes to the threats they face.

Some countries like Poland, Romania, Finland and the bolts are stepping up to meet that threat. Others are not the awakening in Germany that so many thought was coming has yet to materialize. And in France, the denial runs even deeper. France has not met the minimum levels of NATO spinning, and it ranks at the very bottom of countries providing military assistance to Ukraine, and President Macron has recent knee bending before President Z has been shameful.

Old Europe needs to learn the lessons of Nord Stream 2 and not become dependent on adversaries, especially those that commit genocide and look to remake global borders through force. I believe the time has come for US forces in Europe to move further east into the countries that are investing more heavily into their own security. Poland, Romania and the Baltics truly understand the threat from Putin. Unlike others, they've invested in their own defense and our real partners and our collective security.

It's also where our troops will be the most useful and have the largest impact on deterrence. I look forward to our discussion today and hearing more from our witnesses about the best. two best ways we can adjust our posture and Europe. And with that I yield to the Ranking Member for any opening statement.

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.)

That Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is just over one year since Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine, I think that the message from the Biden administration and the message from the alliance has been incredibly strong in that year, and that is that we

will stand together we will stand up against Russian aggression, and we will make sure that a sovereign democratic Ukraine remains I think it's important to think back to where we were in January of 2022. And as the Chairman alluded to pretty much everyone thought that Ukraine was toast. Most everyone thought that there's no way that NATO would come together.

You know, it was a bickering divisive, I think, you know, President Macron just a year before had said that it was basically brain dead. The overall assumption was that we would fail in Ukraine and the alliance would be weakened. As we stand here today. I think everybody has to say that the alliance has been unbelievably successful in preserving Ukraine and turning back Russia, not only stopping the invasion, but recapturing territory in Ukraine, and NATO has never been stronger in terms of standing together as an ally.

It's not just on Ukraine. But throughout Eastern Europe, we have rallied, we are working with our partners across that portion of Europe, to make sure that they have a strong defense to determine Russia, we have added Finland to NATO. We're close on Sweden, not quite then. So I think it's important for all of us to have the proper perspective on this.

We are being successful because of the leadership of the Biden administration, the leadership of NATO, and most importantly, because of the courage of the Ukrainian people and standing up to Russia. So what we need to do is build on that success and continue to support it and not threatened to cut it off for any of a variety of different reasons. And there's a lot of different reasons for that threat to be floated around. One of them is the accountability issue.

But we've talked about that in this Committee before. Clearly the Ukrainians are using the aid and the weapons that we are giving them to maximum effect. If they weren't, they would have lost by now, there is oversight. And to challenge the existence of that oversight is a to undermine the overall effort and be not to be, you know, unsubtle here, but it is to restate Russian propaganda is the one thing that the Russians have continued to be very good at.

And this whole process is to spread every story that they can imagine, to divide our alliance. That is their mission, is to get us to back down from the United Front that we've shown on Ukraine by sowing seeds of discord. So we have to be really careful about which stories that we go ahead and spread. China, by the way, is very aggressive about that as well.

China is one of the main places that is spreading the story that this aid is somehow not being used properly, or is being, you know, fostering corruption, none of which is true, all of which advances their interests and undermines ours. So first of all, let's, let's recognize the success we've had and continue to build on it and be very careful about doing anything to undermine it, the next few months are going to be incredibly important. I think that alliance has stepped up incredibly well, in the last couple of months as Ukraine prepares to try and retake even more territory, providing more weapons, more training the systems that they need, I think we're in a strong position, and we need to build on that. But we will want to hear from our two witnesses about what we need to do not just in the next couple of months, but certainly in those next couple of months and beyond, in order to make sure that we continue to build on those successes, what we want is we want a sovereign democratic Ukraine, and we want peace, we want to force President Putin to the bargaining table to show him that he is not going to succeed, he must make peace.

That is the plan. And I know our two witnesses before today have had a lot to do with making sure that that plan has gotten as far as it has. And I thank them for that. And then just two more issues more broadly, European security going forward.

This is a huge opportunity, and that the NATO alliance has been strengthened as I just described, how do we take advantage of that opportunity? How do we resource it? How do we strike our balance working with our partners in Europe to make sure that we have a strong defense posture across Eastern Europe and that we're as close to on the same page as possible? It would be great if we could finally get Sweden into NATO curious about your thoughts about how we can negotiate through that.

So how do we strengthen Europe? And then to the chairman's last point on China, the role that China is playing, and I think it was very clear from President macrons visit and discussion after his visit with President Xi, that this is a tough question. Europe wants to figure out how to sort of have, you know, a decent relationship with China, while at the same time is aware of the challenges. But how do we strike that?

How do we work with our EU and European partners to make sure that we're on the same page, and trying to deal with the threat that the China presents? So I look forward to your testimony. Again, I thank you for where we're at and where we're going forward. It has been remarkable.

I think it's 54 nations that have come together that are providing support to Ukraine. And again, let us remind ourselves, that if we'd been having this conversation in January of 2022, how many people in this room would have predicted that Ukraine would have been as successful as they have been, or that the alliance would have held together as strongly as it has? And with that, I yield back and I look forward to the testimony.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

And the Ranking Member Graves makes a great point. And I would remind everybody that one of the reasons Ukraine has been so successful is we have been over there with our NATO allies since 2014. training their military, how to be a professional military and those dividends we're seeing today. Now to recognize our witnesses, the Honorable Celeste Wallander is Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, general Christopher Cobolli as the commander of US European command and the Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

Miss Walter, we'll start with you.

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify. I would like to express my appreciation for the continued support from Congress and this Committee in informing and enabling the Department of Defense's work in this region, it is an honor to appear alongside General Cavoli, who is an Outstanding Colleague. Russia's unprovoked war of aggression has created the worst security crisis in Europe since the end of the Second World War. For over a year.

This war has threatened Ukraine, the security of Europe, the global economy, and the rules based international order. Yet, thanks to the courage of the Ukrainian people supported by the United States and abroad coalition of allies and partners from around the world. Russia has failed to achieve its objectives, and independent Ukraine endures. In Europe, NATO is more unified than ever.

Just this month, Finland joined the alliance as its 31st member, we hope Sweden will follow soon. Our goal is a free, prosperous and democratic Ukraine able to defend its sovereignty and deter further aggression. The substantial commitment of the US military assistance to Ukraine reflects the American interests and values at stake. As Secretary Austin has said, our support for Ukraine self defense is an investment in our own security and prosperity.

And the United States is not alone. The Secretary's Ukraine defense contact group has rallied over 50 allies and partners to commit more than \$20 billion in security assistance to Ukraine, including in the critical areas of air defense, armor and artillery. Ukraine has leveraged this assistance to deal Russia significant blows on the battlefield. Although Russia's conventional military capabilities are diminished, Russia continues to present serious risk as it retains capabilities in nuclear cyber information operations, counterspace and undersea warfare among others.

These capabilities combined with Russia's intent to undermine the independence of its neighbors, and will to use force mean that Russia remains an acute threat. The Department remains focused on deterring Russian attacks on the United States and our NATO allies. But it is not the United States alone, strengthening defense in Europe, European allies and partners have responded to Russia's invasion by investing in their defense capabilities at an accelerated pace. We are working with our NATO allies to ensure that the alliance is prepared for modern challenges and can to deter aggression from any adversary allies have deployed land and air defense forces in the eastern part of the alliance and maritime assets across the NATO area.

For the first time in history, NATO has activated its defense plans and deployed portions of the NATO Response Force. Even as we focus on deterring the primary threat of Russian aggression. We remain vigilant and attuned to other threats to EUCOM, the PRC and China at the PRC, China and Russia collaborate across a variety of arenas to undermine the international rules based order. We recognize the PRC is taking lessons from our support for Ukraine, and we continue to monitor their cooperation with Russia.

It is clear that the PRC influence in Europe has waned in recent years, in part due to its close alignment with Russia. We also advance work with allies and partners to address the interconnected challenges in Europe and beyond which the United States cannot address alone. These include complications posed by climate change, cyber and hybrid threats and terrorism. To address both these challenges and threats, the Department will continue to pursue novel approaches for deterrence and defense, that that create advantages for ourselves and our allies and partners and plote pose dilemmas for our competitors.

Congressional support for US forces deployed in the US European command area of responsibility, as well as funding for defense initiatives across EU Europe and Ukraine security assistance have been and will remain critical to achieving US national security objectives. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to your questions.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Thank you Dr. Wallander. Now recognize general Committee for five minutes.

Christopher Cavoli

Thank you, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the Committee. It's a privilege to testify before you today. First of all, on behalf of the men, women and the families of US European command, I thank you for your steadfast support to their mission, to their safety and to their well being. I'd also like to personally thank members for supporting the Reschedule Link of today's session so that I can remain focused on my air of responsibility during a time of operational significance.

I thank you very much for that. It's a very busy spring. It's a pleasure to appear next to Dr. Wallander, who's professionalism and expertise is well known to this Committee and indeed to this whole city. So this is an unprecedented time.

In the Euro Atlantic area. 14 months ago, Russia's illegal, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, dramatically shifted perceptions of European stability, and broader global security and galvanized European governments resolve. Last year's NATO Summit in Madrid was a turning point for the Alliance. Nations committed to a new strategic concept that puts collective territorial defense at the top of the alliances task list.

And for the first time since the end of the Cold War, set into motion a series of efforts that will profoundly change the military structure and the activity of NATO. We have been creating new plans for the general defense of the alliance and these will drive higher levels of readiness and more targeted National Defense investments. Nations agreed to accelerate defense spending increases to establish enhance force posture on the Eastern Flank of NATO to take an unprecedented number of troops and weapons and turn them over to NATO command and critically, to bring two new members into the alliance and I'm happy as Dr. Wallander noted that one of them Finland has already joined. Over time, these efforts will lead to significantly increased European military capabilities, and will continue to deter Russian aggression against the Alliance.

That deterrent posture has allowed us to work intensively in the past year to assist Ukraine in the past year, thanks to your support us donations of arms, ammunition, equipment, vehicles and supplies have enabled Ukraine to halt Russia's invasion. We've not been alone in this effort. The DoD and US Yukon lead an international effort to identify transport and deliver equipment and ammunition to Ukraine along with the training to use that equipment in combat. The material support and training provided by international donors, over 50 of them has been huge and fundamental to the Ukrainian military success.

Over the winter. Our coalition has enabled the Ukrainian military to generate capabilities necessary to defend and to regain parts of their sovereign territory. We're confident our Ukrainian partners are good stewards of donated aid, our Embassy team in Kiev and the security assistance group in Vspport. And Germany worked diligently to monitor and to keep a close eye on all lethal aid and to ensure that it's getting to and staying in the right hands.

Although we remain optimistic for Ukraine's future, this war is far from over. Russia will remain an acute threat to your Atlantic security, and the national defense strategy rightly calls our attention to that. Russia of course is not the only problem in Europe, the People's Republic of China continues to increase its access and influence in our theater in its activities pose risks to us Allied and partner interests. The PRC uses foreign direct investment, government back business ventures and loans to gain access to technology and to get control over vital European infrastructure and transportation routes.

Finally, Europe continues to face transnational challenges, such as violent extremist organizations, uncontrolled migration, organized crime, climate change, you come of course trains and cooperates with allies and partners to help counter those challenges as well. Our strategic approach fortifies our allies and our partners. It strengthens alliances interoperability, and enhances our collective combat credibility, which deters our adversaries. And of course, as always, should deterrence fail us you come alongside our allies and partners is ready to fight and win.

Congress, your continued support for numerous funding initiatives remains absolutely critical to our strategy. These authorities and fundings strengthen the US and NATO ability to rapidly respond in Crisis or conflict. And your support demonstrates our nation's continued commitment to defend the homeland and to protect the peace for 1 billion people living in new Euro Atlantic area. Chairman Rogers Ranking Member Smith on behalf of the entire US European command.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you today. I very much look forward to your questions.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Thank you, General Cavoli. I now recognize myself for five minutes of questions. General Cavoli, it appears that the Putin's bromance has blossomed into a full-blown alliance. Earlier this month, President Z traveled to Moscow, where they reached agreements on expanded military cooperation with Russia.

We know that Russia is providing China with highly enriched uranium that China is turning into plutonium for strategic nuclear breakout. Can you please explain how you see the China Russia Alliance evolving and why defeating Russia and Ukraine has ramifications for China in Taiwan?

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, Mr. Chairman, thanks for the question, which is one of the big questions of the current situation in the globe. Clearly, during this conflict, Russia and China have grown closer together. China's diplomatic and political and moral support for Russia's illegal invasion has been notable, and has assisted the Russians in their position and their domestic political position as well. It appears increasingly to be an uneven bromance, as you put it, in which Russia could become the junior partner, but it is nevertheless a dangerous development or development of significant concern.

We see military cooperation we see economic cooperation, we see political cooperation. There are bright spots in this though, Mr. Chairman, our European allies have spotted this have noticed this and with the encouragement of the United States, and their own observations are taking significant actions to to limit the increasing influence and malign influence where it exists of the PRC inside Europe.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

General I spoke in my opening statement about the administration not giving Ukraine, the weapons it needs to win, chief among them and the cluster munitions. The US military has over 3 million cluster munitions that can be fired from 155. Currently, a current housers in Ukraine's possession, we are going to spend millions of dollars destroying this if we don't use them and Russia is using these munitions right now, against the Ukrainians. Can you please explain about Battlefield military utility that giving the Ukraine the deep Pickens that we have, would have in particular in places like buck?

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, Chairman Rogers. So, the munition in question here is dual purpose Improved Conventional Munitions. We call it dual purpose because it releases bomblets, some of which are antipersonnel, fragmentation, grenades, and some of which are shaped charges that attack vehicles from above. It's very effective munition.

It's, it's very effective against mixed targets of personnel and equipment, especially when those targets are gathered into dense formations.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

And that's what's happening above mu. It is happening in referenda sending waves of troops.

Christopher Cavoli

Happening in Buckminster and it happens on most battlefields when when one force goes into the offense. So as a strictly military matter, it is a useful and and very effective munition.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Okay, Jerry, Ranking Member for any questions you may have.

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.)

Thank you looking forward as we're looking at our posture in Europe, in light of the changes the you know, certainly the addition of Finland to NATO, hopefully the addition of Sweden in the new threat that Russia poses, you know, given their invasion of Ukraine, what should our posture be in Eastern Europe? And how do we have the budget to support that? How do we coordinate with our allies? What does the new force posture look like going forward?

You either one of you.

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, sir, I can start that from from the military perspective and where we stand right now and perhaps defer to Dr. Wallander for her additional comments. So we have changed both allied and US force posture significantly during this conflict. In fact, even before the conflict began, we began to flow forces from inside Europe, eastward, and from the US into Europe. fairly significant uplift right now we have about just shy of 20,000 deployed service personnel who are not normally stationed in Europe forward in Europe.

For the most part, those organizations we now have in the ground domain. We have all of the fifth corps headquarters for we have two division headquarters, and we have five brigade combat teams for the vast majority of that forces posture formed specifically in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, a limited amount in Slovakia, a large amount in Poland and each of the three Baltic countries. We move them around for for a certain amount of training purpose.

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.)

Are you satisfied that we're adequately resourced to meet the needs

Christopher Cavoli

Right now in the ground domain? Yes, absolutely. We're resourced against the requirement we have right now. Should the situation change?

We're prepared to recommend different levels of posture. Thank you, Dr. Wallander.

Celeste Wallander

I would In addition, I would highlight that the United States is leading under General Kelly's leadership at USC UConn, but we are not alone. That allies have reinforced their forward posture. There are eight battle groups in one in each of the frontline eastern flank countries. And each one of those battle groups is led by a different framework nation, the United States, the framework nation for Poland, but other allies have taken up leadership to ensure that there is the right mix of capabilities across the entire eastern flank.

So this is a hole of Alliance achievement. And what we will be doing at the Vilnius Summit is reinforcing further that enhanced posture and the multinational nature of that commitment, which is enhancing the credibility in the eyes of the Russian leadership, it is not only the United States alone, it is the alliance of 31. Soon to be 32.

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.)

That alliance. There are ranges of concerns about you know, the degree to which particularly Germany and France, you know, that early on, were traditionally trying to get along with Russia and or would they step up, you know, what sort of both your assessments as to where that alliance is at in terms of adequately understanding the threat from from Russia and from China as well, and actually stepping up to help us in meeting those challenges?

Celeste Wallander

Well, Germany has stepped up to lead to be the framework nation of the battle group in Lithuania, and France has stood up to be the lead of the battle group in Romania. I believe I've got that right. So they are, they are leading and supporting the forward posture and on the on reliance on Russia. It was a unwelcome, cold shower of recognition that vulnerability to Russian coercion and influence had left some countries in Europe at risk.

But Europe as a whole has responded quickly and has reduced dependence on both Russian gas and Russian oil has imposed strict sanctions on Russian banking on on individuals of influence in Putin's Russia. And So Russia has, Europe has responded both militarily.

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.)

And, I've just got a few seconds left here, I want to give general Kapolei a quick chance to comment on that as well.

Christopher Cavoli

So their initial moves were extremely positive sir. France was first out of the gate to form a new battle group is prepared to raise it up to brigade size if necessary. The Germans had already been running the battle group in Lithuania, and immediately put a brigade command element there to facilitate further reinforcement of it. Both nations have contributed significantly to Ukraine with lethal aid.

And I should note that the French, in their return to large scale operational capability have just staged the largest exercise exercise Orion that they've done in over 30 years. Thank you. I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Wilson, for five minutes.

Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank both of you for being here today. And General Cavoli, I'm gonna particularly commend you a proficiency in Italian very appropriate. But add to that French and Russian.

And I particularly identify my number two son was the Navy Doctor serving under your command at Naples, Italy. And now I've got three grandchildren speak perfectly to Italian, so they'd be happy to be with you. But know what what you're doing is so important. And then, General, I particularly appreciate you raising the issue with Chairman Mike Rogers about the cluster bombs.

Those should be provided with the with war criminal, Putin, sacrificing young Russians for his personal aggrandizement of oil, money power, the human wave tactics, This could help stop that, and certainly would deter their effectiveness. And so I hope every effort will be made to look into providing the cluster bombs that we have 2 million available. I mean, that's just inconceivable that we don't do more, Madam Secretary. So please look into that.

The European Command, General under your command has been outstanding, increasing our readiness along with increasing support of our allies and partners. And NATO has stepped up bolstered and it's forward defenses and enhanced posture to the border countries of Ukraine to deter war criminal Putin's regime. And then it's really significant that NATO is growing and an unintended consequence of war criminal Putin, and his mass murder is for Finland and Sweden to join NATO. And so they're how and what that means the Baltic Republics I mean, just it's just inconceivable how positive some things are.

But what is your summary of the combined forces and capabilities and foreign military sales? specialized training opportunities, what more can we do to assist the people of Ukraine?

Christopher Cavoli

Thank you, sir. For First of all, I'd like to underline your comments about the reaction of the Alliance on on this. It's been, it's been very, very significant. The Alliance has reacted very, very quickly, I have about 40,000.

In my NATO role, I have over 40,000 troops turned over to my command right now. And nations are prepared to add more. With regard to what else we can do to help Ukraine, I think staying the course that we're on right now is very important. We are in a position where we're moving into a period where the Ukrainians will conduct offensive operations.

We have good solid plans to continue to support them. But we all need to continue with those plans, sir.

Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.)

And we must, Chairman Mike Rogers is correct, again, pointing out the danger of the Chinese Communist Party, the relationship of the military aid being provided by z. And then we've seen the pictures of Iran, providing the weaponry to be provided across the Caspian Sea, to war criminal Putin. And it's really clear to me that we have what we're what you're doing is so important to deter the Chinese Communist Party from threats to Taiwan and then to deter the regime and Tehran, from his plans of death, Israel, Death to America. And so what you're doing is so critical.

And then to Madame Secretary, the Ukraine invasion, by war criminal, Putin continues why that we must expedite foreign military sales and to our allies. And it's so incredible. I don't think the American people know that 10 countries actually see the United States in terms of military equipment being provided to Ukraine, based on per capita GDP, including a wonderful country called Bulgaria. And so it's, but we need to backfill foreign military sales to our allies.

But in addition, it also we need to look into what happened. It's not in your it's in your purview of providing aid that's already been paid for by Taiwan.

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman, I thank you for the opportunity to thank Congress for providing heightened amounts of foreign military financing authorities and appropriations in order for us to do exactly what you rightly pointed to, which is so many allies and partners have been so quick and so generous in contributing capabilities to Ukraine, that flexibility and higher amounts you have given us will allow us to backfill those allies and partners.

Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.)

Well, I want to thank Chairman Mike Rogers and Chairman Mike McCaul they have been working with the ranking members to it's been a this bipartisan, amazing. And so let's work together. Thank you. I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Courtney, for five minutes.

Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to both witnesses for your outstanding work. This time of again, the biggest security challenge since the end of World War Two. I'd like to actually general shift the topic a little bit to not the well out of the eastern flank and more to the western flank.

You know, in light of even in the midst of all of Russia's degradation of its military force because of the conflict, its navy continues to operate. And we heard from General van Herk, your colleague when he testified that the patrols in the Atlantic which used to be sort of sporadic by the alien, that their submarine patrols are now becoming persistent. And I wonder if you could just sort of talk about that as much as you can, in terms of you know, what we're doing in terms of anti-submarine warfare to track this and address this? Because, again, despite everything that's going on with your other portfolio, this this is different than it was even, you know, five or six years ago.

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, sir. Thanks. Thanks for the opportunity. And there's very much inside my portfolio I share it with with Glenn van Herk, of course, defensive the homeland starts forward.

First of all, sir, if I could, I'd like to underline your comment about the specificity of the degradation of the Russian forces. It much of the Russian military has not been affected negatively by this conflict. One of those forces is there undersea forces. It's hard to talk in public, as you well know, sir, about about undersea warfare and our efforts in that regard.

But I can say that the Russians are more active than we've seen them in years, and their patrols into the Atlantic and throughout the Atlantic are, are at a high level, most of the time at a higher level than we've seen in years.

Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.)

So one development, which again, maybe you could comment on is just again, with the admission of Finland to NATO, and hopefully, you know, shortly after, with Sweden, that, you know, that brings to the table or to the sea, another sort of, you know, valuable ally. And you mentioned some of the naval exercises. I think it was on page 15 of your testimony that had been ongoing, despite again, in the midst of the Ukraine war. Again, can you talk about where you see, you know, what they will add to those efforts to, again, strengthen the western flank?

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, sir. Absolutely. So the accession of Finland is very important to us. Finland brings a large army at full mobilization 280,000 ground troops brings a very competent Navy brings a large and growing Air Force, they're in the process of acquiring 64 F 30.

Fives, which will create a 250/5 generation fighters across the northern three Scandinavian countries. So the accession of Finland is very strong. The future we hope accession of Sweden brings much of the same, the Swedish Navy is very active,

very competent, and very powerful in the Baltic Sea area. And this will give us a huge additional capability to control all three domains, classical domains in the high north.

And finally, I would point out that just the geography alone in a military sense of bringing those two huge borders of the Baltic Sea into the Alliance, while we're adding 1300 kilometers of NATO border to the Russian Federation, those are very powerful in and of themselves, sir.

Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.)

Thank you. Well, again, your your point about in answer to the first question regarding the increased patrols, I mean, it's a team sport, in terms of all our allies working together to sort of, you know, hopefully manage that and keep it under control. So, and again, as you pointed out, these are two countries with very advanced capability. So I think it is going to be a force multiplier that yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentlemen, recognized gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Wittman, for five minutes.

Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.)

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, Dr. Wallander, General Cavoli. Thanks so much for joining us. Listen, I think we're all very, very steadfastly in support of Ukraine, and their effort to maintain independence from this unprovoked and inhumane and barbaric invasion by Russia. I'm very focused on making sure that every weapon, every round of ammunition that we send to Ukraine is tracked and that we are accountable for every bit of that.

The challenges we face today in the United States are many, our constituents look at us very carefully and say, What are you doing to make sure that we are on track with that? And we know we're sending a number of items over there from tanks to high Mars to javelins and stingers, small arms ammunition across the whole spectrum? Can you give us an idea about what are we doing? And making sure that tracking and accountability of every bit of what we send over there is very focused?

Making sure to we track any potential for waste, fraud and abuse? As well as do we gather intelligence to understand who might be trying to intercept those weapons, whether it's in Ukraine or even somehow on tracks and in transportation in Ukraine?

Christopher Cavoli

Thank you, sir. Yeah, of course. So starting with the monitoring of where the where the equipment goes, we perform a variety of things. First of all, we inventory everything that comes through us hands on the way into Ukraine.

And we do that in a couple of different locations that you're, you're already familiar with, sir. So So we believe we have a very, very solid understanding of what goes into Ukraine, first of all second. We over the last few months have fielded to Ukraine, a NATO standard logistics tracking system, and they give us access to their networks to monitor that. So as we inventory stuff, we ingest that into log fast, and then they track it as it goes forward.

This is their system of tracking and we watch over their shoulder. Of course, that's not enough. So we do inspections enhanced and use monitoring. In fact, those are done by the Defense Attache Office in key of under Brigadier General Garrick Harman.

There's an investment today's Wednesday, there's an A an on site inspection going on in Odessa right now today. There's another one scheduled next Thursday. Those go based on the security situation, however serve so sometimes we don't get those off when we're unable to get to a location. We have barcoded The critical pieces of equipment and issued handheld scanners that project onto a network that we control, and the Ukrainians will inventory by a handheld scanner.

So that's how we look at things inside Ukraine, as far as our efforts outside of Ukraine to make sure that we're doing a good job. We have had in our security enter security assistance enterprise. I believe it's nine DoD IG evaluations for audits and numerous visits. So I'm pretty confident we're doing the best we can there.

And then finally, yes, of course, we do gather intel on it. And I'd be delighted, delighted to talk to you about it in closed session, sir.

Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.)

Very good. Thank you. Let me ask questions about munition stockpiles, as we know, we are at incredible burn rates on munitions that we are sending to Ukraine many times having to ask our friends around the world, if they can help with that. Give me your perspective on where we are today with burn rates on critical munitions, especially those that hold utility in the Indo-PAYCOM.

And what are we doing to address when those stockpiles, those magazine depths are at critical rates in regenerating that and then modernizing some of those weapons' systems and many of those like stingers circa 1960s weapons systems?

Celeste Wallander

Well, let me start with when we create when we work on a package of security assistance to Ukraine, there is a cross-Department working group that includes the services, it includes input from other COCOMs for to address exactly the issue, you raise that our contributions to Ukraine are done in light of our own readiness requirements, and priorities to support other allies and partners, not least Taiwan. So that is baked into our process as we decide how we are best able to supply Ukraine with its requirements.

Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.)

Are we calling upon our friends and allies to help in that effort, especially when we are critically low on some of those munitions?

Celeste Wallander

We Yes, Congressman, we are. And the main structure for that is the Ukraine defense Contact Group, which meets monthly, but in between those meetings, we are in constant contact with allies and partners, not just in Europe, but globally to source those capabilities. And they really have stepped up a lot of the artillery ammunition is now coming from other countries at this point, not directly from the United States to support Ukraine.

Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.)

Thank Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Rep. Trent Kelly (R-Miss.)

Now recognize Mr. Gallego.

Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.)

Thank you, Mr. Kelly. Dr. Wallander. In your written remarks, I was pleased to see you highlight the Baltic states and the important work that they are doing to enhance security in the face of an increasingly aggressive Russia. In fact, one of my proudest moments in Congress was introducing the Baltic secure initiative, which provides targeted security assistance to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, through our most critical and crucial allies.

Could you describe any particular areas where you would like to see the United States deepen cooperation with the Baltic states? And do you think there is more that we can do and should be doing to support a Baltic Allies?

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman. And I share your support for assisting the Baltic countries given their position. And given how forward leaning they have been on security assistance to Ukraine. I think that one of the most important aspects of the Baltic security initiative has been the resources to build infrastructure for the three countries because now we have commitments from NATO allies, and we have an American persistent rotational presence in all three of the Baltic countries, but in order to support those true presences, and in order to make sure that they are at a high readiness, the Baltic countries need to have training ranges, they need to have storage facilities, they need to have the infrastructure to support those substantial number of allied forces as well as their own.

And they have been focused on spending their own national defense resources to build that infrastructure, but the fact that the United States has been willing to put money to that requirement and also there is NATO money on that

requirement is helps them to plan but it also then helps General Cavoli when he is planning those rotational presences when he's planning the exercises, to know that US troops will remain at a high level of readiness and really interoperable with our allies.

Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.)

Thank you. Speaking of Lithuania, we're a few months away from the NATO summit that will take place in Vilnius this summer. The administration has done an impressive job to further strain our alliance cohesion, and also look forward eventually for Sweden to joining Finland and other allies. Could you share your expectations going into that upcoming summit and what in your mind could would signal a successful summit?

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman. I think most, the most important aspect of the summit that I want to point to is something that General Cavoli referred to, which is that the work that's going on building into the summit is our NATO plans, which will then enforce the new the new plans, given the new security environment will be approved in the run up to the summit. And then defense ministers and foreign ministers ahead of the summit will agree on what kinds of resources what kinds of capabilities and what kinds of defense spending are required to to make sure that all of the NATO allies have the capabilities to resource those plans. And it is at the Vilnius summit that heads of state and government will endorse those, those appropriate resources in order to make those plans real and make them credible.

That's number one. Number two is that will what will be important is a NATO statement on the importance of Ukraine as a European country. And its right to exist within its internationally recognized borders as a sovereign and independent state and a NATO commitment to help in the areas of defense institution building and sort of the host of activities that NATO has invested in Ukraine over the past 30 years, which has contributed to NATO Ukraine's ability to defend itself and remain an independent country. So I would point to those two from a defense point of view, those would be the two highlights that we need to focus on for Vilnius.

Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.)

Thank you, Doctor jerk volley. Thanks for your testimony, I want to ask about Russia's actions in the gray zone, remain deeply concerned by the story and believe that regular warfare training with allies and partners is crucial to counter that. Recognize that we're in this setting, what insights can you share about how you come is approaching this challenge?

Christopher Cavoli

Thank you, Congressman. Yeah, I share your concern in that regard. And the our cooperation with our allies and our partners, I should point out in terms of irregular warfare, training and preparation is an important part of our overall defense plans. Both in Yukon and through NATO.

We have NATO Special Operations Headquarters, and we have US Special Operations Command your both of them work intensively on a bilateral basis and multilateral bases to prepare countries for resilience, resistance and, and irregular warfare in general.

Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.)

At regular warfare, I think it's something that we have not recognized as being a very important approach to Ukraine's resiliency against Russia. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

Rep. Trent Kelly (R-Miss.)

Gentleman's time has expired. now recognize the gentleman from Tennessee. Dr. DesJarlais.

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

Thank you, Chairman. General Kavali. Throughout this conflict, we have had the specter of tactical nuclear weapons looming over us by the Russians. And frankly, Putin has put these threats to effective use and restraining our policymakers and leaders from involving themselves more thoroughly in this conflict on the Ukrainians behalf.

In my opinion, the Russians know they're overmatched when it comes to the big guns in our respective nuclear arsenals, however, it seems to me that they feel they have an advantage when it comes to the low yield tactical nuclear weapons. So first, you believe that there is a gap in our nuclear deterrent at present, and also knowing that Chairman Milley, General Cotton and your predecessor General Walters supported the continued development of the nuclear Sea Launch cruise missile, do you share their position that this system would fill a key deterrence in that gap?

Christopher Cavoli

First year second question, sir. Yes, I think that the Select a man is an important weapon. to your first question. I don't think we have significant gaps in our nuclear deterrent capability.

I I'm very confident in our nuclear deterrence as well as our extended nuclear deterrence.

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

In an open setting, can you give us an estimate of how many tactical or nuclear low yield weapons Russia has?

Christopher Cavoli

Not in an open setting, sir, but I'd be delighted to I've seen unclassified

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

Estimates around 2000 warheads. That sounds about Correct.

Christopher Cavoli

I haven't seen those sir. So. Okay.

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

Dr. Wallander. One area that I think the administration has kind of failed the American people is is communication surrounding the conflict in Ukraine. I don't think they've done a satisfactory job in communicating the reason why we're supporting Ukraine, or what our desired end goal in this conflict is.

So I'd like to give you a minute to communicate why you believe it's imperative that we take the fight to Russia at this moment. What interesting interest as the United States having this conflict, and how, how are we doing? And how do we expect to do what's the end game?

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman. First of all, the stakes are European security. Of course, our values and our interests are connected to Ukraine as a sovereign, independent country. But European security in the 21st century is built on a foundation of respect for international law, and the resilience of the UN Charter.

And Russia's assault in Ukraine is an attempt to change the that rules based international order, which is to say that sovereignty is contingent, borders can be changed through the use of force, and big countries get to decide what the foreign and security policies of their neighbors are. So the stakes are larger than Ukraine, but they go beyond Europe as well, because China is engaging in similar kinds of probes, and attempts to erode that same rules based international order in the Indo Pacific and China, we know is watching very closely to see if the international community will allow Russia to get away with us, and would take the wrong lessons from our failure to ensure Russia's strategic failure in Ukraine.

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

And I think that's a good explanation. I wish we could get it out to the American people in a more effective manner. A General Cavoli less than about a third of our NATO allies remain compliant with their commitment commitment to maintain defense spending a minimum of 2% GDP. With this going on literally in the European backyard, what is it going to take to get them to step up?

Christopher Cavoli

Sir, I think this is one of the things it's taken to get them to step up. So in 2014, the average expenditure per GDP inside NATO was 1.4%. Today, it's 1.8%. Not yet at the target.

But closing in on it. We've come up to nine nations meeting the meeting, the 2% goal, to include one nation Poland, which spends more per GDP as of this year, then the United States does. With the accession of Finland, that number has grown to 10 that spend 2% or more, and there are 11 More nations that are on a very definite glide path to get to 2% by 2024, which was the Wales summit pledge. That's not all donations in NATO.

However, sir. And so we continue to have work to do to to get all our all our allies sharing the burden equally.

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

I think that's really important. Considering our looming debt crisis, our exponential that we have in this country, I think Americans are definitely wanting to see other countries step up and do their fair share. And it's extremely important that we build these alliances strengthen these alliances, especially with the looming threats, as we've mentioned, with China and Taiwan. So I thank you both for being here today.

I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Moulton for five minutes.

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you both for being here. Your statements both discussed the practice of the People's Republic of China, in creating agreements with individual European nations that ostensibly are for improving trade but create dependencies on China. And we've seen this same strategy and Africa has been much maligned by us because we say these are bad deals.

But even if they are bad deals for the host, nations, they work well for China because they create this dependency. Have you seen any change in this trend in light of the war in Ukraine, Dr. Wallander?

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman. Yes, we have seen a change. Three of the countries who had been members of the 17 Plus One arrangement by which your China was seeking to build those kinds of dependencies through trade investment have actually, it's not surprisingly, the three Baltic countries have quit that structure, recognizing the challenges that China poses and the vulnerabilities that it seeks to create and successfully often creates, through technology through one problematic investment contracts through acquisition of companies of ports. And so there is a greater awareness among European countries that even as they trade with China, that they need to not allow themselves to become vulnerable to coercion.

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

And we certainly hope that that trend expands and continues General Cavoli were very much anticipating the Ukrainian counter offensive, anticipating it will be much more successful than the Russian offensive the past several months. But are the Ukrainians going to get all the weapons they need in time for this offensive?

Christopher Cavoli

Congressman, thank you. Yes. So we sat down with the Ukrainians, and with our Ukrainian colleagues, and we Have, we calculated the amount of material they would need for this offensive? We checked it a couple of times and, and we gathered it from our allies, who were very generous, especially with regard to tanks and armored fighting vehicles.

And we have been shipping it into the country. We are over 98% of the combat vehicles are already there. And I'd hesitate to describe too much more than an open setting. But I am very confident that we have delivered the material that they need, and will continue a pipeline to sustain their operations as well.

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

Well, it's good to hear and I certainly hope that we hear from the Ukrainians that they agree with you Dr. Wallander someday, hopefully sooner than later this war is going to end. And we can all imagine that Russia will go back home, assess their truly dramatic losses, and then start to rebuild the military. How do we think about deterrence in the future 510 years from now, where we don't want Russia to simply get back to where they were before this war started and started another war in Europe.

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman. Well, first, I would note that Russia will I share your assessment that Russia will seek to rebuild and will be able to rebuild to some extent. But the international community has imposed export restrictions, technology restrictions and sanctions on Russia. And those restrictions will likely make it very difficult make it very difficult for Russia to achieve all of the objectives that the leadership might have in the military sphere.

And so that said, they will rebuild.

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

And so how do you structure those sanctions so that the allies who put them together are willing to continue them to your point to prevent them from rebuilding, while also showing Russia that if they're to change their behavior, they have an off ramp and can be welcomed back into the world community if they significantly changed their

Celeste Wallander

Approach? Well, many of the most important restrictions are American export control restrictions. And while it is good to do them in concert with allies, we have lead on many of the technologies that Russia seeks and has benefited from. But it is our close alliance relationship and our constructive relationship with the European Union because it is the European Union.

That is the organization that agrees upon and enforces sanctions on Russia, in cooperation with us that will enable us to maintain that unity and an awareness of the threat that Russia poses to Europe remains high.

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

And I believe we have a way of communicating to the Russian people that there is a choice here when they get to their next leader, General Cavoli. What do we need to do for Ukraine on this front post? Post War?

Christopher Cavoli

I'm sorry, on what front post war on on their future force?

Unknown Speaker

Yes, their future force.

Christopher Cavoli

We are working hard on the question of what their future force needs to be look like.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentleman's time has expired. Chair now recognizes gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Kelly.

Rep. Trent Kelly (R-Miss.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield my time to the gentleman from Missouri, Mr. Alford.

Rep. Mark Alford (R-Mo.)

Thank you for sitting in your time. Chairman Kelly. Thank you, Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Smith and our witnesses here today. Appreciate you being here.

Warren, Ukrainians exposed some big gaps in our defense industrial base and I along with Mr. Whitman have some deep concerns about our ability to replenish and keep up with our weapons stockpiles. We must accelerate munitions production capacity to be prepared for a potential conflict with China. We all know she is watching what's happening in Ukraine supporting Russia through its no limits partnership with Putin. And I also want to make sure that our European allies are carrying their weight through burden sharing.

General Kapolei. As you mentioned, the majority of our allies are not meeting NATO's 2% GDP defense spending target. In fact, as you said only nine of our NATO 30 Member States met its 2% and 22. Dr. Wallander considering the recent NATO report that these nations just are not living up to their obligations, what is the administration doing to put pressure on these nations to pay their fair share?

Celeste Wallander

Congressman, the first, the most important is that we are making meeting the 2% commitment, a deliverable of the Vilnius Summit. In other words, we are not letting up on the focus and the requirement of meeting 2%. And as I suggested going beyond 2%, if that is required to actively and correctly build the capabilities required by the NATO regional plans. So we are we are pressuring and working with allies to take seriously the capabilities requirement.

Rep. Mark Alford (R-Mo.)

In particular, Germany only contributed 1.44%. That's a big disappointment. What type of pressure specifically are you putting on Germany?

Celeste Wallander

We are expecting Germany to live up to this government's commitment to meet 2%. They have already in hand increase their defense spending over a five year period, which should get them to near 2%, if not above, but we continue to emphasize to German leadership, the importance of Germany to fulfill its commitment.

Rep. Mark Alford (R-Mo.)

Are there any real consequences if they do not meet that and meet it soon?

Celeste Wallander

I think the consequences for European countries that don't meet that commitment is that they, their standing as leaders in Europe, is predicated on the in part on the seriousness with which they take undertake to fulfill the commitments they've made to other allies, and we hold them accountable for that.

Rep. Mark Alford (R-Mo.)

Thank you. General Cavoli. I have a very simple question for you. What happens if Russia wins and Ukraine loses?

Christopher Cavoli

Well, sir, from a military perspective, it depends on what wins means where the force ends up where the Russian force ends up geographically, what what its composition is, what capabilities they have left. But it would certainly mean that we have to change our deterrent posture. If they ended up significantly farther west than then then they've managed to get so far.

Rep. Mark Alford (R-Mo.)

Who would be next?

Christopher Cavoli

Sir? That's a That's a great question. We think about that a lot. And we work with the nations that we think would be vulnerable.

Clearly, geographically speaking, the ones on their immediate periphery of the Russian Federation, would be the first but they wouldn't be the only ones. The Russians are active, globally, very, very active in Africa, for example. So So I think it would depend on a lot of things. We do spend quite a bit of time working with partners and allies who are in the immediate periphery of Russia, to make them resilient and defensible.

Rep. Mark Alford (R-Mo.)

Got a minute left, when to talk about the CCP and their investments in Europe right now. What are some of the projects that they are doing that you can talk about in this setting? And how are we countering those measures?

Celeste Wallander

I think the areas of our greatest concern are when China is largely through technology companies, Huawei is the kind of poster child for that. And so we work closely in sharing intelligence, and our information about the risks that that creates for countries in Europe and more more broadly, globally, for them to be able to control their infrastructure to control their communications. So that is one major line of effort. But the other major concern is when we see China seeking majority control forts.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentleman's time has expired. Chair now recognizes gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Keating.

Rep. Bill Keating (D-Mass.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The greatest strength that the US government has security wise, military wise, is something that Russia doesn't have something that China doesn't have. That's our coalition of allies. That's our strength and foremost among our allies, our transatlantic allies.

They've had, however, a soft underbelly, in terms of their own security, surrounding an issue that concern to us two domestically here. And that's the energy issue, energy and our security, energy and the security of our allies. You can't separate them. They're intertwined.

And they're important. And we see how important it is. With Saudi Arabia's recent change in the position with Iran, we see Russia's influence in OPEC. We've seen Putin use it as a weapon of war, and the strength of the Ukrainian people to withstand this winter.

But the targeting of the energy infrastructure, and how important that is strategically. So given everything that's happening, one of the things that's not I don't think fully appreciated, that we should be looking at, very much in terms of our own us self interest, is the miscalculation of Putin when he thought the using weapon, the weapon of energy with Europe and our allies, how that would be a strategic advantage and the changes that have occurred changes that would have taken decades to get to where they are now. Can you comment on? Because it's so important to our security?

Can you comment on those changes? And how Putin's miscalculation has dramatically changed the energy posture of our allies that have that has such a dramatic effect domestically here in the US as well.

Christopher Cavoli

If I could start Dr. Wallander, because there's a military question to this and an illegal equity. That's that's important, Congressman. First of all, the change has been dramatic. So in general, Europe's dependence on Russian gas has gone from 40% to just under 10%.

Overnight, in a year. It wasn't without pain. And some of the pain was shared by US servicemen and women. Because the prices increased by several fold.

In Germany, the gas prices increased 600% For a period there, they've level back out now. But nevertheless, it was not without pain that they did this. Why is that important for? For us, as you know, there's legislation that requires us not to us the US military, not to depend on Russian gas and oil.

And in the operational energy field, that was easy for us. That's the the gas and petroleum that we buy to fuel ships to drive tanks and things like that. We could control where we got that from, but our installations overseas were dependent on the local systems. And so we were unable to comply.

But in Germany, where we have 39,000 Americans and their families, we actually went from being 40%, dependent to 0%, dependent on Russian gas. The only exceptions would be countries where we really don't have a lot of people.

Rep. Bill Keating (D-Mass.)

Dr. Wallander if it could. Looking at the future, this is a tremendous shift. And it's advantageous to our own security interests and defense interests in this country.

Can you just comment also, along with the general cajoling? Absolutely.

Celeste Wallander

And it's not just the dependence, it's the fact that Russia has a long-standing track record of using dependence for political coercion. And that was the vulnerability that was created by investing in accepting Russian investment particularly in gas pipelines, by diversifying, to LNG by diversifying to new sources. By moving away from carbon-based fuels. Europe is reducing that vulnerability that Russia could use the turning off or the metering of energy for political effects.

And that is a very welcomed develop.

Rep. Bill Keating (D-Mass.)

Getting back to my primary point that makes this coalition stronger, because Putin had thought that this would be a wedge. So looking forward, how important it has been, in the decades to come to our greatest strength that this is something that's being dealt with so dramatically is its general set.

Celeste Wallander

I will just point I fully agree. And I'll point to another element which is in 2014. When we first looked at sanctioning Russia for its initial invasion of Ukraine, one of the limitations on strong sanctions was exactly that energy dependence, going forward, sustaining sanctions, tightening them when, when necessary, will be easier for Europe because they are not dependent. And that will be a long-term disadvantage for the Putin leadership.

Rep. Bill Keating (D-Mass.)

Thank you. Thank you for your work.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. Gallagher.

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The phrase lessons learned from the war in Ukraine has become one of the most popular perhaps overused phrases in in sort of the DC Nash security community. I guess in simplest terms, Dr. Wallander What lessons do you believe the Department of Defense has learned from the war in Ukraine?

Celeste Wallander

Three lessons, one is needing to pay close attention to readiness and supply chains. We neglected that as a country in the last 30 years. And we've learned that lesson and we're taking action to remedy those that neglect. Number two is the importance of a lion allies and partners glow a global network of allies and partners.

It's not just NATO, although it's importantly, NATO. It is the G7 it is other like-minded countries who care about that international rules-based order. And I think the third lesson is that we need to make investments in partners that we did make in a country like Ukraine to build basic defense institution capabilities to build relationships. Because all of the work that UConn has been able to do to surge support to Ukraine would not have been possible without those relationships that were built over several decades.

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.)

And when it comes to our sort of initial inability to deter Russia from invading and miscalculation there in what lessons are to be derived from that?

Celeste Wallander

Well, I think there are the lessons are the positive lessons of how we successfully deter Russia every single day because Russia, despite potential incentives to have not threatened to NATO have not threatened the US homeland. We know how to create credible deterrence that works. And that's a lesson I know, that you come is taking and that the Defense Department wants to continue forward as we think about the importance of the Vilnius Summit, and make sure making sure we have a credible deterrent for NATO.

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.)

But as a matter of fact, on February 24, we we obviously did not to have a credible deterrent, or we failed to deter notwithstanding what's happened afterwards, and sort of not a positive development anytime you have, you know, hundreds of billions of dollars and 10s of 1000s of lives lost. I guess I'm sort of honing in on that failure of deterrence. Is it mirror imaging? Is there something about Putin we failed to understand?

Celeste Wallander

I think tactically, we underestimated the stakes that the Russian leadership Well, I don't know if it's technically but we miscalculated and believed that Russia, this Russian leadership, would be daunted by the International costs that it would pay. But I think the other lesson learned is one we are we are already implementing, which is to take seriously the actual defense capabilities of partners like Ukraine, so that they can mount a credible deterrent. And while work was done by law, bipartisan work was done on that in the last decade. Clearly, we didn't do enough, and that we have definitely learned that lesson and are carrying it forward.

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.)

Jericho, same question on on sort of Putin and deterrence failure, what was their central miscalculation? And then an added question about we a lot of people refer to Ukraine as a sort of testbed for technology in Modern Warfare. How are we capturing that innovation on the battlefield and importing it into into DOD?

Christopher Cavoli

So, sir, starting with your second question, while we have we have a ton of different initiatives and activities, to observe, from the technical level, to the operational level, and to the institutional level, what's working in Ukraine, what's not working in Ukraine, and we're importing those we have at all echelons, talks with the services about what we're seeing, they have questions for us. We talk with the Ukrainians, they are evolving very quickly, because, you know, they're they're under selective pressure as it were. So they're developing new techniques. Sometimes we develop them together in consultation with each other.

But all of this is permeating back into the services as they generate future forces. Just as important. We're in consultation constantly with the other combatant commands.

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.)

I have 18 seconds. Is there is there like an obvious battlefield innovation in Ukraine that can be exported to the Indo Pacific? For Aquilino?

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, I think our method of equipping and advising from afar.

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.)

My time has expired.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes gentlelady from Pennsylvania, Miss Houlahan.

Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-Pa.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you both for your testimony, both here and in the closed setting as well. I have a couple of questions. And I want to pull on a couple of threads.

One is we spoke about the addition of Finland to NATO and the power of their capabilities. And one of the things you spoke about was their air power and their plans to have I think 60 F 30 fives at least is that correct around then 6464. And then we've also spent a lot of time of course talking about Ukraine. And what we would expect would be offensive operations that are forthcoming and user General talked about staying the course.

Good solid plans that are outlined. But I and a number of other people bi-partisanly have been asking of you all whether or not it would be appropriate to allow for Ukraine to have access to air craft as well, whether they're a 10s or F 16 or Meigs I think the Polish have have been in the press recently talking about that. What is the latest thought on that? Why is that not something that we would want in a in an active war zone to be providing for an ally of ours?

Celeste Wallander

All right. Our focus has been on with generous support of the American people through Congress. Focus on Ukrainian pride. 40s for the fight, and aircraft while on the list, Western modern aircraft is about eighth on the list.

And so we have focused with resources on the highest priority capabilities. And that has been Air Defense Artillery and armor. I think General cola can speak to this better than I there's also a timing issue. What do they require right now, which is what we've been focused on for the battles they're facing, what can we deliver that will be timely and effective.

And in that regard, the contributions that some NATO allies have made of legacy Soviet aircraft have been helpful to the Ukrainians, because their pilots are trained on those aircraft. They know how to use them, they know how to maintain them.

Christopher Cavoli

Thanks Alaska, ma'am, in the in the near term and into the midterm. What Ukraine really needs to do is control the airspace over its country and over its forces, right. And they've been doing that very effectively with ground-based air defense. And we spoke a little bit about our efforts to introduce more ground-based air defense recently.

So that's like, the thing that's most imperative right now. And it's being very well served by ground-based air defense. They've also got some capabilities that that we've married to their Soviet era airframes for offensive operations that are best talked about in closed session. And finally, I would note that there are countries that have given airframes and Slovakia and Poland specifically have given a significant number just in the past couple of weeks.

And they were readily integrated into operations. Yes.

Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-Pa.)

And I've been following that. And I appreciate that. I'm just going to leave that part of my questioning was saying that what I'm curious to know if there is any point in time where it makes sense to continue that conversation, because the Congress has at least been asking that question officially since last April. So it's been more than a year.

And I understand that these timelines are long, and it's very expensive and prioritization, but we have no indication necessarily that this is going to abate anytime soon. And so it just feels as though it's still an appropriate conversation to continue to ask and to continue to have with what remains of my time. I would like to follow up on what Mr. I think it was Keating was asking about our efforts in the DoD within EUCOM, to make sure that we are helping our allies be less reliable

on Russian energy sources. And I was wondering if you could specifically comment on the energy resilience and conservation investment program, and whether or not any of those funds have been particularly useful in being less dependent, as you mentioned, sir, in our in our own use of energy or our allies being less dependent?

Celeste Wallander

Congresswoman, I would have to take that question for a response in the record. I'm not I would have not been tracking whether we've been able to use that funding for specifically for allies. It's a great question. And I would like to get you a good answer.

Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-Pa.)

Thank you. I appreciate it. I'm gonna go ahead and yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes gentleman from Nebraska, General Bacon for five minutes.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

Chairman Rogers, thank you and I thank Dr. Wallander, for you being here and General Cavoli, fully appreciate your your perspective, I have a series of questions on the Baltics. Then I also want to talk a little bit about energy, energy to our own bases in Europe. So if we could be concise, I'd be very grateful. So I'm on the Baltic security Chair, I'm the co Chair for the Baltic security caucus also served in NATO for a few years.

You know, the Baltics deserve a lot of our focus. They are on the frontlines. They've embraced democracy or free markets. And they are shining bright, their their prosperous, but they're on the frontlines, I think, very vulnerable.

So first of all, Dr. Wallander, are we doing enough to create deterrence, and the three Baltic states?

Celeste Wallander

I think that we are we've really stepped up the United States and allies and have heard their concerns. And in particular, one of the achievements there was the the Madrid summit decision to focus on credible defense for a defense and you've seen that then materialized through the battle groups, but also with persistent us rotational presence, persistent air policing. And we've prioritized all three countries in some of their FMS cases and FMF.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

Appreciate that. We've dedicated about 250 million a year for the Baltic Security Initiative. And we're going to try to at least I'm proposing to raise it this following year, but we'll see how well we do Joker rolling. I know what the last NATO conference was talking about putting up a crown division in the Baltics, not necessarily all American could be a blended of various countries.

What's your opinion of that? I mean, I personally think it's needed for deterrence. But where do you lie and what and what's the Are they? Are we going with us?

Christopher Cavoli

Thank you, Congressman. So the new plans that we've put together, the regional plans that we put together are a pretty big advance in a number of ways. One of the ways is that they incorporate for the first time in years, National Defense Forces, a national defense planning, when you put the Baltics national forces together. And when you put the multinational forces, those three battle groups that can come up to brigade level, and when you put the US unilateral contributions of special enablers together, and then you put the multinational division northeast, on top of that, which is a NATO force that I control, you have well over a NATO division in the Baltics right now.

And this is all baked into the plans that I was discussing earlier. Sir.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

I think that's a big step forward for deterrence. Russia needs to know they're fighting with us. When they when they pick on the Baltics, it doesn't appear to me that the Baltics have a very modern air defense capability. Um, no, we have fighters that move in and out, but surface to air missiles.

What can we do about that?

Christopher Cavoli

Sir? So we are in year three of a five year special security cooperation and initiative for integrated air and missile defense in the Baltics? I know you're familiar with it already, sir. And so the first phase of that was to lay down the communications networks in the secure communications necessary that's been done.

We're now in the phase where we lay out more sensors, and importantly, integrate those sensors. We're doing pretty well with that phase three will be the last year of the five-year plan, and that is to put actual weapon systems in separately from that, sir, I would say that those battle groups that NATO has put out there do come with ground based air defense that we've been integrating with the overall air picture. And then finally, for the Vilnius Summit, we've created a special air defense plan that will help us drive forward the rest of the Baltic IMD program.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

I think that's good news for the Baltic states. So the more we can build on that's great because they are very vulnerable. Switching gears a little bit, I served at Ramstein I'm very familiar with Landstuhl hospital as a part of putting it together as a base commander there years ago. But the one thing I always told me, Ramstein Landstuhl, we're always relying on Russian gas.

And I've tried to chip away at that over the last few years. But last NDA, we finally said no ands or buts you got you cannot be using Russian gas. How are we doing on this? What Tyler want if you got the information?

Christopher Cavoli

Sir, we're doing great on that right now. And it's because of the conversation that we were having earlier with a couple of other representatives. So we were unable to comply because we were dependent on German infrastructure and German energy infrastructure. That has changed dramatically over the last 14 months, the Germans went from 39.6% of their energy use coming from Russia to zero.

I mean, I think it's point 1%. I can't even figure out what that is. So we're no longer reliant on on Russian gas in those locations.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

Thank you very much. Thank you both. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes gentlelady from Texas, Miss Escobar.

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-Texas)

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. And many thanks to our witnesses. Thank you for your service and for the incredible work that you've done. I think context is so important.

And I wanted to share with you all, when I attended the 2019 Munich Security Conference, the conversations at that conference, were alarming and jarring when it came to Western unity. When it came to our commitment to NATO, I was at this year's conference, and it was radically different. And I am so proud of the work that our country and that our administration has done in order to shore up those alliances, alliances, and to ensure that we are together, especially in this very important fight to support Ukraine. So I want to focus a little bit on what lessons that we've learned, actually, general Coverly from Russian readiness failures, what readiness lessons particularly regarding sustainment supplies and logistics.

Have you learned thus far from Russian operational failures? Where have Russian forces vastly improved on their early failures? And what problems continue to plague them? How are our support efforts preventing Ukrainian forces from making similar mistakes?

Christopher Cavoli

Thank you, ma'am. And first of all, I was at both of those security conferences also. And I share your observations and and the sense of gratification that you have about that. I think I think the theme of the 2019 one was West lessness.

That's right. I remember correctly. And that was not the theme this year. Two Lessons Learned specifically With regard to two logistics, first stockpiles and consumption rates, they are just off the charts.

And I think that we in the DoD have taken note of that. I know that we and NATO have taken note of that and have incorporated that lesson into our new new plans. And that will be part of driving defense spending higher in Europe and among our allies. Second, logistics is an end-to-end system.

And the Russians have proven extremely adept at operational level logistics, they can move large amounts of stuff loves long distances quickly. But once it gets off the train that last mile as it were, that is part of the system too, and they were not ready for that. And that is shown over the days. Part of the system also is the operational design of your operation.

One of the key weaknesses of the initial Russian plan was the fact that it it attacked from five different directions at once converging. So the Russian army was operating on what we call exterior lines, that is from outside and you had to really work hard to shift an effort from one axis to another. So those are those are three or four lessons, I think that we could draw from their their logistic experience. On the other hand, our logistic experience has been extremely successful.

Jackie van Ovestehen in US transplants, ability to move things, huge amounts of stuff strategically overnight, is unmatched in the globe.

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-Texas)

Excellent. Thank you. Dr. Wallander. I have a follow-up question for you want to pick up on some of the concerns that Mr. Wittman and Alfred raised regarding munition stockpiles?

I've urged integrating additive manufacturing into this process in the past I think it is where we can have tremendous success and we can really capitalize on the innovation and brilliance of it. You referenced the cross Department working group to oversee munition expenditures and backfill efforts is this group also tasked with exploring innovative ways to meet those backfill requirements.

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman, Congresswoman, I the main focus of work on those issues is led by the acquisition and sustainment part of OSD and is led by Undersecretary Bill plant. And there he is so busy, so focused, so active in finding ways to solve bottlenecks to use exactly the kind of creativity and innovation advantages that us the US economy and US companies have. And they've already solved some of the creative solutions, that they've already come up with some creative solutions that we could we can't talk about in public for Ukraine, but also have managed to go far beyond what we expected a year ago and now being able to count on enhanced artillery ammunition production over the coming years.

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-Texas)

Thank you both so much, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Banks providing

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Verlander since the war began in Ukraine, the DOD has deployed or extended the deployment over 20,000 additional US troops to Europe. This surge includes additional air and land and naval capabilities. And now we have 100,000 US servicemembers who are stationed in Europe.

Given the depleted state of the Russian military and the increasing defense spending of our NATO allies, does the United States need those surge forces in the UCOM area of operation after the war passes?

Celeste Wallander

Congressman, I believe that the DoD in close support with the joint staff and UConn will take exactly that assessment when the time comes. It's premature to make that assessment right now, because we do not know precisely how the conflict ends how the battles over the next couple of months, we'll resolve but I assure you, we will look carefully at exactly that issue.

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

So when you don't know the surge forces might be permanent.

Celeste Wallander

We don't know what the requirements will be for credible defense and deterrence after the next couple of months, because we're still in the middle of this hot war and a high level of Russian activity in Ukraine.

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

Okay, so do you think the Department should redeploy temporary search forces to other theaters like the Indo Pacific or back to the continental United States based on other priorities,

Celeste Wallander

My my

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

Support surge is permanent a permanent sir

Celeste Wallander

I let me be clear, this are the three It is by no means assumed to be permanent. There is a process for sourcing global employment of the force. And at this point, the surge was assessed to be sustainable and to not come at the cost of horses.

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

According to a recent study conducted by CSIS, the US military would run out of certain munitions in a potential conflict with China in less than a week, in part because of what we've sent of our stockpile to Ukraine. Is it possible for the DOD to replenish crucial US weapons stockpiles for items like javelins, stingers, 155-millimeter artillery shells to what they were a year ago, while maintaining security assistance to Ukraine at the current rate.

Celeste Wallander

I'm not aware of that study, but I will reinforce something I spoke to earlier, which is all decisions to provide security assistance to Ukraine are taken in light of US readiness requirements. And that input includes all COCOMs, including INDO PAYCOM.

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

So even given the surge in munitions funding, and the expansion of production lines, what's the soonest that it would take to replace our stocks of Javelin stingers on our 55-millimeter?

Celeste Wallander

I would have to take that question for the record. I don't know a date, sir.

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

Does the DOD consider the strength of us stockpiles when deciding which munitions that we provide to Ukraine?

Celeste Wallander

That is part of the readiness assessment?

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

And does the DOD consider the need for Taiwan to receive some of these weapons to defend themselves before we supply aid to Ukraine,

Celeste Wallander

Assessing Taiwan's requirements as part of that process and making decisions?

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

And if the DOD considers the danger that supply particular munitions to Ukraine poses to us stockpiles, as you said, why did it take the Department so long to inked deals to boost the production of these systems after the war in Ukraine began?

Celeste Wallander

I don't believe that it. We might disagree about what it was a quick response to the requirement. Those new contracts and those new advances on supply lines and defense industrial base came within months.

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

Is that quick enough? We just told us that we haven't replaced the stockpile studies prove it. So is it quick? Can we can we replace them quick enough?

Celeste Wallander

We can replace stockpiles as required by readiness input from the services and the COCOMs.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Jen, I recognize the gentlelady from California, Miss Jacobs.

Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-Calif.)

Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you both for being here. And for testifying. As you may know, even while before the war in Ukraine, I was focused a lot on adequate and use monitoring of our weapons around the world.

And I want to commend the administration for the admirable work you all have done to do and use monitoring and enhance and use monitoring in Ukraine. I saw myself firsthand when I was out there in December. And I know it's incredibly hard to do and use monitoring in a place like Ukraine that has active conflict where we rightly do not have boots on the ground. But we also know, even outside of war zones, as the GAO has recently detailed in two different reports this year, that end use monitoring can be challenging, and that we've had challenges with it.

So Assistant Secretary Walter, I was hoping you could speak to one, the challenges of conducting enhance and use monitoring in a context like Ukraine or an active war zone, and how what we're doing in Ukraine compares to other previous and current conflict affected countries, and how we're thinking about and US monitoring moving forward, given what we're learning in the context of Ukraine.

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman, I, I want to reinforce general coverage, please presentation of the processes as being innovative, comprehensive and providing a high level of confidence that we know how much we've what has happened to all of the capabilities that we've provided to the Ukrainians that the Ukrainians have been very forward leaning, and cooperative and provide a lot of transparency. And that leads to the high confidence of our reports about and use monitoring and that we can we have not detected diversion of capabilities that we have. We have provided in particular, it's extraordinary what you can has been able to do, given that it is of combat environment, and US military forces cannot be towards the front lines to do the end use monitoring North American citizens and the innovations using technology that General Cavoli provided as is something extraordinary. And to your question about how does that compare to previous instances?

I don't believe we had those in place and this is going to be one of the lessons learned And we can now do this in other areas where we're assisting partners in ways that we couldn't we didn't think we could do before.

Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-Calif.)

Well, thank you. Thanks for all your innovative work on that. And please let us know what you need from our end to be able to continue improving our annual monitoring of weapons not only in Ukraine, but but all over the world, and particularly as we're looking at sort of moving forward, further, equipping partner forces. I Susan, Secretary wonder, I wanted to also ask you a question about war powers.

As you know, Congress is who the Constitution gives the power to declare war and fund and regulate the military. Are you aware of any legal analysis produced within the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice or any other part of government that would allow the President to use force against Russia without congressional authorization, and that includes force applied through foreign surrogates?

Celeste Wallander

Being clear, I am not a lawyer, and not speaking from a legal perspective. I am not aware of such discussions because are in supporting Ukraine, because we are not at war or involved in combat or hostilities with Russia. We are supporting Ukraine and providing capabilities to Ukraine. The Russia contingency from an American point of view would be inherent right of self-defense.

We're Russia to attack the United States or our allies.

Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-Calif.)

Thank you. I asked because there was a concerning article in the Washington Post that said that DOD was working on plans to potentially do kinetic strikes against Wagner group it outside the EUCOM AOR. And so I just hope that you will notify Congress in this Committee, if ever there is starts to be discussion about, you know, directly attacking Russia or its proxies with us or one of our surrogate forces.

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congresswoman. I will, I will be mindful of your question and take that back.

Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognize Jim from Florida, Mr. Waltz.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you both for for coming today. I just wanted to add to some other members questions and conversations about burden sharing. And I just wanted to draw your attention to where we are at this point in terms of the United States and the taxpayer providing military assistance.

Compare with our allies, notably there, you have Germany, at two and a half billion. These are pledges compared to the United States at 46. You have the United Kingdom, a little over five. Poland, despite having an economy a fourth the size of France has contributed more.

Secretary Wallander, would you call this burden sharing? Do you think this is fair to the American people and taxpayer?

Celeste Wallander

Congressman, I think your chart it was illustrates American leadership. And we are very concerned about burden sharing. I will note that there are eight countries that contribute a larger percentage of their GDP in security assistance to Ukraine than the United States, Poland among them.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

No, absolutely. And I don't want to take away from what our Eastern European allies are doing and contributing but Germany, France, Italy, Spain, some of the largest economies in Europe, this is have contributed a pittance compared to the United States, even though the EU economy is the same as the United States collectively. So one of my other colleagues asked, What are the consequences? I mean, listen, the American people and this is what I need you to take away.

And I made the same point to, to Secretary Austin, the American people are sick and tired of this. If I had \$100, for every speech that a defense Secretary has written in the last 20 years begging our European allies to step up. I'd be a very rich man, but they haven't. I mean, they just haven't the United States has subsidized European security and social programs for the last 20 years.

So when does this end? When do they actually get to the point? And what are the consequences if they don't?

Celeste Wallander

We continually push NATO allies to do their part, both in the NATO context.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

So Madam Secretary, we've been pushing for decades across multiple administrations, and sending strongly worded memos over tea and crumpets and Europe isn't getting the job done. So here's what I need you to take away this continued support is at risk domestically, politically here. If we don't see the administration getting results not asking forcefully getting results in terms of this pathetic contribution. You hear?

And you need to understand that there is a domestic issue here with continued support to Ukraine, given everything that we've done. That said, we have done a lot we've been very effective post facto after deterrence failed and after 1000s and 1000s of Ukrainians are dead in suffering. But you agree, and you've testified the Russian military is devastated. Correct.

Celeste Wallander

It's conventional forces, ground forces that are in Ukraine has been devastated.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

Unlikely for them to to take the entire country of Ukraine at this point.

Celeste Wallander

Very unlikely.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

I think, fair to say that the 31 most modern militaries in the world and a strengthened NATO alliance that many people in this room have celebrated, could handle the remnants of the Russian military, should it decide to take action in a NATO country or or be aggressive in the NATO country? Fair to say, I mean, they can't they can't take all of Ukraine. I don't see how they could take a modern European.

Celeste Wallander

I would agree with you.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

If its Air Force can't establish air superiority in Ukraine, I can't imagine it establishing air superior superiority in Poland.

Celeste Wallander

I think there have to take we should not think should not make the mistake of underestimating Russia's military capabilities, because the stakes of getting it wrong are too high.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

But I think at the end of the day, we have a very serious threat in western in the western Pacific in the Indo PAYCOM theater, and I noted that you would not commit to the surge being permanent, yet we have taken assets from the Indo Pacific. We've taken Air Force and other assets to put them in Europe. Yet we have 31 NATO nations that are able to stand their own ground against a diminished Russian military.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentleman's time has expired. Thank you, Chair and I recognize gentlelady from Virginia, Miss McClellan.

Rep. Jenn McClellan (D-Va.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Secretary. And General my staff recently had the opportunity to meet with members of the Ukraine's national emergency services, which is their equivalent of FEMA, and they mentioned that one of the tools that would be most helpful for them is the provision of remotely controlled mine detection and removal equipment, such as MV 4s and NV 10s to decontaminate areas, heavily mined with unexploded ordinances. There are currently only two of these machines in the Ukraine, despite multiple cities being littered with unexploded ordinances.

Is EUCOM working to ensure that more of this life saving technology is being provided.

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, absolutely. A lot of it's being provided by allies, ma'am. And a lot of it's being provided by other international organizations that are go beyond a single country. The whole question of D mining and demilitarizing.

The landscape at the end of this is a big one.

Rep. Jenn McClellan (D-Va.)

One of sorry,

Celeste Wallander

I didn't know I was just going to point exactly to the fact that that S3 is actually a major focus of a number of there's a consortium of European countries contributing to that capability.

Rep. Jenn McClellan (D-Va.)

I'm glad to hear that because one of the key takeaways we took was the the number of people lost in the emergency services through these unexploded ordinances. At least 53 have been injured and 13 dead as of March 24. And so I think doing all we can to, to assist in that endeavor would definitely be appreciated by them. Assistant Secretary Wallander, Russia has targeted several of our allies using irregular warfare tactics, such as strengthening separatist sentiments and planning coup attempts in nations like Montenegro and Moldova.

Can you all talk about what EUCOM is doing to help partner nations to thwart these efforts?

Celeste Wallander

Well, I'll start from a from a whole of government approach. The United States has focused on combating corruption, improving transparency, rule of law, good governance because one of the main vectors by which Russia is able to undermine allies undermine countries in Europe and try and influence their political leadership is through corruption, poor governance.

Christopher Cavoli

Ma'am, we also take a number of efforts in the information space. We work with our allies and our partners very carefully to identify misinformation and then rapidly to counter it. Critically, we help to train the governmental organs of our allies, how to do that as well, so that they can go into the future. And then finally, we work with them on cyber defense quite a bit.

So they maintain an awareness of some of the various ways that that that Russia can manipulate the public conversation on things. We do all of those under authorities from the Department of Defense.

Rep. Jenn McClellan (D-Va.)

Thank you. You anticipated my next question on Disinformation and Propaganda. In February of this year, Russia suspended its participation in new start, one of the few remaining nuclear arms control treaties that remain following the disastrous foreign policy of the previous administration in this area. Does this make nuclear weapons a more present threat should Russia seek to escalate its illegal war in Ukraine further?

Celeste Wallander

Congressman, we we share your concern that Russia is no longer implementing and in compliance with the new Star treaty. The immediate loss is a loss of transparency and sharing data, which helps to create reassurance and stability. And as a Fung is a main function of arms control. And it's something that we would want to prioritize in discussions with Russia, about them coming back into compliance at this point, they've shown no interest or willingness.

And that is a matter of concern. It's less of a concern in the near term, because we have a pretty good understanding of Russian strategic nuclear forces and capabilities. But it becomes a greater concern over time, and it's something we're going to have to work on.

Rep. Jenn McClellan (D-Va.)

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Thank the gentlelady Chair now recognizes another great member from Virginia, Miss Kiggans, for five minutes.

Rep. Jen Kiggans (R-Va.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to kind of piggyback off of my Republican colleagues some of their comments today that have been about accountability and spending in Ukraine. And I will say that I was definitely very much with them at the beginning of this, this process. And I'm not new to Congress.

But over the course of the past 100 or so days and listening to some of these briefings that we've received. I am understanding more of the importance of the US involvement in the Ukraine fight. So I guess Dr. Wallander, I just asked that maybe you go back to Secretary Austin and administration, and I think it's really messaging, you know, we are privy to a lot of information in this Committee that that the general public is not. So when we talk about, you know, our constituents that care about how much we're spending compared to how much the rest of the world is spending, I just think we're not doing a great job of informing them about the importance of what might happen if Russia Russia was to succeed and was to be victorious in that fight, what would then happen with China and Taiwan, you know, these are, these are very important issues that I think we've just not done a great job with messaging of the importance of, of our role in the Russia, Ukraine fight and of Ukraine, coming out on the right side and winning.

So, so because of that, you know, I'm a supporter of what we are doing there. You know, you talked earlier about trying to increasing access and interest in Russia. And then you mentioned that we've seen the PRC, diminishing ties with some of our NATO ally allies in Europe in favor of strengthening ties with Russia. Can you expound on that a little bit, and just in what ways is the PRC diminishing those ties with allies?

Celeste Wallander

It as the EU, as a structure has got has become more attuned to the risk of being dependent on China. The EU has taken a more active role in implementing its oversight over contracts over investments, and sometimes pushing against individual countries, which maybe don't prioritize that as much. But the EU has played a as a structure has played a constructive role. But mostly it's happened at the level of individual countries that have decided they are not willing to take the risks that I mentioned, some of them.

But we it is something we need to continue to work on as Americans in talking to our European allies and partners, so that they understand the risks they create when they make themselves vulnerable to coercion and influence.

Rep. Jen Kiggans (R-Va.)

Very much so. And along those lines. We talked a little bit about the French president, you know, macarons visit to the Pearce visit with with the PRC and his comments, and I'm concerned that our European allies are not taking the threat of the PRC as seriously as they should. So do you believe that European leaders understand and appreciate the significant threat posed by the PRC and their aggressive posture towards Taiwan?

Celeste Wallander

Europe has come a long way. NATO, for example, now has in its strategic concept, a recognition of the danger Is that the PRC poses to global security and therefore to European security, but it is something we we need to continue to work on. And make sure that that as that challenge evolves, as it remains acute as it may be changes shape and different aspects of China's activities that we share that information with our allies and partners.

Rep. Jen Kiggans (R-Va.)

And I guess, general Kapolei, along those lines, are we doing on the military side? Are we working on those relationships?

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, ma'am. Absolutely. The example would be the way we use ports. So it's not a surprise to you that China has been investing heavily in an effort to gain control of critical transportation infrastructure, transportation infrastructure that we both the US and the Alliance rely on.

So the way we run our exercises, and the ports we choose to exercise is a very strategic choice. It allows us to see things and when we reveal limitations in our port usage, for example, countries take action very quickly, they spot it, we've opened new ports, we've worked with countries to establish new port capabilities. And that's just one example. Earlier Dr. Wallander talked about 5g capabilities and other things.

So we are able to use the military instrument to open eyes.

Rep. Jen Kiggans (R-Va.)

Good, good. Those are all good things. And then just thinking about that relationship between China, between the PRC and Russia, and they're meeting more and, you know, there's part of me that thinks they are more aligned than we know. But do you feel like Russia will fall in line behind China?

Because it kind of seems like China is, is leading the way and kind of dictating, you know, or that there's certainly more of a world power in my mind than Russia. But do you think that Russia would fall in behind China? Or is there some just controversy between the two?

Christopher Cavoli

I'll say one thing quickly and get there. Give it to Celeste? I think they're in danger of that just happening, whether they choose it or not. Ma'am.

Celeste Wallander

I just share that concern. I think that's exactly right.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentlelady's time's expired. Chair now recognizes gentleman from California, Mr. Panetta for five minutes.

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Cavoli. Ukrainian counter events is offensive, as we're hearing is due in weeks, I guess is what they're saying. And while an ample supply and replenishment of artillery will clearly be instrumental for the Ukrainian forces to be successful.

I would also think that you got to have sort of a surprise attack as well. And a successful surprise attack would just be the first half if Ukraine can manage this and preserve its command and control. Their forces will have to break through Russia's defensive line and quickly mobilize troops forward. So what capabilities do our Ukrainian partners still need to be successful in this breakthrough in this surprise attack, including air defense capabilities?

Christopher Cavoli

Congressman, obviously, any any force can always use more of everything. But according to the modeling that we very carefully done with them. The Ukrainians are in are in a good position. The Ukrainians are in a good position.

They have some weaknesses that I'd prefer not to talk about in public. If I could talk to you in private about those I, I'd be happy to. But but we're confident in terms of their surprise and things like that. Of course, we've worked on all that with them.

And of course, it wouldn't be surprised if we talked about it in public, also, sir. So I'd be delighted to have the chance to, to talk to you in more detail in private.

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.)

I appreciate that. And obviously, Poland has come up a little bit here in this hearing. And obviously it provides critical security for the Eastern Flank of NATO and it's deepened. Poland has done a good job deepening their defense relationship with United States, I would say in response to the growing security challenges across EUCOM, including management of pre-positioned equipment.

Now the US leads the enhanced forward presence battle group in Poland and deploys a rotational Armored Brigade brigade combat team under Operation Atlantic Resolve. And at the June 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid Biden announced the first President Biden announced the first permanently stationed US forces on the eastern flank. As NATO continues to assess the distribution of forces along that flank. Can you describe the benefits of stationing a permanent brigade site sized team in Poland?

Christopher Cavoli

Sir, the benefit is to have a permanent presence of a team forward whether it's permanently assigned or not. There are other service equities that go into that that really general Mocombo would it be better to talk about stress on the force from rotation and things like that? But it's it's it's very important and and the US government has found it very important for For us to have an armored brigade combat team for deployed there, it saves a lot of time. The second thing is the pre position stocks that you mentioned, Congressman, those have been absolutely critical to our ability to respond quickly to the events of the last year and a half.

And it was all enabled with EDI funding.

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.)

Grave and Secretary Wallander. What might that type of permanent if they're what permanent stationing provide us from a policy standpoint as we continue to work closely with our Polish partners?

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman. Well, Poland has been it is an extraordinary ally, reliable, a wonderful host to these American forces. Poland has also been incredibly stalwart and helpful in our ability to provide security assistance to Ukraine to to support the training of Ukrainian forces so that they can effectively use those capabilities. And so you know, Poland has really emerged as a as a leader among NATO allies in Europe.

And we're actually I consider us very lucky that we are the framework nation for the battle group in Poland and have these capabilities, because we can count on them.

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.)

Great. Thanks to both you Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Thank the gentleman and I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Panetta on this. I've been very upfront about this, we need to be moving more of our troop presence into Poland, Romania, the Baltics and out of Germany where the real threat is. With that, Mr. Davis, North Carolina is recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

Thanks so much, Mr. Chair, and to our witnesses who are here today. Thank you for your service. And thank you for your timely presence today. Russia continues to remain a persistent threat to European security by employing a range of tools to coerce its neighbors and divide the Alliance.

Could you elaborate on how Russia uses cyber operations and energy supply manipulation to coerce our allies and partners?

Christopher Cavoli

Thanks, Congressman. First of all, the energy manipulation. It has reduced dramatically over the last year because of the our allies desire to come off of Russian gas. So it's, it's moving in a good trajectory.

Some of our partners, however, have not had the luxury of being able to adjust their economies yet. And Russia continues to turn on and off, contracts, switches, gas flow, etc. Moldova has been a victim of this recently, in the last winter. So it remains important cyber.

Cyber is hard to talk about in public, but they use cyber to create disinformation. And they also use cyber to delete information, data and to attack infrastructure. And we have to work quite hard across the alliances and with our partners to defend against that. And finally, I would say some of the work that Russia does still is with its conventional force.

So the Russian Air Force, the Russian ground force has been has been degenerated somewhat by this conflict. Although it is bigger today than it was at the beginning of the conflict. The Air Force has lost very little, they've lost 80 planes, they have another 1000 fighters and fighter bombers, the Navy has lost one ship. So they still use all of that conventional power as well.

And they mix them all together, sir.

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

According to the Department of Defense since February 2022, the United States has deployed or extended about 20,000 additional armed forces to Europe, bringing the total US force posture in Europe, including permanently stationed forces to approximately 100,000 military personnel. So do you see additional changes to force posture to approximately stand against Russia, Russia?

Christopher Cavoli

Sir, let me just start with the current force posture. The figure 100,000 includes Department of Defense civilians as well. The uniformed force posture is about 82,000. This this afternoon, as we sit here, but nevertheless, it's all Department of Defense, as you point out, force posture is going to depend from my perspective as a military matter largely on the outcome of this conflict, sir, and we just don't know where it's gonna go.

We don't know what the size, the composition and the disposition geographically of the Russian military is going to be. And that's going to drive a lot of this.

Celeste Wallander

Decisions about posture will first and foremost depend upon military advice and assessments. They will also I want to emphasize This came up earlier, they will be based upon you comms advice, you comms assessments of what's required, but balanced across the global force, because the United States has global responsibilities. And the Defense Department will make sure that all of the COCOMs are resourced appropriate to the challenges and threats that we face.

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

And can you talk about how the People's Republic of China is threatening us and allied interests in Europe, including how their technology related activities are advancing their military capabilities?

Celeste Wallander

Congressman, there's first of all durability that, that rely on that for those countries in Europe but also globally, create for themselves when they rely exclusively on Chinese technologies, which come in the in the appearance of private investment, but in fact, have close ties to the PRC and to the government. So that is one vulnerability. There is also there are active efforts by Chinese different elements of the Chinese government or influencers in the Chinese economy and trade and investment community to seek relationships for to exploit access to sensitive technology. It's information that we share constantly with European allies, so they can be aware of the need to be careful and to not get bought into those kinds of vulnerabilities.

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

Thank you so much. Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Thank the gentleman Chair now recognizes gentleman from Texas, Mr. Fallon.

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

Chairman, thank you very much. Just a couple of questions. We see the largest land invasion in general since World War Two in Europe. And, you know, NATO Allies agreed many years ago to spend minimum 2% of our GDP on defense.

And some of us do that. And some don't. I'm a big supporter of NATO always have many people. In fact, the vast majority this Committee is as well.

I remember, you know, foreign president Trump getting on our allies about spending their fair share. And after this invasion, what, why is Germany delaying? You know, have they made a concrete commitment to that 2% threshold? Because I haven't seen it.

And I don't know if I've missed anything. So I wanted to ask you about that.

Christopher Cavoli

Sure. Thanks, Congressman. Yeah, Germany's made a fairly significant shift. Previously, there was not a roadmap that got them to 2% not only by 20, if there wasn't one by 2024, there wasn't one there is now they have a plan to get to 2% by 2024.

Second thing I would point out, the German Ministry of Defense in the armed forces have new leadership, the leadership is very focused on achieving those goals and on spending the special fund on real capabilities. So I think, I think we see a very different Germany today than we did 14 months ago when it comes to defense.

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

So maybe one of those silver linings and a pretty awful cloud, as far as commitments like from Spain, Italy, Canada, other countries like that. And of course, a small, very wealthy countries like Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark come to mind because they weren't hitting that 2%. either. You agree, or they all on a roll up to it now.

Christopher Cavoli

So we have 10 allies today spend more than 2% or 2% or greater to include one ally Poland, which spends more per GDP than the United States does. We have 11 allies that now have credible plans, detailed some of them laid out in law to get to 2% by 2024. We do have 20 more allies, however, and we have work to do.

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

I want to laud Romania to when we visited them. We had a CODEL they were at, I believe, 2% that and they have committed to 2.5. And developing country that's not quite, you know, has the strong economies of some of the Western Allies.

Christopher Cavoli

But I agree Sir Romania is is a wonderful ally. Romania is modernizing very quickly.

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

In general, what are your thoughts on the posture, the force posture of roughly 81 82,000 Right now, as far as moving east when we went on moving east, moving more toward Eastern Europe, we talked and visited with the Prime Minister of Romania as well. And I said that, well, I think we probably need to ensure that the troops we have there now remain and make it permanent. And his response was very telling one sentence, he said, I don't think you all have any choice. So I just wanted to visit with you on that as well.

Christopher Cavoli

Absolutely. Prime Minister Chuka and I have have known each other for a few years, and he's made that point clear to me frequently. I hope he pointed out to you, however, that there is a US division headquarters in Romania right now there's a US Brigade Combat Team in Romania. There's a US helicopter battalion in Romania right now.

And there are periodically us us fighters with regard to the rest of our posture. We have moved east significantly since just before the beginning of this conflict. And throughout it. That's a lot of the surge forces that have come forward.

Some, some of its a little bit limited by capacity to House and to train all those forces. We go forward. And we're working closely with our allies.

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

Would be I think it'd be great to have a plan in place where we can continue that move and moving east. Madam Secretary, myself and Representative Panetta have introduced Ukrainian Human Rights Policy Act. And we want to shed light on the war atrocities that mean, there's been mass killings, deportations, etc. You know, the drill.

And as the war rages on, what do you think we can do to better hold Russia accountable for these actions today and in the future?

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman. We, the Defense Department fully supports holding Russia accountable. In February of 2023. Vice President Harris spoke out on made clear that US policy is that what Russia is doing in Ukraine constitute crimes against humanity.

So we will support there are multiple proposals for developing international fora for supporting Ukraine's domestic capability to hold Russians accountable. But the first step is the kind of work that so many have done to publicize these actions and document them publicly in the US government has supported those.

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

Well, I want to thank you all my time has expired. Thank you for coming. Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

I thank the gentleman, I think thank the witnesses for their testimony today. And with that, we are adjourned.