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Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
THE POSTURE OF UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND
AND UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Washington, D.C.

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7 U.S. Senate
8 Committee on Armed Services
9 Washington, D.C.
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11 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in
12 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed,
13 chairman of the committee, presiding.

14 Committee Members Present: Senators Reed [presiding],
15 Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King,
16 Warren, Peters, Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, Inhofe, Wicker,
17 Fischer, Cotton, Ernst, Cramer, Scott, Blackburn, and
18 Tuberville.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 RHODE ISLAND

3 Chairman Reed: Let me call the committee to order.
4 Good morning.

5 The committee meets today to receive testimony from
6 General Tod Wolters, Commander of United States European
7 Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and
8 General Jacqueline Van Ovost, Commander of United States
9 Transportation Command. Thank you both for your service to
10 the nation, and I thank the men and women serving under your
11 commands at this critical time. General Wolters, I would
12 also like to take a moment to recognize the tragic loss of
13 four marines during a training accident in Norway. Please
14 convey the committee's condolences to their families and
15 fellow marines.

16 The security challenges for European Command, or EUCOM,
17 have never been clearer. One month ago, Russia unleashed
18 its illegal and unprovoked attack on Ukraine, upending
19 decades of general peace and stability in Europe. Putin's
20 invasion has inflicted horrific suffering upon innocent
21 civilians in Ukraine, threatened European security, and
22 caused serious consequences for the global economy. The
23 Ukrainian military has performed heroically in the face of
24 this overwhelming violence and the Ukrainian people have
25 shown the world what true courage looks like.

1 If Putin thought his actions over the past month would
2 drive a wedge between NATO members and within the
3 international community, he was badly mistaken. The
4 conflict in Ukraine has reinvigorated the NATO alliance and,
5 as NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg noted recently, this
6 is a "pivotal moment" for European security. Since the
7 start of the conflict, the international community has
8 implemented a severe and far-reaching set of economic and
9 energy sanctions, increased military and humanitarian
10 assistance to Ukraine, and reinforced NATO's military
11 presence along the eastern flank, including the deployment
12 of four new NATO battlegroups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania,
13 and Slovakia. Germany has announced historic new defense
14 spending; additional nations have indicated an interest to
15 join NATO; and even Switzerland has announced an intent to
16 freeze Russian financial assets. The international
17 community has united in a way not seen in generations.

18 EUCOM and TRANSCOM are playing a critical role in this
19 effort. American troops continue to operate enormous
20 forward logistics centers to receive, identify, and
21 transport the majority of security aid intended for Ukraine
22 from across the international community. This has been a
23 herculean task executed with admirable skill on very little
24 notice.

25 I would ask our witnesses to provide the committee with

1 any updates, and also to help place the current Ukraine
2 crisis in the larger context of our long-term competition
3 with both of our strategic competitors, Russia and China.

4 Keeping an eye to the future, an important reality we
5 are seeing in Ukraine is that any potential adversary is
6 going to attack our logistics support systems. This idea of
7 "contested logistics" will include obvious threats to our
8 forward bases, as well as the aircraft and ships that
9 resupply those bases. It could also include cyberattacks
10 against the information technology systems that support our
11 deployments, government and commercial, and possible kinetic
12 attacks against ports and airfields supporting our
13 deployments.

14 I am concerned that our thinking about logistics during
15 conflict has defaulted to our experiences dating back to
16 Vietnam, that we have owned the sea and air lines of
17 communication and have only had to worry about logistics
18 efficiency, not effectiveness. General Van Ovost, I would
19 like to know what steps are being taken to prepare for such
20 threats to our logistics, and how the military services can
21 alter their acquisition programs to take these concerns into
22 account.

23 Thank you, again, to our witnesses. I look forward to
24 your testimonies. Now let me recognize the ranking member,
25 Senator Inhofe.

1 STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 OKLAHOMA

3 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and General
4 Wolters and General Van Ovost, it is nice having you here
5 and we are always proud of you and the contributions that
6 you make.

7 As I have said many times, this committee's top
8 priority has been ensuring the effective implementation of
9 the 2018 National Defense Strategy. It is still good today.
10 It told us China is our pacing threat and that we need much
11 more effort from our military to take on that threat.

12 The threats have only gotten worse since then.
13 Yesterday, the Administration sent us the classified 2022
14 National Defense Strategy. I hope the unclassified version
15 is public soon.

16 I understand this strategy was late in part because the
17 Biden administration revisited what were likely rosy
18 assumptions about Russia. It is a good reminder that we
19 must deal with the world as it is, and not as we would have
20 it to be.

21 Our plan to deal with that world must rest on a strong
22 foundation of military power, and it must focus on actions,
23 not words, for credible deterrence.

24 Four months ago, Secretary Blinken justified not
25 sanctioning Russia by saying, quote, "The President believes

1 that sanctions are intended to deter." Last week, the
2 President himself said, and this is a quote, "Sanctions
3 never deter." Nothing about this makes sense.

4 Deterrence failed in Ukraine. We must ensure it does
5 not fail anywhere else. The costs of war are far greater
6 than the costs of preventing war.

7 We must ensure that our combatant commands have what
8 they need to credibly deter our adversaries and address the
9 challenge of strategic competition.

10 These threats highlight the need for real growth in the
11 defense budget and a sense of urgency and willingness to
12 take risk both at the Pentagon and here in Congress.

13 We just received the President's fiscal year 2023
14 budget and it does not request the real growth we need. We
15 will do our due diligence and our constitutional duty, as we
16 did last year.

17 General Wolters, I look forward to hearing your
18 assessment of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and how the
19 United States and our NATO allies will bolster European
20 defenses while continuing to support Ukraine's ability to
21 defend itself.

22 I am troubled by lackluster funding for the European
23 Deterrence Initiative in recent years and concerned about
24 the ability of our industrial base to support re-arming
25 ourselves, our NATO allies, and the Ukrainians.

1 General Van Ovost, I would like to know if you have the
2 resources you need to support not only General Wolters in
3 Europe but also our INDOPACOM commander.

4 Additionally, I look forward to hearing your views of
5 our current sealift readiness and how that impacts your
6 ability to support your combatant command counterparts.

7 Thank you both again for testifying today. Senator
8 Reed.

9 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

10 General, you may begin.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL TOD WOLTERS, COMMANDER, UNITED
2 STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND/NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION
3 SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER EUROPE

4 General Wolters: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe,
5 and distinguished members of the committee, on behalf of the
6 men, women, and families who serve our nation we extend our
7 thanks for your steadfast support. It remains a privilege
8 to serve alongside these dedicated patriots and our allies
9 and partners.

10 It is also an honor to testify alongside my longtime
11 shipmate, General Jackie Van Ovost. Her TRANSCOM team
12 continues to deliver miracles at the point of need.

13 We are fully aligned with the Department of Defense
14 priorities to defend the nation, take care of our people,
15 and succeed through teamwork. Every day we work to generate
16 peace with our allies and partners by strengthening the
17 deterrence and defense of the Euro-Atlantic.

18 This is a pivotal moment in Europe with generational
19 implications. When testifying before this committee last
20 year, Russia was already on the path to further intimidate
21 and threaten Ukraine while testing the will and resolve of
22 the Transatlantic Alliance. Russia's premeditated and
23 unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has galvanized our allies and
24 global partners. We admire the courage and tenacity of the
25 Ukrainian armed forces and citizens, and so respect their

1 sovereign democracy.

2 In the Euro-Atlantic area, NATO remains the cornerstone
3 of deterrence and defense. As we face the largest conflict
4 in Europe in three generations, our Transatlantic Alliance
5 has responded in all warfighting domains. In the air, NATO
6 has established an air defense architecture along the
7 eastern flank that includes contributions from 11 allies.
8 On land, allies continue to deploy additional forces to
9 enhance its forward presence from Tallinn in the north to
10 Sofia in the south. At sea, our standing maritime forces
11 are infused with additional capabilities to ensure freedom
12 of navigation spanning from the Arctic to the Aegean.
13 Aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean dramatically increase
14 the inherent air combat capability and NATO's air defense
15 architecture along the eastern front.

16 NATO's capabilities in space and cyberspace are more
17 closely integrated than at any other time in the alliance's
18 history. The sum of these modern, multi-domain capabilities
19 underwrites the security of NATO's Article 5 guarantee.

20 A protagonist of our commitment to NATO begins with our
21 efforts in the United States European Command. Our
22 primary mission is to compete, deter, and prepare to
23 respond to aggression with the full weight of the NATO
24 alliance. Our investments in military-to-military
25 relationships, training, and readiness build unity, resolve,

1 and combat-credible deterrence.

2 USEUCOM, with support from forces in the continental
3 United States, has sparked allies to enhance posture along
4 the eastern flank, rapidly deploying three brigades of
5 European-based and CONUS-based combat forces, a carrier
6 strike group, and fourth- and fifth-generation fighters.
7 This effort is America's effort, with soldiers, sailors,
8 marines, airmen, guardians, and Defense Department civilians
9 from all 50 states and territories, some based in Europe,
10 others rotating into Europe from across the nation.

11 This build is enabled by years of focused investment
12 through the European Reassurance and Deterrence Initiatives,
13 commonly referred to ERI and EDI. These enhancements,
14 including facilities, pre-positioned equipment, rotational
15 deployments, and all-domain exercises improve our speed and
16 agility. As a brief example, thanks to EDI and ERI, we were
17 able to deploy the entirety of an armored brigade combat
18 team from Georgia in the United States to Germany in just
19 one week. That level of speed and agility is unmatched. On
20 behalf of the men and women of European Command, we thank
21 Congress and the American people for their contributions to
22 this effort.

23 The capabilities the Department has brought to bear in
24 response to this acute security environment have required
25 critical partnerships with USTRANSCOM, USCYBERCOM,

1 USSTRATCOM, and the intelligence community. These partners
2 are vital to establishing and sustaining our current
3 deterrence and defense posture.

4 We are witnessing a generational moment, a historic
5 demonstration of unity and will, and an unprecedented effort
6 by allies to strengthen defense while simultaneously helping
7 those in need. Just an example, but it is a critical one.
8 We have seen Germany commit to meet the alliance 2 percent
9 benchmark, and we expect other allies will follow and
10 redouble efforts to adequately invest in defense to generate
11 peace.

12 From Turkey in the southeast to Norway, Sweden, and
13 Finland in the north, in air, land, sea, space, and cyber,
14 allies and partners are committing.

15 Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, we thank you
16 again for this opportunity, and I look forward to answering
17 your questions.

18 [The prepared statement of General Wolters follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, General Wolters. General
2 Van Ovost, please.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL JACQUELINE VAN OVOST, COMMANDER,
2 UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

3 General Van Ovost: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member
4 Inhofe, and distinguished members of the committee, good
5 morning. It is my honor to join you today with my senior
6 enlisted leader, Fleet Master Chief Donald Myrick, to
7 represent the men and women of the United States
8 Transportation Command. Every day I am immensely proud of
9 their contributions to national defense.

10 As I sit here today, we are in lockstep with General
11 Wolters in providing critical aid to Ukraine, and assuring
12 our NATO allies through troop deployments and exercises.
13 TRANSCOM coordinates the Joint Deployment and Distribution
14 Enterprise, creating a strategic comparative advantage
15 through logistics that no other nation can achieve. Our
16 success would not be possible without the steadfast support
17 of this committee and the whole of Congress.

18 TRANSCOM operates an agile and resilient logistics
19 enterprise, comprised of our military components, commercial
20 partners, and industry teammates deliver for our nation, our
21 allies, and partners around the world. We project and
22 sustain the world's most capable military force. The speed
23 and reliability at which we execute these missions
24 demonstrates our nation's resolve and serves as a deterrent
25 to our adversaries.

1 However, the world is evolving, and the complex
2 contested environment that is emerging will test the future
3 readiness of our enterprise and challenge TRANSCOM's ability
4 to deliver a decisive force when needed. It is imperative
5 that we evolve into a more agile, resilient mobility force
6 through focused modernization and recapitalization of our
7 capabilities to ensure we remain ready now and into the
8 future.

9 My top readiness concern remains sealift, as 70 percent
10 of our government-owned surge sealift ships will approach
11 the end of their service life in 10 years. I greatly
12 appreciate your support on the authorization and funding of
13 the first steps of our sealift recapitalization effort. The
14 funding for five new ships in the fiscal year 2022 omnibus
15 appropriations will enable us to continue this vital
16 process, and we look forward to working with the Navy to
17 satisfy restrictions in current law to execute these
18 purchases.

19 Next, air refueling is critical to the joint force's
20 ability to deploy and employ an immediate force. I
21 appreciate your continued support to funding the KC-46
22 recapitalization program and critical modifications to the
23 KC-135 aircraft. We must continue to modernize and
24 recapitalize our aging air-refueling assets to ensure that
25 they remain agile, resilient, and relevant to the future

1 fight.

2 One last and very critical thought. Cyber is an area
3 of significant vulnerability for TRANSCOM. As we are
4 inextricably linked to our commercial industry and 90
5 percent of our systems operate outside the Department of
6 Defense information network, we remain focused on
7 strengthening our partnerships with our transportation
8 providers to mitigate cyber vulnerabilities. As such, cyber
9 resiliency and digital modernization initiatives are a top
10 priority.

11 Just as we are engaged globally in supporting the DoD's
12 operations, we have vital responsibilities to take care of
13 our DoD employees and their families. Among the most
14 important is the management of the Defense Personal Property
15 System, responsible for the movement of household goods.
16 Our continuing overhaul of this system, to include the
17 recently awarded Global Household Goods Contract, strives to
18 deliver both the high quality our servicemembers, Department
19 employees, and families deserve as well as the
20 accountability Congress demanded.

21 I am honored to join General Wolters in his last
22 appearance before this committee and thank him for his
23 nearly 40 years of service to our country and his commitment
24 to our nation's security. Together, with all combatant
25 commands, TRANSCOM routinely demonstrates the nation's

1 ability to fight, deliver, and win.

2 I would like to thank you once again for your
3 leadership and for the support you provide our
4 servicemembers. I look forward to your questions.

5 [The prepared statement of General Von Ovost follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, General Van Ovost.
2 General Wolters, the initial Russian plan did not work
3 in their favor, thank goodness, due to the courage of the
4 Ukrainian people and the support of the international
5 community. So it appears now that they are engaged, as they
6 were in Chechnya and other episodes, in a campaign of
7 attrition and direct attacks on civilian targets rather than
8 military targets.

9 And the question really, in that context, is can the
10 Ukrainian forces maintain their efforts and can we continue
11 to maintain our support for the Ukrainian forces?

12 General Wolters: Chairman, I think we can and we will
13 continue to maintain our support for the Ukrainian armed
14 forces. We will do so with materiel support as well as
15 thought. And as you well know we have made dramatic
16 improvements in our information sharing and intelligence
17 sharing, and as they continue to prosecute their campaign
18 our advice and our assistance with respect to materiel will
19 be very, very important.

20 Chairman Reed: Thank you. Now we are in the midst of
21 a tremendous sort of shift or pivot, as the General
22 Secretary of NATO said. What areas should we be encouraging
23 our European and international allies to take to face this
24 not only present threat but the continuing threat of Russia
25 and China?

1 General Wolters: Chairman, I think we have to
2 comprehensively improve our military disposition in all
3 quadrants and in all domains, and we have a plan in place to
4 do so. And as the Secretary General approaches the leader
5 summit this June, his overall NATO plan coincides with that
6 military plan to ensure that we can show greater NATO
7 strength and greater military strength. And as you well
8 know, we are on the appropriate glidepath to do so as we
9 continue to fortify the eight battle groups that exist in
10 the proximity of Eastern Europe.

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you.

12 General Van Ovost, the issue of contested logistics,
13 which you touched upon, includes not just the platforms to
14 carry materiel but getting that materiel through to our
15 forces in the Pacific, in Europe, or anyplace in the world.

16 And with the ability of our adversaries to detect and to
17 hit targets at long ranges, how are we planning to do that?

18 General Van Ovost: Chairman, that is of concern to us,
19 as we work in the Indo-Pacific, with Admiral Aquilino, we
20 are looking at a strategy of diverse and disperse. In other
21 words, we are seeing that we are going to have more
22 distributed operations in more locations, which will provide
23 us that redundancy and resilience, and then diversity to
24 have some capability to move with respect to ships on the
25 water that are in motion, which are harder to target, than a

1 large, single location where we stack up our logistics. So
2 we are very much looking at how we do intra-theater
3 dispersement at a time and place where we will be able to
4 resupply the forces securely but keep it moving so that they
5 do not become targets in the future. That gets back to the
6 agility of the force that we need, and to do that our forces
7 need to be connected -- they need to be on the network --
8 our ability to securely command and control and understand
9 where the forces are, where the logistics are, and where
10 they need to go.

11 Chairman Reed: So in some respect communications is
12 the primary tool in your efforts.

13 General Van Ovost: Yes, Chairman. The ability to
14 securely command and control and direct the resources to the
15 highest priorities is a critical capability that we have.

16 Chairman Reed: Also I think by implication you would
17 need a significant number of platforms, and probably smaller
18 than the ones we are customarily used to. In addition, we
19 would have to take steps to try to electronically hide those
20 vessels. Is that correct, or airplanes?

21 General Van Ovost: Senator, we know that now we cannot
22 afford to simply disperse forces into the field. They have
23 to be integrated, integrated with all joint functions --
24 fires, maneuver, force protection. So in that manner we are
25 going to have to deploy in packages forward. And to your

1 point, it is not simply large ships or large aircraft. It
2 will be a variety of capabilities, depending on the scheme
3 of the maneuver and who we are supporting.

4 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. Thank you both.
5 Senator Inhofe, please.

6 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The recent
7 emergency supplemental provided an additional \$3 billion to
8 support Ukraine, backfill our allies, and invest in United
9 States stocks dedicated to this effort. General Wolters,
10 you have indicated that EUCOM needs significant increases to
11 sustain efforts to deter Russia, including through the
12 European Deterrence Initiative that the Biden administration
13 cut last year.

14 Okay. General Wolters, credible deterrence only works
15 when you have a strong national defense backing of our
16 words, and President Biden's warnings to Putin clearly
17 failed to stop his invasion. Russia's actions are a wake-up
18 call for this Administration and for Europe and Russia, and
19 Russia remains a significant threat.

20 As your opening statement attests, this crisis has
21 provided how much of a game-changer the European Deterrence
22 Initiative has been since it enabled the military to stand
23 up the Army pre-positioned stock sites that our troops have
24 now fallen in on. Can you expand on how critical those
25 sites have been to enable our troops to surge in Europe over

1 the past few weeks?

2 General Wolters: Senator Inhofe, to take an armored
3 brigade combat team and launch it from the continental
4 United States and put it on European turf and have the tanks
5 that comprise that brigade combat team to shoot, move,
6 communicate, and fire on range in one week is an amazing
7 accomplishment. And that was facilitated by those Army pre-
8 positioned stocks and it was practiced in previous
9 exercises, which are very expensive and part of the EDI fund.

10 So I would just say that when we demonstrated to the
11 European community and to the NATO community and to the
12 world how well we can shoot, move, and communication and
13 transition a large force from CONUS to Europe, at that pace,
14 is something that demonstrates the great value of EDI.

15 Senator Inhofe: I think that is right. And are there
16 any force elements included in the new 20,000 forces that
17 you have in Europe now that would be extremely useful in
18 your deterrence efforts in the long run, in the future?

19 General Wolters: There are, Senator, and most of them
20 have to do with critical enablers, that you are very
21 familiar with. And we have been able to benefit from their
22 existence as they have arrived in Europe.

23 Senator Inhofe: Good. And General Van Ovost,
24 strategic lift refers to the ability to transport personnel,
25 equipment, and stores from the continental United States to

1 operational theaters around the world. General Van Ovost,
2 as we discussed in my office, could you further describe the
3 current readiness of the sealift fleet?

4 General Van Ovost: Thanks, Senator. Look, the sealift
5 fleet is critical to the execution of our plans. They move
6 90 percent of the cargo in wartime. And today, as we stand,
7 about 70 percent of our roll-on, roll-off capacity is going
8 to exceed its service life in 10 years. Our ability to keep
9 those sealift ships in readiness status is costing more and
10 more every year. So it has been imperative that we embark
11 upon the sealift recapitalization program, for which I am
12 grateful for the appropriation and the authorization, which
13 will get us up to four new ships. And then we are going to
14 work with the Navy to get beyond four, up to nine, as they
15 submit their sealift build plan, and hopefully that will
16 satisfy the requirements and we can continue to purchase
17 sealifts when favorable conditions are occurring right now
18 in the market.

19 Senator Inhofe: That is good, and I think they will.
20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Inhofe.

22 Senator Gillibrand, please.

23 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
24 Wolters, Senators Ernst, Rosen, and King, we just returned
25 from visiting with our troops in Germany and meeting

1 Ukrainians as they flee across the border into Poland. Can
2 you give us, consistent with this unclassified setting, an
3 update on what EUCOM's role is in facilitating both the
4 delivery of lethal aid but also our humanitarian efforts to
5 support the Ukrainian people?

6 General Wolters: Senators, as you are familiar, based
7 off your visit, we had 18th Airborne Corps and the 82nd, and
8 a large force put in play in the appropriate geographic
9 region to assure and deter. And part of that program was,
10 when the conditions were right, facilitate the flow of
11 citizens back and forth across the border. And that has
12 certainly taken place, and the utilization of those 5,500
13 soldiers has enhanced our ability to secure our European
14 population on the Polish side of the border and to take into
15 account the disposition of activities inside of Ukraine by
16 consulting and communicating with those who have departed.

17 So that force has been integral to ensure that the 4
18 million-plus refugees from Ukraine have a soft landing once
19 they come into Europe. And we have still got a lot of work
20 to do, and we will continue to facilitate that flow and do
21 the best we can, from a military perspective, to secure
22 those soft landings for the refugees coming out of Ukraine.

23 Senator Gillibrand: Can you speak to Special
24 Operations Command Europe's intention to establish a new
25 forward operating base in Albania to improve our current

1 ability to operate in the Balkans, and can you speak to how
2 this has affected our ability to partner with neighboring
3 forces?

4 General Wolters: I can, Senator. That advancement is
5 critical. With Albania we will improve their resiliency, we
6 will improve their familiarity with other nations on the
7 peripheries' resiliency, and it will make that region much
8 stronger and much more ready when it comes to identifying
9 nefarious activities that start to creep in. And the
10 Special Forces do a fantastic job in the information
11 environment of ensuring that we are out in front of malign
12 influence in that area.

13 Senator Gillibrand: I appreciate the chart that you
14 have given us for the U.S. force posture in Europe, having a
15 total of 102,000 forces as of March 24, 2022. Do you
16 envision additional changes to force posture in the next few
17 weeks to appropriately stand against Russia?

18 General Wolters: Senator, we take a conditions-based
19 approach and we look at the issues second by second, minute
20 by minute. I would just tell you that based off the dynamic
21 environment that exists today that number could change. I
22 suspect that it probably will, and in which direction will
23 be determined based off conditions in the environment.

24 Senator Gillibrand: Could you please speak to the
25 issue, as we are addressing the ongoing situation in

1 Ukraine, China continues to attempt to cultivate influence
2 in Europe and is another challenge that EUCOM has to face.
3 Do you feel that EUCOM is adequately equipped to manage both
4 the acute crisis in Ukraine as well as the long-term
5 challenges posed by China?

6 General Wolters: We are, Senator, and this goes back
7 to Senator Inhofe's NDS from previous years and the new NDS
8 that is out, that focuses heavily, from a U.S. Department of
9 Defense perspective, with respect to integrated deterrence
10 and cross-COCOM activity. I am very, very familiar with the
11 challenges that Admiral Aquilino faces in INDOPACOM. He is
12 very familiar with the challenges that we face in Europe.
13 And when it comes to the transactions that take place
14 between Russia-China, and China-Russia, we are both very
15 dialed into that, as a result of the architecture and
16 process that is in place in the Department.

17 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. General Van Ovost, one
18 issue that my office has heard from servicemembers
19 throughout the pandemic was how COVID delays negatively
20 impacted their PCS, including servicemembers being told to
21 handle their own move due to lack of contractors and
22 services. Do you feel that TRANSCOM's ability to help
23 servicemembers has improved and that TRANSCOM has adapted to
24 the new normal since the onset of the pandemic?

25 General Van Ovost: Senator, we are also concerned

1 about the household good movement industry, but writ large,
2 with essentially contested logistics in here in the
3 homeland, it has affected all aspects of what we do. I do
4 believe we are headed for a more stable future with respect
5 to the labor market, and frankly, our ability to complete
6 the Global Household Goods Contract means that I have really
7 good indications we are going to have the capacity necessary
8 to ensure that this does not happen into the future.

9 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Gillibrand.

10 Senator Wicker, please.

11 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

12 General Wolters, in the last few moments we are seeing news
13 reports that Moscow is committing to withdrawing a majority
14 of its forces surrounding Kyiv. Of course, it is now
15 afternoon where the negotiators are. Multiple teams have
16 been withdrawn from the axis of the attack, and DoD
17 officials are saying they see this as a major strategy
18 shift, according to news reports.

19 What is your assessment of the authority and status of
20 the current Russians who are negotiating at this moment? We
21 had had reports initially that they were not sending the A-
22 team to these negotiations.

23 General Wolters: Senator, I have heard those same
24 reports but I cannot verify whether or not they are the
25 varsity or the junior varsity. I can verify that the

1 comments that you made with respect to the shifting dynamics
2 in the ground domain in the vicinity of Kyiv are exactly
3 what we see from a EUCOM perspective.

4 Senator Wicker: Okay. Well, we will see how
5 significant that is. I have got my doubts, but we certainly
6 hope for peace.

7 Let me just ask you, in terms of permanently stationed
8 forces in EUCOM, is our current posture enough? What are
9 the numbers there, and should the United States have more
10 permanent or rotational forces in EUCOM, and specifically in
11 the Baltics?

12 General Wolters: Senator, the numbers increase. From
13 a U.S. perspective, as a result of the incursion into
14 Ukraine by Russia, have boosted our numbers from 60,000 to
15 approximately 100,000. What I also examine in my other
16 command hat is the increase of European involvement, and in
17 specific targeting of what we are doing with respect to the
18 population and capability increase in the Baltics, we have
19 seen a dramatic shift as a result of contributions from
20 multiple nations. Several have been published in open
21 press. Germany, the United Kingdom, Denmark have all been
22 very, very generous with respect to their recent
23 contributions to the EFP battle groups.

24 Senator Wicker: But sir, what is your recommendation
25 as to more permanent U.S. forces?

1 General Wolters: I think what we need to do, from a
2 U.S. force perspective, is look at what takes place in
3 Europe following completion of the Ukraine-Russia scenario
4 and examine the European contributions, and based off the
5 breadth and depth of the European contributions be prepared
6 to adjust the U.S. contributions. And my suspicion is we
7 are going to still need more. And obviously there is always
8 a mix between the requirement of permanent versus
9 rotational, and there are plusses and minuses of each one.
10 We will have to continue to examine the European
11 contributions to make a smart decision about where to go in
12 the future.

13 Senator Wicker: Okay. Let me ask you about
14 expectations when this war began. What we were hearing is
15 the Russians would defeat the Ukrainians and obtain their
16 invasion objectives within 5 days or so. Is there an
17 intelligence gap in our capability that made us overestimate
18 the Russians and underestimate the defensive capability of
19 the Ukrainians?

20 General Wolters: Senator, there could be, and as we
21 have always done in the past, when this crisis over with we
22 will accomplish a comprehensive after-action review, in all
23 domains, in all departments, and find out where our weak
24 areas were and make sure that we can find ways to improve.
25 And this could be one of those areas.

1 Senator Wicker: And then finally, what barriers do you
2 see increasing the number of DDGs in Rota to six?

3 General Wolters: Senator, the infrastructure is set as
4 a result of the tremendous EDI contributions over the years,
5 and as we speak we have temporarily put more destroyers into
6 EUCOM's portfolio. And we have been able to test the
7 infrastructure receptiveness in Rota to taking on two more
8 cruiser destroyers, and we are ready, willing, and able to
9 support.

10 Senator Wicker: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr.
11 Chairman.

12 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker.

13 Senator Blumenthal, please.

14 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you both for your service
15 and thank you for being here today.

16 General Van Ovost, in my visit to the border a couple
17 of weeks ago I was impressed not only with the incredible
18 courage and resilience of the refugees coming across the
19 border but also the work of the 82nd Airborne in that area,
20 enabling the Ukrainian military to transport many of the
21 resupplies of weapons, Stinger and Javelin missiles and so
22 forth, to the forces on the ground, sometimes within hours
23 of the unloading to actual combat. Would you agree with me
24 that the Ukrainians -- and they are the ones who are
25 transporting. I know that none of your men and women are

1 involved -- but would you agree with me that they have been
2 extraordinarily agile and effective in their transporting
3 across Ukraine under fire or potential fire, to their
4 forces, of those weapons systems and other supplies we are
5 providing?

6 General Van Ovost: Thank you, Senator. Look, I
7 absolutely believe that they have been effective, as you can
8 see, that none of the lines really have been hit on the way,
9 and it appears they have been delivering right to the right
10 location at the right time. And I want to thank everyone
11 with respect to supporting the logistics flow and be able to
12 donate the security cooperation that has been so successful
13 to date.

14 Senator Blumenthal: Yeah, the 82nd Airborne has been
15 extraordinary. I know that other forces of the United
16 States and NATO allies have been as well.

17 General Wolters, as very far from the expert that you
18 are in this area, I think to many of us it looks like the
19 Ukrainians could win this fight if it were a fair fight on
20 the ground and if they were not vulnerable from the skies to
21 the reign of terror that the Russian military has unleashed
22 through artillery, jet fighters, missiles. And the urgent
23 and predominant need is aerial defense. Could you tell the
24 committee how many S-300s, SA-3s, what is the inventory that
25 is available to provide to Ukraine so that it can defend

1 itself and, in effect, have a fair fight on the ground, and
2 also protect civilian targets, which Vladimir Putin has
3 mercilessly and ruthlessly hit repeatedly?

4 General Wolters: Senator, in a different setting I
5 would adore the opportunity to give you specific numbers.
6 What I can say is from a U.S. perspective there is
7 consultation about supply and demand on the Ukrainian armed
8 forces to ensure that they are getting the right equipment
9 at the right time, based off their military campaign design,
10 so that they can best protect their forces.

11 Senator Blumenthal: In your judgment, are they getting
12 what they need?

13 General Wolters: They are, Senator.

14 Senator Blumenthal: And are we replenishing or
15 backfilling -- for example, as we apparently did in Slovakia
16 -- with Patriot missile systems, the air defense that our
17 NATO allies need, if they are providing the Soviet-era air
18 defense such as the S-300s?

19 General Wolters: We are, Senator, and in multiple
20 portfolios, above and beyond just the surface-to-air
21 missiles.

22 Senator Blumenthal: One of the lessons, it seems to
23 me, of the combat so far is that the Russian tanks have been
24 far more vulnerable than Putin ever contemplated. Are there
25 lessons about the use of tanks here for future warfare, in

1 your judgment?

2 General Wolters: Absolutely, to include the command
3 and control of those tanks.

4 Senator Blumenthal: And that would involve better
5 communication systems.

6 General Wolters: It would, Senator.

7 Senator Blumenthal: Are you satisfied that the United
8 States and our NATO allies could and would avoid those same
9 kinds of mistakes if we had to respond to aggression by the
10 Russian army?

11 General Wolters: We can and we could and we would.

12 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. Thanks, General, and
13 thanks for your many years of service. To both of you,
14 thank you.

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

16 Senator Fischer, please.

17 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
18 you, General Wolters, for your many years of service. Thank
19 you, General Van Ovost, for being here today as well.

20 General Wolters, in your prepared testimony you note
21 the importance of our nuclear deterrent, and in particular
22 our non-strategic nuclear weapons that are forward deployed
23 in Europe. Can you talk a bit more about their importance
24 and the support that our allies have for this mission?

25 General Wolters: Senator, what nuclear strategic

1 deterrence offers is tough to communicate to our European
2 partners, and over the course of the last several years they
3 have all gained a greater understanding of the freedom of
4 maneuver that the strategic nuclear deterrence umbrella
5 provides those nations in Europe. And with contributions
6 from the European nations, with respect to allowing the
7 facilitation of non-strategic nuclear weapons I feel that
8 Europe is in a much better place to effectively defend and
9 deter.

10 Senator Fischer: Thank you. Can you also talk about
11 the support that our allies have shown for the additional
12 four battle groups and the level of interest you have seen
13 from them in participating, please?

14 General Wolters: The participation has been very, very
15 strong. The level of interest continues to increase, and it
16 corresponds with nations' voluntary national contributions
17 that continue to mount, specifically in those four battle
18 groups in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia. The
19 campaign momentum to build those minimum battalion-sized
20 battle groups with all-domain capability is improving with
21 every day.

22 Senator Fischer: And also many of our NATO allies are
23 talking about increasing their defense spending, I think
24 basically in response to the Russian invasion that we have
25 seen in Ukraine. We have seen countries in NATO, our

1 allies, comes together and pledge to reach that 2 percent.
2 Some have even pledged to go higher.

3 Can you tell us how you are working with our allies and
4 partners to ensure that the additional sources are really
5 focused on the right capabilities that are needed?

6 General Wolters: I can, Senator. We have a strategy.
7 We have plans that ultimately allow nations to identify
8 military requirements that contribute to delivering the
9 appropriate effect in the environment to ensure that we can
10 better defend. So now you have, in print, the appropriate
11 connective tissue that allows the taxpayers in all the
12 European countries to understand why it is they are
13 committing the euros to what causes, to generate the
14 appropriate effect to have better defense.

15 Senator Fischer: Is the United States participating
16 not just with the alliance as a whole but with individual
17 countries in trying to determine just what is needed where,
18 what type of capabilities are needed where, when you look at
19 the entire alliance?

20 General Wolters: Senator, the U.S. is, and so are the
21 other 29 nations of NATO, and that is part of the great
22 aspect of having an alliance like NATO. There is a lot to
23 be learned when you are willing to listen to Estonia's
24 needs, and we do, and we learn a lot, and they listen to
25 ours, from a U.S. perspective.

1 Senator Fischer: Are you hopeful that the alliance
2 will continue to work well together, that there a new
3 understanding about the threats that are out there? I have
4 deep concerns about the classified briefings that we have,
5 and all of that information is not available to the people
6 of this country. I think if we could see some material that
7 would be declassified and be able to share with the citizens
8 of the United States there really would be a deeper
9 understanding, more concern felt when the population
10 understands the threats that are out there. And I can see
11 that happening in Europe, but it took an invasion for it to
12 happen. How are we going to address that?

13 General Wolters: Senator, I am hopeful and confident
14 that the degree of cooperation amongst the NATO nations will
15 continue. And looking back to how we approached this
16 campaign and the degree of intelligence sharing and
17 information sharing and the impact that it had on building
18 trust amongst nations was very, very powerful, and we need
19 to continue that practice.

20 Senator Fischer: I think we need to continue it in
21 this country as well, so that the people in the United
22 States understand the very real threats that we face to our
23 national security. Thank you, sir.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Fischer.

25 Senator Hirono, please.

1 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you
2 both for being here.

3 General Wolters, you mentioned something that
4 definitely perked my interest, piqued my interest. We know
5 that China and Russia have a relationship, and China seeks
6 to expand its influence in Europe. So you mentioned that
7 you are working, I think, much more closely with Admiral
8 Aquilino because of this recognition that things do not just
9 stay in one command theater. So can you talk a little bit
10 more about your increased, closer working with Admiral
11 Aquilino?

12 General Wolters: I can, Senator. We have shared
13 thoughts about what Russia has done with respect to its
14 physical actions in the vicinity in Ukraine and its
15 activities outside of Ukraine with its so-called allies and
16 partners, and the impact that it has on the actual
17 execution. And Admiral Aquilino is obviously very
18 interested in that because he faces a scenario that is
19 reasonably similar to this with respect to Taiwan. And how
20 we examine the U.S. response, the allies' and partners'
21 response, will help image Admiral Aquilino in working his
22 way through some of the tough spots that we anticipate that
23 he will have to work with in the future with respect to
24 state-on-state activities and state-on-state alliance
25 activities and state-on-state activities with respect to

1 other partners and allies on the periphery.

2 Senator Hirono: It sounds as though this is a more
3 close relationship that you are having with another
4 combatant commander. Is that so?

5 General Wolters: I have that same relationship with
6 all the other combatant commanders.

7 Senator Hirono: That is good to know. It makes sense.

8 General Van Ovost, it is good to talk with you again.
9 As you are aware, the Department of Defense recently made
10 the decision to defuel and close the Red Hill storage
11 facility on Oahu, and so there will be a transition period.
12 It will take a significant amount of planning and funding
13 for this transition.

14 Last year's NDAA established TRANSCOM as the DoD bulk
15 fuel manager of the Department, which will become effective
16 later this year. As you assume this new role, what will you
17 be focused on to ensure the Department's fuel needs are met
18 in the Pacific, and what do you anticipate being the
19 greatest challenge as Red Hill is closed and we move to a
20 more distributed laydown?

21 General Van Ovost: Thank you, Senator. As you are
22 aware, there are really multiple studies, analyses, and war
23 games highlighted that our global bulk fuel, our command and
24 control, our distribution, where it is at, access to it, and
25 the infrastructure that supports it are inadequate in this

1 contested environment. Frankly, as the new NDS also states
2 that the PRC is the most consequential strategic competitor
3 we have. So we as look to the Pacific we have to do things
4 differently.

5 So what we are doing right now, under the throes of
6 providing a strategy back to Congress here on 1 October on
7 how we are looking at the globe with respect to posture, war
8 reserves, our ability to maneuver the force both from an
9 inter-theater standpoint and within the theater, to ensure
10 that we have dispersed and diverse, specifically with
11 respect to fuel, to reduce the risk.

12 Indeed, in the decision to defuel Red Hill we are going
13 to use that as an opportunity to put a storage afloat so
14 that we can actually practice techniques and procedures that
15 we would actually use should we have to go to conflict, with
16 respect to our inter-theater tankers, doing console
17 operations, and new intra-theater, smaller tankers that we
18 would need to move the fuel forward into theater.

19 So as we look to those conops, in developing them and
20 resourcing them, it will be something we will be looking
21 forward in the future as the global bulk fuel manager.

22 Senator Hirono: Just one more question along those
23 lines. As we move to a more distributed fuel operations, is
24 there an opportunity to expand investment in places like the
25 compact states to build out a resilient fuel laydown while

1 also building economic cooperation with our compact
2 partners?

3 General Van Ovost: Senator, I defer to Admiral
4 Aquilino with respect to specific partners. He has, as you
5 know, a 2B posture that is laid out that is really looking
6 more south and in that area. And from my perspective, we
7 could not do what we do without the commercial partnerships
8 that we have around the world. So we are looking to thicken
9 our partnerships, especially out in the Pacific.

10 Senator Hirono: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Hirono.

12 Senator Ernst, please.

13 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and General Van
14 Ovost and General Wolters, thank you so much for your
15 service and for appearing in front of our committee today.

16 General Wolters, you know that I traveled with many of
17 my colleagues several weekends ago to visit Germany and
18 Poland, and we were grateful for the time that we had on the
19 ground. We had Senator Gillibrand, Senator King, and
20 Senator Rosen from this committee. So we were able to spend
21 time not only with significant leaders from Germany and
22 Poland but also with the tremendous men and women of the
23 18th Airborne Corps, the 82nd Airborne All-American, and our
24 armored brigade as well. I want to thank those men and
25 women for being there on the front lines and assisting with

1 your NATO mission.

2 But as we focus on Ukraine we also get very concerned
3 about movement with Russia and the thoughts that perhaps
4 they would also engage in other countries as well. This is
5 something we really have not addressed in this hearing yet.
6 Despite the fact that Russia is stalling a bit in Ukraine,
7 there are a number of Russian troops, I believe about 1,500
8 Russian troops that exist in Moldova. And we are concerned
9 about that. For folks that might be watching out there,
10 Moldova is a country on the southwestern border of Ukraine.

11 So we are concerned about this community, this country
12 as well. So what capabilities, both militarily -- perhaps
13 you can speak to humanitarian issues as well -- but what
14 have we offered to Moldova as a way of reassuring their
15 country as well?

16 General Wolters: Senator, our European strategy calls
17 for comprehensive defense and shared response, and from a
18 EUCOM perspective we examine the 51 nations as part of that
19 grouping, and Moldova is one of them. And whenever there
20 are opportunities to increase our ability to share more info
21 and share more intel, we are attempting to do so. So that
22 for all of Europe we are improving our comprehensive
23 indications and warnings and command and control and
24 feedback so when problems arise we hear about it sooner
25 rather than later. And if there are information pieces that

1 need to go to Moldova sooner rather than later, to help
2 their disposition with respect to participation in a free
3 Europe, we are doing so.

4 And the number of liaisons and the number of times that
5 we exchange has certainly grown over the years.

6 Senator Ernst: Have we seen any movement of those
7 Russian troops that exist in Moldova to reinforce the
8 actions in Ukraine, or do we see any movement shifting from
9 Ukraine into Moldova?

10 General Wolters: At this point, Senator, neither.

11 Senator Ernst: Okay. That is good. So we know that
12 Poland has offered MIG fighter jets, the S-300 anti-aircraft
13 systems, to support the defense of Ukraine, and to this
14 point the United States has chosen not to engage and be
15 party to those transfers or to backfill our NATO allies. My
16 question is not why -- I think there has been a lot of
17 debate about that -- but who specifically is the final
18 authority on making the decision on what gets transferred to
19 who?

20 General Wolters: Senator, with respect to my European
21 job, the national leader is obviously the individual who is
22 responsible for making that policy decision. And I say that
23 because, as you well know, other nations were involved in
24 this transaction. And the first thing that Secretary
25 General Stoltenberg was keen on was the fact that nations

1 can make the choice with this decision and it typically
2 comes from their national leaders.

3 Senator Ernst: And if we shift back to the United
4 States of America, with the assumption that those countries
5 are willing to receive or to transfer if we are to be a
6 party of those actions, if we are transferring items, who is
7 the ultimate authority in that decision-making chain?

8 General Wolters: Our commander in chief.

9 Senator Ernst: Okay. Thank you. I will yield back.

10 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

11 Senator Warren, please.

12 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
13 you, General Wolters, for your leadership in responding to
14 Russia's invasion of Ukraine. I support the Ukrainian
15 people and our allies in this work.

16 So Congress recently approved \$13.6 billion for
17 Ukraine, including \$6.5 for the Pentagon. We also supported
18 NATO partners against Russian aggression for years through
19 the European Deterrence Initiative, or the EDI. But because
20 of the way Congress and DoD set up this fund the Pentagon
21 does not have to explain how EDI spending supports a long-
22 term plan.

23 EDI was first funded through the Overseas Contingency
24 Operations, or OCO, account, which was primarily set up to
25 support operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. But it became a

1 slush fund for the Pentagon to funnel billions of dollars
2 towards programs that were unrelated to those conflict.

3 Now the Biden administration eliminated OCO, and to
4 make sure that EDI did not turn into the same thing Congress
5 required your command to provide annual plans for long-term
6 EDI spending. General Wolters, three of those plans had
7 been due since the fiscal year 2020 NDAA made this
8 requirement the law. How many of those plans have actually
9 been provided to Congress?

10 General Wolters: Senator, I can tell you that EUCOM
11 has made a response, and the transaction between the
12 Department and Congress I am not aware of.

13 Senator Warren: Okay. Well, I will tell you the
14 answer -- zero. Congress has pumped an additional \$13
15 billion into the EDI, and it is now highly likely that the
16 EDI will grow in tandem with our need to support our
17 European allies. So even though these are required by law,
18 we have not gotten these reports.

19 General Wolters, has your command provided the DoD with
20 the information they need to provide those plans to Congress
21 this year so that they can finally follow the law and submit
22 a report?

23 General Wolters: We have, Senator.

24 Senator Warren: I am sorry?

25 General Wolters: We have, Senator.

1 Senator Warren: You have provided the information. I
2 appreciate that because I am counting on seeing that report
3 soon. If we do not, it sounds like the process is breaking
4 down at DoD, and I will follow up with DoD to make sure that
5 we get the report we need. And I appreciate your
6 cooperation in that.

7 In addition to requiring plans for how EDI money would
8 be spent in the upcoming year, the fiscal year 2020 NDAA put
9 in place requirements for an annual report on how EDI money
10 was spent. Congress also never received those reports. So
11 General Wolters, will you make sure that this committee
12 receives a report by November 30th of this year on how EDI
13 money has been spent to date?

14 General Wolters: I will do everything within my
15 command authority to do so, Senator.

16 Senator Warren: All right. Well that one is within
17 your command authority so I very much appreciate that.

18 You know, this committee is being asked to sign off on
19 an \$813 billion in national security spending next year. It
20 is no secret that I think that level of spending is too
21 high. Our strong, multilateral response in Ukraine shows
22 how important it is for us to invest in diplomacy, in
23 helping refugees, and in using all of our foreign policy
24 tools. But that does not mean giving the Pentagon a blank
25 check or shrugging when we do not get the budget information

1 we need to conduct spending oversight. Tracking these
2 dollars is part of how we keep America safe and how we work
3 with our allies.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back my time.

5 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator. And let
6 me recognize Senator Blackburn, please.

7 Senator Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
8 you again to you all for being here.

9 General Wolters, I know this is not because of you.
10 Unfortunately, I think you are on the receiving end of a lot
11 of frustration from people because of the way we have
12 received information regarding Ukraine. And I know that we
13 need to continue to keep a lot of what is happening on the
14 ground in Ukraine in a classified space.

15 But for the second time in less of a year, American is
16 plunged into a military crisis for which our leadership
17 seems unprepared and unaccountable. And I talk to a lot of
18 veterans. As you know, we have got Fort Campbell, we have
19 Arnold Engineering, we have the U.S. Naval Station, we have
20 got Oak Ridge. So a lot of military in our state. And I
21 think that people really want some transparency. They want
22 some answers. They want some accountability.

23 And interestingly enough, silence is a message.
24 Silence is a very strong message. And it is not a message
25 of strength. And I think that it does not work in concert

1 with the principles on which this nation was founded. So I
2 hope that in the near future this committee is going to be
3 able to have an open hearing on the issue of what is
4 happening in Ukraine.

5 Now, I want to go on to a long-term concern that we
6 have discussed, and regardless of what is happening in
7 Ukraine I want us to look at what is happening with Beijing.
8 And maintaining China as the pacing challenge, not just for
9 DoD but for each combatant command is of the utmost
10 importance, and it is something that this committee needs to
11 assist DoD with as well as to hold the different divisions
12 accountable for.

13 So to each of you, very quickly, what are the roles of
14 your combatant commands in supporting the implementation of
15 the 2018 National Defense Strategy with regard to China?

16 And General Wolters, to you first, and then General Van
17 Ovost.

18 General Wolters: Senator, I have to do everything
19 within my power, as the commander of USEUCOM to take a look
20 at the coordinating authority activities that take place
21 inside of my territorial boundaries, and find the ones that
22 have any potential impact with respect to China. And as
23 Admiral Aquilino governs and manages his UCP, he needs to do
24 the same with respect to Russia. And this is a process that
25 has been in place for several years, and it is improving,

1 but it continues to require vigilance and scrutiny and
2 iterations to ensure that we can get better.

3 Senator Blackburn: Let me ask you this. As you look
4 at what is happening with the CCP, what are the trends that
5 are of greatest concern to you?

6 General Wolters: I would contend that it is the
7 activities of allies and partners as they apply to those
8 nations, being able to get what they want or what they
9 should not get.

10 Senator Blackburn: Okay. General Van Ovost?

11 General Van Ovost: Thank you, Senator. With respect
12 to trends that I look at as the Transportation Commander, I
13 monitor their ability to project power around the globe,
14 because that is our operating area, and I am monitoring
15 their investments into ports, and their impact of these
16 investments on our ability to maneuver around the world,
17 their ability to disrupt and degrade our ability to project
18 and sustain a force into the Pacific.

19 Senator Blackburn: Is that the trend that concerns you
20 most? You know, take Djibouti. So their work in areas like
21 that, where they go in under Belt and Road but then they
22 couple that with their military. Is that kind of at the top
23 of your list of concerns?

24 General Van Ovost: On the top of the list of my
25 concerns is the kinetic and non-kinetic threats in the

1 region. But secondarily, as I look to them maneuvering
2 around the globe and influencing other nations' decisions,
3 this is about allies and partners. So the second main thing
4 we are doing is we are trying to thicken our relationship
5 with allies and partners around the world to robust them
6 against these threats. Certainly from our perspective the
7 military threats but also the diplomatic and economic
8 threats that they face from China on a day-to-day basis.

9 Senator Blackburn: So you consider those in total and
10 not separately.

11 General Van Ovost: I do. I do. A whole-of-government
12 approach for all of these allies and partners to be able to
13 robust them. And I will take it a step further. We are
14 inextricably linked to commercial industry. So our
15 commercial industry networks that are around the world right
16 now, we are also working on thickening and protecting them,
17 because they are working in these regions day in and day
18 out, delivering around the world, and we rely on them as
19 well.

20 Senator Blackburn: Thank you. I have some questions I
21 will submit to you all, and thank you very much for your
22 time today.

23 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Blackburn.

25 Let me recognize Senator King, please.

1 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
2 Wolters, Putin has been talking for years about his
3 ostensible claims to Ukraine and part of Russia and all
4 those kinds of things. One of his principal strategic goals
5 seems to be a land bridge between Russia and Crimea. Are
6 they making similar noises about Kaliningrad, and is this
7 something we need to be concerned about, or do they accept
8 that Kaliningrad is essentially landlocked from the east?

9 General Wolters: Sir, with respect to Kaliningrad it
10 is something we should always be concerned about, but over
11 the course of the last 4 to 5 months that has not been an
12 issue, with respect to Russian activity.

13 Senator King: Thank you. Quick question. Speed of
14 shipments, from the time the order is given in Washington to
15 authorize equipment to Ukraine, how long does it take to get
16 to the Polish-Ukrainian border?

17 General Wolters: Senator, it depends. We have been
18 iterating on this. It is improving. And we have seen
19 cases, for example, with a large, armored brigade combat
20 team that we have been able to transact that in weeks as
21 opposed to months.

22 Senator King: So that is improving, and these are
23 timely shipments. The Ukrainians need this equipment right
24 now, not a month from now.

25 General Wolters: It is improving. We have cases with

1 smaller force settlements where it would take 28 to 30 days,
2 and in many of those cases we are down to single-digit days,
3 in less than a week.

4 Senator King: I am not talking about necessarily force
5 elements but materiel, weapons.

6 General Wolters: That falls into the same category.

7 Senator King: Same category. Okay.

8 We heard at the beginning of the invasion that there
9 were something like 200,000 Russian troops in Belarus and in
10 Russia. They have committed many, if not all of those.
11 What reserves do the Russians now have? In other words,
12 what portion of their entire military force, in terms of
13 people, have been committed to Ukraine at this point, and
14 what level of reserves do they have to call upon?

15 General Wolters: Sir, in a different setting I can
16 give you a precise number, but in the 70 to 75 percent
17 category are devoted to this, from a Russian perspective, at
18 this time.

19 Senator King: So a very substantial portion of their
20 total force is committed in Ukraine. Can the Ukrainians
21 succeed in the east as they have around Kyiv? They are
22 going to redeploy in that direction too, I presume, since
23 the Russians are doing so. Do the tactics that they have
24 been able to use in the north and northeast succeed in
25 stalling the Russians or perhaps even pushing them back?

1 General Wolters: Senator, I certainly believe that
2 they can succeed in stalling the Russians.

3 Senator King: Okay. I understand the comment. But
4 have the Ukrainians improved over the course of the past
5 month in their terms of use of the weapons and tactics?
6 They seem to have shown significant success in the last week
7 or two.

8 General Wolters: Absolutely, Senator. The Ukrainian
9 armed forces show a very, very positive learning curve.
10 Hence, I am optimistic about being able to force additional
11 stalling on behalf of the Russians.

12 Senator King: Let me change the subject for a minute.
13 I am concerned that Russia falls into a number of different
14 COCOMs -- I am sorry, the Arctic -- and I am concerned about
15 coordination between the various COCOMs that have a piece of
16 the Arctic defense, because Russia is certainly militarizing
17 on their shore of the Arctic. What steps are there, or do
18 you feel that there is sufficient coordination? The whole
19 idea of a COCOM is somebody is in charge, and if you have
20 got, I think it is three COCOMs that have a piece of the
21 Arctic jurisdiction, do you feel it is sufficiently well
22 coordinated to respond to a Russian action in the Arctic?

23 General Wolters: As you are well aware, Senator, in
24 2019, we established NORTHCOM as the capability advocate for
25 DoD, and in his responsibility today, General VanHerck is

1 doing a tremendous job of orchestrating the support that
2 supports the relationships with the other COCOMs.

3 To the point to where all of us have plans for the
4 Arctic, being held accountable to support those plans so
5 that we can improve our indications and warnings on our
6 command and control and our mission capabilities --

7 Senator King: So NORTHCOM has the lead.

8 General Wolters: NORTHCOM is the capability advocate
9 for DoD for the Arctic.

10 Senator King: I have never heard the term "capability
11 advocate." Does that mean they are in charge?

12 General Wolters: In so many areas it does, especially
13 when it comes to capabilities, which is ever so important
14 for us in the military to deliver the appropriate effect in
15 the environment.

16 Senator King: General, I will have some questions for
17 the record on TRANSCOM. The two specifically are, cyber
18 resilience, which you have cited as a potential problem --
19 or not a potential but a serious problem -- and also what
20 lessons TRANSCOM has learned from the Ukraine experience, a
21 kind of preliminary after-action review, if you will. I
22 will submit those for the record.

23 Thank you very much.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator King.

25 Senator Cotton, please.

1 Senator Cotton: Thank you both for your appearance
2 today and your service to our nation. General Wolters, I am
3 sure you deeply regret this will be your last appearance in
4 front of this committee, as the combatant commander in
5 Europe.

6 A couple of weeks ago Russia shot missiles that landed
7 about 10 miles from Poland's border. You are the combatant
8 commander for American forces in Europe. You are the
9 supreme allied commander for NATO forces. What direction or
10 authorization have you received from the President or from
11 the NATO council about the immediate action you should take
12 if a missile were to hit Polish territory?

13 General Wolters: Continue to fortify the security
14 disposition from a military perspective in air, land, sea,
15 space, and cyber, on the eastern portion of Europe.

16 Senator Cotton: Are you authorized to immediately
17 strike back at that aircraft that launched the missile or a
18 missile battery that fired it?

19 General Wolters: No, I am not.

20 Senator Cotton: By the time you receive that
21 authorization, that aircraft and that missile battery
22 probably would have moved and no longer be susceptible to
23 immediate strike. Is that correct?

24 General Wolters: That is correct. And again, this all
25 applies to activity that occurs in Ukraine, with respect to

1 Russia, not on NATO territory.

2 Senator Cotton: I am disappointed to hear that you do
3 not have that authorization, General.

4 The President said, while he was in Europe, that we are
5 training Ukrainian forces in Poland. Is that accurate?

6 General Wolters: At this time -- was that the time
7 setting of the statement?

8 Senator Cotton: That is what the President said. Jake
9 Sullivan said we are not. I am just trying to figure out if
10 we are or are not.

11 General Wolters: I do not believe that we are in the
12 process of currently training military forces from Ukraine
13 and Poland. There are liaisons that are there that are
14 being given advice, and that is different than I think you
15 are referring to with respect to training.

16 Senator Cotton: A few weeks ago, President Zelensky
17 asked for the transfer of MIG-29 aircraft from Poland. The
18 Secretary of State said that we gave a green light to that.
19 Two days later the Pentagon said it was untenable because
20 they were afraid that it would be escalatory. Were you
21 asked for your best military advice about this decision, and
22 if so, what was it?

23 General Wolters: I was and I provided that best
24 military advice to the Secretary of Defense. If Secretary
25 Austin would like to share that with you I know that he

1 will.

2 Senator Cotton: Can you help me understand how it
3 would be escalatory to provide these aircraft to Poland if
4 they came from us but not if they came from Poland?

5 General Wolters: I think that nations have to make the
6 decision independently about whether or not they want to
7 give aircraft to the Ukraine, and that is certainly the case
8 with respect to Poland's choice. With respect to what we
9 do, part of the decision, from a United States perspective,
10 was metered through the return on investment for the
11 capability of those platforms versus potential escalation.
12 And when that balance was looked at, the decision was made
13 not to advocate giving MIGs to Poland.

14 Senator Cotton: Yeah, I mean, I understand that some
15 people think that these MIGs would not be that useful for
16 Ukraine, and I do not believe they will be a silver bullet,
17 but President Zelensky and the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense
18 has asked for them, and I think this would be a case where
19 we respect their judgments, even if they just use them for
20 spare parts for their aircraft. I think they have earned
21 that right. And I do not think if you are a Russian pilot
22 you view old MIGs as any more escalatory than modern
23 Stingers, if you are the one being shot out of the sky. I
24 suspect you would not either, General.

25 Are we still making distinctions between offensive and

1 defensive weapons that we provide to Ukraine?

2 General Wolters: Senator, I would expect that we are
3 examining each and every one of the weapons and making sure
4 that on a case-by-case basis we are taking into account the
5 escalatory potential that they present.

6 Senator Cotton: I just think that Russia invaded
7 Ukraine. Ukraine is defending its soil. By definition,
8 every weapon it has is defensive.

9 Two weeks ago, the President announced the delivery of
10 a package of arms to include switchblade drones. One week
11 ago, the Pentagon acknowledged that they had not yet been
12 delivered. Have those drones been delivered yet to Ukraine?

13 General Wolters: They have not yet landed in Ukraine.
14 They are in the process.

15 Senator Cotton: Do we know why that is taking so long?

16 General Wolters: I do not at this time, Senator.

17 Senator Cotton: One final question I have here. This
18 is about your placemat on the disposition of U.S. forces.
19 We have 40,000 troops in Germany. That is four times the
20 next-largest troop presence, almost, and 40 percent of our
21 total enhanced presence in Europe now. Is there a strategic
22 reason to have so many troops in Germany, or is that just a
23 historic artifact that it used to be the front lines of the
24 east-west conflict?

25 General Wolters: It has to do with mostly the United

1 States Army and availability of training ranges. So when
2 those force elements come over they can practice shooting,
3 moving, and communicating, and when called to go forward you
4 will have a ready force, and that is because of the long
5 tradition that you have experienced in your Army career of
6 Hohenfels and Grafenwöhr.

7 Senator Cotton: Can you tell me how many of those
8 40,000 troops that we have in Germany have the primary job
9 of shooting a weapon, driving a vehicle, or flying an
10 aircraft that can kill a bad guy?

11 General Wolters: Well over 70 percent.

12 Senator Cotton: So over 70 percent of those 40,000
13 troops have a military occupational specialty or APSC that
14 is about killing bad guys, not supporting frontline troops?

15 General Wolters: That is correct. They are the teeth
16 of the military formation.

17 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

19 Senator Rosen, please.

20 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Chairman Reed, for holding
21 this critically important hearing.

22 General Wolters, I am sure you understand more than
23 most that the world is watching the United States as we
24 support our NATO allies and help the Ukrainian people defend
25 their country from Vladimir Putin's violent, unprovoked war

1 on their democratic way of life.

2 So with this in mind, earlier this month I traveled to
3 Poland and Germany as part of a bipartisan codel to
4 reinforce to the world that Americans stand united in our
5 support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Throughout
6 the trip we did have the privilege of meeting U.S. forces
7 supporting the EUCOM mission, we received briefings from
8 commanders on the situation on the ground in Ukraine, and we
9 saw first-hand the security assistance and training NATO is
10 providing. This trip underscored for me that we can and we
11 must do more, taking additional actions to support Ukraine,
12 helping them to defeat Putin's forces.

13 And so I want to just turn to a little bit of talking
14 about the humanitarian aid, because in Poland we visited a
15 refugee center where displaced Ukrainians were seeking
16 shelter and refuge from Putin's brutality, and I saw women
17 and children -- they were all women and children, primarily
18 -- they fled their homes and the lives they built. We heard
19 on the ground people in Ukraine are running out of food,
20 water, medical supplies.

21 So General, what role is EUCOM playing in supporting
22 the U.S. military's humanitarian mission in the Ukraine, and
23 how concerned are you that potential Russian gains might
24 complicate your efforts to provide both the military and
25 humanitarian assistance that they need?

1 General Wolters: Senator, we are very concerned, and
2 EUCOM is assisting with inventories, transactions back and
3 forth, with security assistance as well as humanitarian
4 assistance, to make sure that from the supply and demand
5 standpoint that the right stuff goes in at the right time,
6 with the best possible force protection. And we will vary
7 as necessary, based off trends that exist in the environment
8 to ensure that we can, as best we can, safely get the right
9 goods to the right people at the right time, both from a
10 security assistance standpoint and both from a humanitarian
11 assistance standpoint. As a military organization we are
12 obviously working side by side with many of our government
13 partners outside of the Department of Defense as well as
14 those that represent departments outside of the Department
15 of Defense in the countries where these transactions are
16 taking place, Poland and others.

17 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I want to move on to cyber
18 threats, because obviously you have alluded to it, General
19 Van Ovost, and of course my colleagues as well. But I want
20 to turn Russian gray zone tactics. Russia has launched
21 malicious cyberattacks to target Ukraine's infrastructure,
22 its government networks, while utilizing disinformation to
23 falsely paint Ukraine, of course, and I am going to quote
24 here, "a Nazi regime."

25 So General Wolters, I have a three-part question for

1 you on Russian hybrid warfare threats. First, have Russian
2 cyberattacks compromised Ukrainian command and control?
3 Second, do we have adequate strategies for countering
4 Russia's information operations in eastern Ukraine? And
5 third, given that NATO, in 2014, declared that a cyberattack
6 could lead to the invocation of Article 5, in your view what
7 should be the threshold for a Russian cyberattack that could
8 lead to invoking Article 5?

9 General Wolters: Senator, the first question that has
10 to do with Ukrainian C2, as I think most of us have seen in
11 the public domain, Ukrainian C2 is currently in place, from
12 a whole-of-government perspective, on Ukraine's part, all
13 the way down to the military. So I would contend that
14 Russia has been very challenged in that area and Ukraine has
15 continued to be successful.

16 I think the strategic implications are profound, and I
17 believe that when we examine what has taken place up to this
18 point, and write books about it in the future, we will look
19 back and conclude and be comfortable with the fact that we
20 have dramatically, from a U.S. perspective and NATO
21 perspective, improved our tactics, techniques, and
22 procedures as they contribute to a campaign in the area of
23 offensive cyber and defensive cyber, as well as the
24 manipulation of how information comes out and how we can
25 ensure that the truth still gets to the appropriate point.

1 And I would just say that when it comes to what NATO
2 does to declare an Article 5, as a military commander what I
3 am responsible for is ensuring that we have all of the fact.
4 And as you well know, Senator, we typically wind up in
5 situations to where the next day after we quickly discover
6 that we did not have all the facts. And what I would owe
7 the North Atlantic Council and NATO so that they could make
8 the appropriate decision is to get as many of those facts as
9 I can and provide my best military advice to the North
10 Atlantic Council that would be responsible for making that
11 decision, all 30 nations, about whether or not to enact
12 Article 5. And in situations like this, when it comes to
13 cyber, it is very difficult to get the facts, and you have
14 to work hard to make sure that you get those, and that would
15 be my responsibility at the time when that would occur.

16 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I see my time is up, but
17 General Van Ovost, I will take this for the record, about
18 investing in the right cyber talent and modernizing IT
19 capabilities in order to support all of this.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen.

22 Senator Cramer, please.

23 Senator Cramer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to
24 both generals for being here and for your incredible
25 service.

1 General Wolters, I want to begin with you, go back to a
2 conversation you had with Senator Wicker, specifically about
3 the distinction of permanent and assigned forces, as we
4 obviously see this increase now in force. And as I
5 understand -- and maybe I will drill down a little more --
6 he was asking about permanent and assigned forces. I think
7 the bottom line was you said we should probably grow them.

8 What I am wondering is over the last several years, as
9 we have been drawing down, EUCOM and CENTCOM, to prepare
10 more forces for other places, specifically the Pacific, and
11 you have talked a little bit with Senator Hirono about the
12 global issue, how do we reconcile the need for more forces
13 everywhere? Do we just grow the force, or does this
14 management of personnel become much more difficult? And by
15 the way, I might also ask, and how does agile combat play
16 into all of that? We, in North Dakota, are very cognizant
17 of the B-52s and the role they have played, exercising,
18 obviously. Maybe just talk a little bit about ACE and how
19 that fits in as well.

20 General Wolters: Well, Senator, first, Agile Combat
21 Employment is very helpful, whether or not you are
22 addressing permanent or rotational forces, to be able to
23 take a unique capacity and quickly insert it into a region,
24 and then when no longer does it deliver the effect that
25 helps enhance peace in that region pull it out and get it

1 back home where it needs to be, to refit and be ready to
2 respond globally. It is incredibly important.

3 With respect to permanently assigned versus rotational,
4 as we have seen, what has unfolded in Ukraine with respect
5 to Russia, it has allowed us the opportunity to take a look
6 at a whole-of-government, multi-domain force and examine
7 what shifts we could possibly make in the future. And I
8 contend that we would probably be wise to examine what has
9 unfolded in Ukraine and Russia and the periphery nations.
10 And certainly from a NATO perspective and being a commander,
11 with respect to those NATO forces, those contributions that
12 those allies and partners have committed impacts the
13 appropriate effect that we can deliver, which goes all the
14 way back to how smart we need to be with respect to making
15 the right decision, giving global ramifications on permanent
16 versus rotational.

17 And the answer is still, I believe it depends. There
18 is always goodness and badness in both cases, but I think we
19 need to be smart about it and refit just a little bit and
20 examine what has unfolded here, to make a prudent decision
21 going forward.

22 Senator Cramer: Well said, and you actually
23 anticipated my next question and answered it, so thank you.

24 Speaking of whole-of-government, General Van Ovost, you
25 probably are as engaged in the whole-of-government approach

1 as much, or more importantly, probably, than anybody. There
2 are two things that you have said, one in your opening
3 statement -- I think it was your opening statement -- where
4 you said something to the effect that "I look forward to
5 working with the Navy to satisfy restrictions in current
6 law." I think that was regarding the building of ships,
7 right? Could you just elaborate a little bit on "satisfy
8 restrictions in current law"? Should we be changing the
9 restrictions? Are you implying that, or are you just saying
10 there is a lot of bureaucracy we have to work through, and
11 help me help you?

12 General Van Ovost: Thanks, Senator. The authorization
13 is to purchase up to 9 used sealift ships, 4 ships without a
14 requirement for new build, but in order to purchase the
15 fifth ship the Navy has to submit a plan for 10 new ships
16 being build, sealift or OSV, general utility type ships, so
17 we can continue to purchase used number 5 through number 9.
18 So in 2021, we have now purchased two ships, and we have
19 been given the appropriation to purchase 5 more used ships,
20 but we will only right now be able to purchase 2 more until
21 either the law is changed or the Navy submits a plan that is
22 satisfactory to the committees.

23 Senator Cramer: I understand. So we need to work on
24 that.

25 You also referenced, in a conversation -- I do not

1 remember which Senator it was; it might have been Hirono --
2 you referenced the term "thickening partners" a couple of
3 times, I think. What I am wondering is, have you seen, in
4 recent months or recent years, a changing, if you will, or a
5 growing cooperation among our partners, with our partners in
6 the Pacific, specifically, to allow, for example, better
7 access to ports and navigability that maybe was not there in
8 the not-so-distant past? Are you seeing some improvement?

9 General Van Ovost: Senator, I would say we are seeing
10 improvement. The fine points of that improvement I would
11 leave to Admiral Aquilino. But as we look to both our
12 military and our commercial networks, as we are increasing
13 our activities and exercises and interoperability with our
14 allies and partners in the Pacific, we are seeing an
15 increase.

16 Senator Cramer: Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr.
17 Chairman.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cramer.

19 Senator Duckworth, please.

20 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
21 you both General Van Ovost and General Wolters for joining
22 us today.

23 As we near the milestone of one month into the invasion
24 of Ukraine we are hitting a critical moment in our pledge to
25 support Ukraine and our NATO allies. What were once seen as

1 ad hoc efforts to gather and distribute aid to the Ukrainian
2 heroes combatting Russian aggression has become a new
3 normal. What was once an emergent situation will now test
4 our commitment and our resilience as the fatigue of warfare
5 sets in?

6 This new reality will stress our own logistics networks
7 as we have to reinforce our delivery mechanisms into Ukraine
8 in order to deter Russian interdiction, and it will
9 challenge our industry partners to reopen or accelerate
10 manufacturing lines to incorporate into the next aid package
11 and to replenish our own stockpiles.

12 So I would like to start off by discussing the status
13 of our inter-theater capabilities, which are critical to the
14 work that we are doing in Europe, and will be just as
15 critical if ever needed for a contingency in the Pacific.

16 During our last meeting, General Van Ovost, we
17 discussed your plans to reduce the age of your strategic
18 maritime assets by purchasing used replacement ships. This
19 strategy is clearly proving successful, but with 34 or your
20 50 assets set to retire I am concerned that we are not
21 moving fast enough.

22 General Van Ovost, what are the biggest obstacles you
23 face in your strategy to buy used maritime assets, and what
24 can Congress do to support your efforts during fiscal year
25 2023?

1 General Van Ovost: Thank you, Senator. And as we
2 discussed, the aging ships are costing more to maintain, and
3 even with that more money we are not getting the readiness
4 bang out of that buck. So we have had to make some prudent
5 and cost-effective decisions to accelerate retirements of
6 platforms even without a backfill.

7 I think most importantly a stable plan of
8 recapitalization with used ships to ensure that we get the
9 most value out of it, and also to stabilize the shipyards,
10 because these ships do go back and get modifications done as
11 they come into the ready reserve fleet, so a nice, stable
12 platform for buy, about 4 a year, would be very helpful to
13 close and be able to mitigate those gaps.

14 But I also wanted to just reiterate that, you know, our
15 organic fleet will never be able to do everything we need to
16 do, so maintaining a healthy ready reserve fleet is good,
17 but I also want to thank this committee for their work on
18 not only on the continued stipend for the MSP but also for
19 the tanker security program that we just started, to provide
20 U.S.-crewed, U.S.-flagged ships for both fuel movement and
21 for our regular maritime security program. These are force
22 multipliers for us to ensure that we can continue to project
23 and sustain the force into the future.

24 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. For my second question
25 I want to turn back to logistics, but in Europe. I would

1 like to touch on issues of lessons learned and potential
2 obstacles for the future. And I know we have already had a
3 bit of a discussion on the EDI with my colleague from
4 Oklahoma, Senator Inhofe. Given that we are nearly 4 weeks
5 into this conflict in Ukraine and a month and a half into
6 our increased presence and posture, we must take the
7 opportunity to evaluate this strategy and look forward to
8 what logistic challenges may be in our future.

9 So General Wolters, I would like to give you the
10 opportunity to sort of discuss what lessons related to
11 logistics should we be learning from U.S. operations in
12 Europe, and what steps should we be taking during this
13 fiscal year's budget cycle to plan for the enduring
14 logistics challenge of a prolonged war in Ukraine, as well
15 as the recovery that will come after that?

16 General Wolters: Senator, as you well know from your
17 history this take constant scrutiny, constant iterations,
18 constant willingness to listen and process and improve. And
19 we, during the start of this campaign, in the vicinity of 27
20 February, stood up two logistics cells that actually iterate
21 on all these processes. One is EUCOM-represented and the
22 other one is internationally represented. And at the end of
23 the day you have got to get the right stuff in at the right
24 time, and it has to be appropriately defended so that those
25 individuals that are responsible for what we are putting in

1 and protected, and when it goes into the actionable area,
2 Ukraine, it is put to good use. And then you have to track
3 it every second along the way.

4 And we have that data, are maintaining that data, and
5 we continue to iterate the process and improve, all the way
6 from acquiring it in CONUS to where it gets to the operator
7 in Ukraine, to make sure that we are doing the right thing
8 from a logistics standpoint. And that is actually what
9 those two cells are charged to do, as well as current-day
10 ops. And at the end of the day it takes gigantic elbow
11 grease, every millisecond of the day, to get right, and you
12 have to wake up the next morning and tell yourself you are
13 probably not doing it right and be prepared to iterate one
14 more time. And that is what those two cells are currently
15 in the process of doing at Stuttgart.

16 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
17 Chairman.

18 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Duckworth.

19 Senator Tuberville, please.

20 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Good morning. Thanks
21 to both of you for your service. General Van Ovest, in
22 2017, China put their first military base in Africa, in
23 Djibouti. Now it looks like they are possibly going to put
24 one on the Atlantic side, Equatorial Guinea. Does that give
25 you any concerns in TRANSCOM?

1 General Van Ovost: Senator, it absolutely does. As
2 they begin to elbow their way into these countries they will
3 begin to effect their economic decisions and their
4 diplomatic decision, which could disrupt or delay our
5 ability to access those same areas. So I am concerned about
6 their building operations around the world as they are
7 trying to protect their growing interests, not only in South
8 America but in Africa.

9 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. General Wolters, off
10 the question here a little bit. Do we still have Afghan
11 refugees in your purview?

12 General Wolters: Sir, we just closed out the last set
13 that were at Camp Bechtel. They are safe and secure in
14 another country right now.

15 Senator Tuberville: How many do you think you have
16 processed through your venue?

17 General Wolters: We actually processed 70,000 through
18 the four sites in Europe.

19 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Awesome job.

20 What do Finland and Sweden bring to the table in NATO?

21 General Wolters: Sir, the first thing they bring is
22 forces that are ready, and they have a history of doing some
23 wonderful things against folks that elect to violate their
24 sovereignty. And their ready forces help lead from the
25 front, many of the other national forces that represent the

1 NATO nations.

2 Senator Tuberville: They have a pretty strong
3 military, considering their size?

4 General Wolters: Yes, sir.

5 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Why do you think they
6 shot hypersonics in Ukraine when they did not have to?

7 General Wolters: I think it was to demonstrate the
8 capability and attempt to put fear in the hearts of the
9 enemy, and I do not think they were successful.

10 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. What did it hit? Or was it
11 one or two?

12 General Wolters: There have been multiple launches.
13 Most of them have been directed at military targets, still
14 TBD based off the intelligence returns. But what I can say
15 is most of those strikes have been designated at specific
16 military targets.

17 Senator Tuberville: One went from one side of the
18 country to the other. I mean, that takes a lot of guts to
19 do that, know that, I guess, they knew it was going to work.

20 You know, when I was over in Ukraine a few months ago,
21 the generals there were telling me about the new armor that
22 they were putting on tanks. Has that been successful for
23 Russia? I notice a lot of tanks are torn up. Do you have
24 any information on that? Have they held up, you know, the
25 new armor, to the Javelins and the Stingers?

1 General Wolters: Sir, this is pretty anecdotal but the
2 feedback we are getting is if you have a lot of anti-armor,
3 anti-tank munitions you can slow down a tank. So even their
4 new armor has some chinks in their armor, so to speak, with
5 respect to multiple projectiles being launched at them.

6 Senator Tuberville: Have we seen any new weapons,
7 other than hypersonic, used in this war?

8 General Wolters: No, sir.

9 Senator Tuberville: I am anxious to see how the
10 switchblades work. I think that could be a huge benefit for
11 us down the road, and hopefully to Ukraine.

12 Let's see. I have a couple more here.

13 General Van Ovest, Alabama is proud to have been
14 selected as the permanent home of the U.S. Space Command, in
15 Huntsville. Recently there have been comments made that
16 question if the command would be able to easily move from
17 their temporary home. That obviously would be part of your
18 purview there. I just want to say that I have every
19 confidence in your ability to guide TRANSCOM through
20 facilitating this move following the IG's decision in the
21 near future. If you can pull off the last-minute
22 Afghanistan evacuation, this should be a piece of cake. But
23 hopefully we can get that done.

24 I yield my time, and, General, thank you for your
25 service. I hope you are looking forward to playing golf and

1 fishing. Thank you.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Tuberville.

3 Senator Peters, please.

4 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 General Wolters, let me first congratulate you and
6 thank you for your 40 years of service. Your leadership and
7 dedication to the men and women of our Armed Forces and our
8 allies and partners has certainly helped shape the
9 unprecedented strength and the unity of NATO against Putin's
10 criminal aggression, so thank you.

11 In your posture statement you highlight this is a
12 perhaps the last time you expect to testify as EUCOM
13 commander, and the history has yet to be written about how
14 the illegal invasion of Ukraine concludes. We will continue
15 to count on you to remain steadfast in a difficult challenge
16 until the time as you pass the mantle of leadership for
17 EUCOM commander and NATO supreme allied commander of Europe.

18 General Wolters, in November of 2020, a trilateral
19 ceasefire agreement was signed between Armenia, Azerbaijan,
20 and Russia, to conclude the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh,
21 and it seems as if Azerbaijan has taken advantage of the
22 conflict in Ukraine by launching unprovoked assaults against
23 Armenian villages. Given Russia's poor military performance
24 in Ukraine, I am concerned about their ability to keep the
25 peace, especially as they may need to draw on the 2,000

1 Russian troops that are deployed there.

2 So my question for you sir, is what actions are we
3 taking and what actions should we be taking to promote peace
4 and stability in the Caucasus?

5 General Wolters: Senator, what we have to do first is
6 ensure that through the defense attaché offices in
7 Azerbaijan is get the facts with respect to the activities
8 in Nogorno-Karabakh, and as you can well imagine right now
9 there is lots of finger-pointing taking place back and
10 forth. And the facts, as we know right now, is that
11 Russia's involvement in imposing good order and discipline
12 in that scenario was very little and very curious.

13 So we will continue to gather the facts and then take
14 the next step forward with respect to Russia's play in this
15 activity and with respect to Nogorno-Karabakh's activities
16 of their defense force and the Azerbaijan force.

17 Senator Peters: Great. General Wolters, nowhere in
18 the world is the power of our alliance more evident than
19 NATO, and the Michigan National Guard is proud to play a
20 role in that alliance at Latvia's partner for nearly 30
21 years, through the National Guard's State Partnership
22 Program. In January, members of the Latvian National Armed
23 Forces trained on air and ground force synchronization at
24 Joint Terminal Attack Controllers at Camp Grayling,
25 Michigan.

1 My question for you, sir, is how valuable is the state
2 partnership program to your security cooperation initiatives
3 and do you consider this an area of high return on
4 investment in your AOR?

5 General Wolters: Sir, I would consider it an area of
6 very high return on investment. The disposition of the
7 force elements in Latvia today are very robust. There are
8 lots of U.S. entities in Latvia as we speak, and they are
9 able to shoot, move, and communicate side by side with
10 Latvian armed forces to a far more lethal degree than they
11 have in the past, as a result of the State Partnership
12 Program.

13 Senator Peters: General Wolters, I understand that one
14 brigade set of the U.S. Army's most modern Abrams tank has
15 been deployed from the Army's pre-position stock in Germany
16 to Poland, to enhance NATO's deterrence posture. Given the
17 use of heavy armored forces by Russia in Ukraine is
18 continued, is rapid mobilization of the Abrams as the most
19 powerful ground combat vehicle that we have important to
20 you, as a combat commander in Europe?

21 General Wolters: It is, Senator. It is a tremendous
22 force multiplier when it comes to deterrence.

23 Senator Peters: And is the recent decision by Poland
24 to upgrade its tanks to the U.S. Army's Abrams to replace
25 older Russian-designs a significant development for NATO and

1 allied nations in Europe?

2 General Wolters: Absolutely yes, Senator.

3 Senator Peters: General Van Ovost, in your posture
4 statement you highlighted the significance of air refueling
5 mission and stressed the importance of timely
6 recapitalization. I spoke with Secretary Kendall just last
7 week and we each agree that it is critical that Congress
8 provides the Air Force with the right systems needed to
9 deliver needed capabilities. And while the 2006 RAND
10 analysis of alternatives may be somewhat outdated, it
11 certainly outlined a few recapitalization options.

12 So my question for you, ma'am, is from a capabilities
13 standpoint what do you think is the best recapitalization
14 strategy?

15 General Van Ovost: Thank you, Senator. As I said the
16 air refueling is the lifeblood of our ability to project and
17 employ a force. And if I could also mention that we cannot
18 do it without the total force, so I appreciate the National
19 Guard capacity.

20 The best way to recapitalize is to have a stable plan
21 that gets after the capabilities we are going to need in the
22 future. The KC-46 is the future of air refueling because it
23 can do multiple things, and it is connected to the battle,
24 both with Link 16 and ability to be able to get
25 communications offboard and long-range from that aircraft

1 securely.

2 So as we look to develop what capabilities we need in
3 the future, in a contested environment, we will be looking
4 at the lessons from the KC-46, and I will be working with
5 the Air Force to describe those requirements into the
6 future.

7 Senator Peters: Great. Well thank you. Thank you,
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Peters.

10 I want to thank both the witnesses, General Wolters,
11 not only for your testimony but for your extraordinary
12 service over many, many decades. You are in the most, at
13 this moment, critical position, I think, in the military,
14 and we are all fortunate that you are there. And thank you
15 very much, and please communicate that to the men and women,
16 particularly the 82nd Airborne Division. Yes, sir. All-
17 American.

18 And General Van Ovost, thank you very much for your
19 thoughtful approach to these problems and your very clear
20 signals to us that we need to make some significant and
21 difficult decisions with respect to reconfiguring our
22 logistics, particularly in conflicted areas.

23 With that, in the absence of any further questions from
24 my colleagues here, I will adjourn the hearing.

25 [Whereupon, at 11:17 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]