

Prepared Statement
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Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for conducting this hearing and sharing the opportunity to highlight the value of the NATO Alliance.

As we approach the Alliance’s 70th anniversary on April 4th, we should also note that this is a year of other significant transatlantic anniversaries. This November will mark thirty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War. Yesterday, was the 20th anniversary of the accession of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary to NATO and on March 29th we will cross the 15th anniversary of accession of seven other central European democracies into the Alliance – the “big bang” round of NATO enlargement. These are important milestones in the effort to build a transatlantic community featuring a Europe that is “whole, free and at peace” – and they underscore the success of NATO.

Thus, it is an opportune time to take stock of the Alliance and its pivotal role in transatlantic security, the challenges before this unique community of democracies, and what needs to be done to strengthen the Alliance and adapt it to current and anticipated realities.

NATO provides a transatlantic security architecture that has sustained peace among its members on a continent that over the last two centuries was ravaged by some six major wars, including two world wars. Through sustained US leadership, the Alliance’s consensus based decision making process, and its joint commands, exercises and operations, NATO has helped transform former adversaries into partners and deterred outside aggression. European democracies that are secure and at peace are inherently better able to work with the United States in addressing challenges within and beyond the North Atlantic arena.

The Alliance has been a powerful force multiplier for the United States. It generates among our allies -- and a growing number of NATO partners -- militaries that are interoperable with the US armed forces and that have earned the confidence of our military commanders. Time and time again European, Canadian and US soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines have served and sacrificed shoulder to shoulder on battlefields often far from Europe, in places like Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world.

Above all, the Alliance provides the United States the ability to leverage unmatched political, economic and military power. NATO’s actions benefit from the political legitimacy

unique to this transatlantic community of democracies. The economic power of this community – a combined total of over \$39 trillion in GDP -- dwarfs that of any rival. The Alliance’s military capability remains unsurpassed. No other military alliance can field a force as integrated and as capable as NATO.

NATO’s value to the United States has only increased in today’s increasingly complex and dynamic security environment. This committee has repeatedly documented the return of great power competition driven by Russia’s revanchist ambitions and China’s growing assertiveness. Moscow’s invasions of Ukraine and Georgia, its military provocations, assassinations, interference in foreign elections and abandonment of international arms control treaties are but one set of examples of how the rules based order that has been a driver of peace, freedom and prosperity around the globe is under threat.

The collision between liberal democracy and authoritarian nationalism is another profound feature of today’s security environment. The latter’s emergence among NATO’s own member states has indigenous causes, but it is also being fueled significantly by both Moscow and Beijing, in large part to weaken and sow division within the West.

And, the world today is on the cusp of what some call the fourth industrial revolution featuring the advent of hypersonic weapons, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and other technologies that promise to transform the battlefield and redefine the requirements of military stability and security.

When navigating these challenges to protect US values and interests, NATO’s military capacity as well as the political and economic power offered by this community of democracies only becomes more essential.

Despite its advantages, NATO and its member states must still adapt in order for this Alliance to remain effective in the new and evolving security environment. Toward this end, NATO must address the following five challenges:

First, the Alliance must accelerate its efforts to increase preparedness for high-intensity conflict. Following the end of the Cold War, the Alliance’s force posture shifted toward the requirements of peacekeeping and counter-insurgency. These were demands generated by operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Today, Russia’s military aggressions and provocations and sustained military build-up, particularly in its Western Military district, underscore the renewed need to defend against high intensity warfare contingencies, the likes of which we have not had to face since end the Cold War.

The Alliance’s readiness for such contingencies is a matter of real concern. It is notable that General Curtis Scaparrotti, the Commander of United States European Command, testified last week that he is not yet “comfortable with the deterrent posture that we have in Europe” and warned that “a theater not sufficiently set for full-spectrum contingency operations poses increased risk to our ability to compete, deter aggression, and prevail in conflict if necessary.”

Addressing this challenge is the responsibility of all NATO allies. **This is the second challenge before NATO. Our European Allies and Canada must invest more to increase the capability and readiness of their armed forces.** Their investments must address key NATO shortfalls, including air and missile defense, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), and long-range fires, among others. Europe must build the infrastructure necessary to facilitate the rapid movement of heavy forces to NATO's frontiers in times of crisis and conflict.

It is true that our Allies are finally making tangible progress toward meeting their longstanding commitment to spend an equivalent of 2% GDP on defense. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg recently stated that since 2017, our European Allies and Canada have increased their defense spending by \$41 billion and that figure is on track to increase to \$100 billion by 2020. That is real progress and it must continue.

The 2% benchmark and the concurrent commitment by NATO allies to direct 20% of defense spending into military procurement provides a simple, politically useful metric to prod more equitable burdensharing. However, its effectiveness can and should be reinforced in two ways. First, NATO should reanimate the inspections it used during the Cold War to assess the readiness, deployability and sustainability of committed Allied military units. Such inspections should be executed by one of the Alliance's two strategic commands, NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe and Allied Command Transformation. Data from such inspections should be reported to NATO Defense ministers and, where possible, incorporated into the annual public reports the NATO Secretary General publishes on Allied defense spending.

Third, NATO needs to reinforce its increasingly vulnerable flanks in North Central Europe, the Black Sea region and the Arctic where military stability has been undermined by Russia's military build-up, provocations, and aggression. In North Central Europe, the challenge is acute where the Alliance's four Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) battalions stationed in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are juxtaposed against divisions of Russian airborne, mechanized infantry, artillery, and tank units and the sophisticated aircraft, air defense, helicopters, ships, and missiles that support them.

If these NATO battalions are to be a truly effective deterrent against an aggressor of this magnitude, they must be able to survive for at least a limited amount of time amidst an aggressive attack. They must have sufficient lethality to impose costs on the adversary, and the Alliance must have a demonstrable capacity to reinforce them in real time. To become truly credible, NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence must be a central focus of the Alliance's readiness initiatives and the investment priorities of NATO member states.

Fourth, the Alliance must more substantially embrace and support the membership aspirations of Ukraine and Georgia. NATO enlargement has been one of the great success stories of post-Cold War Europe. The extension of NATO membership to Central European democracies reinforced peace and security in Europe and strengthened the Alliance's military

capability. The newest members of the Alliance have been among Europe's most stalwart transatlanticists and most willing to contribute to US-led operations, including those beyond Europe.

The recent accession of Montenegro and the impending accession of Macedonia to NATO are important steps toward completing the vision of an undivided Europe, but the Alliance needs to also provide Ukraine and Georgia a clear path to NATO membership, recognizing it will take them time to meet the political and military requirements.

Toward this end, these two nations should be more deeply incorporated into the maritime, air, and ground force initiatives the United States and NATO is developing for the Black Sea region. Their territories would be useful to anti-submarine, air-defense, surveillance, and other operations needed to counter Russia's efforts to leverage its occupation of Crimea into an anti-access/area-denial bastion spanning that sea. And, NATO Allies should expand the lethal security assistance provided to Georgia and Ukraine to include anti-aircraft systems, anti-ship missiles and other capabilities that would enhance their capacities for self-defense.

One clear lesson from Moscow's invasions of Ukraine and Georgia is that the ambiguity of these two countries' relationships with the Alliance only whetted the appetite of Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, and animated his sense of opportunity to reassert Moscow's hegemony over what has been allowed to become a de facto and destabilizing grey zone in Europe's strategic landscape.

Finally, the Alliance needs to actively consider the role it will play in the West's relationship with China. While China is not an immediate military threat to Europe, its actions against the rule based international order affects Europe as it does America. The Alliance should expand and deepen its network of partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region that now include, among others, Japan, Korea, and Australia. As the transatlantic community's military arm, NATO can play a constructive, if not significant role, in the West's broader diplomatic, economic and military strategy to counter China's provocative actions and to shape a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with Beijing.

As the United States confronts the complex and dynamic challenges of the 21st century, there is no instrument more essential – and indispensable -- than NATO. The political influence, economic power, and military might available through this community of democracies cannot be sustained in the absence of a robust US military commitment to the Alliance. That is the price of leadership, and it is one whose returns have been consistently advantageous to the United States.