

**RECORD VERSION**

**STATEMENT BY**

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Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on our defense policy in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) area of responsibility in my capacity as Assistant Secretary of War for International Security Affairs. It is my honor to appear alongside USEUCOM Commander, General Alexis Grynkewich.

In today's testimony, I will highlight how our approach to Europe nests within the recently released National Defense Strategy, particularly in the areas of homeland defense, burden sharing with our European allies and partners, and super-charging the defense industrial base.

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## **Our Approach to Europe**

In line with the National Security Strategy, the Department's National Defense Strategy calls for a courageous realignment of our resources and priorities in line with the interests of everyday citizens of the United States of America – an “America First” approach. The world that shaped our habits, assumptions, and force posture in Europe post-Cold War no longer exists. The National Defense Strategy is based on a clear-eyed, flexible realism – a pragmatic approach focused on peace through strength that we have been advancing since President Trump took office last January, in four succinct lines of effort. First, we will defend the U.S. Homeland in line with our national interest. Second, we will deter China in the Indo-Pacific; third, we must increase burden-sharing with our allies and partners. Finally, to achieve all of this, we must supercharge the U.S. defense industrial base, which will operationalize that burden-sharing and help field combat-credible capabilities on both sides of the Atlantic. My testimony will focus on our commonsense approach in Europe across the first, third, and fourth NDS lines of effort.

Relevant to today's hearing, the National Defense Strategy recognizes the threats that Russia poses to the U.S. Homeland and, most acutely, to eastern Europe. Under Secretary of War for Policy, Elbridge Colby, underscored to NATO Defense Ministers on February 12, 2026, that we must be prepared for the possibility of potential opponents across theaters to act simultaneously. We do not consider this inevitable, but as a Department, we must plan for the worst-case scenario, and ensure our allies and partners are planning for this as well. Operation EPIC FURY in Iran has underscored the importance of prudent planning across adjacent theaters, and only reinforces the need for a reformed NATO, a defensive military alliance focused on the European continent, what Under Secretary Colby has called “NATO 3.0.”

This requires being honest and clear with our allies and partners that they must do more, rapidly, not as a favor to us, but for their own interests. These realities compel us to think clearly, soberly, and realistically about how we defend ourselves—and how we do so together sustainably, sensibly, and credibly.

The core strategic reality is this: while the United States remains committed to NATO – via our extended nuclear deterrent and other, critical, but more limited, operational support – Europe must step up to assume primary responsibility for its own conventional defense.

We have worked hard to communicate this necessity to our allies. We have and we will continue to engage in an open, forthright dialogue as befits allies.

To underscore a simple but essential point: the Department remains committed to NATO and our common defense. We hold this commitment with the conviction that fundamental to having a strong alliance is that all members do their part. Experience teaches us that alliances are strongest when responsibilities are appropriately shared among allies to reflect comparative advantages in underlying capabilities and interests. This is not an abandonment of NATO, nor a strategy of isolation. Rather, we are looking to our allies and partners to stand on equal footing in true partnership, rather than enabling dependence. We fundamentally believe this is in both their interest and ours – because when a burden-sharing balance among allies becomes misaligned or spread too thin, the alliance will weaken, not from ill will, but from structural strain.

### **Defend the U.S. Homeland—Mitigating Threats from the USEUCOM Area of Responsibility**

The United States must and will prioritize those theaters and challenges with the greatest consequence for American interests and where only American power can play a decisive role—most notably, in the Western Hemisphere as we defend the U.S. Homeland. By leveraging our respective strengths and specializing in areas we are best positioned to act, our alliances will be more balanced, effective, and resilient.

#### *Arctic Security & Greenland*

The Department is addressing the President’s top priority of defense of the homeland. In the past year, the President approved a change to move Greenland from the USEUCOM area of responsibility to U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), in recognition of the importance of Greenland to U.S. homeland defense. Greenland is strategically significant for the security and defense of the U.S. Homeland and interests in the Arctic region. However, there remains tremendous equity for USEUCOM around Greenland and the broader Arctic region. Greenland constitutes one border of the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom, or GIUK, Gap, which is a strategic corridor for Russia’s naval operations between the Arctic and North Atlantic. As we work to ensure guaranteed U.S. military and commercial access to Greenland, the Department fully supports the diplomatic trilateral talks led by Vice President Vance and Secretary Rubio with Greenland and Denmark. Separately, General Grynke, in his Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) capacity, recently initiated an enhanced Vigilance Activity (eVA) Arctic Sentry to enhance broader Arctic security efforts and align NATO and select allied national activities in the Arctic.

#### *Russia*

Russia still retains deep reservoirs of military and industrial power, and the national resolve required to sustain a protracted war, as the ongoing war in Ukraine shows. Moreover, Russia possesses the world’s largest nuclear arsenal and continues to modify and diversify its nuclear

forces and equipment. Russia invests in undersea, space, and cyber capabilities that it could employ against the U.S. Homeland, or which could be used in a coercive manner short of nuclear confrontation. The Department assesses that Russia will remain a persistent but manageable threat to NATO's eastern front for the foreseeable future. Conventional, nuclear and cyber capabilities and threats are understood through our defense intelligence and national intelligence enterprises, which are in turn enabled by the use of FISA Section 702, an invaluable source of intelligence collection.

The threat is real, complex, and growing. Adversaries are actively developing and fielding a new generation of advanced weapons. We face a spectrum of dangers, from sophisticated ballistic and hypersonic missiles to advanced cruise missiles to other aerial systems, that put the U.S. Homeland at risk, which underscores the President's push for a Golden Dome for America to protect the American people from such threats.

Given these realities, the National Defense Strategy notes we will ensure U.S. forces are prepared to defend against these threats to the U.S. Homeland, while also making clear that our European allies and partners will take primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe against a potential Russian threat. European NATO dwarfs Russia in economic scale, population, and potential military power. However, we cannot take our deterrence posture for granted; allies must move urgently to meet NATO defense spending commitments and capability targets.

The Department is open to fostering mil-mil dialogues with the Russian Federation, including in support of State Department-led talks in the wake of New START's expiration and the high-level mil-mil dialogue announced last month by General Grynkewich. In any case, our goal will remain ensuring that America's interests are upheld and defended, especially as we consider the future of nuclear arms control. Additionally, the United States remains interested in strategic stability and maintaining channels for military deconfliction and de-escalation with Russia, which have for decades reduced the chances of miscalculation between our militaries.

### **Increase Burden-Sharing**

America's alliances have an essential role to play, and our strategy is one of focused, realistic, interests-based engagement. As such, a burden-sharing approach with NATO allies and non-NATO partners is essential, especially to address persistent threats to our allies and partners but are less severe for the United States.

### *NATO*

The Department is committed to NATO. We believe that the best way to meet that commitment is an approach that validates and returns to NATO's founding purpose.

NATO was established to provide strong, credible, and equitable defense of the North Atlantic area. Since its founding, the alliance has adapted to meet the security challenges it faced. NATO 1.0, from 1949 through 1989, was focused on deterring an attack on NATO territory and was fully ready to fight and win if deterrence failed. This era was defined by a hard-nosed, realistic,

clear-eyed approach to deterrence and defense in which all allies were expected to pull their weight. This model deterred the USSR in part by persuading the Soviet Union that military action was not a viable strategy.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and dismantlement of the USSR and Iron Curtain, NATO transformed into “NATO 2.0”. This version of the Alliance was typified by a shift of effort and focus away from Europe's defense toward "out of area" operations and substantial disarmament on the continent, as well as a change in frame from the hard-nosed, flexible realism of the Cold War "NATO 1.0" to much more of a liberal internationalist mindset of the "rules-based international order." It is clear, however, that this approach of "NATO 2.0" is no longer fit for purpose, neither for the United States nor our allies. The times are changing, and we must adapt – in terms of how we think about the world and the Alliance's role in it and how we posture to meet it in practical terms.

The Department is calling for NATO 3.0: something closer to NATO 1.0 than the approach of the last thirty-five years. We want the Alliance refocused on its original purpose as a defensive military alliance focused on the European continent. “NATO 3.0” will require much greater effort by our allies to step up and assume primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe. To President Trump's great credit and to the great credit of the allies, the alliance took historic, momentous steps to chart a new course in line with this needed shift, most notably committing to 5% defense spending, with 3.5% on core defense – the new global standard for our allies around the world. We are beginning to see a promising start in meeting 5% spending, and reforming procurement and readiness systems that have long been neglected. The past year was a year to reframe and reorient – the turning of the tide has happened. We must now, in collaboration with our allies, deliver balanced, credible, and durable results.

We will continue to provide critical capabilities that underpin NATO's deterrence. We will continue to train, exercise, and plan alongside our allies. We are committed to Article 5. Yet we believe Europe can and must do more. Increasingly, Europe believes this too. We will all be stronger and safer as a result.

Last year, I briefed both professional staff members and members from the House and Senate Armed Services Committees on the Department's decision to redeploy a brigade combat team (BCT) stationed in Romania. Following consultations with General Grynkewich and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary Hegseth opted not to backfill this BCT, which had been forward deployed to Europe since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. I want to highlight this decision was rooted in the progress our European NATO allies have made to improve their military capabilities and take on greater responsibility for their defense. Since 2022, our allies have taken on increased responsibility on NATO's eastern flank, including through the NATO Forward Land Forces battlegroups stationed in these countries. These increased capabilities enabled the United States to graduate its BCT, not as a disengagement from Europe, but as a demonstration of allied progress.

Ultimately, this progress and Europe's resources must result in ready forces and capabilities, so the United States is seeking allied progress on the issue of military readiness. Readiness is a culture, involving personnel, doctrine, training, logistics, budgeting, and several other things –

and we will be encouraging a holistic look at readiness within allied militaries, to ensure forces are effectively ready to fight and defend European NATO. Given Europe's wealth, industrial capacity and technological advances, and proximity to Russia, it stands to reason that Europe can and must field the preponderance of the conventional forces required to deter and, if necessary, defeat, aggression against Europe. In doing so, our allies can ensure NATO's ability to provide for the effective defense of the continent, even in a scenario of simultaneous contingencies worldwide.

As we work with NATO to accelerate the transition to a Europe-led NATO, we have pledged to be as transparent as possible in our approach, working through NATO processes wherever possible to meet the Secretary's commitment to "no surprises" to the allies. Through the use of these processes, we will continue to make clear our expectation that allies must do more, focusing on real war-fighting requirements.

In these ways, this approach will allow us – working closely with our allies – to ensure that NATO remains strong, relevant, sustainable, and positioned to succeed for decades to come.

### *"Model Allies"*

Following The Hague NATO summit last year, some of our allies and partners have stepped up in a special way to meet the moment and set the example for others. These model allies are spending at levels that resource and prioritize their national defense and the defense of Europe. Poland, for example, is a preeminent example of a model ally, spending 4.5% for 2025 and has pledged 5% for 2026. Others are increasingly stepping up. Germany, at our request but also in its own interest, has accelerated investments in its defense industrial base to become the powerhouse that drives Europe toward meeting its Article 3 obligations. Finland, after NATO accession in 2023, continually hones its capabilities through development of its air defenses and investment in whole of society military capabilities, representing a significant contribution to the alliance. These model allies are partners, not dependents, and the Department will prioritize cooperation, engagement, arms sales, defense industry collaboration, and intelligence sharing with those countries who share our sense of urgency to step up on defense.

We recognize threat perceptions can differ across the alliance depending on history, geography, and politics – we will work with countries where they are and encourage our allies and partners to focus on where their resolve is. Nevertheless, we will urge our allies toward progress on meeting spending commitments, delivering on NATO Capability Targets, enhancing their readiness, and increasing commitments to NATO missions and the NATO force model from all our allies – east and west, north and south, and new and old.

### *Ukraine*

Turning to Ukraine, President Trump has stated, the war in Ukraine must come to an end. It is in the interest of the United States, Europe, and Ukraine to secure a lasting and durable peace. A durable, sustainable peace in Ukraine can only be achieved and maintained through strength: a strong Europe, and a strong Ukraine. As Ukraine defends its territory, it is important that allies act with urgency to provide the necessary resources for Ukraine's defense. While negotiations

play out, the National Defense Strategy plainly underscores the need for Europe to take the lead in supporting Ukraine's defense, as well as the role it would have to sustain a future peace deal through reconstruction.

Credible deterrence and defense measures are essential prerequisites for any enduring settlement, but equally critical is ensuring that Ukraine's Armed Forces are sufficiently capable to serve as the foundation of deterrence. To that end, on July 14, 2025, President Trump and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte publicly announced the United States would continue to provide critical materiel to Ukraine funded with financial contributions from NATO allies. This has culminated into the Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) initiative. The PURL initiative has become one of the alliance's most effective mechanisms for coordinating support and aligning allies behind a common understanding of validated Ukrainian battlefield requirements. Over 20 European nations have pledged more than \$4.3 billion to this effort, and the United States will continue to encourage our allies and partners to sustain their contributions to the PURL initiative to meet Ukraine's validated battlefield requirements. The PURL initiative is enhancing Ukraine's defense capabilities, supporting peace efforts, and enabling Europe to take the lead in its own defense.

On negotiations, the Department continues to be regularly engaged with the U.S. negotiating team as it seeks to secure peace in Ukraine. Though negotiations are ongoing, the United States and Coalition of the Willing (CoTW) have made substantial progress on both security protocols and a post-conflict deterrence framework, including ceasefire monitoring.

At the same time, the Department is paying attention to lessons learned from the battlefield and delivering those insights to U.S. warfighters. This is especially true regarding the role of drones, along with the expertise and cutting-edge technology to deploy them. Beyond technology, the Department is changing its own ecosystem by incorporating adaptable, modular, and rapid-improvement processes to stay relevant in future fights in other theaters.

#### *Other Non-NATO Partners*

We also recognize that keeping our European allies laser-focused on strengthening our deterrence through burden-sharing means mitigating any new or resurgent conflicts on the continent that could distract from our core NATO 3.0 priority. Toward that end, we remain engaged, with European allies and partners increasingly in the lead, in preventing any resurgence of conflict in the Western Balkans.

Last year, President Trump facilitated a historic agreement to cease hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan, creating new opportunities to collaborate with our two partners in the Caucasus. Our priority remains focused on resolving the conflict, finalizing the peace process, and ensuring that enduring peace is maintained between the two nations.

We are collaborating with both nations to expand cooperation with their respective State Partners—the Kansas and Oklahoma National Guards. Our efforts include modernizing our partners' armed forces through foreign military sales and enhancing their exercise programs to improve interoperability with U.S. Armed Forces.

## **Supercharging the Defense Industrial Base on Both Sides of the Atlantic**

Expanding transatlantic defense industrial capacity is the most important step NATO allies can take to operationalize the 5% defense spending commitment and invest in real, combat-credible forces and capabilities. We need to get the defense industrial base healthy on both sides of the Atlantic.

Per our National Defense Strategy, the Department will partner broadly to restore our industrial capacity and reinvigorate our nation's ingenuity, because our fighting force's readiness, lethality, and military options depend on it. This effort is a "call to industrial arms," and putting American industry on a wartime footing, a national mobilization rivaling those that powered America—and our allies—to victory in the World Wars and the Cold War.

We issue the same call to our European allies and partners to make a parallel effort. This will require a commonsense, non-exclusionary approach to defense industrial base expansion that focuses on building capacity, aggregating demand to sustain that additional capacity, expanding multinational procurement, utilizing NATO standardization agreements, and addressing supply chain vulnerabilities.

We recognize this approach should allow Europeans the flexibility to invest in their industries and build comparative advantages, while still enabling U.S. firms to compete. Protectionist measures that exclude U.S. industry and isolate our respective industrial bases only serve to deprive the alliance from meeting its goals without delay. The need for rapidly increased defense industrial production is too acute for us to toy with exclusions.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Department of War is clear-eyed about the threats associated with the USEUCOM AOR and, as always, will address them from a peace-through-strength position that prioritizes the interests and security of American citizens. We are committed to NATO and seek to strengthen it even further – in a way that is balanced, credible, sustainable, and positions the alliance to succeed for the long term. I am honored to be working with this committee, General Grynkewich and his team at U.S. European Command, and our valued allies and partners on this inspired vision from the President.

Thank you.