HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON

UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND

Thursday, March 23, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:34 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John McCain, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Chairman McCain: Well, good morning.

The Senate Armed Services Committee meets this morning to receive testimony on the posture of U.S. European Command. I would like to welcome General Scaparrotti, who is back before the committee. I am sure he has been eagerly awaiting that opportunity. We thank you for your decades of distinguished service and for your leadership of our men and women in uniform.

This morning, our thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones of the four innocent people killed and dozens more injured in an attack in the heart of London that police believe was inspired by radical Islamist terrorists. We stands in solidarity with the British people, committed as ever to our special relationship and to the common defense of our security and our values.

3 years ago this last week, Russia violated Ukrainian sovereignty and annexed Crimea, a seminal event that revealed what had already been increasingly obvious for years: that the United States and our European allies confront an aggressive, militarily capable Russian Government that is hostile to our interests and our values and willing to use force not as a last resort but as a primary tool to achieve its revisionist objectives. Many
believe this challenge had been consigned to the history
books. And indeed, the United States operated under that
assumption for far too long, drastically reducing our
military presence, allowing our intelligence capabilities to
wither, and unilaterally disengaging from the information
fight.

I might add that yesterday we received information that
Sergei Magnitsky who was murdered by Vladimir Putin’s thugs—
his lawyer was thrown from a fourth floor room. I mean,
this kind of stuff you cannot make up. And it is an
indication of Vladimir Putin’s feeling of impunity that he
can go around killing people without any penalty to pay.
And I am sure that what Mr. Putin was trying to do is send a
message to anybody else in Russia who wants to stand up
against him. I digress.

3 years later, I regret to say the United States still
has not adjusted to the scope, scale, and severity of the
new strategic reality we face in Europe. We continue to
lack coherent policy and strategy to deter conflict and
prevent aggression in Europe. Despite important progress
made through the European Deterrence Initiative, we still
have no long-term vision for U.S. force posture in Europe,
one that accounts for Russia’s rapid military modernization,
evolving nuclear doctrine, violations of the INF Treaty,
advanced anti-access/area denial threat concentrated in
Kaliningrad, and significant military buildup along its western border.

Indeed, as General Scaparrotti points out in his written testimony -- and I quote -- the ground force permanently assigned to EUCOM is inadequate to meet the combatant command’s directed mission to deter Russia from further aggression.

The new administration has an opportunity to turn the page and design a new policy and strategy in Europe backed by all elements of American power and decisive political will. General Scaparrotti, we hope you can help this committee begin to think through the basic requirements for such a policy and strategy and what resources and authority you need both as European Commander and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe to deter and, if necessary, defeat aggression against the United States and our allies.

Some of the features of a new approach in Europe are already clear. For example, the need to enhance the forward presence of U.S. military forces and provide defensive lethal assistant to Ukraine. But we still have a lot of work to do in other areas, particularly in countering Russian disinformation and devising gray zone strategies for competition below the threshold of major conflict.

What is also clear is that no U.S. policy or strategy in Europe can be successful without our NATO allies. At the
2014 NATO Summit in Wales, the leaders of every NATO ally pledged to reach the goal of spending 2 percent of their GDP on defense by 2024. The good news is that according to NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, defense budgets across Europe and Canada increased by 3.8 percent last year, or by some $10 billion.

This is important progress, but we must be careful not to reduce the NATO alliance of the notion of burden sharing to simply 2 percent. Our allies do not just need to spend more, they need to spend better. One senior European official recently said that Europe spends roughly 50 percent of the United States on defense, but produces just 15 percent of the capability because defense purchases are uncoordinated, duplicative, and inefficient. That is why enhancing European security is not just a job for NATO but also for the European Union, which has an important role to play in encouraging cooperative defense acquisition and operation of modernized defense equipment.

Finally, we must never forget that the essential contributions America’s allies make to our national security are not measured in dollars alone. After the September 11th attacks killed 2,600 Americans and 135 citizens of NATO countries, for the first time in history, our NATO allies invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. NATO troops went to fight side by side with American troops in
Afghanistan, and over 1,000 of them made the ultimate sacrifice.

The price our NATO allies paid in blood fighting alongside us should never be diminished. And we must never forget that America is safer and more secure because it has allies that are willing to step up and share the burden of collective security.

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

Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for holding this timely and important hearing.

And I join you in solidarity with our British allies and applaud your comments.

Thanks also to General Scaparrotti for your nearly 40 years of service in the military, your leadership in Afghanistan, Korea, and now at U.S. European Command. Also, please pass along our sincere gratitude for the outstanding service of all the men and women who serve with you in EUCOM. Thank you, General.

The transatlantic relationship is a cornerstone of U.S. national security and the international order established at the end of World War II. Our European allies and partners have stood with us in maintaining the peace, including in coalition operations in Afghanistan and fighting terrorist extremists in Iraq and Syria. The NATO alliance remains strong and is grounded in a shared vision of an integrated and stable Europe rooted in respect for sovereignty and political and economic freedom.

I am concerned, however, about the mixed signals that the current administration seems to be sending regarding the U.S. commitment to NATO and the willingness to cut a deal with Russia. Secretary Tillerson’s reported decision to
skip a NATO foreign ministers meeting next month and take a
trip to Moscow prior to a NATO summit in May has raised
cravings in some European capitals. I urge Secretary
Tillerson to reconsider his attendance at NATO next month
and send a strong signal of our unwavering support for the
alliance.

The broad and growing challenges facing the EUCOM
Commander mean that alliance unity is more important than
ever. The cohesion of NATO is being directly threatened by
Russia. President Putin has repeatedly shown he will use
military force to assert a Russian sphere of influence over
its neighbors and to undermine their further integration
into Europe. Nowhere is this more evident than in Ukraine
where Russia has used hybrid warfare tactics to seize Crimea
and continues to support militarily and financially Russian-
led separatists in eastern Ukraine, in violation of Russia’s
commitments under the Minsk agreements. As we heard at
Tuesday’s panel of distinguished former government
officials, it is critically important that we assist Ukraine
in resisting Russian pressure and instituting democratic
reforms. A successful, reformed Ukraine would provide a
powerful alternative to Putin’s autocratic rule.

The United States has taken significant steps in recent
years to rebuild its military presence in Europe and
reassure our allies and partners threatened by renewed
Russian aggression. The European Deterrence Initiative, or EDI, and the NATO enhanced forward presence have increased the rotational presence of forces in Eastern Europe. In addition, while many NATO members to fall short of the 2 percent of GDP target for defense spending, defense budgets among NATO nations are increasing and a number of allies are making significant in-kind contributions as well. Questions remain, however, whether we have the appropriate mix of forces in Europe, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and I hope you will address these questions this morning.

Russia is deploying the full array of tools in the Kremlin playbook to challenge the West. This includes aggressive actions in the nuclear realm. I agree with the experts on Tuesday’s panel regarding the importance of responding strongly to Russia’s fielding of a missile system in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces, or INF, Treaty. In addition, Russia’s nuclear doctrine of escalate to deescalate is not only deeply disturbing but potentially catastrophic.

Also disconcerting is Russia’s increasing boldness in using non-military tools to target Western democracies and advance Putin’s strategic aims. Russia is employing an array of covert and overt asymmetric weapons in the gray zone short of military conflict, including cyber hacking, disinformation, propaganda, economic leverage, corruption,
and even political assassination. To counter this insidious Russian interference, we must begin by recognizing it as a national security threat. Further, the intelligence community has warned that the kinds of Kremlin-directed malign activities witnessed in last year’s U.S. presidential election are likely to re-occur in the future, including during elections in France, Germany, and elsewhere in Europe this year. Responding to this national security threat will require a whole-of-government approach and a comprehensive strategy for pushing back against Russia broadly.

EUCOM faces a number of other challenges as well. This includes increasing instability in the Balkans where Russian influence operations are feeding Serbian resentments both in Serbia and among Bosnian Serbs. In addition, in the Balkans, where traditionally a moderate form of Islam has been practiced, there are growing Islamic Salafist influences as a result of a mosque-building campaign funded by Saudi Arabia. On its southeastern border, EUCOM must contend with the instability arising from Syria and the transnational threats emanating from that conflict. And to the south, the migration crisis in the Mediterranean countries continues to strain European resources for security. General, I am interested in hearing how NATO is handling these myriad of problems and how the United States can be helpful.
Again, I want to thank General Scaparrotti for his service and I look forward to this morning to his testimony.

Chairman McCain: Good morning, General.
STATEMENT OF GENERAL CURTIS M. SCAPARROTTI, USA,
COMMANDER, U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND/SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER,
EUROPE

General Scaparrotti: Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to testify today as the Commander of the United States European Command. On behalf of over 60,000 permanently assigned service members, as well as civilians, contractors, and their families who serve and represent our Nation in Europe, thank you for your support.

Before starting, I would like to also express my condolence on behalf of the entire European Command team for the civilians and policemen killed and wounded in yesterday’s terrorist attack in the UK. Our thoughts and prayers go out to these victims and their families impacted by this senseless attack. We strongly condemn this attack and will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with our NATO ally and our partners to defeat terrorism.

Chairman, the European theater remains critical to our national interests. The transatlantic alliance gives us a unique advantage over our adversaries, a united, capable warfighting alliance resolved in its purpose and strengthened by shared values that have been forged in battle. EUCOM’s relationship with NATO and the 51 countries within our AOR provides the United States with a network of
willing partners who support global operations and secure international rules-based order. Our security architecture protects more than 1 billion people and has safeguarded transatlantic trade which now constitutes almost half of the world’s GDP.

However, this security architecture is being tested, and today we face the most dynamic European strategic environment in recent history. Political volatility and economic uncertainty are compounded by threats to our security system that are trans-regional, multi-domain, and multi-functional. In the east, a resurgent Russia has turned from partner to antagonist as it seeks to reemerge as a global power. Countries along Russia’s periphery, including Ukraine and Georgia, struggled against Moscow’s malign activities and military actions. In the southeast, strategic drivers of instability converge on key allies, especially Turkey, which has to simultaneously manage Russia, terrorists, and refugee flows. In the south, violent extremists and transnational criminal elements spawn terror and corruption from North Africa to the Middle East, while refugees flee to Europe in search of security and opportunity. And in the high north, Russia is reasserting its military presence and positioning itself for strategic advantage in the Arctic.

In response to these challenges, EUCOM has shifted its
focus from security cooperation and engagement to deterrence and defense. Accordingly, we are adjusting our posture, our plans, our readiness so that we remain relevant to the threats we face. In short, we are returning to the historic role as a warfighting command focused on deterrence and defense.

EUCOM’s transition would not be possible without the congressional support of the European Deterrence Initiative. Thanks in large measure to ERI, or EDI, over the last 12 months, EUCOM has made clear progress with an enhanced forward presence or force presence, complex exercises and training, infrastructure improvements, increased prepositioning of equipment and supplies, and partner capacity building throughout Europe.

But we cannot meet these challenges alone. In response to Russian aggression, EUCOM has continued to strengthen our relationship with strategic allies and partners, including the Baltic nations, Poland, Turkey, and Ukraine. EUCOM has also strengthened ties with Israel, one of our closest allies. Above all, EUCOM has supported the NATO alliance which remains, as Secretary Mattis said, the bedrock of our transatlantic security.

Thus, EUCOM posture is growing stronger, and I remain confident in our ability to affect this transition. But there is much work to do. We must not only match but
outpace the modernization and advances of our adversaries. We must invest in the tools and capabilities needed to increase effectiveness across the spectrum of conflict. And we must ensure that we have a force that is credible, agile, and relevant to the dynamic demands of this theater.

To this end, EUCOM has identified the following focus areas: ISR collection platforms that improve timely threat information and strategic warning; land force capabilities that deter Russia from further aggression; enhanced naval capabilities for antisubmarine warfare, strike warfare, and amphibious operations; prepositioned equipment to increase our responsiveness to crisis and enhance missile defense systems.

Let me conclude by again thanking this committee’s members and staff for their continued support of EUCOM not only through increased funding but also by helping us to articulate the challenges that lie before us. Support from other senior leaders and, above all, the public at home and across Europe is vital to ensuring that we have a ready and relevant force.

This remains a pivotal time for EUCOM as we transition to meet the demands of a dynamic security environment. I remain confident that through the strength of our alliances and partnerships and with the professionalism of our service members, we will adapt and ensure Europe remains whole,
free, and at peace.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Scaparrotti follows:]
Chairman McCain: Since a quorum is now present, I ask the committee to consider a list of 62 pending military nominations. All of these nominations have been before the committee the required length of time. Is there a motion to favorably report these 62 military nominations?

Senator Reed: So moved.

Chairman McCain: And is there a second?

Senator Nelson: Second.

Chairman McCain: All in favor, say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman McCain: The ayes have it.

General, do you have any general comment about the attack yesterday in London and the significance of it?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, the attack in London underscores again the dynamic environment in Europe. Europe is challenged by both a flow of terrorists returning to Europe from Syria and other places. They are challenged by an internal threat of those inspired by ISIS or directed by ISIS. And this is an example of the attacks that we have seen in Europe in the past year. It is a difficult challenge. As I said, we remain solid and stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies in NATO to defeat this threat.

Chairman McCain: The likelihood of further actions like this, particularly some that are self-indoctrinated, is very hard to stop.
General Scaparrotti: It is, sir. And I would just say
that the number of threat streams that we have of this type
within Europe is probably higher in Europe than any other
part of the globe with the exception of the places that we
are actually physically fighting in like Syria and
Afghanistan and Iraq.

Chairman McCain: Is there a connection between that
and refugees?

General Scaparrotti: The flow of refugees and those
who move them, particularly criminal activities that will
help move them -- they also are more than willing to move
both equipment, personnel, weapons, and people.

Chairman McCain: As you know, there was an attempted
coup in Montenegro by the Russians. And the Montenegrin
membership in NATO is pending, and 26 of the 28 nations I
believe have already registered their approval. It is a
small country, only 650,000 people. It is very
strategically located, as you know. What is your view of
the importance of Montenegro especially since they have
completed all of the very difficult procedures necessary to
become eligible -- what is your view of the importance of
their inclusion in NATO?

General Scaparrotti: Chairman, it is absolutely
critical that they be brought into NATO. They have had this
desire. They have met the map. And it underscores NATO’s
outreach and ability to bring in those who want to determine
their own means of government and become a part of NATO. If
we were to lose this, it would set back many of the other
countries and peoples, particularly in Eastern Europe, who
are looking forward to and have their eyes set on the West
and becoming a part of NATO.

Chairman McCain: So it is very important.

General Scaparrotti: I think it is critical, yes.

Chairman McCain: I thank you.

Finally, you talked about the military presence
necessary for additional forces in Europe, but one of the
problems we continue to face -- for example, one of the
causes of the attempted coup in Montenegro is the saturation
of propaganda emanating from Russia. We all know the
controversy here in the United States about our election,
but we now see them active in the French election
apparently, in the German election. But more importantly,
they are inundating the Baltics in particular. What are our
ideas other than ask for a strategy? What are our ideas as
to how to counter what has emerged as one of the greatest
threats to stability in Europe?

General Scaparrotti: Chairman, I think, first of all,
we have to confront this threat as it is, be sober-minded
about it. We have to do it as an alliance and with our
partners, and we have to call it out. We have to confront
it. There seems to be a reluctance in many of the nations to actually confront it when we see it, publicly take it on. And I think we as partners have to form together and begin to do this. As you said, it is prolific, and I believe we have got to confront it.

Chairman McCain: We countered Russian propaganda during the Cold War with Radio Free Europe and Voice of America. And all I have seen so far is disarray in Prague about the role, the funding, the strategies and all that. What do you think we need to do there to have our own effective counter-message to be sent? I know that is not exactly in your area of responsibility, but I think it is a kind of warfare.

General Scaparrotti: Sir, it is. The Russians see this as a part of that spectrum of warfare. That is their asymmetric approach.

I will start here. You know, we have information operations that are military, and I have those that are countering malign influence in Europe. But what we really need is we need a whole-of-government approach, a whole-of-government information campaign, of which I am a small part of that. We need somebody in the lead of that, and then we need to finance it and form a governmental strategy. As you said, in the Cold War, we had one. There is a start on that. We have what is called the RIG, the Russian
Information Group, which is the beginnings of that. But that has to be reinforced. It has to be financed. They have to have the authorities that they need to lead that forward.

Chairman McCain: And the lead on that would probably be the State Department. Right?

General Scaparrotti: The RIG is co-chaired with EUCOM and the State Department is the lead. Yes, sir.

Chairman McCain: So it would not help you any if we slashed the spending for the State Department.

General Scaparrotti: No, sir.

Chairman McCain: Senator Reed?

Senator Reed: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. In fact, you anticipated one of the questions I wanted to raise about the malign influences in elections and institutional capacity that are evident in Europe today. And I think I can safely say that we are really not organized to deal with it at this point. Is that correct?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir. I agree we can get much better organized to deal with this than we are today.

Senator Reed: Let me just go a step further and say that in your estimate, what are the strategic effects that the Russians are trying to achieve by these activities? This is not sort of a random kind of just stir up trouble for the sake of stirring up trouble. What are the strategic
objectives?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, their overall objective is to undermine the governments that oppose them, to reinforce the political parties in each of those countries that might be aligned with them, to demonstrate the weakness of the West and undermine the U.S. and the West. They want to ensure that they can dominate particularly their periphery. And they are doing that through this asymmetric approach.

Senator Reed: Now, you have indicated that particularly with the European Defense Initiative and with the response initiative, we are beginning to reorganize, re-equip, et cetera. Can you give us a sense of your priorities? You had a long list of activities that you feel you have to undertake. But the top three issues that you have to get accomplished in the near future.

General Scaparrotti: Sir, the top three that we have to get accomplished -- I think, first of all, is we have to get our posture correct for deterrence, and that is across all the services. It not just -- we tend to focus on the Army part of this, but each of the services play a role in that.

Secondly, we have to ensure that our command has made the transition to a command that can command and control in the dynamic environment against an aggressor like Russia. We just recently had our command post exercise we have every
2 years. It was a great exercise, but what it laid out is the changes we have yet to make within the component commands in Europe in order to fight a foe like Russia.

Senator Reed: And with respect to Ukraine, our expert panel on Tuesday, who did a superb job, suggested that is really the critical arena at the moment. If they are able to subvert Ukraine, then that will send shock waves throughout Europe. Is that in your assessment? And just generally, how are we collectively, both NATO, the United States, EUCOM, and the EU, doing in terms of our efforts in the Ukraine?

General Scaparrotti: I think the good news with respect to Ukraine is that we are unified and we are organized. NATO has a defense fund that supports it along very similar lines to the U.S. We are thankful to Congress for its funding of our activities there. In fact, we lead a multinational joint commission, which is actually the vehicle that among our allies and the U.S., assesses and then directs the reform that needs to take place in conjunction with Ukraine. They also do the assessment of the needs in terms of equipment and training and guide that training. So we are actually doing that together with our partners, as well as NATO through that one body. And I think it is very effective.

Senator Reed: And in that regard, a great deal -- my
impression is -- of the civilian capacity building and the
anti-corruption efforts is being done by the European Union.
So their efforts are absolutely critical to U.S. success.
Is that fair?

General Scaparrotti: That is true, sir, and it is
critical. Our connection to EU, as well as NATO’s, has been
in the forefront here for the past year or so for many
reasons, and that is one of them.

Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Fischer?

Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And welcome, General. It is nice to see you again.

As you know, last week General Selva confirmed Russia’s
deployment of a weapon system that violates the INF Treaty.
And he went on to say that, quote, the system itself
presents a risk to most of our facilities in Europe, and we
believe that the Russians have deliberately deployed it in
order to pose a threat to NATO and the facilities within the
NATO area of responsibility. End quote.

You touched on this in your opening statement on page
5, and you said that the system creates a mismatch in
escalatory options. Could you please elaborate on what you
mean by that and what the implications are of this
deployment?
General Scaparrotti: Well, this deployment gives them some advantage in terms of reach and precision within their systems. And when we talk about escalation management, if there is a tension or a crisis with Russia, because of their doctrine and their view that they will escalate to dominate or escalate to deescalate, it creates a very tight range of options when we work through escalation management. So an enhancement like that just makes this a very restrictive and difficult management process you through in deterrence. It is that much more pressurized. So it is a critical enhancement. It is one that we need to respond to.

Senator Fischer: You say we need to respond, and you just mentioned options, the word “option.” Secretary Carter talked about options. He mentioned counter-force, countervailing capabilities, active defenses, but we did not see any real action in order to pursue those. Do you think that we need to?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, I think we do.

Senator Fischer: And which of these options do you think would be the most effective in dealing with this?

General Scaparrotti: If I could, I would like to take that for a response for the record. I need to think about the comparison of those actually and tell you the best response.

[The information follows:]
1  [COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Fischer: Okay. Thank you.

General Scaparrotti: Thank you.

Senator Fischer: At a recent hearing of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, which I chair, we discussed the implications of Russia’s nuclear strategy, often referred to as the escalate/deescalate. And General Koehler, who is a former Commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, made the point that the Russian approach reinforces the value of NATO remaining a nuclear alliance, as well as the need for the deterrent value provided by U.S. nuclear weapons that are stationed in Europe.

In your written statement, you say that NATO and U.S. nuclear forces continue to be a vital component of our deterrence. Our modernization efforts are crucial. We must preserve a ready, credible, and safe nuclear capability.

Do you agree that NATO must remain a nuclear alliance and that the U.S. must continue to station those nuclear weapons on the European continent?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, Senator, absolutely I do.

Senator Fischer: Can you outline to us specific benefits that we receive by having those stationed there?

General Scaparrotti: Well, first of all, it provides an immediate response that is within the NATO alliance as opposed to just the U.S. It represents the alliance in a response by 28 nations, a commitment by 28 nations that we
will deter and we will deter their nuclear forces. I think that alone is significant.

Secondly, it gives us some other options because we have not only the U.S. but other contingents that provide essential capabilities within that nuclear capability. So there is more agility there as well.

Senator Fischer: And it recognizes the importance of deterrence. Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Shaheen?

Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General Scaparrotti, for being here this morning and for your service to the country.

I want to follow up on the line of questioning that Senators McCain and Reed started on the whole information warfare issue. When former General Breedlove was before the committee earlier this week, he pointed out that recently Russia has established an information warfare division within its armed forces. Do you think NATO should be looking at something like that? Are there already efforts underway? You talked about the RIG group, but should we be doing more within NATO to address the propaganda that Russia is putting out throughout Europe and the United States, by the way?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, Senator. I think in the
United States, we have organization I think to effectively operate. What we need to do is policy and then actions that flow from that within the United States. That is a whole-of-government approach. That is probably not the structure that we have in the way that we need it today. So it is more of a whole-of-government response I would tell you. I think we are pretty agile in the military, rather than establishing some information command, et cetera. We have smaller units that tactically execute these kinds of missions. I have them in EUCOM.

Within NATO, NATO has taken this on as well, but it is somewhat nascent at this point. And I think we do have to pursue that. I mean, we have got an adversary here who is using this to very good benefit, and we have to compete short of conflict in this area as well.

Senator Shaheen: But as you point out, we do not really have a strategy to do that, and we do not have anybody in charge of that in the United States Government. I mean, we have the Global Engagement Center that is starting up in the State Department. I have spoken, as I am sure others have, with the continuation of the efforts we had during the Soviet Union when we had the Cold War and we had Radio Free Europe, and they did a terrific job in those days. But we do not have a continuation of that that is part of sharing and cooperating with factually presenting
what is happening in the West compared to what is going on with Russia’s propaganda.

So where should that effort be located. Do you have thoughts about who should participate in that and how we better coordinate what we are doing?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, Senator, I do. I think actually that the RIG, the Russian Information Group, which I mentioned, is actually a good structure to start with. It has State as the lead, co-chaired with European Command. It has all of the other agencies involved in that. The GEC is a key leader in that, which has been empowered to do the communication piece of the State. But, you know, it is not robustly supported. I do not believe that it has the kind of focus and priority that we need to have. So, therefore, it exists but it needs to really be reinforced, funded. And then as you said, I think we have all the talent and creativity we need in this Nation to do this better than anybody else. We just need to decide to do it.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

There was a report. Actually I agree with you. I just want to make that clear.

There was a report earlier this week about Russia training Kurdish fighters. And it was not clear to me to what extent they were doing that. But how is Turkey responding to that report? Are they concerned about what
Russia is doing, and how does that affect their sort of growing rapprochement with Russia?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I have not talked to my counterpart, the CHOD in Turkey, since this report came out. So we have not talked directly. I cannot tell you exactly what their response on this would be.

But given my association with them and their concern about the PKK and associated groups, Kurd groups, that are aligned with them, I think they would have great concern about it. They want to ensure that the attacks that they have from the PKK are not reinforced in any way -- Turkey does. They also want to ensure that they do not have -- the cantonments in Syria are not connected in Syria so they have Kurdish entity across their entire southern border. And given those two objectives, I think they are very concerned about it probably.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Inhofe?

Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, last weekend, I was in the Ukraine and was observing their training. The 45th does a great job. In fact, that is the same group that not long ago was providing the same training of training in Afghanistan and Iraq. And so they are going to be there for a year long. You know, I
watched that, and there is really an art to that. And they are doing a great job because most people will think that they are there to train the Ukrainians or wherever they are stationed, but they really there to train them to train the others, and there is a big difference. So I wanted you to know that they are really doing a good job.

During the parliamentary elections in 2014, I was with Poroshenko and the crowd when, of course, they had that huge success, the first time in 96 years. No Communist is in the parliament there. And so, as you know, it became very controversial after that took place and Putin started killing Ukrainians, and we wanted to provide the lethal defensive assistance. Our committee was pretty much unanimous on that. The administration was not that excited about it. So in both the fiscal year 2016, we authorized $300,000, in fiscal year 2017, authorized $350,000 for the security assistance for Ukraine, including lethal assistance such as anti-armor weapons.

So General Dunford during his nomination hearing said this. Quote. He said, I think it is reasonable that we provide that lethal support for the Ukrainians. Frankly, without that kind of support, we are not going to be able to protect themselves against the Russia aggression.

So I would kind of like to get your idea. Do you agree with him? Do you agree also that we need to provide that
assistance? What are we providing now and how much more should we?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, thank you. In short, yes, I do agree with him. I have been there twice recently.

I would note that I agree. The Guard is doing a very good job there and an important one in their training relationship with the Ukrainians.

In terms of lethal support, the Ukrainians are in a very tough fight, which you saw. They are very disciplined soldiers. But they are facing what we say are separatists. They are actually Russian proxies in my mind. They are being provided very lethal equipment. The Russians are providing the separatists that. The Russians are also testing some of their new TTPs there. So we need to reinforce the Ukrainian military as much as we can and provide them the best opportunity to fight what is a very lethal Russian proxy at this point.

Senator Inhofe: And I agree with that. I have a question for the record as to what kind of equipment specifically we should do.

But I want to mention one thing. Do you happen to know-- his name is Fatmir Mediu. He was the Secretary of Defense in the Albanian defense. They had a meeting, and I happened to be attending that meeting -- it was on January 31st -- kind of a roundtable talking about ISIS and the
threat in the Balkans. And it was kind of revealing.

Apparently a lot of the ISIS recruiting is taking place in
the Balkans right now. Do you have any comment to make as
to what our activity is there in terms of what the threat is
there? Are we working with them as closely as we should?

General Scaparrotti: I am very concerned about the
stability in the Balkans, and one of the reasons is that
what is generally a moderate or a Western-looking Islamic
population is increasingly being affected by extremist
influence there. And part of that is recruiting for ISIS.
And so it is a trend right now. It is one I think we have
to pay very close attention to.

Senator Inhofe: Okay. That is good. I appreciate it.
Now, my time has expired, but for the record, I would
like to get as specific information as we could as to what
best we could afford to send over there against the
aggression that they have. Okay?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir. Thank you.

Senator Inhofe: Thank you.

Chairman McCain: Senator Heinrich?

Senator Heinrich: Welcome, General.

As was mentioned earlier, it is being reported that our
Secretary of State will be missing the NATO summit of
foreign ministers in a couple weeks. This obviously comes
at a time when the administration has criticized the value
of NATO. Russia is meddling in European elections, and
Russia is threatening our NATO allies in the Baltics.

Do you have any opinions on whether this sends the
right signal to our NATO allies? And what kind of messages
do you think we should be sending to our NATO allies at this
time?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I think it is essential
that our allies in NATO understand that we are absolutely
committed to the alliance and continue to be a key leader
within the alliance.

I noted this morning that the Secretary-General and the
Secretary had met, and they are looking for a date that all
of the allies can meet for the foreign ministers conference.
And I hope that is, in fact, worked out and that becomes a
reality.

Senator Heinrich: As do I.

General, Russian denial, deception, disinformation were
all important parts of the hybrid warfare campaign that we
saw during the illegal seizure of Crimea and its Russian
support for separatists in eastern Ukraine. As EUCOM
Commander, you lead much of the effort to identify and
attribute Russian disinformation operations. Can you
describe for us how Russia is organized to conduct this kind
of information warfare and what techniques you are seeing on
display in the Ukraine?
General Scaparrotti: Thank you.

When you are talking about this, you think about it in a military organization, but frankly, what I think is important is that Russia actually has a very broad set of groups to include their intelligence groups that are doing this. So they actually have a whole-of-government approach on this, which I think makes it one more difficult. It is one of the reasons that we also see what I think is a pretty rapid or agile use of social media, TV --

Senator Heinrich: Absolutely.

General Scaparrotti: -- cyber, et cetera. So it is a force to be reckoned with at this point. And I think it is that organization that gives them the ability.

Senator Heinrich: Do you have recommendations in terms of building our capacity or that of our allies and partners in the region to be able to resist these kinds Russian influence activities?

General Scaparrotti: Well, I think, first of all, in EUCOM we have elements that today have missions to counter Russian malign influence, both to identify it, counter it, and then, third, we are building partner capacity. And we are exchanging techniques, et cetera. Estonia has an excellent cyber center of excellence, for instance. That is a key node in NATO. We work very closely with that. So we need to continue those kinds of partnerships and exchange of
skill and understanding how they are working. And I think, particularly as an alliance, we can counter this.

Senator Heinrich: I think because of their proximity, we actually have a lot to learn from our Balkan partners, and given what we have seen even in our own elections, it is time to learn those lessons.

Russia’s air defense systems like the S-300 and S-400 threaten to block our ability to be able to project power in the event of a conflict in the European region, particularly in the Baltics. This certainly undermines the U.S. and NATO’s Article 5 commitment to the defense of these allies and raises concerns about the alliance’s ability to deter an increasingly aggressive Russia.

How capable are the Russian air defense systems particularly in Kaliningrad?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, I would just state in an unclassified venue, they are very capable. The newer systems like the S-400 is a definite enhancement in their capabilities. That is why we are concerned about it. As you stated, their location in Kaliningrad and Crimea and the Mediterranean provides difficulty for our access and mobility. We can counter this. I am confident of that.

Senator Heinrich: Do you have opinions in that regard on what types of next generation technologies, for example, we will need to effectively counter the Russian A2/AD
capabilities?

General Scaparrotti: Up front what I talked about in terms of our advanced aircraft, fifth generation, enhanced munitions, particularly long-range precision munitions, electronic warfare, those things generally is what we need to continue our modernization efforts on. And if you would like, I could give you a more specific in a classified response, obviously.

Senator Heinrich: I would appreciate that, General.

Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Rounds?

Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for your service. I appreciate the opportunity to visit for just a few minutes today.

With regard to Montenegro, the chairman had begun the discussion in terms of the possibilities that they could become a member of NATO. If they were to become a member of NATO, what would you expect the Russian response to be and how would you prepare for it?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I think we have probably seen their response in terms of their activity and their attempt to block that. I think to a certain extent, they know this is going to happen. I trust it will.

In a conversation with one of NATO’s ministers, one of the countries that has communication with Russian
leadership, he shared with me that a Russian leader told him that Putin had said he lost Montenegro, but there will not be another Montenegro. I think that is an indication of how they think and how important it is to them that these other nations that seek to have a democratic government and turn to the West are under threat. It is one of the reasons that I think Russia continues to have frozen conflicts and be present in places like Georgia and Ukraine because it is their means of controlling that.

Senator Rounds: You have got extensive background in Europe. You know a number of the European leaders. With the change in administrations, naturally there are going to be some questions in terms of policy changes, decision-making processes, and so forth. What questions are you getting from your European contacts in terms of leaders and what concerns do they have?

General Scaparrotti: Well, I think, first of all, as a new administration comes in, they want to ensure that we are committed to the alliance and the security of the transatlantic AOR. For instance, Secretary Mattis at the first NATO meeting at the defense ministers conference made our commitment very clear, as did Vice President Pence, at Munich. And I think that is critical. They look to that. They also now look to what are the policies and are the policies consistent with security in the transatlantic
region. Of course, in a new administration, they are looking forward to policies with respect to NATO, policies with respect to Afghanistan and others.

Senator Rounds: When it comes to doing your job, you clearly have to have the tools and the tools in proper working order in order to get the job done. If you could give us a list of those areas that you have the most concern with our capabilities today. And I will just give you an example. The fact that right now if we have one task force leaving the Mediterranean coming through and another one going in, in some cases we are actually stopping in the middle of the Mediterranean and trading ammo because we do not have enough ammo to literally maintain operational capabilities in multiple task forces. Those types of things concern us. We have a nuclear submarine sitting at the dock because literally we cannot get the maintenance done on it so that it is certified to die at this stage of the game -- a nuclear submarine. The readiness clearly is not there in some cases.

Do you have issues right now under your command that you would share with us that you have concerns with?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I would like to get into detail in a classified or closed session. But generally I would say this. The demands of our security strategy today in the dynamic world that we are working in requires us to
have more capacity than we have today in our armed forces.
You noted the Navy. So in Europe, I do not have the carrier
or the submarine capacity that would best enable me to do my
job in EUCOM. It is sufficient, but it is not what ideally
I would like to have to deter Russia, assure our allies,
build their capacity, work with them on the basis that we
need to work with them. So that is an example of the areas.

Now, you mentioned munitions. I am concerned about
that as well because we are using munitions today in those
places where we are in conflict. And the adversaries that
we face, for instance, Russia or China or North Korea, will
be high intensity conflicts. And we have to invest in the
stockpiles that we need, and we also have to invest in
enhancing those munitions so as we look to the future, we do
not find ourselves in a position where our adversaries have
outpaced us.

Senator Rounds: Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Peters?

Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General Scaparrotti, for being here
today. I certainly appreciate your testimony and also
wanted to thank you for being very generous with your time
at the Munich conference where we had an opportunity to
discuss many of these issues at length.
General, as you are well aware, we are increasingly relying on space, cyberspace, and fiber optic communications cables in all aspects of our lives. And these systems are also critical for social and economic activity, and their assured access and availability is vital to the U.S. strategic stability. And when you look at Russia’s navy operations right now in the EUCOM theater, which includes a significant footprint in the Arctic, which is growing dramatically without necessary response from us, and a $2.4 billion expansion of the Black Sea fleet by 2020, Russia appears committed to bolstering their military infrastructure on EUCOM’s flanks. This increased OPSTEMPO includes naval activity that suggests that Russia right now is exploring undersea cable vulnerabilities at much greater depths, depths where the cables are difficult to monitor and breaks are harder to repair.

So my question is, in general, what is your assessment as to whether or not we have sufficient redundancy within EUCOM’s command and control architecture, to include ballistic missile defense systems, to withstand a coordinated attack on our undersea, terrestrial, and space-based communication systems that you rely on?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, what I would like to do is respond to that in a classified venue so I can give you a very accurate answer.
Senator Peters: Sure.

General Scaparrotti: I am confident of our ability to operate today. As I just said, we just did our command post exercise, and we were looking at that. But we need to modernize what we have today in terms of command and control, as you noted, in order to have the right kind of resilience with the adversary that we face. You need a good deal of redundancy to be sure. And that is one of the areas. If you note in a classified venue, what I have asked of OSD, that is one of the key areas that I think we need to work on is the C-4 structure within Europe.

Senator Peters: Well, I would appreciate that and actually following up on Senator Heinrich’s questions too as you come back to brief on some of the A2/AD capabilities. I would be interested in learning more about that, particularly when it comes to next generation, what we need to be investing in today to be ready for the years ahead as warfare changes dramatically in the next few years.

But based on capabilities, to follow up my last question here related to capabilities, in the fiscal year 2016 NDAA budget, I co-led an effort to enhance lethality of the Stryker vehicles with a 30 millimeter cannon. This was in response to an operational needs statement from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment where the Strykers were the heaviest vehicles permanently stationed in Europe at that time. And
I understand that the work to add the 30 millimeter cannon to Strykers is going well. The first prototype was successfully delivered last October, and training is beginning on those vehicles.

The ERI also provides funds for upgrading the Abrams tanks to be prepositioned in Europe as well.

So could you just provide an update on the need for this capability and if we need to continue to be moving forward and that any lapses in that upgrade either of the Abrams or the Stryker is a problem or not for you?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, thank you very much.

It is not a problem for me, but it is a priority --

Senator Peters: Right.

General Scaparrotti: -- given the adversary that we have who continues to modernize. Particularly Russia is modernizing their armored force, as well as in each one of their services, they are making advancements. So it is critical that we outpace that, that we provide our soldiers in this case the very best equipment that we can and we continue to upgrade it.

Abrams is a fine tank, but as technology changes, we can make upgrades to it and make it better, and we make it better in terms of defense as well. And we owe that to our soldiers.

Senator Peters: And the Stryker as well?
General Scaparrotti: And the Stryker as well, absolutely.

Senator Peters: Great. Thank you, General. I appreciate it.

General Scaparrotti: Thank you.

Chairman McCain: Senator Sullivan?

Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General, good to see you. Thanks for spending time with a number of us in Munich.

Do you agree that one of the most important strategic advantages we have in terms of our national security is that we are an ally-rich nation, our adversaries are ally-poor?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, absolutely.

Senator Sullivan: And do you also agree that the ally-poor nations like Russia, China, North Korea, Iran -- that they recognize that -- they do not have many allies at all -- and that they try to undermine our alliances? Is that not what certainly Vladimir Putin is up to?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir. I think his intent is actually to fracture NATO, and I think it is because he does fear NATO. He knows the power of that alliance.

Senator Sullivan: So given that, are we doing enough diplomatically, militarily right now -- the Trump administration -- to reinforce our alliances, expand our alliances, deepen our alliances? What is your assessment of
what we are doing and what we could be doing better whether it is in the military realm or diplomatic realm? How are we doing on that?

General Scaparrotti: Sir, I think we absolutely have a focus on building partner capacity, building our relationships with our partners. We are a leader in NATO. From a EUCOM perspective, that is something -- I mean, we work on this every day. I do not think there is any question of that particularly on the military side. It is a very close relationship with our partners. It is day to day. And you know, it works both ways. We learn from our alliance partners as well.

Senator Sullivan: Are there things that you recommend that we could do more of or better in that regard? It is really, really an important issue -- or the Senate? We play a big role in terms of our allies, treaties.

General Scaparrotti: Well, I think in terms of the alliance itself, here again, I keep coming back to it, but I think it is whole-of-government in the sense that every agency in the government does their part and it is clear to our allies that from every agency in the United States, that the alliance is important and it shows and demonstrates in its actions that the alliance is the bedrock of transatlantic security. So there is no disagreement in what they see in terms of action, not just on the military side
but in terms of our diplomacy, our information, our economics, et cetera.

Senator Sullivan: I wanted to switch over to an issue that a number of us have been focused on and we have had discussions on it, is what is happening in the Arctic and the increasing importance of that region in terms of strategic resources, transportation, a lot of concerns of our NATO allies like the Norwegians and others about the significant Russian buildup in the Arctic. And as you know, it does not look like a friendly buildup: four new brigade combat teams, a new Arctic military command, very aggressive actions in the high north, including a military exercise that was a SNAP exercise with close to 50,000 troops that EUCOM was barely aware of, which is kind of, in and of itself, not a good sign.

A number of us, Senator King, the chairman, were concerned enough that we did not have a strategy on that. So we required the Secretary of Defense to actually put forward a new Arctic strategy. There is a classified and unclassified version. Have you read that?

General Scaparrotti: I have not read it, no.

Senator Sullivan: So I would highly recommend that you take a look at it because it is the new DOD strategy. It is not perfect, but it is a heck of a lot better than the one that was previously published by DOD, which was pretty much
a joke. And so, of course, EUCOM has a lot of important elements to play in that strategy.

But one of the things it emphasizes, it does talk about our strategic interests, which the last strategy did not even bother to do. But one of the things it emphasizes is looking at freedom of navigation operations, the ability to actually push back on the Russian buildup, which includes 40 icebreakers, 13 more under construction, several new seaports and harbors.

But although it emphasizes FONOPS, do you think right now if Russia decided to deny access to vital U.S. or Arctic shipping lanes in the Arctic region, that you as the Commander of EUCOM -- could you provide the President an option of conducting a surface FONOP to challenge that act like we are trying to do in the South China Sea, given our assets right now? Because the strategy emphasizes FONOPS, but it certainly seems like the means that we have right now would not enable you to make such a recommendation to the President. What do you think about that, General?

General Scaparrotti: I think it is would depend as well on the circumstances in terms of location and time of year because of the assets that we have as well. As you know, the northern sea route lays in closest proximity to Russia’s coastline as well, which complicates that given their military buildup. So we clearly need to invest more
in the kind of assets that help us in the Arctic. So that
is how I would respond to that, Senator.

We can give options. We certainly need to improve our
capabilities. And I am concerned as well about our
capabilities with respect to the high north and security of
the North Atlantic, et cetera.

Senator Sullivan: That is just a diagram of what the
Russians are doing. It is pretty significant.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator King?

Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, General, I want to thank you and your staff for
preparing and presenting to the committee this map which I
think is extraordinary. I am a great believer that you
cannot confront your adversaries unless you understand them,
unless you understand how they think. And to me the amazing
or very interesting and illuminating part of this map it
shows the borders of the Soviet Union in 1989 and today the
borders or Russia. And essentially from Putin’s point of
view, his border retreated about 1,000 miles across a whole
front of eastern Europe. And clearly that is part of his
world view in terms of Russia’s proper place in the world.

Would you agree?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir, I agree. That is why I
think the map is illustrative because I think if you are
Putin, you are looking out for Moscow and you see what I think he would consider to have been his strategic buffer. It tells you a bit about his mindset, and from what we know about him, he feels as though he has been encroached upon, that he has this sphere of influence that he believes is rightfully his. Of course, these are nations that have a right to determine their own government.

Senator King: And part of Russia’s history is a kind of paranoia about the West, going back to Frederick the Great and probably Napoleon. They have, in fact, been invaded from the West. And again, that contributes to this mindset. Would you not agree?

General Scaparrotti: I agree, sir. Yes, sir.

Senator King: And that gets to my real concern -- and I have raised this in other hearings -- both in the South China Sea or in Europe, is the danger of an accidental war, a danger of misunderstanding, confusion, leading to some kind of escalation.

What protections do we have from a misunderstanding? For example, we deploy what we consider a defensive rocket battery, missile battery in Poland, and the Russians read that as an aggressive act, and it goes from there. How do we ensure that does not happen? As I view the world today, I think this is our gravest sort of state-to-state danger, is misunderstanding and leading to accidental conflict.
General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir. The thing that I worry about the most just day to day is that there is a miscalculation or an issue where we have forces in close proximity. So how do we deal with that?

First of all, there are international norms in the air, at sea, et cetera that day to day the Russians adhere to as well. We have seen violations of that on their part. But it enables us --

Senator King: Deconfliction.

General Scaparrotti: It is deconfliction. That is correct. It is a good word.

The second thing is I think it is important that we communicate with them. Today we do that primarily through the media, et cetera. But we have, as you know, connection with the Russians for deconfliction. I think that communication is important because what I try to do in EUCOM --

Senator King: Do you have direct lines of communication with your opposite number in Russia, for example?

General Scaparrotti: I do not today.

Senator King: Do you not think that would be a good idea? You could say, wait a minute, that missile was launched by accident, do not get alarmed. I mean, I think having that kind of communication and at the higher level,
at the State Department or at the White House level, there
should be the opportunity anyway for this kind of
communication.

General Scaparrotti: We do have communication for
deconfliction within OSD today. It is limited. I agree
with you. I think communication is an important component
of deterrence, for instance. But I think also given
Russia’s behavior, there is some limitation to that. We
should not reward them for some of their bad behavior as
well. So we should do what we need to do to ensure we are
safe and we deconflict.

Senator King: I am not suggesting warning them. I am
just suggesting if something occurs, you could get on the
line and say, wait a minute. Do not misinterpret that.
That is where the concern comes.

General Scaparrotti: That is correct.

Senator King: We talked a lot -- and I just want to
associate myself with many of the other comments about the
information war. To me, the specific answer to our failure
to engage successfully in the information war goes back to,
I think, 1998 or 1999 when we abolished USIA. There is no
single point in the United States Government today that is
in charge of information, and I think it is inexcusable that
the country that invented Hollywood and Facebook is being
defeated on the information battlefield. And clearly, that
is part of the war that we are engaged in. Putin is
achieving great success in Europe and across the world and
one would argue in many areas without firing a shot through
effective use of information. I think our friends on the
Foreign Relations Committee perhaps can consider that. But
USIA was the point and now we do not have it. So I hope we
can recover that capacity sooner rather than later.

Thank you very much, General.

Senator Reed [presiding]: On behalf of Chairman
McCain, Senator Cruz please.

Senator Cruz: Thank you very much, Senator Reed.

General, good morning. Thank you for your service.

The European theater continues to be a vital concern, a
critical and complex region that will always be near the top
of our national security priorities.

I want to begin by focusing on the repeated reports we
are seeing of Russia's growing support for the Taliban and
for ISIS. General Nicholson testified last month that
Russia is attempting to legitimize the Taliban and undermine
the Afghan Government. Just a few weeks ago, General Votel
expressed his concerns regarding the extent to which Russia
has managed to prop up the Assad regime. And in the same
hearing, General Waldhauser said that Russia is trying to
exert influence on the outcome of which entity emerges with
control of the government inside Libya. That is a fairly
comprehensive list of radical Islamic terrorist hotspots across the globe from Afghanistan to the Middle East to Africa and Russia seeking additional influence with each. How should this inform our future strategic choices with respect to Russia, and what impact would that have on your AOR?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, thank you. I think those are all accurate. I agree with all their statements. I think actually that it is a part of Russia’s intent to present themselves as a global power. In my view, where they are involved, they are not necessarily so concerned about the outcome, just that they can be a part of it. They can be seen as being a part of that. Whether it is an effective outcome I do not think it is as much of a concern to them.

So that is what we need to take from this, more so from our point of view the fact that they are a spoiler often in many of these cases. So we also have to engage them in this manner, and we have to engage globally as well in these places in order to ensure that we have the proper influence.

Senator Cruz: And if Russia were to succeed in undermining the Afghan Government, what would the effect of that be on the NATO alliance?

General Scaparrotti: It would be significant. I mean, NATO and the United States in my view must win in
Afghanistan. And I agree. I have seen the influence of
Russia of late, an increased influence in terms of
association and perhaps even supply to the Taliban.

Senator Cruz: We have also seen over the past few
months numerous instances of Russian aggression or hostile
behavior such as Russian jets buzzing the U.S. Navy
destroyer Porter and numerous intercepts of U.S. aircraft in
the Baltic Sea. And some of these incidents have been
exceedingly unsafe. Recently Russia also deployed a land-
based cruise missile in clear violation of the INF Treaty.
And also, a Russian spy auxiliary, gathering intelligence,
ship conducted operations off the U.S. coast near our
submarine bases.

General, in your professional opinion, what should be
the U.S.’s responses to these actions? How do we reduce
Russia’s flouting of international norms?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, first of all, we must be
strong in all that we do. We should confront them in each
of these occasions or each of these incidents. And then we
need to sail and fly every place that is within
international norms and international Airways and maritime.
We just need to keep doing that. You know, for instance, in
the Baltic or in the Black Sea, these encounters are their
means of showing us their displeasure for us being there.
We have every right to be there. We have, in fact,
increased our presence, and I think that is the right step, increase our presence and insist on the fact that we have every right within international law to operate there and continue to do so.

Senator Cruz: Let me shift to a different question. American forces have conducted several deployments in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve to demonstrate our commitment to the stability of Europe. Recently 400 soldiers and 24 AH-64 Apache helicopters deployed to Europe from Fort Bliss. However, earlier this month, the Army’s Deputy of Chief for Operations, Lieutenant General Joseph Anderson, expressed concerns regarding sustainable readiness for the Army’s future rotations. In essence, it sounds like soldiers that are coming home from one deployment will have less time to get ready and train before re-deploying to the European theater. That or the Army will be forced to reduce its global commitments.

General, do you share the same concerns as General Anderson regarding this rotation of forces. And what impact do you see in your AOR, and what do you recommend to improve the situation?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, first of all, it is crucial that we continue the rotations within Europe for deterrence of Russia and for assurance and support of our allies, the commitments that we have made. But I do agree
with General Anderson that, for instance, in the Army, as an Army officer, we are less than a 1-to-2 dwell. We are turning our people very quickly. It is the reason that our Chief has said that we need to grow our force, and we need to focus on readiness, as he is doing, because we are committed today at a very high rate.

Senator Cruz: Thank you, General.

Senator Reed: Thank you, Senator Cruz.

On behalf of the chairman, Senator Donnelly please.

Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you very much for being here.

We talk a lot about Russia’s escalate to deescalate strategy or the idea that Russia has indicated through its words and its exercises that it sees the use of tactical nuclear weapons to supposedly deescalate a conflict as a realistic option.

How should NATO respond to this? And does the United States have the capabilities whether through dual-use aircraft or strategic bombers to deter such an escalatory move?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, thank you.

As I have said, we should be strong in the face of both their rhetoric, their actions, and their modernization. And we do have the capability to deter this. But we must remain strong and we must continue to modernize given the pace of
their modernization so that in the future we continue our dominance.

Senator Donnelly: I am just wondering personally. Do you think that Vladimir Putin and/or the Russians believe that they could use a nuclear weapon without a similar scaled response?

General Scaparrotti: That is a good question. I think that about that a lot.

You know, they have said publicly that they see the potential of the use of a nuclear weapon in what we would consider a tactical and conventional means. And that is just alarming.

Senator Donnelly: I think it is a clear misunderstanding of who we are as well --

General Scaparrotti: Exactly.

Senator Donnelly: -- is what I think.

I was privileged to be over in Georgia and Ukraine not too long ago. My friend and fellow Hoosier, Senator Lugar, helped create the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction. And while we were there, we spent a lot of time working with the Georgian and Ukraine Government in efforts to counter the smuggling of those materials.

Russia has destabilized borders in both these countries, and I am concerned about the impact that has had
on the ability to smuggle nuclear material through uncontrolled regions like eastern Ukraine. In Georgia, in fact, the special police unit calls those kind of areas the black holes. It is a serious threat given that the smuggling networks in these regions reach to the terrorist networks in the Middle East. That is the pipeline.

And I was wondering what EUCOM is doing to counter this effort at the present time.

General Scaparrotti: Thank you, Senator. Your pipeline that you described is accurate.

We have a transnational threats element within EUCOM. It is whole-of-government. It relies mostly on not just the military piece but mostly on other agencies within our government connection with our partners and allies, with Europol within EU, et cetera. It is a network essentially to help us highlight criminal networks. They are often very closely aligned and working with our terrorist networks. So that is one of the major things that we do. It is an important function, and it is a central part of our counter-transnational threats line of effort, which is one of our five lines of effort.

Senator Donnelly: I want to follow on some of the questions my colleague, Senator Fischer, asked earlier about Russia’s INF violations and their deployment of nuclear-armed ground-launched cruise missile. They have similar air
and sea launch capabilities that do not violate the INF. So why do you think they are deliberately choosing to deploy a seemingly redundant capability on land?

General Scaparrotti: Well, I think that it would provide them a capability internal to their country that gives much great reach, simply put.

Senator Donnelly: Do you feel that all of the steps being taken in Kaliningrad with the Iskander short-range missiles -- that the goal of all of that is to divide us, to undermine NATO, to try to separate the commitment from one to the other?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I think that is part of it. I think much of what they do is to undermine confidence in NATO, undermine confidence in the West. You know, it is to threaten them with the idea that we can have control over a swath of your country or a number of countries in the region with these systems.

Senator Donnelly: I want to thank you. You have a real challenge on your hands at this time, but we want you to know we are 100 percent behind you, that we will do everything we can to provide you with all you need and that you can tell all of our friends and allies over there that we have their back.

General Scaparrotti: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Senator Reed: On behalf of Chairman McCain, Senator Ernst please.

Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, General Scaparrotti, very much.

It is good to know that you do support providing lethal aid to our Ukrainian friends. It seems like we all do agree that there should be that lethal assistance out there. And I have made this clear to this administration. I made it clear to the last administration as well. But I do hope that this administration decides to provide the assistance as soon as possible.

Recently I have grown increasingly concerned about Russia’s use of tactical drones to spot for artillery and advanced technology for communication and GPS jamming. What types of advanced technologies are the Russians using against Ukraine and in other places as well? And is there specific technology that we should be considering when we are providing Ukraine the opportunity to counter that technology?

General Scaparrotti: Thank you, Senator.

Actually in Ukraine what we see the Russians do is somewhat what they have done in Syria, and that is use the Ukrainian conflict as a place that they can test some of their new technologies or TTPs, and one of them, as you mentioned, is the sensor to shoot our linkages between
weapon systems and the use of drones, et cetera. That is a
problem that we are working on hard ourselves because we are
seeing a proliferation of that not just with the Russians
but in some limited ways as well with terrorists. So we are
working those technologies. The work with Ukraine provides
us an opportunity to test some of the things that we are
doing as well. And we simply need to make EW and those
types of things available to them that can help counter what
the Russian proxy forces are bringing to bear there.

Senator Ernst: Absolutely. Thank you.

And you also mentioned that you were concerned about
the stability in the Balkans. And on Tuesday, Ambassador
Burns joined us here and highlighted Russia’s increasing
influence in Serbia. And specifically he did mention the
recent coup and assassination attempt in Montenegro that was
orchestrated by the Russians in Belgrade. And in light of
that effort targeting NATO interest, do you think we should
have a more robust presence in Kosovo as a means to deter
the Russians in the Balkans?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I do. I have been to
the Balkans several times in recent months primarily to
learn more myself about the actual situation there, but also
to bring focus to it. The Russians are active in
undermining our efforts in the Balkans today, and we need to
provide additional interagency focus. I think this is a
matter of not just the military support with, say, the Kosovo security force, et cetera, which we have troops in. I think it is also a diplomatic and informational effort with us and importantly with our partners because, as you know, NATO and the EU have a large role to play in the Balkans as well today and lead many of these organizational efforts. So we all need to work together. And the military is a part of it. On that point, I would say we should not reduce our force size particularly the Kosovo security force because it is kind of the bedrock of stability right now. But we do need a much more robust diplomatic/informational effort among the alliance there.

Senator Ernst: Absolutely. I think everything should be on the table at this point in reassuring and assisting our allies, our friends in the Balkans.

And then just very quickly, you have mentioned the cyber center and how great it is, the cyber center that we have in Estonia. And I will be meeting with their ambassador later to discuss their cyber defense center of excellence. So I am really excited about that opportunity.

And can you just tell me very briefly how well EUCOM and NATO are prepared to defend against cyber attacks, especially those that are aimed at disrupting the elections that we will see ongoing in Europe?

General Scaparrotti: Well, first of all, within EUCOM
I think we are postured well to deal with cyber. Cyber Command works very closely with us, and literally it is a dynamic relationship because within the cyber domain, things change so rapidly. So when we just had our exercise here last month, we had an element from Cyber Command that acted as a component per se in EUCOM reporting directly to me. So I think we are modernizing, we are moving forward. We have got good support. We have got a lot of work to do particularly in capacity.

Within NATO, NATO recently determined that cyber was a domain at the Warsaw Summit. That was important because what it did is it provided direction to work doctrine and policy in a much fuller way which is the commander within NATO I need, and it gave me authorities to do more within cyber in NATO, which we need to do. So on the defensive side, pretty good. Beyond that, we are at the beginning of this in terms of NATO complete cyber capability.

Senator Ernst: And I do hope that is something that we can work on with them.

Thank you for your great service, sir. Thank you.

Chairman McCain [presiding]: Senator Warren?

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

And thank you for being here, General.

I want to quickly ask about the importance of our non-military foreign assistance to your mission.
appeared before this committee last year for your nomination as EUCOM Commander, you said -- and I am going to quote you here -- I strongly support the collaborative interagency approach. In my experience, it takes a network with all required agencies to defeat a threat network.

So, General, do you still agree with that statement?

General Scaparrotti: I do, absolutely.

Senator Warren: The budget proposal put out by the Trump administration last week calls for a 29 percent cut to the State Department and significant cuts to other agencies with international responsibilities. General, would funding cuts to agencies that conduct diplomacy and development make your job as EUCOM Commander easier or more difficult?

General Scaparrotti: It will make the job more difficult. I rely heavily on our relationships with the other agencies in our government. Within my headquarters, my POLAD is essentially one of my deputies, Ambassador Elliott. That gives you an example of the importance we place on it in EUCOM. And many of the things I have talked about this morning, counter-transnational terrorism -- that is predominantly agency personnel from State and Treasury. It is not uniformed personnel that do those actions for EUCOM in the United States and Europe.

Senator Warren: Thank you, General. I agree strongly on this.
You know, Russia is actively working to destabilize countries along its border and undermine unity within the European Union and NATO. And they are doing this through a lot of indirect tactics like enabling separatist forces and disseminating propaganda and fake news. They even launched a cyber attack to influence the results of our election recently.

But Russia is also investing in other kinds of asymmetric capabilities like disrupting communications through electronic warfare or working to evade U.S. and NATO surveillance and investing in space and cyber tools. According to press reports and arms control analysis, they violated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty by deploying ground-launched cruise missiles.

The European Reassurance Initiative, ERI, has helped to counter some of these destabilizing activities. The United States has deployed equipment and rotated forces into Central and Eastern Europe, but I am wondering if this standard display of force is the best way to deter Russia now that Putin seems to rely more on indirect tactics.

So what I want to ask, General, is let us set aside conventional forces and prepositioned equipment for just a second, that it is there. What more can we do through ERI to address Putin’s indirect and asymmetric tactics?

General Scaparrotti: Through ERI, we are actually
using these funds in some of the areas for the asymmetric activities to counter those malign influences. We have special operations forces that are supported by this that do military information support operations and activities in support of U.S. Government, particularly the embassy and the ambassadors in each of the countries. It supports us as well in cyber in operations. In other ways, there are means that perhaps -- for instance, support in naval forces are seen as a ship, et cetera, but they are actually supporting those capabilities and those ships support us in other ways in terms of asymmetric means. So I agree with you, and we do have a focus on that.

I would last say that part of this is we are learning too. I mean, part of that effort through ERI is to make sure we understand how they operate in this gray zone or hybrid activity. And that is supported here as well.

Senator Warren: Thank you very much, General. I think we need to be smart about responding to and deterring Russia’s asymmetric aggression. It seems to me that we cannot think solely about deploying more troops and conventional military assets in Europe in order to counter Russia. We have got to have a very wide perspective on this. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Wicker?
Senator Wicker: General, you mentioned on page 8 of your testimony the ceasefire violations in Ukraine, that the majority of them are being committed by Russian-led forces. Senator Warren mentioned fake news. How helpful are the OSCE monitors in giving us the correct picture there? And then I have a couple of other questions about OSCE.

General Scaparrotti: Senator, thank you.

OSCE is very important to this. One of the issues is that their job is to monitor activities and compliance with the agreement on both sides of the line of contact. In fact, Russia -- it is well known that they intimidate and restrict the mission monitors in their job, which is one of the things that we need to encourage and insist that Russia stop doing and begin to allow the OSCE to do its job properly.

Senator Wicker: What can we do in that respect?

General Scaparrotti: Well, I think in that respect, sir, we need to bring the international community together with respect to Russia and their lack of movement on the Minsk. They say publicly they are in support of the Minsk agreement, but personally I think if you watch their actions, there does not seem to be steps taken on their part to do just that.

Senator Wicker: They are doing a lot of exercises there and in all of Europe. One of the techniques they use
to try to get around their commitments is the SNAP exercise
designation. Can you tell us about that?

General Scaparrotti: These exercises reflect Putin’s
focus on his modernization. It reflects his intent to make
their forces more responsive to improve their mobilization,
but it also is a part of intimidation I would say.

The SNAP exercises themselves are typically broadcast
as much smaller than they end up being. Some of them are
not announced at all in contravention to the Vienna document
and the treaties that we have there. So that is very
disturbing, and it is a way that you can have
miscalculation. And we know in the past, at least with
Crimea, they have used an exercise to shield what was a
violation of the sovereignty of Ukraine.

Senator Wicker: But they also continue to do exercises
in Crimea. What is the significance of the most recent
Russian exercise in Crimea?

General Scaparrotti: To me the significance is that --
well, there are several of them. One is that they do both
defensive and offensive operations as a part of that SNAP
exercise. They rehearsed attacks on the eastern border,
actually flew toward it, those kinds of activities which are
very disturbing and create a lot of angst along the eastern
border and within EUCOM being able to watch this and
understand what is their real intent. So it is the way they
run the operations and without transparency that creates the problem.

They have the right to do military exercises. They need to do them in a way that is constructive and aligned with our agreements.

Senator Wicker: But they do not have a right to do the no-notice exercises under their agreements.

General Scaparrotti: Under the agreement, it has to be announced if it is over 9,000 troops, and it has to be observed if it is 13,000 or more. There has to be an allowance for observers if we choose to do so. And their SNAP exercises are much, much larger than that, almost 100,000 if you take them in all the different exercises that happen simultaneously.

Senator Wicker: Should we be concerned about trends in Russian activity in the North Atlantic?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, we should. They are more aggressive. They are reestablishing bases in the Arctic and North Atlantic. We have to go back to establishing the same deterrence that we practiced during the Cold War in my view.

Senator Wicker: Is there a forum where we are engaging with them diplomatically about that?

General Scaparrotti: I do not know the forum personally. I know that we have engaged with them diplomatically, but I could not tell you the forum, sir.
Senator Wicker: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Hirono?

Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, you have mentioned several times the importance of the whole-of-government approach particularly to reassure our NATO allies and your concern that the contemplated cuts to the State Department, for example, and the Treasury Department by this administration would raise major concerns for you, also shared by Secretary Mattis. Is that concern that you express shared by our other combatant commanders?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, I would say that you would have to ask them directly for their own personal opinion, but I will answer it this way. We operate with our interagency, and most of what we do today, even in the more direct actions that we have taken in, say, Afghanistan or Iraq have relied upon an interagency approach, a whole-of-government approach. That is the way we traditionally operate.

Senator Hirono: It sounds as though that your concern or your commitment to the importance of a whole-of-government approach is one that is shared by our other commanders.

You mentioned that there is a possibility, of course,
of Russia’s use of nuclear weapons, and there is always that possibility. But on the other hand, Russia has cyber capability that can be very effective, and one wonders why they should resort to conventional warfare if they can use cyber to do all kinds of damage. So, for example, Russia is currently conducting cyber operations in various countries, such as the Ukraine, Montenegro, by attacking military communications and secure databases, as well as power grids. In addition, they are using fake news and information operations to impact elections across the globe. And this has magnified a wave of populist nationalism in Europe and impacted the recent U.S. elections.

And I think that you mentioned or you described that you are working with our allies to create a defensive approach to the cyber operations that Russia has deployed.

I am wondering, though, has the question of what the U.S. would do if Russia’s activities in affecting and disrupting the elections of our NATO allies, whether the question has come up where at some point we would say that these kinds of cyber attacks rise to the level of an act of war that would trigger reaction from us to support our NATO allies.

General Scaparrotti: Senator, that is a matter of policy, but I think we are a member of NATO. NATO has said that Article 5 could be triggered by a cyber event. We are
a member of that. So I think there is the occasion that that could occur. But, again, what we would do and what level that would be that would create a response is a policy decision.

Senator Hirono: Something that we need to definitely discuss at the policy level.

I think you mentioned in response to another question regarding our mil-to-mil communications with Russia that we do not necessarily want to reward their bad behavior. And I am wondering, based on your communication with the administration, do you know what the administration’s position is on the current Russian sanctions? And would rescinding these sanctions affect stability in Europe in your view?

General Scaparrotti: I have not had the discussion with my leadership on the sanctions, Senator. You know, I think that we must retain the sanctions. We put them in place as a result of their annexation of Crimea. It is another way that we, both the United States and the alliance in Europe, strongly show that that is unacceptable and we will maintain strength in the face of Russia’s activities.

Senator Hirono: So would any kind of cutting back on those sanctions not signal some kind of a retreat or weakness on the part of our U.S. commitment to NATO, for example?
General Scaparrotti: Well, I think personally that if we were to relieve or cut back on those, Putin would see that as a very good thing, and it would reward him standing fast long enough to perhaps survive the sanctions themselves.

Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator McCaskill [presiding]: I am the acting chairman right now, and I have the pleasure of calling on myself.

You know, I am going to say for the record what needs to be said here, and that is that if we want to send the right signal to Russia, all of the work that we are doing, that you and your command are doing, which is so important, is an integral piece of that. All of the work we do with our allies in Europe is an integral piece of that. But a big piece of it is having a commander-in-chief that will say that right things to Russia. And we do not have a commander-in-chief right now who is willing to say out loud what everyone knows about Putin and what he is doing in Europe and what he tried to do in the United States. And until we have a commander-in-chief that is willing to speak out against this thug and his behavior, I do not know that all the great work that you and your command can do is ever going to move the needle enough.

And I have said it, and I feel better. You do not have
to say a word, not your place to say a word. I understand the role of the commander-in-chief in your life. But I wanted to say it and put it on the record.

I was in Estonia. I would like to talk a little bit about what is going on in other places in nontraditional warfare. I was in Estonia last summer, and I was shocked how many Estonians told me -- you know, we went to a coffee shop and we were talking to those who spoke English. And they were saying how they really wanted to be part of NATO, but they were worried about the NATO soldiers being able to rape the citizens of Estonia and not be held legally accountable. And I, of course, went, what?

And as it turns out, this is the other thing Russia is doing, that Russia is pushing propaganda through Estonia that NATO is somehow going to damage their sovereignty in terms of the enforcement of rule of law.

Could you speak to that, General, that method that they use to try to undermine the support of NATO in the countries that they have designs on?

General Scaparrotti: You stated it clearly. In fact, we are now in NATO -- the first forces are going into the four nations, Estonia being one of them. And we have already had a couple of incidents of just complete untruth -- the incident never occurred -- within days of the troops arriving. We prepared for this. We expected it. We were
able to respond to those truthfully and quickly and debunk
the false story. But it is something that I expect will
continue.

And as you said, it obviously has -- their
disinformation obviously has some influence. If there is a
consistent message from Russia in the east, it is to
undercut the credibility of the United States and NATO at
large, consistently.

Senator McCaskill: And do we have a robust enough
response to this kind of disinformation campaign? Are we
focusing enough on this part of the warfare?

General Scaparrotti: I think we are focused on it. I
do not think we have a robust enough response at this point.
I think we have to, both as the U.S. and also as allies,
come together and take a more aggressive confrontation of
Russia particularly in this gray area.

Senator McCaskill: Yes. I would certainly hope that
would be on NATO’s agenda as to strategies moving forward to
combat this kind of insidious disinformation that really
does strengthen the efforts of Russia to use military might
to intimidate and eventually move into countries that have
no desire to be occupied.

I also want to take a brief moment to talk about
something I am like a broken record on and that is OCO. The
Congressional Research Service recently published an
extensive report on OCO funding, and it states the obvious that those of us who are on this committee are painfully aware of, that this began truly for a contingency after 9/11 and has now morphed into something very ugly off the books in that we now have the European Reassurance Initiative in the OCO budget. We now even have base budgeting in the OCO budget.

Talk, if you will, from your perspective, as you are asked to draw up your financial needs for your command, how you all are making a decision inside the Pentagon what you put in OCO and what you put in the base budget.

General Scaparrotti: Well, ma’am, for instance, I will start with EUCOM. We have the outline of the use of ERI, what it is intended to do based on Congress’ direction. I have a process where my component commands, the other services, make recommendations for funding in ERI. And I have a board that eventually comes to me for a decision that, first of all, asks the question, is that in support of the intent of ERI, and if not, why is it in here. We will push it off to the base budget. Or even those areas where I think, you know what, that is a broader activity we are funding. It really ought to be in the base, not in ERI. So I have that system myself within EUCOM, and we draw that line hard because we appreciate ERI. We want to maintain the credibility of it and how we use it. It is fundamental
to doing our job in EUCOM.

Within OSD, there is a very deliberate process run by the DepSecDef and the Vice Chairman that all of us as combatant commands take part in. And it is very detailed in terms of a look at each command and what we propose for a budget, what we intend to put in, and it looks at a cross section, as well, a comparison of each other. So it is a deliberate process.

I would just say that I am in favor of moving funds into the base. We need predictable funding --

Senator McCaskill: Right.

General Scaparrotti: -- so that we can actually make longer-term decisions and have more continuity. And that would be better I think for the force as a whole as well.

Senator McCaskill: This would be a good time for us to have the discipline, as the President has presented a budget that is -- frankly, it is not a huge increase in the military. I think he is trying to make everybody believe it is a big increase to the military. I think it is only 3 percent higher than what President Obama recommended in his budget. But nonetheless, it is an increase. When everything else is getting cut, I think this would be a good time for us to bite the bullet -- pardon the use of that particular analogy, but I think it would be time for us to be honest with the American people and put all of these
items into the base budget so the American people understand what we are spending on the military as it compares to other parts of our budget.

I thank you for your service. I thank all of the men and women who serve under your command. I think you have got a really important job now. I understand the importance of what you do now has been exacerbated by what Russia has done over the last 12 months and what they continue to do in democracies across the world. And we are depending on you to be our front line eyes and ears to their aggression. And I thank you very much.

Chairman McCain [presiding]: Senator Blumenthal?
Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.
I want to join in thanking you and the men and women under your command for their service in a critical area of the world for us and our national security.

I understand you have just come back from a trip to Israel, and I would like to ask you what security concerns the Israelis raised with you, focusing specifically on the Iranian development, continuing development, of their ballistic missiles.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir. Well, first of all, Israel is an extremely close ally of ours, a special ally. We in EUCOM have an excellent relationship with them. It is nearly daily contact. One of my missions is support of
Israel and their defense.

And so as I visited, their CHOD and I and their senior leaders obviously talked about their concerns about Iranian malign influence, as well as their missile capabilities. We work closely with them to support and complement their missile defense, for instance. And in fact, one day of that trip, I met their air missile defense commander and went to look at some of their sites to ensure that we in EUCOM were supporting that fully.

Beyond that, we discussed, for instance, their concern about Hezbollah and fighters gaining experience in Syria and other places and returning and what that might mean in the future, a concern about, obviously, Syria and the tri-border region as the conflict in Syria continues. So they live in a very tough neighborhood, and you can look in nearly every direction and have a threat.

Senator Blumenthal: Is there more that we can and should be doing to strengthen their defenses against that kind of missile threat?

General Scaparrotti: Senator, we are doing all that we can. I mean, we work with this closely to ensure that we do, in fact, reinforce their defense. In fact, there are more things we can do with their missile defense. We have people there this week working on that as well. I mean, it is a matter of modernization, change in environment. But we
are doing that. To maintain their military edge is very, very important and also to maintain the war stocks that we have committed to them for use.

Senator Blumenthal: But there is more that we can do and we are doing it.

General Scaparrotti: We are, and we are focused on support of Israel.

Senator Blumenthal: I take it, speaking of ballistic missiles, that you would agree with General Selva who testified earlier this week during the House Armed Services Committee that Russia is violating the INF Treaty.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, I agree.

Senator Blumenthal: And I think in your testimony you used the word “concerning.” This is an extraordinarily important area. Is it not?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir, it is. And it is an enhancement in capability that has a direct impact throughout the theater from my perspective.

Senator Blumenthal: And that is because, as you put it well in your testimony, it increases Putin’s asymmetric options as this missile capability is built. The whole reason that the treaty exists is to stop this kind of development because it threatens to destabilize the whole confrontation -- not confrontation, but the array of forces in that part of the world. Correct?
General Scaparrotti: That is correct.

Senator Blumenthal: Have you made recommendations as to what we should be doing about it?

General Scaparrotti: I have made recommendations in the sense that we need to respond to this. We need to be strong in the face of it. And I think the actions that we have recommended in EUCOM, in terms of posture, force structure, et cetera, are all a part of this, a part of the response that we need to have for Russia at large.

Senator Blumenthal: Is there consideration, to the extent you may know of it, about additional diplomatic or military action that the administration may be taking to counter this threat to our security?

General Scaparrotti: At this time, I have not had that discussion yet with that specific topic in terms of policy actions or actions that might be taken.

Senator Blumenthal: Have you any expectation that that discussion will occur?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, I do.

Senator Blumenthal: Can you give us a general time frame?

General Scaparrotti: No, I cannot, but I would expect we will have it. Yes, sir.

Senator Blumenthal: Well, I would urge that it be done sooner rather than later. With all due respect, I am not
nearly as well informed as you, but I am extremely alarmed
by this violation of the INF Treaty and what it represents
strategically in that part of the world and what it reflects
in the way of Russian intentions around the world. Thank
you, General.

General Scaparrotti: Thank you, sir.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Apparently Senator King has not had
enough.

Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Fortunately,
your microphone was off for the editorial comment.

General, a couple of quick questions. Do you consider
RT, Russia Television, an agent of the Russian Government?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, I do, sir.

Senator King: And it is my understanding that not only
are they using RT in Europe, but they are also sniffing
around or, in fact, looking into acquisitions of commercial
television and radio capacity in Europe.

General Scaparrotti: That is correct. I have been
told in a number of countries that they are using fronts,
but essentially buying local TV, and in one case recently, a
social media network that is influential particularly with
the young in the Baltics.

Senator King: So when you say buying local TV, you are
talking about TV stations, not airtime.
General Scaparrotti: That is right. They are buying TV stations and a social network company that does work on social media.

Senator King: This is one more area of their what I consider very effective playing of a weak hand. They are aggressing upon us at a low dollar cost, but aggression nonetheless.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir. I agree.

Senator King: Different subject. Iceland. I was in Iceland recently, and it struck me as an incredible strategic location. Keflavik air base was dismantled -- or not dismantled. It is still there, but it was deactivated around 2004 or 2005. It strikes me that this is such a strategic location. Do you believe that we should at least consider, subject to the approval of the people of Iceland, some reconstitution of our capacity there? I know we have rotational forces there but something more than that.

General Scaparrotti: Senator, we do have rotational forces through there, but I think we should consider it. Again, it comes back to my concern about the high north, North Atlantic, and the increasing Russian threat from the North Atlantic fleet there. So that area is important to us to increase our activities with our allies to ensure that we deter Russia and we are very knowledgeable of their activities as well.
Senator King: It struck me as a large, unsinkable aircraft carrier in the midst of the most strategic spot in the North Atlantic.

General Scaparrotti: Yes, sir.

Senator King: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: And, you know, Senator King, I met with the President of Iceland, and I know that General Scaparrotti has too. We have a PR challenge there as well with the people of Iceland. Is that not true, General?

General Scaparrotti: Yes, I believe we do. I think NATO could do more work there as well in terms of perspective or receptiveness, Senator.

Chairman McCain: They would be more receptive if it were a NATO kind of commitment rather than just the United States.

General Scaparrotti: Well, in discussions, that is what has been discussed with me as the SACEUR.

Chairman McCain: Well, I thank you, General, and I appreciate, obviously, the important information you have provided the committee.

I would just like to mention again what Senator King brought up, and that is this whole issue of this information warfare that is going on right now is something that crosses a lot of boundaries between State and Defense and
intelligence and other agencies of government. And yet, every time I turn around and talk particularly to one of the smaller countries, that is one of their biggest issues is this propaganda that the Russians -- and fake news, et cetera, ranging from what their obvious attempts at changing the outcome of the French election to the pressure on Latvia to alienate their Russian speaking population. So I hope we will move that issue up on our priority list. It seems to me it is kind of like the weather. We talk about it but we really do not do anything about it.

And there is a precedent for it. It was called the Cold War. How many people do we know that after The Wall came down who said I listened to Radio Free Europe? I listened to the Voice of America. It kept hope alive. Why can we not reconstitute something along those lines to get the message out? I do not think it would be hard to counter Russian propaganda given the kind of lifestyle they have in Russia.

So I hope you will think about it, and we will continue to think about it. But whenever you get one of these issues that involves more than one agency of government, as you know, we have much more difficulty, whether it be cyber, or whether it be this information challenge that we are facing now.

So we thank you, General, for visiting with us again
and thanks for the great work. Senator King will come to Brussels and spend time with you as well. Thank you.

General Scaparrotti: Thank you, Chairman. My privilege.

[Whereupon, at 11:35 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]