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Statement by

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Office of the Secretary of Defense

Before the 116th Congress

Committee on Armed Services

U.S. House of Representatives

September 30, 2020

Introduction

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Thornberry, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to brief you today on the recent European force posture realignment, alongside Lt Gen David Allvin. Lt Gen Allvin is a great partner and it is an honor to appear beside him today.

National Defense Strategy and CCMD Review

The Department continues to prioritize implementation of the National Defense Strategy (NDS) including the building of a more lethal force and strengthening alliances. One important initiative to advance the NDS and ensure a focus on these priorities is the ongoing comprehensive review of all the Combatant Commands. As part of U.S. European Command's (USEUCOM) review, Secretary Esper directed USEUCOM to develop options for repositioning our Europe-based forces to compete more effectively and respond to contingencies both within Europe and globally.

These options will be guided by Secretary Esper's five core principles: 1) enhancing deterrence of Russia; 2) strengthening NATO; 3) reassuring Allies; 4) improving U.S. strategic flexibility and USEUCOM operational flexibility; and, most importantly, 5) taking care of our Service members and their families. On July 29, Secretary Esper announced an update to the status of our U.S European

Command Force Posture review, following the decision by the President in early June to limit the number of assigned active-duty Service members in Germany to 25,000 as well as the DoD Concept to reposition some of our forces within Europe and back to the United States to be better situated for Great Power Competition.

Realignment Details

The review yielded a concept for nearly 12,000 military personnel to be repositioned from Germany, with almost 5,600 re-stationed in other NATO countries and approximately 6,400 returning to the United States. The realignment concept includes consolidating headquarters to strengthen operational agility, repositioning some forces in the United States to focus on readiness and prepare for rotational deployments, and deploying rotational forces in the Black Sea region on NATO's southeastern flank to improve deterrence. These force posture changes meet Secretary Esper's core principles as mentioned previously, while adapting our force posture to address national security concerns in today's dynamic environment.

The concept consists of the following four pillars. First, the consolidation of various U.S. headquarters in Europe outside Germany, including in some cases, collocating headquarters at the same locations as their NATO counterparts in Belgium and Italy. This would help strengthen NATO and improve the operational

efficiency and readiness of more than 2,000 Service members in these headquarters. Second, the nearly 4,500 members of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment would return to the United States, as other Stryker units begin rotations farther east in the Black Sea region, giving us a more enduring presence to enhance deterrence and reassure Allies along NATO's southeastern flank. Third, the 2,500 airmen based at Royal Air Force (RAF) Mildenhall, United Kingdom, who are responsible for aerial refueling and special operations, and who had been scheduled to re-base to Germany, would remain in the U.K, thus ensuring the uninterrupted readiness and responsiveness of these units. Fourth, a fighter squadron and elements of a fighter wing would be repositioned to Italy, moving them closer to the Black Sea region and rendering them more capable to conduct dynamic force employment and rotational deployments to NATO's southeastern flank.

Importance of NATO and European Partners

This concept to reposition our forces in Europe constitutes a major strategic shift, wholly in line with the NDS, and consistent with other adjustments the United States has previously made within NATO. Over NATO's 71-year history, the size, composition, and disposition of U.S. forces in Europe have changed many times. Those posture adjustments have come as a result of changes in the threat environment, shifts in the international system, or simply because the borders between NATO countries and Russia altered as NATO welcomed new Allies. As

we enter a new era of Great Power Competition, we are at another inflection point in NATO's history, and the Department is confident that the Alliance will be better and stronger in part because of this realignment. Now that Allies are increasing their defense spending and capability acquisition, the Alliance is much stronger than it was in 2016. As our planning for the realignment matures, we will be sure to communicate frequently with Congress and with our NATO Allies to maintain visibility and foster cooperation.

Recent European Successes Beyond the Combatant Command Review

As we continue to implement the NDS, efforts at enhancing our European posture beyond the USEUCOM Combatant Command review have shown recent success, including the signing of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) with Poland in August that will enable an increased enduring U.S. rotational presence in that country of about 1,000 U.S. military personnel. This includes forward elements of the U.S. Army's V Corps headquarters and a Division headquarters; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities; and an aerial port of debarkation. All of these additional elements are in addition to the 4,500 U.S. military personnel already on rotation in Poland and includes infrastructure and logistical support provided by Poland.

This new Agreement comes after several years of discussions with Poland with the aim of streamlining our operations on the ground and facilitating operations by our Armed Forces in Poland. The Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement better supports the growing number of U.S. rotational forces operating within and through Poland and provides a legal foundation consistent with the Defense Cooperation Agreements we have with other NATO Allies.

Our continued efforts to streamline operations across Europe, including through modernized and new agreements with NATO Allies, especially on its Eastern Flank, directly support our core NDS principles by improving operational flexibility and enhancing deterrence. The Department is confident that these continuing efforts will help to adapt the force and optimize our force posture in Europe as we seek to deter malign actors.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I appreciate your continued support to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, members of our newest service the United States Space Force, and civilians in the Department of Defense who work every day serving the American people. I look forward to your questions.