

**RECORD VERSION**

**STATEMENT BY**

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**BEFORE THE**

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**ON**

**THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN REASSURANCE INITIATIVE**

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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Chairman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, distinguished members of the committee, I have a brief opening statement to highlight some of our initial insights about the current status of the United States' European Reassurance Initiative, or ERI, our evolving support to NATO initiatives, and on specific Army's strategy, execution, and challenges.

As my colleague from OSD Policy will address in more detail, in March of this year, the Secretary of Defense issued a formal announcement to NATO member states and host nations of our planned deployment of rotational and deterrent forces in support of ERI. Since then, the U.S. has enjoyed in-depth cooperation with our Allies in developing a synchronized plan to address challenges to European security. That cooperation continues to this day as we with the land forces of our Allies and partners work to address common issues and realize our shared goals.

The U.S. European Reassurance Initiative has evolved from an initiative primarily focused on assurance to one focused on deterrence. Under ERI, we introduced rotational units on an intermittent basis as part of our effort to maintain a persistent, rotational presence of air, land, and sea forces. As part of this, we established a single pre-positioned armored brigade combat team (ABCT) equipment set, as part of the first European Activity Set. This activity set was used for deployments and our initial rotational commitments. This increased U.S. presence in Europe, as well as increased funding, has enabled a capstone DOD assurance event, the recent Polish national exercise, Operation Anakonda.

Operation Anakonda, held this past month fielded 31,000 multinational soldiers from 24 countries, almost half of whom were American. The 4th Infantry Division Headquarters deployed and provided all command and control for U.S. military elements and operations. Army forces, including those already assigned to Europe, units from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, 10th Army Air & Missile Defense Command, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve conducted multinational air assault and airborne operations, air defense operations, combined artillery live fire operations,

bridging operations, and numerous other training events. Continuing such complex, realistic, tough exercises with multiple partner nations will improve the Army's collective warfighting capabilities across the full range of military missions, and demonstrate credible US and allied capabilities to potential adversaries in the region.

With Anakonda complete and 66 exercises scheduled with U.S. Army - Europe participation in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, we are increasing our capacity for deterrence which we deem as the bedrock of future strategy in the region. The previously-mentioned ABCT equipment set, already in Europe will form the core of new division-sized Army pre-positioned stock (APS) equipment sets under APS-2 supporting EUCOM. An ABCT equipment set will soon be joined by equipment sets for a Division Headquarters and Division-level artillery brigade. By the end of FY 2017, these three equipment sets will be on the ground as the foundation of the European Command's (EUCOM's) deterrent force. Over the next five years, the Army plans to add enabler units, as well as additional combat equipment sets to APS-2. These pre-positioned sets could round-out a Division's worth of potential combat power that can be rapidly manned and fielded for deterrence exercises or in response to contingency operations.

During this next fiscal year, the Army will transfer the ABCT equipment set in the European Activity Set to pre-positioned stock. US-based ABCT's will deploy to Europe with their entire complement of tanks, fighting vehicles, and support equipment. This deployment, which we refer to as a "heel-to-toe" rotation, will establish a persistent presence in Europe, while providing Army units the opportunity to practice and develop their deployment skills.

These ERI contributions are part of the broader NATO effort to strengthen deterrence, which include deploying a NATO battalion-sized battlegroup, called Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP), into Poland and each of the three Baltic nations. These eFP NATO battalions will result, for the first time, in units being deployed persistently in the region whose mission is specifically focused on countering any incursion.

Through deterrence and Enhanced Forward Presence, the United States' efforts define the theater strategy the Army is developing and executing with ERI funding provided by Congress. We are doing this in close cooperation with, and in support of, the Joint Staff and EUCOM Commander. As the President and Secretary of Defense further define support to NATO, the Army will adapt strategies and plans in Europe to meet new requirements. We fully support an increased deterrent posture in Europe.

Having addressed the strategy and execution efforts to date, I'd like to discuss some challenges we face in fully realizing the effects we desire. First, of course, is the instability associated with ERI budget requests.

Our base budget remains challenged; without augmentation or tradeoffs to other defense priorities, it will be unsustainably stressed in order to support emerging demands to demonstrate US commitment to Europe and deter aggression, requiring a high operational tempo, ready units, and modernized equipment. Serious risk will be introduced to other Army commitments. Building deterrence requires significant amounts of equipment and materiel over the future year defense program. Our ability to do that while continuing to reset the Army after 15 years of war and meeting Combatant Command mission requirements worldwide with ready forces places immense pressures on the Army budget. The overall plan to restore the health of our nation's Army, especially over the next two years, is at risk unless the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 ERI budget is approved at the requested level.

Increasingly, it appears that the Department will be starting FY 2017 under a Continuing Resolution and operating under the restrictions therein. Continuing Resolutions may limit the Army's ability to deploy rotational brigades and build EUCOM's prepositioned equipment sets starting early in 2017 to meet exercise timelines.

The second challenge we face, as we develop contingency plans in Europe, is the need for more coordinated support at the government level from our Allies to ensure a synchronized and cooperative environment, should plans need to be executed. We welcome NATO actions to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the freedom of maneuver necessary to support assurance and deterrence initiatives; and we encourage greater speed in its development. In the near term, the Army will benefit from NATO's execution of the Enhanced Forward Presence effort as collective action will ensure these efforts are complementary towards building our shared deterrence goal.

Your support, through funding the President's requests for ERI, is an essential component of the European deterrence strategy. However, our ability to support steady-state and peacetime priorities will no doubt be challenged if we must meet emerging requirements at the same time.

In closing, I thank Congress for your support of the European Reassurance Initiative and applaud the performance of the entire team –the Department, NATO, as well as the National Guard and Reserves, all of whom have played key roles in this strategy. We're rebuilding strength in Europe more and more every day. I am also privileged to observe the great contributions of the young men and women in our Army who are key to improving security in NATO and the wider world. I look forward to this session and answering any questions you may have.