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ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND AND UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Washington, D.C.

ALDERSON COURT REPORTING
1029 VERMONT AVE, NW
10TH FLOOR
WASHINGTON, DC 20005
(202) 289-2260

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U.S. Senate
Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger Wicker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators Wicker [presiding], Fischer, Cotton, Ernst, Scott, Budd, Banks, Sheehy, Reed, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Warren, Peters, Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, and Slotkin.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER WICKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI

Chairman Wicker: The hearing will come to order.

The committee meets this morning to receive testimony on the posture of the United States European Command and the United States Transportation Command. I'd like to thank our witnesses today, General Grynkewich and General Reed, for being here, and I want to extend a special welcome to their families.

General Grynkewich oversees approximately 80,000 military personnel in the U.S. European Command, EUCOM. He also serves as the supreme allied commander Europe, making him the military commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, NATO, the world's only nuclear alliance. General Grynkewich comes before this committee at a time of great turmoil. The United States is engaged in a high intensity conflict in the Middle East, while simultaneously, supporting Ukraine's self-defense against the Russians invasion. EUCOM is involved in both efforts. The command provides extensive operational and logistic support to Operation Epic Fury. At the same time, it facilitates the flow of weapons and intelligence to Ukraine, and of course, our forces in Europe remain at the ready to deter and defend against Russian aggression.

Our European allies provide access, basing and

overflight rights to our forces. This creates enormous military advantages for the United States. Our presence in Europe enables us to project power into adjacent theatres, most obviously into the Middle East, but also to Africa, and now, the Arctic. Our European allies are rightly increasing their defense spending, but we must recognize that they are sharing the political and military risk of war, too, and that is every bit as important to U.S. interest. So, this is a welcome development.

Defending against armed aggression from Russia remains the most compelling rationale for the NATO alliance. Russia is led by Vladimir Putin, a war criminal, and ruthless murderer and dictator. He possesses the world's largest and most diverse nuclear arsenal, and he always cheats on his arms control commitments. In Putin's twisted view of the world, Russia is the victim of historical injustices. He has proven willing to take on extreme risks to redress these perceived historical injustices against Russia, most notably, by launching a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, an entirely a war of choice.

Some have proposed a precipitate reduction in U.S. forces deployed in Europe. Such an action, which some have entitled NATO 3.0, would have us on -- would have us take an unnecessary vulnerability on at a precarious moment. Putin could easily interpret that action as weakness rather than

resolve. During the Cold War, we shared the burden of conventional defense in Europe precisely because it was in America's interest to do so. This remains the case today.

Europe has heeded President Trump's call to step up on defense spending. We now need to ensure that political will is turned into hard combat capability as soon as possible. Mr. Putin has a predilection for war and aggression. That is a fact, and it led this committee to place a floor on the U.S. military's force posture in Europe, particularly the Army ground maneuver forces. Mr. Putin's aggression has caused us to make that decision. We took that step in the National Defense Authorization Act that became law in December, a bipartisan achievement. The law reflects our collective judgment that now is not the time to accept unnecessary risks in Europe.

The best way to reduce the need for defense in Europe is to degrade the threat posed by Russia's military. Ukraine is doing exactly that. Its success in defending against Russia reflects Ukraine's resolve and ability to innovate during wartime. We should support these efforts. We should immediately begin a crash program to take advantage of new production lines here in America, building new low-cost weapons to help the Ukrainians defend themselves. This includes low-cost cruise missiles, which we can build thousands of every year, and includes new, more

easily producible air defense interceptors.

While General Grynkewich is focused on the European theater, General Reed supports the global Joint Force. TRANSCOM expertise and precision allows the Joint Force to extend its reach far beyond the safety of friendly confines, whether supporting Operation Midnight Hammer, Operation Absolute Resolve, or the hundreds of regular refueling and sealift missions required by other combatant commands.

When most Americans think of the military, they imagine airplanes, warships, and big guns, correctly, I might add. What they do not see is the system that moves all these pieces around the globe. A worldwide network of American logistics assets keeps our far-flung bases ready for action. We are the world's best military, in part, because TRANSCOM runs this complex system. China and Russia know this. These adversaries are not simply modernizing their armed forces. They are intentionally targeting our global logistics network to prevent us from operating around the world.

Congress recognizes this danger. The fiscal year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, again, which was signed, which was passed on a bipartisan basis and signed by the President of the United States last December, elevated contested logistics management to a senior leader responsibility. We charge the deputy secretary of defense,

vice chief of the Joint Staffs, and the commander of TRANSCOM to work together to integrate contested logistics across the Joint Force. This statutory direction makes explicit what the battlefield has already proven: Congested logistics is not owned by any single command or service.

As I've outlined, these witnesses come before the committee at an important moment for American national security. I thank them for appearing today, and I look forward to our conversation. And with that, I turn to my colleague, Ranking Member Reed.

STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE ISLAND

Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, General Grynkewich and General Reed. Thank you for appearing today. Thank you for your service to the Nation, and to those who you command, our warmest thanks and appreciation.

Both European Command and Transportation Command are deeply engaged in supporting the ongoing conflict with Iran, from enabling combat operations to moving personnel, equipment, weapons, and medical support across continents. EUCOM and TRANSCOM are playing critical roles in sustaining the United States military effort. This conflict is a reminder that modern warfare requires the full integration of every element of American military power, from operational forces, logistical networks, allied basing access, and the strategic mobility that connects them all.

General, the convergence of interest among potential adversaries like Russia, Iran, China, and North Korea is of great concern to this committee. There is a recent development that deserves scrutiny. Media outlets report last week that Russia has been providing Iran with the locations of U.S. military personnel and assets for targeting in the Middle East. I'm deeply concerned about this development, especially because the White House has

sought to downplay it, and the Secretary of Defense has said that he is, "Not concerned." If this reporting is true, it must be addressed with resolute and vocal condemnation by America's leaders. Our service members deserve nothing less.

For more than 3 years, EUCOM has been the backbone of the international effort to support Ukraine in the war of survival against Russia. EUCOM has enabled the Ukrainians to defeat there and defend -- defeat the Russians and defend their sovereignty, while sending an unmistakable message to America's adversaries about the strength of the NATO alliance and the resolve of the United States and its partners. The operational picture today remains difficult. Neither side has been able to secure a decisive advantage on the battlefield, but Ukrainian forces continue to battle bravely, and the Ukrainian people remain steadfast in their resolve.

At the same time, the broader strategic context in Europe is evolving. The Trump administration's new National Defense Strategy outlines a significant shift in how the United States views its role in the European AOR. The administration has argued for a significant reduction in American military engagement in Europe, and for European allies to assume a much larger share of NATO's conventional defense responsibilities.

Strengthening Europe's own defense capabilities is an important and necessary goal, which it should be noted, our European partners are already making impressive strides. But any significant shifts in the capabilities or capacity of the United States will offer to the NATO alliance must be carefully assessed and closely coordinated with our allies. Anything less than close coordination could create unnecessary gaps and increased risks during a period of significant geopolitical tension. I worry that the administration is singularly focused on the speed of transition and not the strategic implications of getting it wrong.

General Grynkewich, I would ask for your perspective on this. Is it your expectation that Europe could assume the majority of NATO's conventional defense burden by the end of this decade, and what risks do you foresee in accelerating such a transition before our allies may be fully constituted to do that?

General Reed, TRANSCOM is vital to the ongoing operations in Iran. The success of any military campaign ultimately depends on the ability to move forces, equipment, and supplies across the globe at speed and scale, from strategic airlift and sealift, to aerial refueling, and the movement of munitions between theaters. Your command is the logistical network that allows the United States military to

operate worldwide. I would appreciate an update on the demands these current operations are placing on TRANSCOM, and your assessment of the command's readiness to sustain them, while maintaining the capacity to respond to crises in other theaters.

Looking further ahead, one of the most important challenges facing the Department of Defense is the problem of contested logistics. For decades, American military operations have benefited from secure sea and air lines of communication. However, we have reached a point where potential adversaries will likely target the logistics network that underpinned U.S. military power. These threats could include attacks against forward bases, aircraft and ships that resupply those bases, cyberattacks on the information technology systems that manage deployments, and even kinetic strikes against ports and airfields in the United States and abroad.

General Reed, these vulnerabilities raise difficult questions about the survivability and resilience of the logistics systems on which our military depends. I would like an update on your command's efforts to address the contested logistics problem. In particular, how are you working with the military services to ensure that future logistics platforms and operational concepts are better suited to operate in a contested environment?

Gentlemen, thank you again for your leadership, and for the service of the men and women under your command. I look forward to your testimonies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed, and also thank you for giving them a preview of the questions you're going to ask. Who would like to go first? General Grynkewich, would you like to go first? You are recognized for your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL ALEXUS G. GRYNKEWICH, USAF, COMMANDER, UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND AND SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER EUROPE

General Grynkewich: Chairman, and Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, it's an honor to be here today representing the men and women of U.S. European Command. And I'm also grateful to have Command Sergeant Major TJ Holland, our command senior enlisted leader, joining me today. It is also a privilege to be here with my good friend, General Randall Reed. Throughout my career, I've seen firsthand the extraordinary capability U.S. Transportation Command delivers across our Joint Force.

I'd like to begin by thanking this committee and Congress for your steadfast support to the warfighters and missions of U.S. European Command. The United States faces a complex and evolving global security environment. Growing cooperation between Russia, North Korea, Iran, and the People's Republic of China has increased military risk across multiple theaters and domains in Europe. North Korean troops, and materiel, Iranian drone technology, and Chinese economic support enable Moscow to sustain its war in Ukraine.

I have been privileged to be part of the negotiations, working to fulfill the President's goal of a lasting peace, but in the meantime, this brutal war continues, recently

1 starting its fifth year as both sides trade human life for
2 time and territory. And despite significant losses in
3 Ukraine, Russia retains the capability and capacity to
4 threaten U.S. interests with its large and increasingly
5 diverse nuclear stockpile, asymmetric capabilities, and
6 competent ground, air, and maritime forces.
7 Given this environment, U.S. European Command is
8 focused on three priority missions. The first of these is
9 protecting the U.S. homeland. To do this, U.S. European
10 Command works closely with NORAD and U.S. Northern Command
11 to monitor and secure the strategic approaches to North
12 America. Allies help with this by sharing intelligence,
13 strengthening our early warning, and enhancing our ability
14 to respond to potential threats. In the North Atlantic and
15 in the Arctic. They help us monitor Russian and Chinese
16 activity, including subs and long-range bomber patrols.
17 Together, we ensure these capabilities are unable to
18 threaten the U.S. or our interests in this hemisphere.
19 Our second mission is to serve as a platform for
20 projecting U.S. combat power, both in and beyond Europe.
21 Our forces, bases, and infrastructure take advantage of the
22 continent's strategic geography, and allow the United States
23 to rapidly move forces, sustain operations, and provide the
24 President with diverse military options across multiple
25 theaters. In the past year alone, U.S. European Command

increased pressure on the shadow fleet with the seizure of MV Bella, enabled strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities during Midnight Hammer, and facilitated strikes on ISIS-affiliated terror groups in Africa. This mission continues today with support to Operation Epic Fury in Iran.

Our third mission area is positioning the NATO alliance to deter and defend. Given the possibility of simultaneous conflict in multiple theaters, a strong NATO allows the United States to redirect focus while still protecting our European interests. This requires allies to step up, and they're doing just that. Allies are increasing defense spending and building their readiness to assume primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe. This shift requires continued investment in a robust and resilient Defense Industrial Base that can deliver the required military capabilities at scale.

As the character of war continues to evolve, U.S. European Command is working directly with NATO allies, industry, and the Joint Force to capture the lessons of contemporary conflicts. We're committed to ensuring NATO remains the most capable military alliance in history, and to protecting our interests at home and abroad.

Chairman, and Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of this committee, thank you for your unwavering support to our warfighters and our mission. It's an honor

to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Grynkewich follows:]

Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, General. General Reed, you're recognized.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL RANDALL REED, USAF, COMMANDER, UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

General Reed: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of the committee. Today, I am joined by my wonderful bride, Lynn, and our senior enlisted leader, Chief Master Sergeant Brian Kruzelnick. Together, we represent the men, women, and families of United States Transportation Command. I am also privileged to serve and testify along my -- alongside my longtime friend, General Grynkewich. Thank you for your leadership.

As the champions of global logistics, USTRANSCOM is a total force team of soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Guardians, Coast Guardsmen, civilians, and merchant mariners. Your unwavering support of these experts and the missions they fulfill daily allows the warfighter to thrive. I must highlight our most unique experts: The Joint Enabling Capabilities Command. This subordinate command is your first responder in a global crisis, the Joint Forces 911. They rapidly deploy planners, communicators, and command, and control specialists that activate a joint task force headquarters and set the conditions for success.

USTRANSCOM has three military service components: The Air Force's Air Mobility Command delivers rapid global airlift, air refueling, and aeromedical evacuation with speed and reach to provide immediate response. The Navy's

Military Sealift Command delivers the mass of our combat power through the decisive strength of sealift sustainment. The Army Transportation Command is the critical link deploying the Joint Force from our forts to our strategic seaports, connecting the homeland to the global fight, and operating critical ports worldwide.

Completing the USTRANSCOM team is our fourth component, our commercial partners. Commercial airlines, trucking companies, rail operators, and ocean shipping companies move our service members and cargo anywhere, anytime. These industry leaders and partners offer expertise, capacity, and networks required for mission success.

USTRANSCOM is the heart of a larger team: the global Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise, or the JDDE. Together, the military, commercial industry allies and partners form a network with a single mission to deliver power and presence at the time and place of our choosing. We know the strategic environment continues to transform our competitors, trained to contest our every move, and turn logistics into a primary battle space. We acknowledge the challenge. This is precisely why we exist.

USTRANSCOM specializes in winning the fight to get to the fight. Therefore, there should be no surprise that our priority remains keeping power projection as the Joint Forces' decisive, strategic advantage. First, we champion

the American warfighters starting here in our homeland. The journey to the fight begins not on the battlefield, but on the Nation's highways, railways, and commercial seaports. Your interest in securing and modernizing this fort to port network is a direct investment, and the ability to project power. The resilience of this civilian infrastructure, the bedrock of the domestic supply chain, allows TRANSCOM forces to deploy and win.

Second, your continued partnership helps forge the future of maritime dominance. By recapitalizing strategic sealift, America will deliver overwhelming combat power to any shore for the next 50 years. We must continue this vital work and champion the mariners who form the backbone of our fleet and underwrite our national security. We support the maritime policies, including; Maritime Security Program, Tanker Security Program, Cable Security Program, the Jones Act, and cargo preference laws. Together, these programs secure U.S.-flagged vessels and the merchant mariners necessary to move sensitive defense material in emergency.

Third, your support guarantees our air mobility fleet remains a dominant projection force, the ultimate display of American resolve. Through our global reach, we unleash the power of presence, reassuring allies and deterring adversaries. Continued modernization and recapitalization

secures this advantage for the next generation of warfighters. Finally, we are transforming all mobility operation platforms into a survivable connected node within the warfighting network. As tankers and cargo planes link to battle space awareness, they become the eyes and ears of our commanders as they drive toward mission success. Your support makes our forces more resilient. We are grateful for air fleet investments because connectivity creates survivability.

Distinguished members, your leadership positions USTRANSCOM to overcome any challenge. Together, we send the message that America's logistic outreach is unmatched. Our resolve is unbreakable. We are ready, united, and decisive, and that together, we will always deliver.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent USTRANSCOM and to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Reed follows:]

Chairman Wicker: Well, thank you both for your service. General G, I'm going to ask you to pronounce your name again.

General Grynkewich: Senator, it's Grynkewich.

Chairman Wicker: Okay. With a wich. Okay. Very good. Well, let me just ask you briefly to -- answer a few questions briefly, and then I'll let you elaborate. Do you agree that Russian -- the Russian military's lack of tactical skill has been exposed in the war in Ukraine.

General Grynkewich: Senator, Russia invaded Ukraine thinking it would be a 2-week war. And as I heard a friend say recently, the hardest part of a short 2-week war is the first couple of years, and I think Putin has learned that because of the problems he's had with building a modern and effective force.

Chairman Wicker: In spite of that, do you agree that Russia has maintained the ability to wage war and continues to threaten our treaty allies in Europe?

General Grynkewich: I do, Senator.

Chairman Wicker: And do you -- and clearly, you've already said that Russia stated -- Russia has demonstrated its and its ability to sustain high intensity war for over 4 years, and I guess it's fair to say also that the public somehow over there is willing to suffer deprivation in pursuit of return to what they feel is Russian greatness.

Do you agree with that statement.

General Grynkewich: Senator, I do. I just say that, you know, Putin is an autocrat, is able to control the information environment in Russia. So, the Russian people are probably not hearing all of the trials and tribulations that their forces are facing, or understanding the high casualty rates of the Russian forces.

Chairman Wicker: I guess it would be fair to say the elite in Russia are not feeling all of the negative effects that the general populace is feeling.

General Grynkewich: I assess that's correct, Senator.

Chairman Wicker: Okay. NATO Secretary General and the German Chancellor have both publicly stated that Russia, once the war is over, will again pose a dire threat to Europe by the end of the decade. Do you agree with that? And I'll let you elaborate, if you'd like.

General Grynkewich: Senator, thank you. You know, in Ukraine today, Russia has well over 500,000 troops. And so, should the war in Ukraine end, which we all hope it does, we will have to see the contours of the agreement and then monitor Russian behavior to see what their intentions are. But from a purely military perspective, when 500,000 battle-hardened, Russian troops are repositioned to other areas, we'll have to pay attention to that as a potential military threat, and be cognizant of what it could pose to the

Alliance.

Chairman Wicker: Okay. We're delighted to see our European allies agree to the 5 percent and to do their fair share of their part of the burden-sharing. How long do you think it's going to take for our European friends, once they've enacted this 5 percent, to build the capabilities and force structure needed to actually assume the lead role in the conventional defense of Europe.

General Grynkewich: Yeah. Chairman, thank you. I agree with you that the agreement that -- made at The Hague Summit to spend 5 percent of military spending is a tremendous accomplishment, and it shows how seriously the Europeans are taking their own security. Many nations are already on a pathway with 5 or 6 nations this year already near or above 5 percent of GDP. Though, the biggest risk for those countries is now turning that money into actual military capability in their inventory, and that does take an industrial base that can deliver on time. So, I see that as the biggest risk to them being able to achieve this on a -- on a quick timeline.

So, you know, from my perspective, I think we're looking at, you know, different capabilities will show up at different times. It will be a gradual slope that will increase in the pace of European rearmament as the Defense Industrial Base gets healthy. So, I think you'll see it

starts slowly, and then as the industrial base investments take off, they'll be able to rearm quickly. So, I would say by the end of this decade, they will have made great progress toward that. They won't be all the way there, but certainly, by 2035, they will be.

Chairman Wicker: Okay. So, about 2030, they will have made great progress, but they won't be there by 2035, if their commitment continues. They should be able to be in the leadership position on that?

General Grynkewich: Yes, Senator. I believe that's correct.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Reed.

Senator Reed: Oh, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen.

General Reed, you have been quoted as saying that we must start a new program to modernize our strategic airlift, the C-5 and the C-17. I know you can't disclose details of the forthcoming budget proposals, but are you confident that we'll begin that process of modernization this year?

General Reed: Senator, thank you for the question. Strategic airlift is one of the most critical capabilities that we provide. It's what we call the immediate force when our Nation needs to respond right away. That's how we get the force quickly projected out of the country and to the point of need. The challenge here is that for the

capabilities that we need in those aircraft, it takes a long lead time to design and actually deliver the aircraft.

C-5s and C-17s are capable today. Thank you for the investment, for the upkeep, but the time has passed now to start on the development of the next platform. In that platform, not only will it have to be able to do the things of the C-5 and the C-17 today, but we are also going to make sure that we have secure communications, that the platform will have the awareness of the space around it for the crews to be aware of what's going on around them, and at the same time, it needs to be as survivable as we can create. Thank you.

Senator Reed: Thank you. General Grynkewich, one of the unexpected beneficiaries of our operations in Iran has been Russia. The price of gas has increased dramatically, which benefits their economy at a point where their economy was suffering after multiple years of warfare. We've, in fact, lifted sanctions on the delivery of the oil with India and other countries. We are now in a position where we must send missiles, particularly Patriot, to the Gulf area to replenish our supplies rather than to provide them to Ukrainians. This all seems to be a situation where Putin is benefiting dramatically. Is that your perception that this has unexpectedly or unintentionally given him a significant increase in staying power?

General Grynkewich: Senator, a couple of thoughts on this. First, I'm very proud of the role that European Command is playing to support Operation Epic Fury, and our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Guardians have been operating at a high tempo in the Eastern Med and elsewhere, defending Alliance territory, and defending our forces, and projecting power into U.S. Central Command.

As you noted, the price of oil and gas has gone up. We know that Putin does depend on that. I think how much he benefits from it depends on how long those prices remain elevated. I know the leadership of the Department is watching this very closely. I know the President's watching this very closely, and that they're, certainly, concerned about the prices that are out there.

So, I guess, you know, on the administrative front, what I would say on that is we do continue to flow munitions into Ukraine. I could get into some of the specifics on implications in the classified session later today, but I assure you that support continues.

Senator Reed: Should we increase our security assistance to Ukraine, given the -- at least, momentary, strengthening of Russia's economy and Russia's capabilities?

General Grynkewich: Senator, I think the -- there are always global trade offs with the amount of security assistance that we can provide. So, ultimately, it's a

policy question on what the level of support should be. I am in constant contact with the Ukrainians, though, and they do tell me where they see opportunities. I am validating and looking at those opportunities that they're providing to us and the weapons that they're requesting, and then providing my recommendations to the Department on what we could provide them to help them exploit certain situations. I'd be happy to discuss more of that in detail in the classified session.

Senator Reed: Thank you. General, generally, quickly, I have about 45 seconds. Contested logistics is an issue we've been grappling with for several years. Any quick thoughts about what we can do and what we are doing?

General Reed: Senator, thank you very much. We continue to pursue changes in how we operate, both any opportunity and current operations, exercises, and experimentation as well.

Senator Reed: Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Wicker: Senator Fischer, you're recognized.

Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for being here today, and for your service to our country.

General Reed, how is TRANSCOM preparing to perform strategic lift in a contested environment? That presents

unique challenges, correct?

General Reed: Yes, Senator. Thank you. The strategic challenge, as we see it, begins here at here at home. We're finding that the adversaries are aligning and they are trying to contest us in every domain possible. That also begins in the cyber realm. Some of the ways that we're making sure that we harden ourselves there is through increased cyber hygiene. We also get great assistance from USCYBERCOM as well and law enforcement. That extends not only within the Department, but since a significant portion of what we're able to do is in the commercial realm, we're also able to extend assistance to them as well.

When it comes to being able to project the force and to project power, we continue investments and we welcome more in making the aircraft more survivable, and also with more secure communications. Thank you.

Senator Fischer: Thank you. General Grynkewich, what's your assessment of the Russian military's progress reconstituting its losses in Ukraine, in particular, in terms of the missile production or other weapons systems?

General Grynkewich: Senator, the Russian war economy is in, high gear, if you will. So, in terms of missile production and UAV production, my assessment is that they have the capacity resident in their Defense Industrial Base to continue with high levels of production. And then, as

far as their personnel are concerned to date, they have been able to replenish the battlefield losses, tremendous battlefield losses, that they've been taking on a month-to-month basis.

Senator Fischer: In September, we saw a Russian drone incursion along the Polish border. How has EUCOM and NATO responded to that?

General Grynkewich: Yeah, Senator, thanks. I was extremely proud of the immediate response that the Alliance was able to take in response to that incursion. As you as you probably recall, Dutch F-35s who were operating under NATO command and control were able to shoot down several of those drones that came into Polish airspace. Since then, the Alliance has established Eastern Sentry vigilance activity that stitches together a number of disparate air and missile defense capabilities across the eastern flank of the Alliance to thicken the lines for defense. And now, we are also in the process of rewriting our standing defense plan for integrated air and missile defense across the Alliance, the first time this has been done in decades and should be done by the summit this summer.

Senator Fischer: So, you feel pretty positive about Eastern Sentry --

General Grynkewich: Senator, I do, and I would --

Senator Fischer: -- just how it's working now, but in

the future as well?

General Grynkewich: Yeah, I do, Senator. And I would cite as evidence of the Alliance's ability to defend a couple of ballistic missiles that were launched by Iran toward Turkey, and the successful engagement of those ballistic missiles to neutralize that threat.

Senator Fischer: General, can you tell us in this setting what your views are, and what you anticipate seeing in the future in cooperation between Russia and China?

General Grynkewich: Yeah. Senator, I can talk a little bit about it here, and, of course, elaborate in the classified session. But, you know, what we see is two primary means of support that the Chinese provide to the Russians. One is assisting them with evading sanctions and thereby helping their economy, and then the second is dual use equipment that comes out of the Chinese industrial base and flows into Russia. You might think of this as, you know, different chips and different antennas that are then used on weapons of war that the Russians produce in their industrial base. So, that certainly is concerning to us.

You know, if I look into the future, I would accept that type of relationship to continue when their interests align, and for Russia to be willing to support China, in the opposite direction, if China finds itself in need of assistance.

Senator Fischer: Thank you. General Reed, I appreciated the conversation that we had concerning our tanker fleet. How are you working with the Air Force to communicate your needs to meet your requirements?

General Reed: Thank you. We enjoy great support from the service. We continue to ask them to support us with spare parts, weapon system sustainment and to keep the training pipeline strong. In addition to that, they are assisting us with survivability of the aircraft as well.

Senator Fischer: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Fischer. We have Senator Gillibrand, and then, Senator Ernst.

Senator Gillibrand: General Grynkewich, we have seen horrific reports of a U.S. missile hitting a girls' school in Iran. I recognize you are at CENTCOM, and this is not your AOR, but can you speak to the process that you at least have at EUCOM for developing targets? What type of protections you have? Based on what I have heard from reporting, the data that was looked at was a decade old, that any person who can get satellite access to Google Maps today can see that this was a school. New York Times had no problem getting that data and information for a report today. What do you intend to do at EUCOM to make sure you're targeting is consistent with American values?

General Grynkewich: Yes, Senator, thanks. You know, over the course of my career, I've -- as a fighter pilot, I've always done everything I can to avoid civilian harm and civilian casualties, and I would tell you, I'm absolutely committed to that. I know the Department is committed to that, and that when tragedies like this happen, it causes us all to reflect and try to improve our processes.

I've been involved in the targeting process, both with the tactical and operational levels throughout my career, and I would tell you, we do have a number of safeguards in the system. You know, every single time that the tactical level, I was going to release a weapon on a target, I was personally making an assessment as to whether there was any chance of civilian harm and if there was that proportional to the military necessity of striking the target at the operational level?

Both from my time in U.S. Central Command, previously, and then now at U.S. European Command, I can assure you that we have robust standards that we go through and look to see and update the imagery, and update our understanding of the target, and refresh the intelligence on a recurring basis to determine the chances of civilian harm, and to address any collateral concerns that might be there. So, you -- just know I'm absolutely committed to trying to mitigate that risk.

Senator Gillibrand: I appreciate your testimony. I'm highly concerned, however, that Secretary Hegseth does not agree with you. Secretary Hegseth has criticized rules of engagement designed to adhere to the laws of armed conflict and support civilian harm mitigation. Secretary Hegseth has also cut the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence by about 90 percent. Their mission was to help you and to help protect against civilian casualties. So, how do these changes by Secretary Hegseth affect your mission, your judgment, and the responsibility that you take so seriously?

General Grynkewich: Senator, they have not affected my ability to prevent civilian harm. In any way, it's embedded in the targeting process. It's embedded in the culture of U.S. European Command, and, I would say, in the culture of the U.S. military to try to avoid that civilian harm. So, we're continuing to do the things that we have always done to comply with the law of armed conflict and ensure that we mitigate that risk.

Senator Gillibrand: Can you guess how we could have gotten this wrong in Iran?

General Grynkewich: I'm sorry, ma'am?

Senator Gillibrand: Can you guess how we could have gotten this wrong in Iran and targeted a children's school?

General Grynkewich: Ma'am, I would hesitate to speculate with any incident like this. There's -- you know,

I would just say there's usually a chain of errors and mistakes that happen, similar to an aviation accident or some other transportation accident. And I would -- I would say we just need to let the investigation play out and find all those factors.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. General, I'd like to talk a little bit about -- following the firing of the Pituffik's Space Base commander and the stand up of NATO's Arctic Sentry mission. How is EUCOM managing the operational friction caused by the administration's rhetoric regarding Greenland's sovereignty, and the associated tariff threats against our NATO allies?

General Grynkewich: Senator, at the military-to-military level, I can assure you that our relationship remains strong. That the -- with every chief of defense across the Alliance, we maintained our focus on what it was that we were responsible for doing, which was defending -- deterring and defending every inch of alliance territory for -- from any form of aggression and our ability to focus on that on -- to focus on the Hague commitments and make our military stronger. Kept us -- kept us on task, if you will, throughout those discussions.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Wicker: Just to clarify for your benefit,

Senator Gillibrand, you did not mean to say that that we had targeted a school?

Senator Gillibrand: That a missile hit a school.

Chairman Wicker: No, but it's the word targeting --

Senator Gillibrand: Yes, of course.

Chairman Wicker: -- you did not mean.

Senator Gillibrand: How we chose a target that turned out to be a school, albeit, next to an appropriate target of a naval base. But the fact that it is chosen as a target, I'd like to know, and I hope that we can have an open hearing on this, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Senator Ernst.

Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses today for your service to our Nation.

President Trump has pushed our NATO allies very hard to commit 5 percent of their GDP toward defense and resilience, and we've seen a lot of headlines highlighting new defense investments across Europe. At the same time, NATO defense plans depend on interoperability -- excuse me, across 32 allies operating across air, land, maritime, cyber, and space domains. So, General Grynkewich, are these new investments translating into shared capabilities with NATO that are interoperable, or there are gaps that our allies need to find and fill?

General Grynkewich: Senator, that's a terrific

question. The -- we focus very much on interoperability across the alliance and at U.S. European Command. And I would say one of the best ways to ensure interoperability is when our allies buy American equipment from our Defense Industrial Base. That solves the interoperability problem just at face value.

Of course, the U.S. industrial base can't deliver everything that Europeans need, so they're investing in their own industrial base as well. And to ensure that everything works together, we have NATO standards that both countries in the Alliance and outside the Alliance, including in the Indo-Pacific, adhere to in order to ensure that interoperability, but, you know, they're especially new members of the Alliance or folks who are newly certified to NATO standards. We do need to help them along and make sure that they understand that this gets to be very technical when you get into the beeps and squeaks, if you will, of making sure that things can work together.

Senator Ernst: Yeah, I appreciate that very much. And the shout-out as well about the Defense Industrial Base. And I think this just lends credibility to all of our voices when we are saying that we need to invest in more here in the United States. I'm glad that our partners are stepping up and developing their own industrial base, but certainly we need a stronger one here in our own Nation.

Just very briefly, I am a huge supporter of the State Partnership Program. I know we have spoken about this before. Our Iowa National Guard and Kosovo are partnered through SPP, and we know that a strong American presence in these countries does maintain stability. Can you speak briefly about the State Partnership Program and your thoughts?

General Grynkewich: Yeah, Senator, thanks. I've spent some time with your commanding general of the Guard unit and of your Guard, and they do tremendous work in Kosovo, and I'm very thankful for it. Writ large, the SPP builds deep and lasting relationships. Some of our State partners have been in the program for 30 years or more, and over the course of those 30 years, as exercises happen on both sides of the Atlantic, it just builds a bond you can't replace.

Senator Ernst: Yes. Thank you so much. I'm in full agreement. General Reed, we have automatic equipment identifiers, identification tags that help rail providers track the location of our assets across our transportation system. But one of the largest manufacturers of those tags and the technology is owned by a parent company with ties to the Chinese Communist Party.

Currently, TRANSCOM uses our rail system to move heavy assets like tanks from Fort Stewart, or you name it, or other armored vehicles throughout the U.S. So, my concern

is that the CCP could utilize these tracking technologies to monitor our military movements, which is a major security risk during a buildup or a surge. So, would you agree with that vulnerability? Do you think we are giving the Chinese access into a window of our military movements and engagements, and what can we do about that?

Randall Reed: Senator, first and foremost, the Department works really hard to eliminate any kind of Chinese component wherever we find it, and that continues with all the energy and effort that we can put to that. Second of all, when it comes to all domain being contested, in all domain, the cyber realm is one where this presents itself plain and clear.

With that being said, while it may be a vulnerability, there are ways that we can harden that and we continue to do that. There are alternative ways to make sure that we can track the information. Increasingly, as we get stronger tools, we apply those tools, and one thing that's very, very important is as we continue to use the commercial realm. There are lots of other things that move in the commercial space, and that itself makes it very, very hard for folks to track our equipment.

Senator Ernst: Yeah, very good. We need to recognize if we do have vulnerabilities and make sure they're not being exploited. So, thank you very much. Thank you, Mr.

Chair.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator. Senator Kaine, I understand you intend to yield your time to a person who is not yet in the room.

Senator Kaine: That is correct. So, I'll take my time.

Chairman Wicker: I think that would be the best backup plan. You're recognized.

Senator Kaine: Thank you.

America's been at war with Iran for 12 days. The cost to our troops, to everyday Americans, and to innocent Iranian civilians, even school children are dramatic. The war is deeply unpopular. To begin, the war is illegal. The Constitution makes plain that only Congress can declare war. The reason for this provision was articulated by Abraham Lincoln. Kings had always been involving in impoverishing their people in wars, pretending that the good of the people was the object. This, our convention, understood to be the most kingly of all kingly oppressions, and they resolved to so frame the Constitution that no one man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us.

The President has escalated his use of military to carry out hostilities all over the globe without Congress, while threatening military action against many more nations. We're at war because of the unilateral actions of one man

who has grown very confident that Congress will not challenge his kingly behavior.

The war is unprecedented. We've heard from the President many shifting reasons for the war, but Senators have now heard both publicly from the secretary of state and from multiple sessions with civilian and military leaders, a more precise and consistent reason: The President sent our sons and daughters, spouses, parents into war because another nation was determined to invade Iran, and if that occurred, Iran would likely target U.S. troops for retaliation.

The trigger event of this war was Israel's decision to invade Iran on February 28. We could have avoided this war by persuading Israel that it shouldn't invade, and that doing so would hurt its ally, America, and cause global instability. There's no evidence that we tried to do that, or we could have focused on protecting our own troops from retaliation following an Israeli invasion. Instead, President Trump decided to join an invasion of Iran initiated by another nation.

He is not the first American President who has been urged to take this step. Others wisely resisted, he did not. The war's unnecessary. Iran and America were allies during and after World War II until America engineered the toppling of Iran's democratically elected government in

1953. That act followed by 26 years of a brutal dictatorship that the U.S. helped fund, created deep hostility between our two nations, formerly friends. When the Iranian people finally threw off that oppressive dictatorship in 1979, that hostility resulted in 5 decades of violence between our countries, the facts of which are well known to American and Iranian citizens alike.

Iran engages in dangerous behavior toward the U.S., its neighbors, and its citizens. But does that danger, more than 6,000 miles from our shores warrant the sacrifice of our troops, the killing of innocent civilians, and the expense of billions of taxpayer dollars? If more war between Iran and the United States were the answer, we would have found it sometime in the last 73 years.

We had a diplomatic off-ramp to decades of hostility in the Iranian nuclear deal that the U.S. and Iran, together with our European allies, plus China, and Russia, negotiated in 2015. President Trump's decision to abandon that deal, even though it was working and even though many of his closest advisors told him to maintain it, ushered in a sharp spike of Iranian aggression.

American troops are dying because this Nation's political leadership tragically abandoned diplomacy. We owe our troops better than this. They serve with such skill and bravery, but as our experiences in Vietnam and Iraq have

shown, the bravest patriotic service cannot overcome poor civilian decision-making, whether by a President grown too fond of war, or a Congress unwilling to provide a check against such behavior.

Virginians feel this deeply. One of the first casualties of the war, Chief Warrant Officer Robert Marzan, lived in Spotsylvania County. Hundreds of Virginias are now deployed with the Ford Carrier Strike Group. More have received orders that they'll deploy with the Bush Carrier Strike Group. Their families ask me, "Have we learned nothing from 25 years of war in the Middle East, more than 14,000 American troops and contractors dead, more than 65,000 injured, more than $8 trillion spent that could have gone to our education, or healthcare, or economic development. Have we learned nothing?"

Like all in this room, I pray that this war ends soon. Virginians have suffered this year as a smattering economy burdened by tariffs and chaos produces higher prices, fewer jobs, and slower growth. Gas has gone up 60 cents a gallon in the last 11 days, costing Virginians nearly $5 million a day, just in increased fuel costs. We need a President who will honor his promises to avoid foreign wars of choice and strengthen the economy here at home, and we need a Congress who will not stand silent as these promises are broken. I yield back.

Chairman Wicker: Senator Scott, you are recognized.

Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman.

First, I want to thank our troops. I had the opportunity to serve in the Navy at the tail end of Vietnam. Fortunately, I didn't have to go to Vietnam, but anybody that puts on the uniform, you have to admire them, because they're making the decision to put their life on the line for our freedom. We have a lot of troops at risk right now. I pray for their safety. Unfortunately, we've lost seven members, one in Florida, Cody Khork. I know we have 140 or so injured. I hope they have a full recovery, but I want to -- the most important thing I think we can all say is we admire what the military has done. We respect what the military has done. We support what the military is doing, and we hope they all come back safely.

And the goals of this conflict is that they don't have a nuclear weapon. The goals of this conflict, they don't have the ability to have ballistic missiles that it's going to kill Americans like they've been doing for decades. So, I don't think any of us ever want to go to war, but I think we all do respect our freedom and want to keep our freedom. So, I want to thank all of our troops for what they're doing. Thank you both for being here. Thank you for your hard work.

One of the things I appreciate about this President is

he sees the value in putting America first and working with our friends across Europe, Asia, and around the world to ensure peace through strength. Over the past few years, I've had the opportunity to visit a lot of our allies. Last year, I went to Denmark, Estonia, and Finland, all of which are doing their part to increase their national defense spending. They all had some great things to say about President Trump's efforts in the defense space and as a partner.

But a number of allies have been frustrated with being told it's a matter of policy that they can't buy U.S. weapons, and the White House and the secretary I know have had to deal with that. Nevertheless, the problem I want to focus on today is that they're also frustrated with the foreign military sales program. Frankly, I understand why. They're facing a defense industry that too often fails to deliver ships and aircraft. I think you've talked about that a little bit.

Our manufacturers are not getting things done on time or on budget, or people in the Department of War saying they can't have the weapons that they want. It's forcing them to turn to other countries, because they need the weapons now. They're doing exactly what we've asked. They're stepping up their defense spending, but there's not enough American weapons to buy. They want our weapons because they know

they're the best weapons in the world. They want to train with us. They don't want to buy other systems, and I know you're working on interoperability, but they want to buy American weapons.

What's unfortunate is the President and Secretary Hegseth have made clear why it's good for our allies to buy American-made ships, aircraft, and weapons. It creates good paying jobs in America, allows our allies to fight their own fights and do it with the best weaponry in the world. And what I've gone over, I've said the most important thing is you got to defend yourself. We'll be a partner, but we're not going to be your first line of defense.

So, General Grynkewich, is it good for our allies to buy American-made planes, ships, and weapons, and to train with us? And how does this impact our relationship with our allies? And does it make all our military a better fighting force?

General Grynkewich: Yes, Senator. I encourage our allies to buy American equipment as often as possible. We do make the best equipment in the world. It's the highest end kit in so many different areas, and it does enhance interoperability when they do so. Fortunately, there is action that's being taken here with the America First arms export strategy that the Department is working on at the direction of the President, which will move several things

out of the very frustrating FMS process that you described rightly so. I've heard that from allies time and time again, in moving things into direct commercial sales, which will speed the pace at which they can acquire. And then, I'd also say that the work that Secretary Feinberg, our deputy, is doing to supercharge the Defense Industrial Base is going to have a big payoff here and help allies get equipment quicker than they would without those actions.

Senator Scott: General, when General Cavoli testified before Congress, he told us the current force posture was 5 brigade combat teams and two division headquarters. He said it was his advice to maintain that force posture. Is that force posture the same today?

General Grynkewich: Senator, we have 1 infantry brigade combat team returned home at the end of last year, so that's the only adjustment that's been made.

Senator Scott: Okay. Well, first off, I just want to finish by thanking you for what you're doing. I pray all our troops come home safely. Thank you.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator Kelly.

Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Reed, everything happening in Iran and the Middle East right now highlights the -- how critical the maritime domain is, not just for our ability to sustain

military operations, but for the global economy. I want to drill into this a little bit with you. So, first, on March 2nd, while docked at the port in Bahrain, the U.S.-flagged tanker Stena Imperative was struck by projectiles that caused a fire on board. Are you familiar with this, General?

General Reed: I'm aware, Senator.

Senator Kelly: Yeah. Thankfully, the crew is safe. One shipyard worker was killed. That vessel is part of MARAD's Tanker Security Program. Is that correct?

General Reed: That's correct.

Senator Kelly: And how many tankers are enrolled in that program?

General Reed: Sir, the program is fully subscribed at this point, and it's upwards of 60.

Senator Kelly: Upwards of 60.

General Reed: Excuse me, if you're talking about the Tanker Security Program --

Senator Kelly: Yes.

General Reed: Yes. We currently have 10 that are funded.

Senator Kelly: Okay. 10 that are funded. This ship, Stena Imperative, was one of those, it's now damaged. So, obviously, not a large fleet, 10 ships. So, when even just one of these vessels is damaged or unavailable, it can have

an outsized impact. Is that correct?

General Reed: That's correct.

Senator Kelly: So, in your opening statement, you highlighted the importance of the commercial maritime industry to TRANSCOM strategic sealift capability during a crisis, and I agree with that. But what we're seeing in the Middle East also demonstrates that we need to do more to support the commercial industry we rely on. So, let me ask a practical question here. So, since TRANSCOM relies on commercial vessels that require insurance, what happens when no one is willing to ensure ships that are operating in a conflict zone?

General Reed: Senator, thanks to the emergency program of the Tanker Security Program, the value of that for U.S. Transportation Command is the fact that we have assured access to those ships. Those ships are committing to serve with us and to partner with us, and we have the ability to employ them in a maneuver scheme in conjunction with the theater commanders. Part of that also drives us to plan with the theaters to make sure that we have force protection with them as well, but to meet the need. We fully understand --

Senator Kelly: Can you explain, General, can you explain the Tanker Security Program that you just mentioned? I mean, is this the reinsurance that the President mentioned

the other day?

General Reed: Sir, the Tanker Security Program is our U.S.-flagged ships.

Senator Kelly: No, no, no, I thought you said something else. So, my concern is with the insurance, right? Can these ships in the Tanker Security Program, the 10 ships, which really 9 are available right now, are they -- without the required insurance, because they're in a conflict zone, how does that affect their ability to be used to our benefit?

General Reed: There is a provision for war risk insurance. That program, by and large, is run by the Maritime Administration within the Department of Transportation. USTRANSCOM works with them in conjunction. If that is required, there is a conversation and cooperation that exists between the two of us, and we can recommend the requirement for that, at which time, the carriers have the opportunity to apply for the insurance.

Senator Kelly: So, do you see this as an issue today that it's going to be challenging to get some of these ships underway through the Strait of Hormuz because of insurance issues, or do you think there's no problem?

General Reed: Senator, the challenge with transiting the Strait really depends on the conditions that exist and actually to make the safe transit. That will depend on the

conditions at hand. That will be judged best by the theater commander, in this case, CENTCOM, but once the conditions are set, we'll sail.

Senator Kelly: So, no resistance by the ship owners in the Tanker Security Program to sail as soon as TRANSCOM says it's okay?

General Reed: We hold conversations with the ship owners several times a week. There's an information exchange that exists. There's also a forum that we have called the Executive Working Group. In that, we advise them of the situation. We point out to them what's going on. They fully understand the risk, and they also give advice to us in terms of the best way ahead.

Senator Kelly: If I could just have 30 more seconds, Mr. Chairman. So, I think a lot of this highlight -- we only have 10 ships in the Tanker Security Program. MSC has a limited number of vessels. Would you agree that our country needs a whole-of-government national maritime strategy so that our maritime transportation system is prepared for crises? When we look at a conflict going across the Pacific, in the Western Pacific, let's say in the future, you know, with China, are we prepared with our current maritime industry to support a long-term conflict with a near-peer adversary?

General Reed: Senator, I'll tell you that if we were

given the task to go today, we would all go. We would all take what we have, and we would execute and support the combatant commander and their needs based on what they require. I will tell you that there is a lot of work to be done to strengthen the health of the fleet, to strengthen the help of the workforce. Part of the challenge of that is cargo. Having cargo available will actually drive the overall plan for the demand to build ships, the demand to have the ships, and work to be done by the crews.

Senator Kelly: Well, thank you, General, because I'm out of time, but that's what my -- and that issue is addressed in my bipartisan SHIPS for America Act. So, I hope to move that legislation forward so you're in a better position to be able to do your job. Thank you.

Chairman Wicker: General Reed, have you had a chance to look at the SHIPS for America Act?

General Reed: Senator, I have -- excuse me, Chairman, I have.

Chairman Wicker: You have?

General Reed: Yes, I have.

Chairman Wicker: What do you think about it? You've got a pretty good suggestion, don't you think?

General Reed: Chairman, there are a lot of aspects in that, and it's incredibly comprehensive, and it does address a lot of things, but it does bring home the fact that we do

need a comprehensive approach with comprehensive investment. And we also need to make sure that there's a provision to invite the commercial leaders as well to help us through this. In the end, the fundamental success will ultimately be driven by the amount of cargo. And when we have cargo, that will drive the demand for shipping, we'll find a way to actually construct here, and then we'll actually have the crews because they'll have work to do.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you for that insight. Senator Sheehy.

Senator Sheehy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I would second what Senator Kelly was saying and some others that we need to be focusing not just on our exquisite platforms, but also the broader capacity of the logistics system that's going to support that frontline fight. And to that end, to General Reed, and I'm sorry you're getting all the inbounds here, but, specifically, I'd like to talk about our future airlift platforms.

We spend a lot of time in these hearing rooms talking about the F-47, and the B-21, and the F-35, and the F-22. And, of course, those are all critical platforms, but at the end of the day, moving material into theater, especially as we evaluate a WESTPAC engagement with a peer adversary -- I don't say near peer, because I believe we're in a peer-to-peer situation now with China -- physically moving people,

bullets, bombs, food, clothes. Physically moving millions of tons of gear halfway around the world quickly, especially in an area where we're fighting in someone else's backyard and we're having to project that material around the world to tiny islands that we may not be in control of.

Our C-5s are, I've heard in some cases, 40 percent dispatch reliability. They're half century old, if not more. Our C-17s, as incredible platform as they are, are also aging. And as far as I know, we don't currently have a follow-on long range, heavy lift logistics aircraft that's been decided on, awarded, and certainly not in production, but isn't quite even in decided conceptual stages. And when we look at how challenging a KC-46 program has been to roll out to replace -- I still hear that the last KC-135 pilot hasn't been born yet, and that's probably true. And the KC-46 rollout has been very problematic.

So, I think we need to have a very serious focused effort. This committee does, but also at the general officer level of focusing on bringing that next generation heavy airlift platform into reality. And whether that's restart on the C-17 with some great upgrades or whether that's reimagining a new platform, whatever we do, we got to do it quick. So, I'd like your thoughts on that, please, and I understand you're not the procurement command for this.

I realize you're the customer of this platform, but I think part of the defense acquisition paradigm we're trying to change at this committee is making sure the customer is closer to the actual specification process for the platforms because we've given the power to the POs and the contract officers, and the most powerful voice in any acquisition process should be the actual end user customer. So, you, and your captains, and majors flying these planes and driving these ships should be the ones driving the requirements, not bureaucrats somewhere else. So, if you could talk to us about next-gen airlift and where you think it needs to go, I'd appreciate that.

General Reed: Thank you. Our primary job at TRANSCOM is to set the conditions to move within the headquarters -- excuse me. We frequently start with the idea. We need to set the globe to set the theater. What that means is we have aircraft that are operating around the world each day along with sealift, but when a crisis arises, there's the need to make the shift. Once we do that, every aircraft that we have available that already originates in the region, we employ them directly. All the aircraft that we have here in the United States, we generate that, and then we build the network to connect the two.

Our C-17s and our C-5s are the most capable things in the world right now to make that bridge to get the force out

of the United States. That's incredibly key, because greater than 85 percent of the Joint Force still resides here. And so, when they're needed abroad, those are the aircraft that we use to start that move. The challenge that we have predominantly with our competitor is that they are actively developing weapon systems to threaten our aircraft. And so, not only do we need new aircraft to get us into the future, we also need the aircraft that are more survivable. So, in dealing with the Air Force, we are working with them on the requirements to meet that, but also to track the development of the threats as they emerge from our competitors.

Senator Sheehy: What I'd also encourage us to explore all alternatives, expanding and having a wider guarantee for our contract operated cargo carriers. Not best for contested environments, but at least they can get tonnage forward. And then, exploring things like amphibious aircraft or even submarines that can provide logistical support. Subs have typically been reserved for exquisite tactical missions, as they should, but when we're going to be operating in a WESTPAC first and second island chain contestant environment, literally moving logistics under the water where we still have dominance. So, thanks for your time today. I yield back, sir.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Sheehy. We have

Senator King, and then, Senator Hirono.

Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

There's been a lot of confusion about the war and the effects, the causes, why we did it, why we didn't, what our strategy is. But one thing has emerged just in the last few days, there is a clear winner in this war. The clear winner is Vladimir Putin and Russia. Estimates released a few hours ago are that Russia has reaped $6 billion of benefit from this war since it began just 2 weeks ago. It's about $400 million a day from the increase in oil prices and the easing of sanctions, which is somewhat puzzling to me. So, I just think the record should show that the real winner so far is Vladimir Putin to the tune of $6 billion in 2 weeks.

General Reed, can you give me a percentage? If we had a serious need for transport, what percentage of the transport on the sea and in the air would be commercial carriers who are under contract to TRANSCOM?

General Reed: Senator, day-to-day, in competition, about 40 percent of what we fly around the skies is commercial. When we transition to crisis or conflict, we make a conscious decision on where we actually employ the commercial aircraft. Even as we're supporting operations in CENTCOM today, the commercial airlines are supporting us in high volume in places outside the theater.

Senator King: So, in a conflict situation, that 40

percent would go up, I presume.

General Reed: If it's required, yes. In the case of sealift, once the ready reserve force makes the initial surge, commercial really plays in for sustainment and greater than 90 percent of all the sustainment is done by the commercial fleet.

Senator King: Okay. That's what worries me. You have controlled, and I'm sure paid great attention to cyber possibilities, but we're talking about hundreds, if not thousands, of commercial carriers who may or may not be as secure in terms of cyber as you are.

My question is, what steps do we take to ensure that this -- you said 90 percent on the ships, 40 percent, 50 percent, 60 percent in the air are commercial carriers, to ensure that they are protected from a cyberattack? Because if we're in a serious conflict with a significant adversary, the first thing that's going to happen is a major cyberattack to attempt to blind us and disable our transportation system. Do you red team, for example, the commercial carriers to determine the extent of their cyber vulnerability?

General Reed: Senator, we do, and there's a lot of cooperation in that realm. We operate mainly through two different channels. So, within the Department of War, when we organize and plan, that is done on secure systems and we

have a lot of help to make sure that we can protect ourselves. Once that --

Senator King: I understand that. What I'm worried about is Delta Air Lines security if they're called upon to be transporting troops, and the extent to which they can be penetrated, their systems, not yours, but theirs.

General Reed: Yes, Senator. Once that planning is complete, we do have some secure channels with the commercial transportation providers. And also, we red team and we cooperate and provide help with them for cyber hygiene. Among some of the sources are CYBERCOM, National Security Agency, as well as the Department of War Cyber Crime Center.

Senator King: I would urge you to step up those efforts because this is where the first wave of the attack is going to come.

General Grynkewich, to what extent are the Russians -- and there's been some discussion about this -- probing in Eastern Europe and doing asymmetric warfare in the Baltics, for example, in Poland, disinformation, cyberattacks, even drone incursions? What are the Russians up to? Are they building troops up along their Western border?

General Grynkewich: Yeah. Senator, right now, we see a fairly robust amount of what we call Russian hybrid activities or asymmetric activities. And you mentioned some

of those, whether it's information operations, or sabotage, and those types of things. There have been several incidences in the Baltics, and in Poland, in particular, over the last several months since I've been in command.

As far as conventional troop buildups, most of the Russian ground forces are focused on Ukraine, so we do not see significant Russian buildups right now, but I know that there are concerns that those could be coming at some point in the future, particularly once Russia is able to reconstitute its forces.

Senator King: If Vladimir -- I'm sorry. If President Zelenskyy was here, what would be the one thing he would tell us that he needed right now?

General Grynkewich: Senator, I --

Senator King: I suspect you hear that fairly regularly.

General Grynkewich: Yes, sir. He would ask for air defense capability based on the Russian attacks on his heating and electrical infrastructure.

Senator King: And a great deal of our air defense capability is now tied up in the Gulf region. Is that correct?

General Grynkewich: Senator, yeah, we do have a robust set of air defense capabilities in the Middle East, and I've used some of our EUCOM air defense capabilities to defend

some of our NATO allies as well.

Senator King: In the Middle East?

General Grynkewich: Near the Middle East, if you will, in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Senator King: Okay. So, air defense capabilities have been moved toward the Middle East as a result of this conflict. That's correct?

General Grynkewich: Yes, sir, absolutely.

Senator King: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Wicker: Senator Cotton.

Senator Cotton: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you for your appearance today, and more importantly, for your service.

General Grynkewich, it's well known that Iran has supplied Russia with hundreds, maybe thousands, of one-way attack drones since the start of the Ukraine conflict. I assume you agree that passing on the counter-drone warfare lessons that Ukraine and EUCOM have learned from that fight to the forces in the Middle East today and also to the Pacific is a top priority, right?

General Grynkewich: Absolutely, Senator, and we are doing that and deploying capabilities into the Middle East for those purposes.

Senator Cotton: Could you use some additional funds to ensure that we have all the right people and processes to

capture all those lessons and implement them?

General Grynkewich: Senator, more funds for things like that is always welcome.

Senator Cotton: I agree. And I look forward to working with the committee to consider the funding for the NDAA or a potential supplemental down the road. I know that the experience that Ukraine has had and that EUCOM's had in that fight has saved lives in the Middle East today. General, can you tell us a little bit about what's going on the southern flank of EUCOM in Cyprus right now?

General Grynkewich: Yeah. Senator, down in the -- we have a fair amount of activity in the Eastern Mediterranean. Our destroyers are out in the Eastern Mediterranean defending our allies and defending our U.S. forces in that region. Several capabilities are on the Island of Cyprus. I could go into some of the details of what those are in the classified session, but we are very, very much watching that. There have been a few one-way attack drones that we've assessed have come from somewhere, likely from Lebanon towards Cyprus, and so we are focused on defending that piece of terrain.

Senator Cotton: Okay. Thank you. You're an old fighter pilot, right?

General Grynkewich: Yes, sir.

Senator Cotton: 16s and 22s?

General Grynkewich: Yes, sir.

Senator Cotton: Well, I think that the men and women we have in uniform are the best fighting force in the world. I know you agree, and that our Air Force and Navy right now are on the forefront of the current campaign, Operation Epic Fury. So, I have just a few questions about what they may be seeing based on your tactical experience. How complex of an operation is it for our fighters to conduct a campaign the size of Operation Epic Fury?

General Grynkewich: Senator, based on my experience looking at campaigns like this in the past, it is incredibly complex, and the sequence of events and the technical acumen that's required at the operational and the tactical level is quite high.

Senator Cotton: It's my understanding from the briefings that the secretary and the chairman have given is that our combined force, and the CENTCOM commander, I should say, that the combined forces dropped no less than 5,000 bombs on key enemy targets. How impressive is it for our bombers to execute a mission of that size with such precision?

General Grynkewich: Senator, that's a very powerful demonstration of American strength. And to orchestrate that size of a campaign, I think Admiral Cooper deserves great praise for how he's been able to manage that at the

operational level.

Senator Cotton: Yeah. General Caine has said that ballistic missile attacks continue to trend downward 90 percent from where they've started, and one-way attack drones have decreased 83 percent since the beginning of the operation, a testament to our air defenders and our air defense system. Based on your experience flying those fighters, I would assume that you would agree with him that Operation Epic Fury is a real testament to those young men and women we have on the front lines operating those systems and flying those aircraft.

General Grynkewich: Senator, I would, and I'll just take the opportunity to say it's always better to get the archer than the arrows. And so, the offensive counter-air aspect of this that is being prosecuted in U.S. Central Command is impressive as the defensive side of things.

Senator Cotton: Okay. General Reed, you also have prior experience in the cockpit. How impressive is it that our tanker fleet has supported these continuous operations in the Middle East for the largest air campaign in recent memory?

General Reed: The tanker fleet has been very impressive to get the forces across the ocean and to get them into CENTCOM. I'm also very grateful to my friend here who's also been able to help with the portion of his fleet,

but the fact that we were able to get our forces in place to get defense set and to go on the offensive is quite impressive.

Senator Cotton: Do you think there's any other force in the world that has the tanker and mobility aircraft to sustain an operation like Epic Fury?

General Reed: Not to the scale that we can at the moment. Thank you.

Senator Cotton: Yeah, I didn't think so either. All right. Thank you, gentlemen.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator Blumenthal.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for being here today, and for your service.

General Grynkewich, I've recently visited Ukraine, and in addition to going to Odesa, to visit with the men and women of the Ukrainian Armed Services who are serving there, I also met with the American Chamber of Commerce, 600 major businesses with operations in Ukraine. Almost half of them have been targeted and attacked by Russia. Within days of my visit, an Oreo manufacturing plant was hit by Russian attacks. Are you looking into the attacks on American businesses in Ukraine? Are you familiar with that issue?

General Grynkewich: Senator, I am familiar with that. This is mostly managed through the U.S. embassy in Kyiv who

takes those reports and sends them back through State Department channels, but our defense attache office is also aware of them, and reports them to me.

Senator Blumenthal: Are you taking action to protect those businesses?

General Grynkewich: Sir, we are not taking any direct action, but I would tell you that all the support that the Department and the United States provides to Ukraine is certainly going to have a benefit for those businesses as the Ukrainians fight back against the Russian assaults.

Senator Blumenthal: Isn't an attack on those businesses, in effect, an attack on American interests? Attack on American property, is it not?

General Grynkewich: Certainly, it is, Senator. I think it's a complex issue. And, you know, from a policy perspective, the approach that we've taken is to try to help the Ukrainians to defend things that are within their country as best as possible, and so that's where we're focused in EUCOM.

Senator Blumenthal: Wouldn't you recommend that we take a more aggressive posture vis-a-vis Russia when it's attacking our businesses purposefully? These are not mistakes. Close to 300 American businesses have been damaged significantly as a result of these attacks targeting them by Russia.

General Grynkewich: Yeah, Senator, it's certainly a tragedy that Russia targeting is indiscriminate. It's indiscriminate against American businesses. It's indiscriminate against other targets across Ukraine. You know, as we think about how do we best enable the Ukrainians to fight back against the Russians, all of this goes into our calculus.

Senator Blumenthal: Well, I respectfully disagree with your use of the word indiscriminate. It is very discriminating. They are purposely targeting hospitals. I saw a hospital specifically destroyed, in large part. They are targeting electric generation facilities, which I also saw, and they are targeting American businesses discriminating in a very purposeful way. Let me move on.

Chairman Wicker: Well, I'll give you a little extra time. Do you agree with that, General Grynkewich? He's pretty much correct.

General Grynkewich: Yeah, Senator, I do agree. So, when I use the word indiscriminate, I'm applying to the moral lens perhaps that they're looking at this through, and that they aren't discriminating in the way that we would under the law of armed conflict as to what the targets are.

Chairman Wicker: Yeah. I think you and the Senator actually agree on that. You can resume your time, Senator.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I think your questions were helpful, and I appreciate the distinction that you're drawing, General. EUCOM is the global integrator for all defense matters relating to Russia. So, I'm presuming you know about Russia's role in the war with Ukraine. I know you've been asked a bit about it so far. I am assuming the public reports are correct, and that Russia is aiding Ukraine. Can you tell us more about requests from -- I'm sorry, aiding Iran. Can you tell us more about the request from Iran to Russia for assistance and how Russia has responded?

General Grynkewich: Senator, I'm certainly aware of all the public reporting on this. I can go into specifics on your question in the classified session, but, you know, I would just echo what Secretary Hegseth has said recently that if Russia is doing this, they would be wise to reconsider providing any assistance to the Iranians during Epic Fury.

Senator Blumenthal: Do you believe that we should respond aggressively to that kind of assistance that's putting our men and women in greater harm's way?

General Grynkewich: Senator, anytime anyone puts American service members in harm's way, in any manner whatsoever, I believe we should respond robustly.

Senator Blumenthal: Why haven't we done it?

General Grynkewich: Senator, I am confident that we

are responding robustly to anyone who is assisting the Iranians with targeting U.S. forces.

Senator Blumenthal: Perhaps you can tell us more in a classified setting?

General Grynkewich: Yes, sir. I'd be happy to elaborate.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Budd.

Senator Budd: Thank you, Chairman. General Grynkewich, it's good to see you. Thanks for the meeting yesterday. Very informative.

You know, much of the discussion of the Russia-Ukraine wars, it's focused just on those two countries, but I want to talk about other nations that are assisting the Russians, if you will. Talk about North Korea's role in this conflict and the threat that they posed, and also about the Iranian contribution today and even prior to Operation Epic Fury.

General Grynkewich: Yeah, Senator, you bet. One of the things that we watch very closely is how some of our competitors around the globe will work with each other when they share interests, and we've certainly seen that with the North Koreans and the Iranians and the Russians.

In the North Korean case, as you know, it's been widely reported. There's a number of North Korean troops that have been deployed to the border with Ukraine and have made up

some substantial combat power shortfalls that the Russians have had and supplemented them. There's also a number of reports of North Korean individuals now going to work in the Russian Industrial Base to generate some of the ballistic missiles and UAVs that they're building based on the labor shortages that the Russians have within their industrial base. Of course, that industrial base got started because of the Iranian sharing of technology of their Shahed drones, and sharing the blueprints and teaching the Russians how to build them, and how to build them at scale, and that's one of the main threats facing the Ukrainians today.

Senator Budd: Are the Russians short on people and essentially bringing in labor from North Korea?

General Grynkewich: That's my assessment, Senator.

Senator Budd: Okay. General Reed, thanks also for being here. Appreciate what you've done at TRANSCOM, and just a heroic effort leading up to Epic Fury. Talk about some of the numbers, if you will, some of the success stories so far, and then, where are the gaps where Congress can assist?

General Reed: Thank you, Senator. Some of the success is the ability to generate the aircraft to actually get on the move. And so, I'm grateful to the Congress for the sustained funding for weapon system sustainment and spares. Because of that, we're able to keep pace, and we've been

doing that extremely well. So, thank you for that. Other success stories is the fact that we've been able to establish a network for aeromedical evacuation in order to bring home the wounded and to also get them to a higher level of care.

Senator Budd: Thank you. What concerns does TRANSCOM have regarding Chinese and Russian naval deployments, and commercial investments in ports across the globe?

General Reed: For the Russian deployments, we monitor those. We maintain an awareness of where they're going and make assessments in terms of what capabilities they may be seeking. When it comes to the Chinese fleet deployments, we do the exact same, but we also go one step further to track their footprint infrastructure, and what types of things that they put in place mainly in seaports. So, we keep a very close eye on their electronic systems, cranes, and that type of thing. We work with port authorities to make sure that we know where those are, and then we operate in ways to circumvent that.

Senator Budd: So, at this point, General Reed, are those adversaries, are they limiting your ability at TRANSCOM to enable logistics around the globe?

General Reed: Currently, they are not. We plan for that.

Senator Budd: Thank you. General Grynkewich, how is

our air domain awareness in the Russia-Ukraine conflict throughout EUCOM?

General Grynkewich: Senator, we have a robust set of agreements with allies and partners that we stitch together a very comprehensive air picture. Certainly, it's not perfect, but I'm very confident that we're on the right path to make it better. But we do have very good awareness, particularly in and around Ukraine.

Senator Budd: I'm concerned about the uncertainty around the purchase of the E-7 Wedgetail that's affecting our NATO partners who also canceled E-7 orders last November. What's your thoughts on this platform in terms of current and future EUCOM needs?

General Grynkewich: Senator, I've seen the capabilities of the E-7 in action in previous jobs, particularly for low radar cross-section platforms, things like the UASs. It's an incredibly capable platform for detecting those.

Senator Budd: They had canceled orders though. Any concern there?

General Grynkewich: Senator, I am concerned. On the Alliance side, the E-3 fleet is aging. It's about 50 percent combat effective as many of the aircraft are in depot. The Alliance does need a replacement aircraft. The E-7 was the plan for a while, but now we're looking at other

options based on affordability and who is purchasing the E-7. Depending on where the United States goes, considering the E-7 in the future, it may be back on the table or it may not, but we're looking at it closely.

Senator Budd: Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Hirono.

Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Grynkewich, noted that the Russian people are probably not given accurate information on Russia's war against Ukraine, so I do think that it is very important for the American people to know what is happening with regard to Iran. So, before I begin my questions, I'd like to take a moment to highlight for the American people the cost of this President's reckless decision to take our country into war with Iran without congressional authorization.

The seven brave U.S. service members have been killed, 150 wounded, eight severely injured. Over $11 billion in the first 6 days, and this is day 13. So, we're likely closer to $20 billion already spent on this, what I would consider an illegal war, with no end in sight and no plan for what will come next. Oil prices are going up. As noted, the major beneficiary of this is Russia.

And despite how impressive and professional our military is, this is a real war. It is not a game. It is certainly not an excursion. And it is important, even if

the President won't acknowledge when errors happen. Preliminary findings of the strike on an elementary school in Iran that killed 175 civilians, mostly children, point to U.S. responsibility.

But this tragedy didn't happen in a vacuum. Secretary Hegseth, in his misguided attempt to focus on lethality, gutted the office that focuses on mitigating civilian casualties, reducing personnel there from 200 people to less than 40. In that kind of an environment, errors can occur, and as noted once again by General Grynkewich, what may have happened in the instance of the killing of all these school children is it's just a error upon error. A chain of errors, as you put it.

So, we mourn the deaths of our brave soldiers, but as this war continues, there will be more civilian deaths, there will be more cost to our American families. And I joined all those who pray that this war will end, even if there is really no articulated end in sight.

I'd like to start my questions with General Reed. Well, it was nice to meet with you the other day, and TRANSCOM is playing a vital role supporting this war in Iran, even though, as I noted, I totally disagree with the President's decision to launch this war. That said, this war is placing significant demands on our aging, acknowledged aging, air mobility and refueling fleets, both

of which need to be recapitalized.

I'm also concerned this war is going to impact TRANSCOM's ability to support important planned exercises and training in other theaters, particularly in the Indo-Pacific. General Reed, have you had to cancel or scale back any planned TRANSCOM exercises with INDOPACOM because of this war?

General Reed: Senator, since the start of the war, we have certainly surged to meet the need of CENTCOM. One of the things we've been able to do is to get access to greater numbers of Guard and Reserve to assist with that. In addition, access to Guard and Reserve also helps to preserve our ability to support other combatant commanders as well, to include exercises in the Pacific. And in addition to that, we also work with the Joint Staff to make sure that as the needs arise, that we can meet the needs as the best we can while we support the warfight.

Senator Hirono: So, you're telling me that as this war against Iran continues that you are needing to make adjustments with regard to any needs, particularly in INDOPACOM? Because we have a lot of exercises that are really important with our allies in that part of the world. So, you are having to make adjustments. And will you commit to informing this committee if TRANSCOM is unable to fully support upcoming exercise in INDOPACOM or other combatant

commands?

General Reed: Yes, Senator.

Senator Hirono: For General Grynkewich, one of the United States' greatest asymmetric -- I'm running out of time. Mr. Chairman, may I finish my question?

Chairman Wicker: Yes, ma'am.

Senator Hirono: I did want to get your sense that we are stronger when we work closely with our international partners, and would you agree, General, that this requires constant investment in interoperability and training as technology and threats evolve? Would you agree with that?

General Grynkewich: Senator, I would, and we focus on that every single day at U.S. European Command.

Senator Hirono: There's a whole series of questions that follows our need to maintain that kind of interoperability, and I will submit those questions as well as others for the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Chairman Wicker: We'll take another round, if necessary. And, of course --

Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Wicker: -- there'll be a classified portion. Senator Slotkin is next.

Senator Slotkin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to both of you for being here, and thanks for all you're doing to support the significant effort that's going on in the Middle East.

It is hard -- you know, as someone who was at the Pentagon and at the CIA, it's hard to miss, I think, two important trends that are happening in this war in the Middle East that are connected, I think, to what you all do. One is just I feel like the conversation on drones has come home to roost. The Pentagon, over many administrations, Democrat and Republican, has had this unbelievably glacially slow process of acquisition. And so, even though we know that the drones we build are big, and expensive, and take 2 years to build, and they're $30 million, and you can buy them off Amazon, we just haven't been able to get them into the doctrine, into the force in a serious way. And now I feel like, unfortunately, we're paying the price for that.

This is a different chapter in American warfare with the Shahed drones from Iran killing American forces, hitting U.S. embassies, hitting civilian targets, and I think 11

other countries, evading our air defenses, which are set up for much bigger projectiles. And then we've had, I think according to press reports, 11 MQ-9s downed in the course of 2 weeks. The Iranians are figuring out how to bleed us with money and with time, to the point where we now have Ukrainian advisors coming from Ukraine to train us, right? Because they're the experts.

And I just -- it's not for either of you two to respond to, but I just feel like we need to understand that warfare has fundamentally changed. And if Iran is able to hold us at bay and continue that power projection -- we keep hearing that the reason why, or one of the reasons why we went to this war is because of Iran's power projection. They're now holding the Persian Gulf at bay. We can't move ships through it, and they're able to use low-cost drones, $20,000 to $50,000 each, to kill U.S. forces. So, I hope this is in a moment of inflection for the Pentagon, for all of us, that unless we understand how to more quickly get our acquisition system to be responsive. We're going to continue to lose our soldiers, and I hope that's a major lesson that we're all learning.

The second one is the role of Iran and China -- I'm sorry, Russia and China in supporting Iran. And I know we can't talk about it in an open setting, but the -- there's press reports that the Russians are helping target U.S.

ships and aircraft. And I just hope we can all be on the same page, and, certainly, in Europe, you understand the threat of Russia. That if Russia is helping to kill U.S. forces, we have crossed a Rubicon. We are in another moment, and we have to take decisive action on that. And instead, we're giving them breaks on oil. They're making a ton of money, and all the weapons and all the systems that we need for this war are what we would've otherwise given Ukraine to defend themselves.

So, I just hope we're all on the same page on this committee on a bipartisan basis that the situation with drones in this war, and the situation with Russia in helping to potentially kill American forces, and target our weapons, and our systems, our ships, are totally -- they are new, and we need to adjust to that new reality.

Can you just tell me in my last minute here, General Grynkewich, just I'm concerned that we're going to lose a lot of capabilities out of Europe, and then this administration's never going to put them back in. Can you talk about the importance of capability in Europe?

General Grynkewich: Yeah, Senator, thanks. I think having capability in Europe ultimately provides options for this administration or any administration in the event of a conflict. And, you know, I would highlight that in my opening statement, I talked about one of the missions of

U.S. European Command is to serve as a power projection platform. And so, it is having capabilities in Europe, munitions in Europe that allow us to help U.S. Africa Command to target terrorists in Africa, or to help U.S. Central Command as they execute Operation Epic Fury. And so, you know, the distances are shorter, it's less expensive, and it's much easier to project power with --

Senator Slotkin: Yeah.

General Grynkewich: -- our network of bases and allies.

Senator Slotkin: I would just say American power is still important, and deterrence is the best option, and the way we do that is with capabilities. If anyone thinks that Vladimir Putin is deterred when we leave Europe, I would love to sell them a bridge. Thanks very much. I yield back.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Slotkin. Senator Banks.

Senator Banks: General Grynkewich, we hear a lot from Democrats often about how our European allies don't trust us. They don't like us. President Trump has pushed them away. But could you talk for a minute about what President Trump has taught us in Operation Epic Fury, about how to bring our European allies on board? Seems like there's a lot of good news here of our European allies coming to the

table to help us out.

General Grynkewich: Senator, I would tell you that, by and large, the vast majority of our European allies, especially at the military level, which is where I engage most often, have been extremely supportive. They've provided access basing and overflight that enables General Reed's operations to refuel aircraft coming from the United States or the great amount of logistics that flow through Europe.

And it's really been incredible to see the -- there's certainly some discussions in the press about allies who did not move quick enough or who did not provide the access that we wanted, but I would tell you that under the tip of that iceberg, there's much more support in Europe for the things that are ongoing in the Middle East right now.

Senator Banks: What do we make of it? What do we learn from that?

General Grynkewich: Sir, I think that the relationships we have with our European allies matter. I think they admire what the U.S. military is able to do. I think many nations, of course, recognize, as several Senators have mentioned, the threat that Iran has played over the years. You know, I reflect on my time in Iraq during the defeat ISIS operations in 2019 to 2020, and our European allies were side by side with us. And the biggest

threat to us was not actually ISIS, it was Iranian threat network, you know, backed forces that were in Iraq attacking and killing U.S. and European forces. And so, I think on the military level, many of us understand that threat and understand the menace that it poses.

Senator Banks: Can you give us a quick thumbnail on an update on NATO strength and what we're seeing from our allies stepping up to the plate to do more?

General Grynkewich: Senator, you bet. This coming year, we'll have five or six allies that will already be at or near the 5 percent Hague spending commitments. Many other allies, some of the biggest economies in Europe like Germany, are on a rapid pace to achieve 3 or 3.5 percent spending by the end of the decade. So, there's plenty of appetite and plenty of understanding that a more balanced and strong European pillar within the NATO alliance to compliment what America has done for so many years is essential, and that it will make for a stronger and more healthy alliance moving forward.

Senator Banks: This is really good news compared to years in the past where the NATO is stronger and has more money and doing more to step up to the plate to support all of our shared causes, right?

General Grynkewich: I agree, Senator.

Senator Banks: One thing that I am concerned about,

though, with our NATO allies is their reliance on Chinese technology that could compromise the security of critical infrastructure that impacts our forces, U.S. forces. Thanks to President Trump's leadership, NATO allies have committed to spending 5 percent of GDP, as you just discussed, on their security, including 1.5 percent on defense-related activities. If allies use part of this funding to rip and replace high-tech Chinese technology, how would that contribute to EUCOM's mission?

General Grynkewich: Senator, we want Chinese technology out of anything related with the defense of the United States, or Europe, or across the Alliance. And so, we focus our efforts to help our allies identify where they have Chinese technology in their information networks, that's particularly their defense information networks. And then there's Chinese technology and ownership across much of the infrastructure that folks like General Reed would rely on to flow forces either across or into the continent.

Senator Banks: So, you're seeing progress on this front? Do all of our NATO allies share our concern about Chinese technology?

General Grynkewich: Sir, they do. Even the allies that I would traditionally put in a category where, you know, they didn't pay attention to this, when we highlight it today, they absolutely understand the threat and the risk

and they take action.

Senator Banks: And would it likewise be helpful if our allies removed China from satellite ground stations in the Arctic?

General Grynkewich: Absolutely, Senator.

Senator Banks: Okay. That's all I have. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Senator Duckworth.

Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Chairman.

We're now on the second week of President Trump's illegal war against Iran with no end in sight, and I fear the longer that this war goes on, it will have lasting impacts on the readiness of our military to respond to crises and threats elsewhere. Meanwhile, this administration is hiding its incompetence behind a valor of our military men and women as if questioning why we're at war is equal to questioning the valor of our troops. We all know that that is not true. I know that our military will always do the best and most professional job possible, but that means that we here in these chambers who are the elected representatives of the American people are beholden to do our job and make sure that this is the right war, one that is worth our troop sacrifices. And we can't forget that that sacrifice extends to our logisticians and support staff as we've been tragically reminded by the six soldiers

of the 103rd Sustainment Command that we lost last week.

Anytime that we conduct significant military action, especially on this scale, we must understand the demands that it puts on our military. By choosing this illegal war, one that he still cannot justify, Trump has put our service members at risk in completely unnecessary ways. Seven service members have been killed. Seven families had to hear the worst news of their lives, and the Department has now confirmed at least 140 service members have been wounded, eight severely. And with the expansion of this campaign, including to overhead air operations within Iran and possible Naval escorts, our troops may be at even greater risk going forward.

General Reed, TRANSCOM has been working for years to modernize our global patient movement enterprises for the complexities of large-scale combat operations. Can you explain the challenges that our medical evacuation system faces in transporting critical care patients when air spaces and maritime routes are contested as we're seeing currently happening in the Middle East?

General Reed: Senator, initially, what has to happen is we need to put the entire system in place. That requires us to forward stage teams, not just the teams that will provide the care, but the teams who actually provide the scheduling and the teams who have the initial communications

with higher level facilities along the route. Sometimes we have to put those in place in an environment that's contested, and then they continue to serve throughout, but that is done in concert with the theater commander who provides the force protection.

And then once the scheduling begins, we then put the aircraft in place at the point in time of need. It requires that the patients are stabilized, and once they're assembled, we pick them up and then we fly them out. We also depend on force protection to clear the airspace so that the aircraft can get to the next station. And then also important for us is the permission to overfly so that we can have the shortest and the fastest routes.

Senator Duckworth: So, to summarize, it's incredibly complex. We need to make investments in this system and there's a lot more work to be done, but you're doing the absolute heroic best with what you have.

Our wounded service members and logistics professionals now face the realities of medical evacuation, and in airspace, as you've mentioned, contested by missiles and drones from the enemy. I don't believe Trump considered these risks when he chose this war without understanding how it would spread in the region. And I know they're not investing in medical readiness in the Indo-Pacific, where despite the real possibility of military conflict, actually

in our national interest, we have actually less medevac experience and much greater distances to cover. Similarly, it's the same situation in Africa.

Even before this war, the Department underinvested in our medical evacuation system, which is why I've advocated for years to give TRANSCOM and the services the resources that you need to rapidly adapt to future contested environments. These gaps will only widen as we continue to strain our system. General Reed, can you speak to the importance of secure connectivity and the potential impacts, I mean, both logistically for logistical support, but also its potential impacts on existing gaps to this essential medical evacuation mission? You and I discussed this a little bit the other day.

General Reed: Yes, Senator. What's important is making sure that we can pass the information on the status of each person that we attend to. Being able to make sure that that information gets established at the point, but also afforded to the next station, that way we can have the proper physician with the proper care and proper equipment to tend to them. As we continue to press for more secure communications, then we will make sure that there is no drop in the care.

Senator Duckworth: Are you facing some challenges right now?

General Reed: We are facing challenges in terms of secure funding.

Senator Duckworth: Okay. Thank you. This administration's inexcusable poor planning in the lead up to this war of choice on its own exacerbated the toll in our logistics system. General Grynkewich, I will not ask you to speak to current operations, but in your experience, do you agree that coordinating with allies and partners before an operation is critical to ensuring that our air assets have the necessary logistical nodes for rest and refueling to reduce the strain on our aging aerial refueling tanker fleet?

General Grynkewich: Senator, there's always a balance in terms of when you do the coordination. If you have the luxury of it based on operational security concerns to engage with allies and partners, and secure access spacing and overflight ahead of time, that is incredibly valuable. But there's a host of factors that may limit your ability to do that.

Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Duckworth. Senator Warren.

Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

So, on February 28th, Donald Trump launched his war against Iran. By March 1, Iranian strikes had hit at least

six surrounding countries, but all the Trump administration said to Americans in the region was, "Exercise caution." On March 2, the State Department finally told Americans in over a dozen countries to evacuate, but gave no real guidance on how to do that. As thousands of flights were canceled, the State Department initially told Americans to, "Not rely on the U.S. Government for assisted departure or evacuation."

Let's be clear. The Trump administration chose this war, they planned this war for months, and they made no plans to safeguard hundreds of thousands of Americans in the region. There is no excuse for this. And I just want to draw a comparison here. In 2006, the State Department requested support from DOD just 2 days into the war in Lebanon. TRANSCOM arranged ships, commercial charter, and military flights for nearly 15,000 Americans. So, General Reed, let me ask you, if the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense asked TRANSCOM for help to evacuate Americans, would you provide that support?

General Reed: Senator, I would.

Senator Warren: Thank you. So, General Reed, we're almost 2 weeks into this war. Have Secretary Rubio and State Department made any requests for TRANSCOM to help evacuate Americans out of the Middle East?

General Reed: Senator, on the 28 of February, the Department of State made a request to my department for

that, and we have provided some assistance.

Senator Warren: So, you're saying they made that request back on February 28?

General Reed: Yes, Senator.

Senator Warren: So, when we called them yesterday, they said they had not asked you for assistance. Can you explain why that would be so?

General Reed: Senator, I cannot explain that.

Senator Warren: I just don't understand this. And you have been helping them all this time?

General Reed: Senator, what we have done is through -- Central Command have responded to the request for the State Department to provide airlift at locations that they have specified.

Senator Warren: And how much have you airlifted in this period of time? How many people?

General Reed: Senator, I'll have to get that number --

Senator Warren: Can you give me --

General Reed: -- for you from the record.

Senator Warren: -- a rough idea?

General Reed: Senator, it's been in the hundreds.

Senator Warren: Hundreds, not in the thousands?

General Reed: That's correct. But I will say that as we continue to watch the situation, there have been other flights and other opportunities for American citizens to get

out of the way. Some of that has been by ground transportation and some of it has been by commercial charters by the State Department.

Senator Warren: Are you saying you're not doing more because you think that Americans who are in the region are currently being adequately served by commercial flights and private vehicles out of the region? Is that what you're saying?

General Reed: Senator, what I'm saying is we have responded to requests for specific tasks. In conjunction with the commercial flights and what TRANSCOM is providing, there are a number of ways to get our citizens out of harm's way.

Senator Warren: Okay. And what I'm trying to understand is why you're not doing more. Because I'm hearing from my constituents who are stranded there, who've been stranded there for 2 weeks, and they're asking for help, and they're not getting help from the U.S. Government. And you're telling me that you're not helping because you think they've got plenty of other ways to get out of the region? Or is it that Secretary Rubio is not asking you for that help? I just want to understand who bears responsibility here.

General Reed: Senator, it is the responsibility of all to care for the citizens that we have in harm's way, and as

we receive a tasking and the opportunities to do that, TRANSCOM is responding.

Senator Warren: Okay. So, my constituents and other Americans who are trapped in the region are trapped there because Secretary Rubio is not asking you for help. Is that right? I just want to understand what's happening.

General Reed: We've been asked for help and we're available to do that. And so, as we are able and the conditions permit with CENTCOM, we are involved in all the coordination to meet our citizens where we can get to them and then transport them to safety.

Senator Warren: So, you have provided all the help you've been asked for. You just haven't been asked for more help. Is that right?

General Reed: Senator, we have been tasked, and we have responded to each of those tasks.

Senator Warren: Look, I understand military speak here, but I don't understand how it is that we could get 15,000 people evacuated shortly after the war in Lebanon, and now, we've still got thousands, tens of thousands of people trapped in the region. And I'm not understanding what your answer is here, and I don't think the American people are either.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Warren.

General Reed, has the State Department contacted you in

this regard to ask for help?

General Reed: The State Department has, just as they did in the response to Lebanon as well. During that time, there were provisions to get people out by sealift and Charter. And so, the amount of people who left, left with TRANSCOM help as well as State Department chatter during that time.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Peters.

Senator Peters: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Reed, as you're fully aware, the Strait of Hormuz is a strategic choke point in the Middle East, with nearly one-fifth of the global petroleum and three and a half trillion cubic feet of liquified natural gas annually transits the Strait. The Strait's closure that we're seeing right now has left about 1,000 vessels stuck in the Persian Gulf. Two tankers were set ablaze just this morning, and even before these attacks, the uncertainty have caused gas prices to skyrocket, oil trading up to $120 a barrel this weekend and still at elevated levels, and likely to continue to go up.

And in fact, according to the International Energy Agency, the war has caused, and this is quote from them, "The largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market." That's a big statement, "in the history of the global market." Additionally, 30 percent of the world's

fertilizer supply passes through the Strait. This increases prices for American farmers as they're beginning planting season. This will mean food prices will also go up dramatically across the world. We have felt the impacts of the Strait's closure here, surely in prices and many goods, but we also can't forget the impacts of our service members who rely on being resupplied.

So, a question for you, sir, is are you in talks with the CENTCOM commander, Admiral Cooper, on having actual plans to open up the Strait to commercial traffic and also to ease service member resupply in the region, and?

General Reed: We are working with Admiral Cooper as he continues to prosecute the operations that he has. In the warfighting sense, we are doing all that we can to help him get after the targets that he needs to actually suppress the threats on the Strait. There is intense concentration to make sure that we can reduce that enough to get to a point where we can get through the Strait. When it comes to the sustainment for the forces, the Strait is not the only way that we're restricted to in order to resupply force sustainment. We have alternatives for that, and we're currently executing that as we speak.

Senator Peters: General Reed, the TRANSCOM provides, basically, the logistics backbone to support our forces in any conflict, including the war in Iran, as you were talking

about. But this means not only moving troops into the region, but also ensuring they have food, fuel, and munitions. And we talked about this issue at length on an office call, and we talked about how TRANSCOM relies heavily upon commercial partners to be able to augment your capacity to ensure the delivery of these key supplies.

So, my question for you is, how has your ability to deliver these critical supplies been impacted given the contested logistics environment we're in right now where we have commercial ports, commercial fuel networks, and commercial partners that have been significantly disrupted as a result of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz?

General Reed: So, we do acknowledge the disruptions, but this is exactly what we expect in a contested environment. When it comes to the commercial participation, they are able to deliver to points that are safe, and then we will transload, and then we take the responsibility from there. And so, in this way, together, we do and operate where we can, where we operate the best, and then we still get the warfighter the things that they need in their hands when they need it.

Senator Peters: So, you believe you're still able to rely on commercial partners for logistic capabilities, or does this mean we have to shift to more military options where we have greater control and greater security?

General Reed: We can absolutely rely on them.

Senator Peters: Very good.

General Grynkewich, we have seen public reporting on the DOD withdrawing Patriot and THAD Missile Defense Systems from the Indo-Pacific, these are public reports, and repositioning them into the Middle East. These moves, I know, have alarmed our allies, simultaneously weakening our regional deterrents and emboldening our adversaries, including China, as well as North Korea. Have you been asked to reposition any of your missile defense systems away from Europe in order to send them to the Middle East?

General Grynkewich: No, sir, I have not.

Senator Peters: Very good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Rosen.

Senator Rosen: Well, thank you, Chairman, Ranking Member Reed, for holding this hearing. Thank you, General Grynkewich and General Reed -- we have two Reeds here today, right -- for your service to our country.

So, I want to talk about support for Ukraine's critical infrastructure right now. So, General Grynkewich, you know Russia has engaged in a concerted campaign to attack Ukraine's civilian power infrastructure during what's been a brutally cold winter. Despite now entering spring, I'm incredibly concerned that Russia will continue to sustain attacks in Ukraine's civilian infrastructure.

So, I know you have thoughts on this based on our recent conversation in Munich. And so, can you discuss your views on the threat posed by Russian attacks on Ukraine's infrastructure, and what kind of support has the U.S. Government provided Ukraine to support its critical infrastructure, and what more should we be doing in this space?

General Grynkewich: Yes, Senator, as you alluded to, there were a number of attacks over the coldest winter in decades in Eastern Europe against the Ukrainian civilian infrastructure. This included their electrical grid. At times during this period, we saw down to just a couple of hours of electricity per day in Kyiv, as an example, and then attacks on the thermo heating plants as well, cutting heat to large swaths of many of the cities across Ukraine.

So, what I would say is, I think, that these attacks were broadly intended to put pressure on the civilian population to then pressure the Government of Ukraine to come to agreement to end the war. And what I've observed over the course of studying air power in history is that anytime you attack a civilian population, you usually end up finding that it just hardens their resolve. We take this all the way back to the London Blitz in World War II.

Senator Rosen: Right.

General Grynkewich: The Brits just had a stiff upper

lip and kept on fighting, and I think that's what we've seen in Ukraine as well. Moving forward, I am watching very carefully to see now that it is warming up. Do the Russians continue these attacks on that civilian electrical and thermal infrastructure, or do they shift to other targets yet? At this point, it's still unclear, but we're watching it closely.

Senator Rosen: Thank you. We'll be looking forward to updates from that. I also want to talk about NATO cyber preparedness because NATO Secretary General, Mark Rutte, they warned that Russia could be ready to use military force against NATO within 5 years. So, as you know, Russia's cyber capabilities were core to its invasion and continued war with Ukraine. Russia's demonstrating a growing willingness to employ cyber aggression towards NATO. I'm glad that NATO hosts an annual cyber exercise, Locked Shields, the world's largest multinational cyber defense exercise, has begun to strengthen cyber capabilities by creating the Integrated Cyber Defense Center, but that's not going to be operational until 2028.

So, General Grynkewich, how are you and CYBERCOM working with our NATO allies, Ukraine, European partners, to enhance our cybersecurity capabilities, our cooperation, particularly with those less cyber-capable nations? Because that puts us all at risk and makes us more vulnerable to our

adversaries.

General Grynkewich: Yeah, Senator, that's a great question and thanks for asking it. This is one of the areas where the Alliance and I are focused to try to understand how we can bring the cyber capabilities to bear that nations do have. And while there's some countries that don't have a lot of capability in cyber, there are some within the Alliance that do, and some that we wouldn't expect to have to --

Senator Rosen: But we're only as strong as our weakest link, right?

General Grynkewich: That's true, ma'am, but in an alliance that's built on collective defense, we can help each other. If one country is strong in air defense and another country is strong in cyber, there's a natural synergy there where we can help each other to get stronger together. In the classified session, I'd be happy to give you some details on who the main players are.

Senator Rosen: Thank you.

General Grynkewich: But we are working to modernize how we access those cyber effects and can use them in a potential conflict.

Senator Rosen: Thank you. Well, I'm going to stick on this topic, because over the past year, Russian aircraft and drones have flown into NATO airspace on multiple occasions.

I don't believe these incursions were accidental. Russia's deliberately testing NATO countries; the readiness to resolve, and the manner, and timing of all of our response to this aggression. So, building on Senator Fischer, I know she asked this earlier, do you think NATO can and should most effectively respond to these Russian acts of aggression even if they say they were accidental?

General Grynkewich: Yeah, Senator, I'm very proud of the initial responses I mentioned a little bit earlier, but I would also say that the standup of our Eastern Sentry vigilance activity across the alliance has resulted in a dramatic decrease in this activity. So, it has had not just a preventive effect in terms of when drones are incurring into the airspace, being able to stop them, but it's also deterred the Russians from taking that kind of reckless behavior in the first place. So, I think there's always work to be done here. It's not perfect. We continue to have limited incursions, but I think we're on the right path and making great progress.

Senator Rosen: Thank you. I look forward to the classified briefing.

Chairman Wicker: Which will begin precisely at 12 noon. A vote is going on right now. Members are encouraged to go ahead and vote, and we will see you in the SVC precisely at 12 noon.

[Whereupon, at 11:40 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]