HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

OPENING STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL FRANK C. PANDOLFE, USN DIRECTOR FOR STRATEGIC PLANS AND POLICY THE JOINT STAFF BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE 8 APRIL 2014

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished Committee Members, good morning. Thank you for this opportunity to update you on Russian military developments.

You just heard a review of actions taken by the United States, the NATO Alliance, and the international community in response to Russia's unlawful military intervention in Ukraine. Russia's seizure of Crimea is a flagrant violation of international law, and it reintroduces into Europe the threat of external aggression. By doing so, Russia set back decades of international progress.

The United States military and the wider NATO Alliance have supported our response to this unwarranted intervention:

- We have given support to Ukraine by way of material assistance, defense consultations, and the offer of enhanced training.
- We are reassuring our NATO Allies, with whom we have Article V security guarantees, by sending additional air power to the Baltic States and Poland, increasing our surveillance over Poland and Romania, and sending naval ships into the Black Sea.
- And we are helping to impose costs on Russia by halting all bilateral military-to-military interaction. However, as noted by Mr. Chollet, we are keeping open channels for senior leader communications, to help deescalate the crisis.

I would now like to widen the focus of my remarks beyond Ukraine, to discuss the evolution of Russian conventional military power, thereby providing context to today's events.

At the height of its military power, the Soviet Union was truly a global competitor. With millions of people under arms, vast numbers of tanks and planes, a global navy, and an extensive intelligence gathering infrastructure, the Soviet military machine posed a very real and dangerous threat.

Following the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, that arsenal fell into disrepair. Starved of funding and fragmented, Russian military capabilities rapidly decayed throughout the 1990s. From the start of his term in office in 2000, President Putin has made military modernization a top priority of the Russian government. When Russia invaded Georgia in 2008, a number of shortcomings were noted in its military performance. This led the Russian government to further increase investment in its military services.

Since 2008, those efforts have had some success. Russian military forces have been streamlined into smaller, more mobile units. Their overall readiness has improved and their most elite units are well trained and equipped. They now employ a more sophisticated approach to joint warfare.

Their military has implemented organizational change, creating regional commands within Russia. These coordinate and synchronize planning, joint service integration, force movement, intelligence support, and the tactical employment of units.

Finally, the Russian military adopted doctrinal change, placing greater emphasis on speed of movement, the use of Special Operations Forces, and information and cyber warfare. They instituted "snap exercises." These no-notice drills serve the dual purpose of sharpening military readiness while also inducing strategic uncertainty as to whether they will swiftly transition from training to offensive operations.

Today, Russia is a regional power that can project force into nearby states but has very limited global power projection capability. It has a military of uneven readiness. While some units are well trained, most are less so. It suffers from corruption and its

logistical capabilities are limited. Aging equipment and infrastructure, fiscal challenges, and demographic and social problems will continue to hamper reform efforts.

The United States, in contrast, employs a military of global reach and engagement. The readiness of our rotationally deployed forces is high and we are working to address readiness shortfalls at home. And we operate within alliances; the strongest of which is NATO. Composed of 28 nations, NATO is the most successful military alliance in history. Should Russia undertake an armed attack against any NATO state, it will find that our commitment to collective defense is immediate and unwavering.

Russia's military objectives are difficult to predict. But it is clear that Russia is sustaining a significant military force on Ukraine's eastern border. This is deeply troubling to all states in the region and beyond, and we are watching Russian military movements very carefully.

I spoke with General Breedlove, the Commander of U.S. European Command and NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, last Friday. He is formulating recommendations for presentation to the North Atlantic Council on April fifteenth. These recommendations will be aimed at further reassuring our NATO allies. As part of this effort, he will consider increasing military exercises, forward deploying additional military equipment and personnel, and increasing our naval, air, and ground presence. He will update members of Congress on those recommendations at the earliest opportunity.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for this opportunity to address your Committee. I look forward to your questions.