

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE

STATEMENT OF

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COMMANDER

UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Visclosky, Ranking Member Calvert, and distinguished members of the committee, it is my honor to testify today in what is likely my final year as Commander of the United States European Command (USEUCOM). I humbly represent over 68,000 brave and dedicated men and women who are forward-deployed or stationed in the European theater of operations. These warriors demonstrate selfless service and dedication to Euro-Atlantic defense, a mission that is essential to our national security and to maintaining global peace and prosperity. We as a Nation are blessed by their voluntary and exceptional service. Thank you for your steadfast support of these patriots and their mission.

Europe and the Trans-Atlantic NATO Alliance remain crucial to our national security, as clearly stated in the President's 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS), the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS), and the 2018 National Military Strategy (NMS). USEUCOM's operations, activities, and investments are aligned with the principles and guidance provided by these strategic documents. I cannot stress enough that USEUCOM's ongoing and future success in implementing and executing these strategies is only possible with Congress' support, especially the sustained funding of the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI).

A Dynamic Security Environment

The threats facing U.S. interests in the USEUCOM area of responsibility, which includes Israel, are real and growing. They are complex, trans-regional, all-domain, and multi-functional. They require the United States, together with our European allies and partners, to constantly adapt with forces and concepts that are able to out-pace the evolution of these threats. A revisionist Russia is the primary threat to a stable Euro-Atlantic security environment. Russia has invaded Ukraine, occupied Crimea, launched cyber-attacks against the Baltic States and Ukraine, interfered in U.S. and other Western elections, and attacked Ukrainian navy vessels

attempting to transit the Kerch Strait to Ukrainian ports in the Sea of Azov. It is also overhauling its nuclear forces—including those that threaten European territory, such as the dual-capable, Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF)-violating SSC-8/9M729 ground-launched cruise missile. Given Moscow’s demonstrated willingness to violate international law and legally-binding treaties, and to exercise malign influence, Russia threatens the United States’ vital national interests in preserving a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.

We have already made significant strides in adapting our European force posture to meet these threats. As we continue to adapt, USEUCOM remains steadfastly committed to fielding a lethal, agile, and resilient force and to strengthening the NATO Alliance. With continued investment, innovative use of resources, and the strength of our Nation’s resolve, I am confident that we will continue to meet the challenges of the dynamic security environment. This includes ensuring the continued credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent, which backstops all U.S. military and diplomatic operations across the globe and helps ensure that tensions with Russia—no matter where or how they arise—do not escalate into large-scale war.

RISKS AND CHALLENGES IN THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Russia

Russia is a long-term, strategic competitor that wants to advance its own objectives at the expense of U.S. prosperity and security and that sees the United States and the NATO Alliance as the principal threat to its geopolitical ambitions. In pursuit of its objectives, Moscow seeks to assert its influence over nations along its periphery, undermine NATO solidarity, and fracture the rules-based international order. Russia actively pursues an aggressive foreign policy in violation of other nations’ sovereignty, carrying out subversive and destabilizing activities in Europe and the U.S. and exploiting opportunities to increase its influence and expand its presence in Afghanistan, Syria, and Asia.

Russia employs a whole-of-society approach through a wide array of tools to include political provocateurs, information operations, economic intimidation, cyber operations, religious leverage, proxies, special operations, conventional military forces, and nuclear forces. Russia pursues its strategic objectives in Europe, while avoiding direct military conflict with the U.S. and NATO, by targeting countries through indirect action – backed up by the coercive threat of its conventional and nuclear forces. Such actions include questioning a government’s legitimacy, threatening a country’s economic interests, mobilizing fringe opposition groups, and utilizing proxies or armed civilians, such as private military contracting companies with opaque ties to the state.

Russia’s military capability improvements are significant. Russia continues to prioritize high levels of defense spending to complete its broad-based upgrade of its nuclear forces and produce advanced weapons and capabilities specifically designed to counter U.S. military superiority. Russia’s nuclear modernization program covers every leg of its strategic triad and includes advanced modern road-mobile and silo-based Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), new Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs), and Long Range Strategic Bombers. Russia is also developing and deploying new strategic nuclear delivery platforms, to include its nuclear-armed, nuclear-powered underwater unmanned vehicle, intercontinental-range cruise missile, and its air-launched ballistic missile, all of which Russia seeks to keep outside of existing arms control agreements. Additionally, they are pursuing nuclear-armed hypersonic weapons, which could provide them the capability to attack anywhere in the globe with little or no notice.

Russia is also building a large, diverse, and modern set of non-strategic, dual-capable weapons. It currently has an active stockpile of approximately 2,000 of these theater-range systems, which are not subject to the New START Treaty’s limitations on deployed warheads. These systems include air-to-surface missiles, short-range ballistic-missiles, gravity bombs, depth charges, and Russia’s INF-violating ground-launched cruise missile, among others.

Russia's non-strategic nuclear weapons stockpile is of concern because it facilitates Moscow's mistaken belief that limited nuclear first use, potentially including low-yield weapons, can provide Russia a coercive advantage in crises and at lower levels of conflict. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review calls for adjustments to U.S. nuclear forces to close this perceived gap on the escalation ladder and reinforce deterrence against low-yield nuclear use.

Outside of its nuclear forces, Russia is fielding advanced anti-access/area denial (A2AD) integrated air defense systems (IADS), precision guided cruise and ballistic missiles, modern cyber and electronic warfare (EW) capabilities, and counter-space weapons meant to impede U.S. power projection in Europe. They have improved readiness via investments in infrastructure, training, and compensation, and their exercise program demonstrates increasingly sophisticated command and control and integration across multiple warfare areas. In the Arctic, Russia continues to invest in their forces as environmental changes open up access to the High North.

The Kremlin has also demonstrated the ability and political will to deploy its modernized military and expand its operational footprint. Last year we observed a historically high combat maritime presence in the East Mediterranean along with military deployments and demonstrations in Syria. Their most advanced and quietest guided missile submarine, the Severodvinsk, conducted extended deployments in the northern Atlantic.

Russia seeks advantage over the U.S. and its European allies through its non-compliance with long-standing arms control treaties. Its violations of the INF Treaty allowed Moscow to develop capabilities that the United States continued to forego. Its "suspension" of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty gave it greater flexibility to posture forces in regions of special interest to Moscow and to do so with significantly less transparency towards its neighbors in ways we do not because of our adherence to these treaties. Its violation of certain provisions of the Open Skies Treaty—as well as its selective implementation of Vienna Document transparency measures—poses challenges for ensuring full military transparency.

Our NATO allies supported the U.S. announcement to begin withdrawal from the INF Treaty because they recognize that Russia's Treaty-banned systems hold much of Europe at risk and that despite significant diplomatic efforts—more than 30 engagements over nearly six years—Russia refuses to return to compliance.

While the United States maintains global military superiority over Russia, evolving Russian capabilities threaten to erode our competitive military advantage, challenge our ability to operate uncontested in all domains, and diminish our ability to deter Russian aggression.

Ukraine

Moscow persists in its multifaceted campaign to destabilize Ukraine and block Ukraine's democratic choice to align with the West. Following Russia's purported annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia's aggressive activities, including those of Russia-led forces in the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine, target Ukraine's defense, economic, and political sectors. Russia has not implemented its commitments in the Minsk agreements, and Russia continues to arm, train, lean, and fight alongside antigovernment forces in eastern Ukraine. The conflict in eastern Ukraine remains hot, with numerous ceasefire violations reported weekly. The UN reports that approximately 13,000 people have been killed in the Donbas since Russia instigated the conflict in 2014. More than 100 Ukrainian soldiers were killed in 2018 as well as 55 civilians. Due to Russian intransigence, no peacekeeping initiative has been implemented. Russia's unjustified use of force against Ukrainian vessels and naval personnel in the Black Sea near the Kerch Strait last November demonstrated Russia's disregard for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, denying Ukraine its right of free passage in accordance with international law. In addition, through its support of illegitimate elections in the so-called "Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics", Russia has sought to undermine the government of Ukraine. Russia will likely attempt to interfere in Ukraine's upcoming presidential elections, as it did in 2014.

Georgia

After the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, Russia stationed 7,000 troops on sovereign Georgian territory. Russia now occupies approximately 20% of Georgian territory and maintains a significant military and border presence in and around Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia has recognized the two territories as independent, entering into defense agreements with these territories and incorporating South Ossetian and Abkhazian “national military forces” into Russian Army command structures. Russia exacerbates tensions by fomenting discord between these territories and the rest of Georgia. While Georgia supports confidence building measures, such as granting the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) access to the occupied territories in accordance with its mandate. Russia opposes them.

Balkans

Security in the Balkans, a strategically significant region, is tenuous, and Balkan nations are a primary target of Russian malign influence. Negotiations between Kosovo and neighboring Serbia to normalize their relations and agree on a long-term solution that is viable for both countries have struggled to make progress for some time and are currently on hold. Russia fuels regional instability in an effort to prevent individual Balkan nations from progressing on a path toward greater Euro-Atlantic alignment and integration. Seeking to maintain its influence in Serbia through political, military, and economic support, Russia also opposes the recognition of Kosovo as a sovereign country. NATO’s Kosovo Force (KFOR), which includes over 3,500 troops from both NATO and non-NATO nations, plays an important role in maintaining security and stability in this region. Bosnia and Herzegovina also continues to work toward long-term peace and stability. Despite challenges from Republika Srpska, which is influenced by Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina partners with the U.S. and NATO, supporting the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan.

Baltics and Poland

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland are a focal point of U.S. and NATO deterrence posture and activities as Russia attempts to intimidate these nations, both politically and militarily. Russia also tries to influence ethnic Russian populations, especially in Estonia and Latvia, and both countries remain mindful that in Crimea, Russia used these ethnic groups as a justification for intervention. Poland has offered at least \$2 billion towards U.S. basing in Poland, and the form of such an increased U.S. troop posture in Poland is currently being discussed in Working Groups under the auspices of a DoD-led Executive Steering Group.

Turkey

Turkey is a strategically important ally facing significant security challenges, the most pressing of which is the ongoing Syrian conflict. It must maintain security along its border with Syria, and within its borders, Turkey hosts over 3.5 million Syrian refugees. Turkey continues to view the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) as a single entity, one that constitutes a greater threat than ISIS. This has complicated U.S.-Turkey cooperation on Syria. USEUCOM works closely with Turkey to help secure its borders, and we have improved our efforts, in support of Turkey, to counter the PKK and the threats this terrorist organization poses to Turkish citizens. USEUCOM also supports U.S. interagency efforts to effect a deliberate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria that ensures the enduring defeat of ISIS, preserves Turkey's security, and keeps faith with U.S. partners on the ground. Finally, USEUCOM supported U.S. interagency efforts to provide an NATO-interoperable alternative to avert Turkey's planned purchase of a Russian S-400 air defense system, which risks triggering the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). Such an opposition puts at risk NATO cohesion and our longstanding and mutually beneficial U.S.-Turkish defense industrial cooperation.

Violent Extremist Networks

The risk of terrorism in Europe remains high, despite a decline in fatalities from terrorist attacks in 2018. Violent extremists present a clear and persistent threat to Europe's people and infrastructure. ISIS seeks to re-establish itself in Iraq and Syria, expand into new safe havens, and plan attacks against Western targets. We must remain vigilant to all jihadist groups trying to extend their operational networks and radicalize recruits in Europe.

Israel

In the Levant, Israel faces a complex set of security challenges from numerous actors across multiple domains. Israel must constantly defend itself from threats posed by Hamas, Lebanese Hezbollah, and Iran, which has expanded its network of proxies while also pursuing advancements in its missile program to assert its influence throughout the Middle East. Israel must also guard against Russia's increased presence in Syria, its facilitation of Iran's presence, and ISIS militants along its Syrian border.

Additional European Security Challenges

Several other issues present ongoing challenges to European security. Though migrant flows slowed in 2018, Europe's migrant crisis has led to difficult political discussions about demographic integration and the allocation of resources. Transnational organized crime and the illicit trafficking of narcotics, humans, and weapons, to include weapons of mass destruction and related materials, can be linked with terrorism and place an added burden on European security and police forces. USEUCOM is also monitoring China's activities in Europe as it seeks to expand its influence and grow its presence. For example, China is looking to secure access to strategic geographic locations and economic sectors through financial stakes in ports, airlines, hotels, and utility providers, while providing a source of capital for struggling European

economies. Russia and China have increased their transactional collaboration based on some common objectives and opportunities to increase their power and influence at the expense of the U.S. and our allies.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES - "STRENGTH AND BALANCE"

Strategy Implementation

USEUCOM is confronting the risks and challenges in its area of responsibility by aggressively adapting our thinking and posture in accordance with the President's National Security Strategy (NSS), the Secretary's National Defense Strategy (NDS), and the Chairman's National Military Strategy (NMS). We are particularly focused on expanding the competitive space with Russia by increasing the lethality of our forces and strengthening alliances and partnerships. Our forces demonstrate commitment to the defense of our allies while our execution of the Dynamic Force Employment concept, along with our operations and exercises, introduce operational unpredictability to our adversaries. USEUCOM will help ensure that our Nation successfully competes with Russia, deters aggression, and if necessary, prevails in conflict.

Supporting NATO

The NSS, NDS, and NMS all emphasize the central role of a revitalized NATO in securing our vital national interests. NATO allies help shoulder our common defense burden through cash (defense spending), contributions (such as troop deployments), and critical capabilities (e.g., advanced missile defense systems). Allies have made considerable progress in each of these areas.

Since January 2017, allies have added more than \$41 billion in increased defense spending over the 2016 level; and by the end of 2020, Allies – according to NATO Secretary General

Stoltenberg – are on track to add approximately \$100 billion in increased defense spending. In 2018, eight allies spent 2% of their GDP on defense and ten more have presented plans or made political commitments to do so by 2024. 15 allies are already allocating at least 20% of their defense budgets to major new equipment in 2018, and 11 more have presented plans or commitments to do so by 2024. In addition, all U.S. EDI-funded military construction is being submitted for consideration of future funding via recoupment through the NATO Security Investment Program (NSIP).

At last year's Brussels Summit, NATO Heads of State agreed that ensuring alliance responsiveness, readiness, and reinforcement are strategic imperatives for implementing a credible deterrence and defense posture. There are several distinct elements to this commitment. Implementation of the NATO Command Structure (NCS) Adaptation will include a refined Initial State Peacetime Establishment (ISPE) manning increase, the stand-up of NATO Headquarters Joint Forces Command – Norfolk (JFCNF) to command and control (C2) operations in the Atlantic, and the establishment of the Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) in Ulm, Germany.

NATO allies are also making progress in developing a more capable, interoperable, and ready alliance force. NATO's Political Guidance for defense planning (PG19) provides direction for a variety of required cross-domain capabilities. PG19, discussed at the February 2019 NATO Defense Ministers conference, is the first step in the process NATO uses to influence allied nations, develop and deliver interoperable forces, and ensure the alliance has the required capabilities and readiness needed to strengthen deterrence and defense. Additionally, the NATO Readiness Initiative (NRI), which builds upon the 2014 Readiness Action Plan's comprehensive package of Assurance and Adaptation Measures, will provide "4-30s" – 30 major naval combatants, 30 medium or heavy maneuver battalions, and 30 air squadrons ready to fight within 30 days – by the year 2020.

In terms of contributions, allies have stepped up their support for NATO-led missions. From 2014 to 2017, the number of NATO troops serving on deployment was up from 18,000 to just under 23,000 (with almost half of that number, 10,500, from outside the U.S.). In addition to the U.S., Germany, Canada, and the UK serve as Framework Nations for the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battle groups in the Baltics and Poland. The UK, Romania, and Croatia all contribute forces to the U.S. eFP mission. Germany serves as the Framework Nation for the 2019 NATO Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) brigade. NATO allies and partners also contribute forces to NATO's Baltic Air Policing, enhanced Air Policing in the Black Sea region, Standing Maritime Group, Resolute Support Mission (RSM), and KFOR.

As directed by the NDS, we will 'fortify the Trans-Atlantic Alliance' in part by increasing our collaboration with our European allies and partners. With thanks to Congress for its support to our security cooperation and security assistance initiatives, USEUCOM continues to bolster our engagement in places like Ukraine, Georgia, the Balkans, and in other allied and partner nations along Russia's border. USEUCOM employs programs such as the Ukrainian Security Assistance Initiative, Section 333 of the FY17 NDAA, and Title 22 Foreign Military Financing (FMF) to build partner capabilities in key European nations, enhancing their abilities to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to operate in coalition with the United States. Additionally, USEUCOM works closely with NATO planners and forces to integrate our collective capabilities, and we will regularly test and improve these capabilities through Title 10 exercises, our Joint Exercise Program, and through NATO Response Force (NRF) certification exercises to ensure interoperability on the battlefield. We will continue to press allies to meet the important 2% mark, advocate for individual nation capability targets that meet their most pressing force requirements, and align with their assigned NATO capability targets.

NATO is also a key platform for engagement and displaying solidarity on issues such as Russia's violation of the INF Treaty. The Alliance unanimously supported our declaration of Russia's material breach of the INF Treaty in December and our announcement that we were

suspending our legal obligations and initiating withdrawal from the Treaty in February. We remain engaged on this issue with our NATO Allies to ensure NATO is postured to defend against Russia's new intermediate-range capability and to deny Russia any military advantage from its unlawful conduct.

Working with Non-NATO Partners

Georgia remains a committed partner, especially in Afghanistan, where it is the largest non-NATO contributor to Resolute Support with almost 900 troops currently deployed. The U.S.-Georgia security relationship has steadily expanded, and the establishment in 2018 of the Georgia Defense Readiness Program (GDRP) marked a milestone in our partnership. The GDRP helps Georgia field and sustain a credible, ready force through training, education, and mentorship. The program is a centerpiece of Georgia's broad efforts to enhance its national defense and contribute to the security of the Black Sea region.

Ukraine seeks to partner more closely with the U.S., NATO, and the European Union (EU), and it has made progress in developing a capable, sustainable, and professional force. USEUCOM supports Ukraine's efforts through the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine (JMTG-U), combined exercises including the annual naval Exercise SEA BREEZE, and other activities. The United States delivered the Javelin anti-armor capability to Ukraine in April 2018 to deter Russian aggression against Ukraine. Continued senior-level engagement and support for Ukrainian self-defense capabilities and institutional reform will help enhance regional security and demonstrate our continued commitment to Ukraine's security and territorial integrity, and a rules-based international order in Europe.

Thanks to the historic agreement this past summer between Greece and North Macedonia, we are poised to welcome NATO's newest member once Allied ratifications are complete. North Macedonia is a consistent contributor to security, regularly deploying forces to

Afghanistan and to other U.S. and NATO-led exercises, and the Alliance will be stronger with North Macedonia as a full member.

The EU has moved to enact multiple defense reforms and initiatives in an attempt to create efficiencies and commonalities in European defense. These include the Coordinated Annual Review on Defense, which serves as the basis for preparing the EU's long-term Capability Development Plan and identifying defense and investment capability shortfalls; the European Defense Fund, which will amplify research and development undertaken by multiple participants to achieve economies of scale and free up funds for additional capability development; and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), a legal framework to cooperate more intensively on defense issues and jointly develop defense capabilities for EU military operations. NATO continues to work with the EU to ensure these efforts complement rather than duplicate NATO initiatives or undermine NATO as the foundation of Euro-Atlantic security.

Strengthening U.S. Deterrence Posture

A combat-credible U.S. deterrence posture in Europe means fielding a force that is lethal, agile, and able to maneuver across the continent, capable of delivering joint fires, flexible enough to operate inside a highly contested environment, integrated with multi-domain capabilities, resilient through redundant systems, protected through integrated air and missile defense systems, and prepared to leverage the full power of our allies and partners. Establishing this force requires us to make resource-informed decisions about the appropriate combination of persistent forces (assigned, forward stationed, or persistent heel-to-toe 365 day rotations), and those that can quickly reach and operate in theater under the Dynamic Force Employment concept.

Each of USEUCOM's Service Component Commands has strengthened our deterrence posture. The capability and lethality of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) forces stationed in Europe were enhanced by persistent armored brigade combat team (ABCT) and Combat

Aviation Brigade (CAB) rotations. The forward stationing of long-range fires and air defense units will further improve the lethality and resilience of USAREUR forces. Naval Forces Europe (NAVEUR) executed a no-notice deployment of the Harry S. Truman (HST) Carrier Strike Group (CSG) to the Mediterranean in the summer 2018 and to the North Atlantic in the fall 2018. As part of its deployment, the CSG participated in TRIDENT JUNCTURE 18, which had not involved a CSG in over 20 years. In Eastern Europe, strategic bombers and fourth- and fifth-generation fighters deployed to support U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) deterrence missions. Marine Forces Europe (MARFOREUR) sustained rotational elements in both the Black Sea region and Norway. Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) provided rotational teams that helped build the resiliency of allies and partners exposed to Russian malign influence. In support of the Service Components, our nation's reserve component forces continue to play a critical role in supporting our assurance and deterrence mission, especially through the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP).

Enhancing our logistical infrastructure and capacity is another key element to fielding a combat-credible force. EDI investments in resilient joint reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (JRSOI) have resulted in infrastructure improvements as well as the Army Prepositioned Stocks (APS) and European Contingency Air Operation Sets (ECAOS). USEUCOM coordinates with USTRANSCOM in the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise (JDDE) to find integrated solutions and facilitate strategic movement and maneuver through our military and commercial partners. The EU is also addressing logistics through its PESCO project focused on military mobility, with the goal of partnering with NATO to better facilitate the movement of troops and equipment across European borders. Furthermore, we are working to enhance munition stocks and ensure interchangeability with NATO munitions to allow flexibility within the Alliance.

We have also strengthened our deterrence and defense through the Joint Force Headquarters Exercise Program, which prepares USEUCOM to effectively carry out its wartime

mission and trains our Component Commands to assume Joint Force Component Command and Joint Task Force (JTF) missions. Our exercises maintain and enhance our ability to jointly operate in a multi-domain and multi-functional environment. We execute four Tier 1 exercises--AUSTERE CHALLENGE, JUNIPER COBRA, JUNIPER FALCON, and JACKAL STONE, along with numerous theater-specific and global integration exercises.

Although we have increased our forces, improved our infrastructure, and successfully executed multiple rotations, deployments, and exercises, 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.

As for our nuclear forces, the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review validated the importance of maintaining the nuclear triad for strategic stability with Russia and China. Great power competition requires that we maintain a credible strategic deterrence, which includes modernizing its supporting infrastructure. This underwrites U.S. security, diplomacy, and our conventional military operations worldwide.

Countering Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO)

USEUCOM works directly with our Combatant Command counterparts and our European partners to identify and counter terrorist threats. We are increasing our intelligence-sharing and strengthening a counter-VEO network that includes NATO, partner nations, and international organizations such as EUROPOL and INTERPOL. Our EU, NATO, and USEUCOM-shared Trinodal Community of Action targets existing VEO networks and facilitates expanded intelligence-sharing with law enforcement. European allies provide the U.S. with critical strategic access for counter-terrorism operations in USAFRICOM and USCENTCOM theaters, and they also deploy their own forces to support U.S.-led operations, including Operation Inherent Resolve. Counter VEO efforts led to a significant decline in directed and enabled attacks across Europe in 2018.

Competing in Cyberspace

USEUCOM's ongoing efforts to build operational-level cyberspace capabilities are critical to implementing the NDS. USEUCOM benefits from resources and authorities that enable us to partner more closely with USCYBERCOM. We are well-aligned in the planning and conduct of cyber operations to achieve strategic objectives that include deterring Russia, countering misinformation, and defending computer networks. Our Joint Cyber Center (JCC) continues to mature in manning, facilities, and authorities to actively counter cyber-attacks and help strengthen ally and partner nation cyber capabilities.

Building Intelligence Capacity

USEUCOM is working alongside our allies and partners to grow our intelligence and analytical capability in order to meet both steady state and contingency planning requirements. We are leveraging language expertise resident in European nations and are utilizing non-traditional ISR platforms to mitigate the global shortage of high-demand, low-density assets. In addition, USEUCOM is leveraging the growing capabilities of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in sourcing intelligence communication and dissemination platforms, such as the Machine-Assisted Analytic Rapid-Repository System (MARS), Publicly Available Information and Open Source Intelligence (PAI-OSINT), and the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System (JWICS).

Countering Russian Malign Influence

As we expand the competitive space with Russia, USEUCOM is working with the interagency to effectively compete below the level of armed conflict. A leading effort in this domain of competition is the Russian Influence Group (RIG), jointly led by USEUCOM and our State Department counterparts in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. The RIG brings together the interagency to share information and collaborate in efforts to counter

Russian malign activities in Europe. Separately, U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) are also working with select European allies and partners to enhance their defense institutions, border security, and resilience to Russian malign influence. USEUCOM and USSOCOM work together to employ SOF in Europe, where their unique access and capabilities can be utilized to compete below the level of armed conflict.

Providing Assistance to Israel

USEUCOM directly supports our Nation's unwavering commitment to the security of Israel. We meet regularly with senior Israeli military leaders, coordinate in planning, and regularly participate in combined exercises. USEUCOM also assists in the defense of Israel through a continuous missile defense presence in the Mediterranean under OPERATION SHARP SENTRY. Israel continues to be the largest recipient of Foreign Military Finance (FMF) funds, and in September 2016, the U.S. and Israel signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that provides \$3.8B per year in military assistance over the FY2019 – FY2028 period, totaling \$38B, enabling Israel to maintain a qualitative military edge over its adversaries.

Enabling Global Operations

Strategic geographic access, forward basing, and overflight permissions within Europe support multiple Combatant Commands and enable allied, coalition, and U.S. operations. European basing and access remains our strategic military "high-ground" for the United States and a key enabler of our global power projection. The bilateral agreements that grant the U.S. these permissions are built on trust and sustained by maintaining relationships with our allies and partners. Last year's U.S.-led cruise missile strike in Syria is the latest in a number of examples in which European access, basing, and overflight were critical in executing short-notice, contingency operations.

FY20 Requests

The European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) provides funding to improve our deterrence posture and execute our deterrent initiatives and activities. First, EDI ensures that we position the right capabilities and refine the necessary infrastructure to respond to adversaries in a timely manner. Second, it underwrites our commitment to Article 5 and to the territorial integrity of all NATO nations. Third, EDI increases the capability and readiness of U.S. Forces, NATO allies, and regional partners so we can effectively deter adversary aggression and adventurism. USEUCOM has remained disciplined in nominating EDI projects that are consistent with Congressional guidance and follow five distinct lines of effort: increased presence, exercises and training, enhanced prepositioning, improved infrastructure, and building partnership capacity.

In accordance with your Congressional guidance, we plan and execute EDI as if it were a Future Years Defense Program. This allows us to maintain fiscal and program discipline and prepares the command for when EDI transfers from overseas contingency operations (OCO) to base service budgets.

Our FY20 Budget request focuses on: (1) continued implementation of Enhancing Army Prepositioned Stocks to improve responsiveness of ground forces and provide rapidly deployable combat capability in the event of contingencies; (2) continued implementation of the Air Force Prepositioned Stocks and airfield facilities to improve flexibility and resilience of air forces and provide rapidly deployable combat capability in the event of contingencies; (3) continued enhancement to the Theater's Anti-Submarine Warfare through the procurement of additional equipment and the improvement to theater infrastructure; and (4) enhancing other key capabilities and requirements throughout the theater including, but not limited to: (a) Naval logistics hubs; (b) Integrated Air and Missile Defense; and (c) JRSOI.

Conclusion

Given the transformation of the European security environment and its impact on U.S. national security, a strong commitment to the USEUCOM area of responsibility is more important than ever. I would like to thank Congress for their acknowledgement of these threats and their continued support of efforts within the USEUCOM theater. Russia continues to engage in armed aggression in eastern Ukraine, is yet to fulfill Minsk Agreement obligations, maintains an illegal occupation of Crimea with reinforced forces, openly violates International law, to include the Intermediate Nuclear Forces, Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and Open Skies Treaties, and blocks Vienna Document revisions which are needed to address non-accountability of political-military realities. As witnessed last March with the Skripal poisoning, the Kremlin is willing to act boldly, employing banned military-grade nerve agents against civilian targets on the territory of our ally, contrary to all international norms, expectations of civilized society, and their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The growing capability of Iran and its proxies is challenging Israel's security. Violent extremists, though slightly abridged in activities last year, remain intent on destroying a rules-based system of government and will continue to target U.S. and European civilians and infrastructure.

Fortunately, we are not alone in meeting these challenges. As stated in the NDS, the NATO Alliance will "deter Russian adventurism, defeat terrorists who seek to murder innocents, and address the arc of instability building on NATO's periphery." NATO has been, and will remain, vital to our national security, and a central element in addressing the challenges of the 21st century. Our Trans-Atlantic bond is strengthened by a shared commitment of collective defense, democratic principles, and mutual respect of national sovereignty.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and civilians at USEUCOM continue to display selfless service and dedication to meet the demands of the European theater. They are the lethal, agile, and resilient force that will protect and defend the Homeland and ensure that Europe remains whole, free, and at peace.