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Written Testimony

Thank you for inviting me to testify here today on our efforts to reassure Allies and partners and bolster security in Ukraine and the region.

I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to the members at this joint subcommittee hearing for your engagement on European security in light of events in Ukraine. The travel of Judge Poe and other members of this committee to Kyiv and Dnipropetrovsk last week sent a strong signal that the United States stands with the Ukrainian people at this critical moment.

Before I begin, it is important to remember how we got here. Russia's illegal annexation and occupation of Crimea and its continued campaign to undermine and intimidate the government of Ukraine have upended the post-Cold War security architecture that Russia helped to create. Russia is maintaining a 40,000 troop contingent on Ukraine's Eastern border and conducting military activities that raise concerns. The Russian government is attempting to delegitimize the interim Ukrainian government through a sustained propaganda and disinformation campaign. There is strong evidence demonstrating that the actions of recent weeks – the road blocks, building seizures, hostage-taking and other violent acts – primarily in Donetsk oblast – have not been a spontaneous set of events, but rather a well-orchestrated campaign led by Russian special services. We strongly condemn the abduction last Friday of a German-led Vienna Document inspection team and their Ukrainian escorts in Slovyansk by pro-Russian separatists. We are disappointed that senior officials in Moscow have not condemned the abduction of the team and demanded the team's immediate release.

Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine are in violation of international law and do not uphold the letter or the spirit of the April 17th Geneva Accord. The G7 issued a joint statement over the weekend stating that we will “swiftly impose further sanctions on Russia over the Ukraine crisis” citing Russia's continued provocative actions that “escalate tensions by increasingly concerning rhetoric and ongoing threatening military maneuvers on Ukraine's border.”

And yesterday the United States acted – imposing new sanctions on seven Russian government officials, including two members of President Putin's inner circle and 17 companies linked to Putin's inner circle. In addition, the Department of Commerce has added additional restrictions on 13 of those companies by imposing a license requirement with a presumption of denial for the export, re-export or other foreign transfer of U.S.-origin items to the companies. Further, today the Departments of Commerce and State have announced a tightened policy to deny export license applications for any high-technology items that could contribute to Russia's military capabilities. These steps demonstrate that the United States is committed to increase costs on

Russia if it persists in its efforts to destabilize Ukraine and will hold Russia accountable for its provocative actions.

Russia's actions have also forced the United States and NATO Allies to fundamentally reexamine our strategic engagement in Europe. The United States remains as committed as ever to the stability of the region. And we are working through all available bilateral and multilateral channels to ensure that security and stability in the region are maintained. My testimony today will focus on three areas of this effort. First, I will talk about effort to reassure NATO's frontline Allies and bolster our other partners in the region. Second, I will discuss the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) important role in monitoring the security situation and facilitating dialogue in Ukraine. Third, I will address U.S. bilateral security assistance to Ukraine.

Reassuring NATO Allies and Partners on the Frontlines

First, we are pursuing measures, through NATO and bi-laterally, to reassure our Allies and partners in the region and in particular to demonstrate our solemn commitment to our collective defense responsibilities to our NATO Allies. As President Obama said before his meeting with Secretary General Rasmussen in Brussels last month: "We have to have the resources and the preparation to make sure that every member of NATO feels confident in Article 5's effect." Following Russia's illegal annexation and occupation of the Crimea region of Ukraine, the United States and its Allies in NATO undertook immediate steps to provide visible reassurance to Allies in Central and Eastern Europe.

We deployed 6 additional F-15s to the Baltic Air Policing mission. We added 12 additional F-16s, three C-130s and 200 additional U.S. personnel to the U.S.-Poland Aviation Training Detachment in Lask, Poland. NATO deployed AWACS to provide aerial surveillance over Poland and Romania. The United States deployed the USS TRUXTUN and later the USS DONALD COOK to the Black Sea for exercises. The USS TAYLOR is there now.

On April 16, NATO Allies agreed on additional measures to provide reassurance and demonstrate NATO's resolve and solidarity. As Secretary General Rasmussen said, this will mean "more planes in the air, more ships on the water, and more readiness on land."

The tangible impact of this decision can already be seen on the ground in Europe. The U.S. Army Europe is deploying forces to NATO frontline states at their request to conduct expanded U.S. land force training. On April 23rd, a company-sized contingent of U.S. paratroopers arrived in Poland to begin exercises with Polish troops. This exercise will be the first in a series of expanded U.S. Army land force training activities in the region that will take place at least through the end of this year. Additional companies have moved to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia for similar exercises. These events are in addition to previously scheduled multinational land force military exercises in the region aimed at assuring regional allies of the U.S. unwavering commitment to NATO.

We are committed, along with NATO Allies, to maintain a persistent rotational presence in frontline NATO states to reassure our Allies and prepare for any contingency to meet our Article 5 obligations. The United States is doing its part and Allies are stepping up as well. Now more than ever it is incumbent upon all NATO members to contribute actively and equitably to the assets of the Alliance.

The United States is preparing for the NATO Summit in Wales in September. It will be an opportunity to reassess the alliance's long term priorities in the wake of Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine, ensure an enhanced presence along NATO members' borders through the employment of land, sea and air capabilities and reaffirm NATO's Open Door policy under Article 10 of the Washington Treaty remains a bedrock principle of the Alliance.

As part of this work, we will renew our efforts to encourage Allies to reverse the downward trend in their defense spending to make them more capable of contributing to the growing needs of the Alliance. Both the President during his March visit to Brussels and Secretary Kerry at the April 1-2 NATO Foreign Ministerial meeting underscored the need for Allies to step up their defense spending, especially on priority capabilities, and this issue will continue to be a key priority in the run-up to the NATO summit in Wales.

Beyond NATO's borders, we are engaged with other frontline states like Georgia and Moldova who have also come under pressure as a result of Russia's illegal use of force in the region. The United States continues to support Georgia's efforts to build a consensus within NATO for offering Georgia a Membership Action Plan. And Assistant Secretary Nuland and senior DoD officials traveled to Moldova in recent weeks. Both states plan to sign Association Agreements with the EU by June. We welcome both countries' progress toward deeper European integration and are in consultation with both to intensify our political and economic assistance.

Working with OSCE in the Pursuit of Comprehensive Security in Ukraine

Second, we see a vital role for the OSCE in this crisis. The United States remains committed to de-escalation and a diplomatic off-ramp if Russia chooses to take it. We stand behind the Joint Geneva statement that the OSCE should play a "leading role in assisting Ukrainian authorities and local communities in the immediate implementation of these de-escalation measures wherever they are needed most."

Along with our allies in Europe, we are committed to maintaining a large presence of international monitors as part of the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission. This mission is positioned to objectively assess the security situation and investigate claims of human rights abuses and to play a leading role in assisting Ukrainian authorities and local communities in the immediate implementation of de-escalation measures. As of April 25, the Special Monitoring Mission had 161 staff in country, including about 121 monitors in the field from 45 countries. We commend their work and support the OSCE moving ahead quickly to increase the number of monitors up to 500. The Special Monitoring Mission is providing public reports on the security

situation and reported incidents concerning violations of human rights and OSCE commitments. The Mission's mandate also serves to facilitate dialogue in order to reduce tensions and promote peace and stability.

In Geneva, the United States, Ukraine, Russia and the EU discussed how the Special Monitoring Mission could do more to assist with the return of government buildings held by armed pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine. The United States supports the Special Monitoring Mission's efforts to foster resolution as illegal armed separatist groups disarm, seized buildings are returned, and illegally occupied places are vacated. But for those commitments to be properly implemented, Russia must take active and concrete steps immediately to de-escalate the crisis, including public and private messages to pro-Russian elements engaged in illegal activities in Ukraine as well as active support for the OSCE Monitoring Mission's role.

In addition, the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is laying the groundwork to assess the country's electoral process for compliance with international standards for democratic elections. All told, ODIHR is preparing to deploy approximately 1,000 observers throughout the country to monitor the May 25 elections in one of the largest monitoring missions in the 40 year history of the organization. For election day observation, ODIHR will join efforts with a delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, including a delegation of the Congressional Helsinki Commission led by Senator Cardin, and other parliamentary partners.

As the Vice President said last week in Kyiv, "This may be the most important election in the history of Ukraine. This is a chance to make good on the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of Ukrainians east and west and every part of this country." The United States is proud to support and actively participate in the OSCE's election observation mission and we will provide approximately fifteen percent of the short- and long-term observers. On April 17, ODIHR released its first interim observation report on Ukraine's Early Presidential Elections. The report notes that progress towards the administration of elections has been largely positive, although the ongoing political and security developments may pose challenges, particularly in the east.

The OSCE experts – those in the special monitoring mission and those serving as election observers – are the international community's eyes and ears on the ground in Ukraine. We rely on their presence, their mediation efforts, and their reports to portray an accurate picture of the events in Ukraine and defray any attempt by the Russian government to undermine the electoral process or further destabilize Ukraine. These monitors must be allowed to do their jobs without interference, provocation or violence directed against them.

Providing non-lethal security assistance to Ukraine

Third, we are working with the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense to provide security assistance at this critical time.

As Vice President Biden announced last week, we are providing \$8 million in assistance to allow the Ukrainian armed forces and Border Guard Service to fulfill their core security missions. This is in addition to the \$3 million of Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), \$3.5 million of health and welfare assistance to the armed forces, and \$3 million in other security assistance to Ukraine's State Border Guard Service that the United States is already providing to Ukraine. We have also carried out two extraordinary Open Skies observation missions over Ukraine at the request of the Ukrainian government and are participating in ongoing military observation missions under the Vienna Document.

These are first steps, not the limits of our assistance. Going forward, U.S. and Ukrainian officials will remain in constant consultation on how the United States can best enhance bilateral cooperation with the Ukrainian defense establishment. The outlines of our security assistance engagement will come into clearer focus following consultation and approval by the new government after the May 25th elections. We are reviewing other means of assisting Ukraine to pursue modernization, defense reform and border security.

Conclusion

During his visit to Kyiv last week, Vice President Biden expressed our solidarity with Ukraine when he told Prime Minister Yatsenyuk that "You will not walk this road alone. We will walk with you." But the scope of this commitment goes far beyond Ukraine.

Our commitment to NATO's Article 5 guarantee remains—as it has always been—ironclad. And our adherence to OSCE principles and commitments as a means to provide comprehensive security remains steadfast.

Looking forward, the United States will continue to reaffirm the security and stability of the region across multiple fronts using multiple tools at our disposal. In this effort, we appreciate Congress's bipartisan attention and support for security assistance in Ukraine and across the region and will continue work in close coordination with you on all three of these areas.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.