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HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON RUSSIAN INFLUENCE AND UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE OPERATIONS IN THE "GREY ZONE": LESSONS FROM UKRAINE

Wednesday, March 29, 2017

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U.S. Senate
Subcommittee on Emerging
Threats and Capabilities
Committee on Armed Services
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The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m. in Room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Joni Ernst, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Subcommittee Members Present: Senators Ernst [presiding], Fischer, Sasse, Shaheen, Heinrich, and Peters.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JONI ERNST, U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

Senator Ernst: Good morning, everyone. We will call this meeting of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities to order.

And I want to thank the witnesses for being here today. This is a very important topic, and we are glad to have you and appreciate your point of view.

Today, the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee meets to receive testimony on Russian influence and unconventional warfare operations in the "grey zone" and the lessons learned from those operations in Ukraine.

I would like to welcome our distinguished witnesses this morning: Dr. Olga Oliker, senior advisor and director of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies; Dr. Michael Carpenter, senior director of the Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement at the University of Pennsylvania; and retired Lieutenant General Charles Cleveland, former commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command and currently a senior fellow at the Madison Policy Forum. Thank you very much for joining us today.

The invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea in the spring of 2014 represents the breadth of Russia's influence

campaign in Ukraine and the violation of Ukrainian sovereignty represents the first attempt to change the boundary of a European nation since the end of the Cold War. Russian operations span the spectrum from covert information operations intended to influence political opinion to overt deployment of military forces for unconventional warfare designed to dominate civilian populations. We cannot afford to understate its importance or ignore its lessons. It is my hope our witnesses can help us understand in more detail what happened, why it was successful, and how to stop it from happening again in the future.

Last week, the commander of U.S. European Command, General Scaparrotti, characterized the Russian operations in Crimea as activities short of war or, as it is commonly referred to, the "grey zone." Russia's grey-zone activities in Crimea are important for us to review today and unique because it was an influence campaign of propaganda and disinformation, culminating in the employment of Russian special operations forces on the sovereign territory of Ukraine.

This hearing today also allows us to discuss our own special operations forces. It is time we review their unconventional warfare capabilities.

I look forward to hearing from General Cleveland about

his thoughts on the need to strengthen the capabilities in our special operations forces which may have understandably atrophied after over a decade focused on direct action counterterrorism missions.

The Russian influence campaign and unconventional warfare efforts in Ukraine contain all the hallmarks of the grey-zone operations: ambiguity of attribution, indirect approach, and below the threshold of open conflict. As we continue to see Russia conduct these operations across the globe, I hope our witnesses today can better help us understand and better counter these efforts.

Senator Heinrich, would you like an opening statement?

STATEMENT OF HON. MARTIN HEINRICH, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO

Senator Heinrich: Thank you, Chairwoman Ernst. And I want to thank you for holding this important hearing and thank our witnesses for their testimony on Russia's use of influence activities and unconventional warfare in the so-called grey zone that encompasses the struggle between nations and other non-state actors short of direct military conflict.

This hearing builds on the testimony the full committee received last week on the security situation in Europe. At last Thursday's hearing, General Scaparrotti, commander of U.S. European Command, stated that Russia is using a range of military and nonmilitary tools to, quote, "undermine the international system and discredit those in the West who have created it," end quote.

When I asked him about Russia's conduct of denial, deception, and disinformation operations, General Scaparrotti stressed that Russia takes not only a military approach but a, quote, "whole-of-government approach" to information warfare to include intelligence and other groups, which accounts for its rapid and agile use of social media and cyber.

Russia's use of the full range of political, economic, and informational tools at its disposal provides it the

means to influence operations in the grey zone short of a direct conventional war. Today's hearing is an opportunity to examine the lessons drawn from Russia's maligned activities in the Ukraine.

In 2014, General Scaparrotti's predecessor at EUCOM Commander General Breedlove said that Russia was engaged in, quote, "the most amazing information warfare blitzkrieg we have ever seen in the history of information warfare," end quote. Russia used information warfare as a dimension of its own military operations in Ukraine, including the sowing of confusion and disorganization prior to initiating more traditional military operations.

Russia's combination of information warfare with other unconventional warfare techniques, including the training, equipping, and advising of proxies and funding of separatist groups, is what allowed them to, quote, "change the facts on the ground" before the international community could respond effectively through traditional means.

This is relevant not simply as a history lesson but to better prepare us for the kinds of operations we can expect to see Russia conduct in the future. For example, the January 2017 intelligence community assessment on Russian activities and intentions in the 2016 U.S. presidential election assessed that what occurred last year represents a significant escalation in Russia's influence operations

that is likely to continue here in the United States, as well as elsewhere.

So there is much to explore with our witnesses this morning, and again, I thank them and look forward to their testimony.

Senator Ernst: Thank you, Ranking Member. We will start with Dr. Oliker, please.

STATEMENT OF OLGA OLIKER, SENIOR ADVISOR AND DIRECTOR, RUSSIA AND EURASIA PROGRAM, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Dr. Oliker: Thank you very much, Chairwoman Ernst, Ranking Member Heinrich, members of the subcommittee. I am honored to be here today. So I have been asked to address the topic of Russian influence and unconventional warfare operations in the grey zone, lessons from Ukraine. I will talk briefly about what we saw in Ukraine, a little bit about Russian activities elsewhere, and then I will talk about how the Russians appear to think about these issues. I will conclude with some thoughts about what that means for all of us.

Really quick, a definitional point as it were. We are talking -- when we talk about the grey zone, we are talking in this case about operations that are not clearly peace or war and perhaps intentionally meant to blur the line between the two. A note of caution is that these lines are always a bit blurry. When Carl von Clausewitz wrote that war is an extension of politics, he did not mean the politics ends when war begins. Rather, we should expect military, political, economic, and diplomatic instruments to be brought to bear to attain national goals, together and separately.

But when we talk about the two things I think we are

going to focus on here today, military actions characterized by subterfuge and efforts to mask who is and who is not a combatant and information operations, we have a different -- we face a bit of a different challenge. One of these, information influence operations, clearly on the noncombat side of the equation. On the other hand, subterfuge and efforts to mask who is and who is not a combatant are something that the Russians have been exercising increasingly and increasingly effectively. And I think we want to think about both of these less in terms of whether they are or are not grey zone and more in terms of their strategic effects.

So turning to Ukraine, in terms of the public information campaign, Russian language print, internet, and television media had pretty heavy saturation in Ukraine long before 2014 and particularly in Crimea and in the east. They propagated a narrative in 2013 in the lead up to the expected EU Association signature that was meant to convince audiences that EU Association would lead to political chaos and economic collapse of Ukraine, and social media activism amplified these messages.

As time went on and as unrest grew, the message came to include attacks on the protesters on Ukraine's Maidan Nezalezhnosti, Independence Square. They attacked the government that took control after Yanukovych fled the

country. They attacked Western governments, which were depicted as orchestrating what was termed a fascist coup. And eventually, of course, they attacked the elected government of President Petro Poroshenko.

Now, these messages probably resonated most with people already inclined to believe them, people who were nervous about EU Association and distrustful of the West. That was a lot of folks in both Crimea and east Ukraine. So Russian information operations I would argue may have helped bring some of those people into the streets, implemented some of the unrest, but I would also point out that it is important to remember that is not how Russian annexed Crimea. This, while almost bloodless, was a military operation made possible in large part by Russia's preexisting preponderance of force on the peninsula. I would also say that information influence operations of this sort were not responsible for keeping the conflict in east Ukraine going. That also took Russian military support and eventually Russian troops.

Another form of influence that I would like to talk about in Ukraine is that engendered by economic and political ties. Ukraine's and Russia's economies were deeply intertwined since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some of this was corrupt, including with the Yanukovych regime and its supporters. Some of it was not. I would

argue that corrupt ties, just like the rest of the corruption in Ukraine, creates a lobby and created a lobby against EU Association, which was going to bring with it requirements of greater transparency and more open business climates. But the broad range of economic relationships, many of them completely legal, also worried Ukrainians who thought that their livelihoods were genuinely less certain if ties with Russia waned. And many of those people were in Ukraine's east and south.

On the military side, of course the most touted example of Russian unconventional operations is the insertion of additional forces into Crimea in late February of 2014. Wearing uniforms without insignia, these personnel, which we termed little green men and the Russians termed polite people, pretended to be Ukrainian soldiers and police. They seized the Parliament building. They surrounded an airbase. The lack of uniform markings contributed to confusion, and enabled Russia to deny their deployment of additional forces to Crimea.

Similarly, Russia has denied its support for separatists in eastern Ukraine, as well as the insertion of its regular army troops into that fight as both advisors and active forces. As with Crimea, this feeds confusion and allows for deniability. The actual fighting in east Ukraine though is very conventional, tending towards a

great deal of artillery and some trench warfare.

Cyber tools have been used by Russia but with limited effect. The most interesting exception is the December 2015 attack on Ukraine's power grid, which took down electricity to hundreds of thousands of people for several hours. So that is interesting because it is using cyber tools for the sorts of effects you might normally use military forces for. But again, the effect in this particular case was not that great.

So turning outside Ukraine, we see influence operations in full swing in Europe and even here in the United States, and I am not sure I would actually call those grey zone, but I would call them efforts to undermine and subvert Western unity and trust in existing governments and institutions, so I do think there are important.

So in some ways what Russia does elsewhere is similar to what it does in Ukraine. Russian language media targets Russian-speaking populations around the world, particularly in neighboring countries where the media is often popular. Russia also supports outlets around the world such as RT and Sputnik, which broadcasts in other languages, including English. The M.O. of these outlets is to raise questions about the reporting of other sources and of other government statements and views such as by denying Russian military presence in Ukraine. They also tend to highlight

what they portray as the hypocrisy of these non-Russian governments, for instance, collateral damage caused by U.S. and NATO military actions. These messages are then amplified by social media, including through so-called trolls.

Happily, there is no evidence to date that these messages are reaching audiences previously unfavorable to them and changing minds. Just like in Ukraine where Russian messages were most effective with those predisposed to trust them, the same is true around the world. I would argue that the real threat posed by these phenomena is less their independent effect but the fact that they fall into an echo chamber. They are one sliver of a much larger increase in chaos and untruth in the information space as a whole.

The widespread use of these same techniques of smears, blatant lies, uncorroborated reporting, amplified by like-minded social media users, real and robotic, created an environment in which it is indeed really hard to tell truth from falsehood. The resulting situation is not so much one in which more people trust Russian sources but one in which people only trust whichever sources they prefer and discount all the others. This is dangerous. Russia is exploiting it, but we make a mistake if we look at it as uniquely or predominantly a Russian threat.

I also want to talk a little bit about Russian economic influence in Europe and elsewhere. Here, too, it is a bit of a mixed bag. Countries where there are strong business ties to Russia do indeed tend to have lobbies that support closer ties at the national level. This is not necessarily nefarious, right? It becomes nefarious when we see efforts on the part of the Russian Government to leverage it into something that increases Russian influence in ways that are not for the good of both countries.

A greater concern might be Russian support for fringe parties in Europe. We see these ties in Hungary, in France, in Austria, among others. We do see that leaders and members of right-wing and ultranationalist parties throughout the West have looked to Russia as a model, and we have seen that the Kremlin increasingly looks at these groups and supporting them because they tend to be anti-EU and sometimes anti-NATO as a mechanism for weakening Western unity. And Russia, I would argue, might be particularly emboldened by what looks like recent success on this front, though I would also point out that the Kremlin is increasingly very nervous about its own right-wing nationalists and has been cracking down on them. So that is something to keep in mind.

So in the United States of course our intelligence agencies have judged that Russia was trying to influence

our election last year. There is nothing unusual, I would say, about using cyber tools to collect intelligence. It is unusual and crosses any number of lines to then take action to use the information collected that way to interfere in other countries' political processes. It is likely to me that Russia's expectations were that they could disrupt the U.S. election, contributing to confusion and raising questions about its legitimacy.

If they believe this has been successful and even more so if they judge that they had a hand in the outcome, something I personally do not believe to be the case, they may be emboldened to undertake similar actions elsewhere and also in the United States again. And we see evidence of this in Europe. This said, I would underline the fact that Russian efforts exploit weaknesses already in place rather than creating them.

So what do the Russians think about all this? The Russians are writing a lot about the broad range of mechanisms that can advance national and political goals. What is interesting is that they write about them not as approaches Russia can use but rather as tools that are being developed by the West against Russia, and they cite everything from economic sanctions to their longstanding complaint about supportive what they call colour revolutions. They view this as a concerted whole-of-

government effort to weaken and overthrow governments abroad and that Russia has to learn how to counter these.

They assume a substantial Western advantage in all of these areas. And importantly, Russian writing on the future of war also tends to emphasize the importance of conventional warfare and particularly air power and advanced technologies. So I think this is a very interesting thing to keep in mind. Their argument is that we do this to them, and when they write about the things that they see in the American literature, they completely ignore the references to Russia undertaking these actions.

So, bottom line, I think there is no question that Russia is undertaking action across the spectrum of political, diplomatic, and military power. I would warn against viewing Russian approaches as a well-thought-out strategy throughout the world. Russia is testing approaches, it is experimenting, and it is trying to build on successes. So I would say one of the most important lessons for us to take from Russia's action in Ukraine and elsewhere is that Russia is learning lessons. It is studying what works and what does not. It is assessing how to adapt these techniques.

So take Crimea and east Ukraine. The Crimea operation was extremely successful. Russian planners then thought something similar could succeed in eastern Ukraine and

perhaps Ukraine as a whole. They were proven wrong. They adapted, they recalibrated, they changed their approach. So this is one of many reasons that I do not think a Crimea-like scenario is what we should be worrying about in, say, Estonia or elsewhere in the Baltics.

Russia's ability to use military personnel without insignia while denying their presence was not just specific to the Ukrainian situation. It was also not decisive in the success or failure of Russian efforts. Russia's success rather was based on the combination of large-scale military presence and a Crimea population that was confused and sympathetic. This way, the insertion of the personnel without insignia could be helpful. And all of this, we must remember, worked far less well in east Ukraine with a more skeptical population and failed entirely elsewhere such as in Odessa.

So not only is there excellent reason to think that the population of, say, Narva and Estonia, which a lot of us think about a lot, has more in common with Odessa than Donetsk or Sevastopol, but I would also point out that Estonians are at this point hyperaware of this particular threat and the Russians know that and they know all of this and they know all of these lessons. So should Russia have designs on the Baltics, they may try many things, but I would be surprised if the operation looked much like

anything we saw in Ukraine.

One question I am asking myself today is whether there is a Crimea equivalent in the influence operation space. Is there a point at which Russia feels it has hit upon a successful tactic but it overreaches? I believe that its efforts to affect election campaigns may get them to that point, but Russia's limitations in its efforts to weaken existing institutions depend tremendously on the strength of those institutions. Russian tools exploit weaknesses. The challenge then is to eliminate or at least mitigate those weaknesses.

I will close there. I thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Oliker follows:]

Senator Ernst: Thank you very much, Dr. Oliker. Dr. Carpenter?

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL R. CARPENTER, SENIOR DIRECTOR, BIDEN CENTER FOR DIPLOMACY AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Dr. Carpenter: Chairman Ernst, Ranking Member Heinrich, members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to speak about the lessons learned from Russia's influence operations in Ukraine.

Russia's unconventional war in Ukraine has demonstrated a formidable toolkit of measures for fighting in the grey zone from world-class cyber and electronic warfare capabilities to sophisticated covert action and disinformation campaigns. Russia has used propaganda, sabotage, assassination, bribery, proxy fronts, and false-flag operations to supplement its considerable conventional forces in eastern Ukraine.

Moscow has been doing its homework. Recognizing its conventional capabilities lag behind NATO's, Russia has been investing in asymmetric capabilities to gain advantage over conventionally superior Western militaries. At the same time, Moscow has dispensed with its longstanding foreign policy of cooperating with the West where possible and competing where necessary and now seeks to actively undermine the transatlantic alliance and delegitimize the international order through a continuous and sustained competition short of conflict.

But even with Russia's well-honed unconventional capabilities, the United States and its NATO allies can prevail in this competition if we recognize the Kremlin's goals for what they are, develop smart strategies to counter them, properly align our institutional structures, and invest in the right capabilities.

Today, I would like to briefly highlight six areas where the United States must counter Russia's new generation warfare. First is information warfare. In eastern Ukraine and Russia, the Kremlin has used its monopoly on broadcast television in particular to spread false narratives. For example, as Olga mentioned, that fascists control the government in Kyiv. Here in the United States, these lies are easily debunked, but we should not underestimate how even here Russian trolls and bots can spam us with propaganda and thereby shift the media's focus from one story to another.

I believe an independent commission should be established to identify and take action against Russian misinformation in addition to resourcing a more robust interagency body. Frankly, we should also go beyond debunking lies in the Western media space and take a much more active role in exposing corruption and repression inside Russia.

Second, we urgently need to upgrade our cyber defenses

and those of our allies and partners. Regulatory oversight should be strengthened to ensure that private corporations that manage much of our critical infrastructure are taking the necessary steps to harden defenses. I also support the establishment of a national cyber academy and expanding the Pentagon's public-private partnerships with the IT sector.

In cases where the United States is able to attribute a specific attack, our response must be firm, timely, and proportionate. The PNG-ing of Russian officials in response to Russia's cyber attack is unfortunately just a symbolic act with very few real consequences. Until our adversaries learn that the cost of such actions outweigh the consequences, they will keep probing.

Third, we must get better in exposing Russia's covert operations. In addition to its little green men, as Olga referred to, Russia also deployed what call SNMs call little grey men who organize demonstrations and seize government buildings across eastern Ukraine in the spring of 2014. The lesson we learn here is that once these forces were outed in Ukraine, strong social resilience and effective local law enforcement succeeded in thwarting most efforts to foment insurgency. Where Russia's efforts succeeded in Ukraine it was largely because they were backed by coercion and more overt military force, a point you made as well.

Fourth, Russia relies on a range of proxy groups to carry out subversive actions. However, Moscow's greatest success with proxy forces has not been on the battlefield but rather on the diplomatic stage. One of the biggest mistakes made by Western leaders of the so-called Normandy Group was to elevate the role of Russian proxies in the February 2015 Minsk Agreement. The result today is a kabuki negotiation in which Russia's proxies stonewall any meaningful progress on implementing Minsk, and Russia largely avoids blame.

Fifth, sabotage and terrorism have been used to great effect in the Ukraine conflict. A week ago today, former Duma member Denis Voronenkov was assassinated in central Kyiv on the same day as an act of sabotage destroyed a munitions depot. As with proxies, preventing terrorism and sabotage depends on good intelligence and strong social resilience. Ukraine has in fact averted many terrorist incidents over the last three years thanks to tipoffs from vigilant citizens and good law enforcement work.

Sixth, Russia has dramatically ramped up its political influence operations not just in Ukraine but throughout Europe and the United States. To counteract Russian influence operations, we need more transparency in political party financing, more effective anticorruption tools, better sharing of information on financial crimes,

and stronger law enforcement to root out entrenched and corrosive Russian patronage networks.

I believe the United States should establish a standing interagency operational body dedicated solely to interdicting Russian influence operations. Most importantly, however, it is absolutely vital that an independent special prosecutor be appointed in the United States to investigate allegations of ties between the Russian Government and U.S. political actors during the last election cycle. This is the one Russian influence operation that most directly affects our national security, and to protect the integrity of our democratic institutions, we simply must follow the evidence where it leads, free from political influence.

Finally, if I may be permitted to say a few words on how the U.S. should push back on Russia's unconventional war in Ukraine itself, I believe we should start by expanding our military training programs and by providing Ukraine with much-needed defensive weapons. On the diplomatic front, the United States must stop outsourcing the negotiations to France and Germany and get directly involved to help the parties develop a roadmap for implementing the Minsk Agreement. This roadmap must specify dates by which actions must be completed and consequences for failing to meet these deadlines.

To sharpen U.S. leverage, we should consider unilaterally tightening financial sanctions if Russia fails to meet these benchmarks. Lastly, the United States needs to continue to support Ukraine's reforms in part by applying strict conditionality to U.S. assistance but also by encouraging our European partners to play a much more active role than they have today.

Chairman Ernst, Ranking Member Heinrich, subcommittee members, Russia's operations in the grey zone have not only grown bolder in the last decade, but they have expanded from states on Russia's periphery like Georgia and Ukraine to Europe and even to the United States. Our responses at home and abroad must demonstrate the seriousness and urgency that these threats demand. Thank you, and I look forward to taking your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Carpenter follows:]

Senator Ernst: Thank you, Dr. Carpenter.

Lieutenant General Cleveland.

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL CHARLES T. CLEVELAND, USA (RET.), SENIOR FELLOW, MADISON POLICY FORUM, AND FORMER COMMANDING GENERAL, UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

General Cleveland: Thank you. Chairman Ernst, Ranking Member Heinrich, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to share some thoughts, some old-guy thoughts as I would say, on unconventional warfare, population-centric warfare, and the challenges the U.S. faces encountering nontraditional or nonconventional strategies.

Russia's success in Crimea and its actions in eastern Ukraine have caused the world rightly to take note. Through the creative use of violence and threats, Russia redrew, as was mentioned earlier, the international boundaries for the first time in decades. Its success to date is destabilizing an international system that had put in check the territorial ambitions of its members. Disturbing is the fact that they were so successful without paying much of a price, at least politically, as Putin remains popular with his people.

The U.S. military's response has been appropriate and if not predictable. Increased exercises engaged in joint planning learn from Ukraine and try to find and apply countermeasures in the Baltics. In the last few years,

though, I would submit not only from that experience but from my experiences around the world, we have learned a few things. We have learned that the limits of our understanding of foreign cultures matter. We have learned how important that understanding is to developing viable security policies and responses. We have learned the limits of our funding authorities and the inadequacies of some of our existing civilian and military organizations and their understanding of indigenous-centric warfighting. We have learned the inadequacy of our current ability to use psychological and information operations, which has been mentioned earlier. And we have learned the hard lesson of the inelastic element of time in these population-centric wars.

But these limitations obviously are not just with Russia and its nefariousness. It is in fact with actors that are practicing this form of warfare around the world. I would submit that our lack of understanding of this form of warfare has helped lead to poor results in Iraq and Afghanistan as well, and have limited our thinking and options in Syria, Yemen, and pretty much everywhere population-centric wars are being fought.

I offer the following eight points: First, recognize that these population-centric wars are different from traditional war. Two dangerous myths are that such wars

are only a lesser case of traditional war or, to the contrary, these are graduate levels of the same war. Neither is correct and both lead to bad assumptions that we can be successful by just doing better with what we have got or go bigger with what we have got or invest more money more wisely.

We have a laundry list of alphabet soup ad hoc structures created over the past 16 years. It was the battlefield's way of telling us that what we brought to those fights was not enough. New models, concepts, and resulting doctrine organizations and leaders and soldiers are needed in my view, particularly above the tactical level.

Secondly, whatever America's new strategy works out to be, I sincerely hope, as one who lived my life under the special forces motto of de oppresso liber, that it does not relegate hundreds of millions of people around the world to tyranny. The inevitable instability that would result would force our involvement anyway, given as interconnected as the world is today. So it is better that we proactively gain an understanding, shape and act in concert with like-minded friends, partners, and allies, providing leadership when necessary and inspirational always.

Consensus on a national strategy beyond simply an open-ended fascination with CT is critical for providing

direction and clarity. Containment was a powerful centering concepts that helped drive security-sector efforts. It was perhaps practiced differently between the political parties, but by and large it remained an organizing principle throughout the Cold War. Whatever comes next, my recommendation, given the instability in the system and the provocations by regional actors and non-state groups, that it be underpinned by an unmatched soft indigenous-centric and direct-action warfighting capability, superior and elite high-end conventional forces, and a robust diplomatic core.

Third, organize around the reality of modern political warfare or, as my lawyer preferred to call it, unconventional diplomacy. Russia, China, Iran are each employing these forms of political warfare and calls for the U.S. to relearn lessons from the Cold War on its own approach to political warfare are worth serious consideration. For example, our acknowledged problems conducting effective information campaigns might improve with a 21st century variation of the U.S. Information Agency.

Some other ideas are, one, ensure that the NFC has UW expertise or unconventional warfare expertise; two, create a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Warfare, that being unconventional warfare to foreign

internal defense or population-centric warfighting; at the State Department, create a bureau for political warfare led by an official of ambassadorial rank similar to what they have done with counterterrorism; and four, create the creation of a joint special warfare command within SOCOM that would hopefully match the success of its direct-action counterpart. It would be an interagency command with perhaps a deputy from another agency, another government agency or state and other interagency officers serving as fully empowered members on a tailored headquarter staff.

The TSOCs or the Theater Special Operations Commands, currently COCOM to SOCOM, could be subordinated to such a headquarters, freeing the SOCOM staff to focus on their policy procurement, joint soft doctrine development, and unit-readiness missions. This structure would give more weight to SOCOM's unconventional warfare of foreign internal defense, civil affairs, and psychological operations or military information support operations by providing a single headquarters that would, by necessity, be the advocate for U.S. support to indigenous warfighting, unconventional warfare, and foreign internal defense.

SOCOM has concentrated money and effort rightly towards building an exquisite direct action capability, but other of its legislative missions have suffered, particularly, in my view, information operations.

Fourth, the U.S. has been seeking the holy grail of whole-of-government warfighting for well over 50 years. Presidents have issued several decision directives to get at this, but it remains elusive. There must be an outside forcing function to do better in my mind. Putin's success directly reflects the Russian hold on all levels of government and the elements of power outside of government and their adept use, resulting in a sophisticated, complex, hybrid war or unconventional warfare campaign. Certainly that is easier for an authoritarian government. But the stovepiped authorization and appropriation of funds creates internal pressures that work against developing cross-department solutions. Add to that the different cultures of the security sector departments and agencies, and it is rare to see any real moves towards creating a truly interagency solution.

It is fair to ask the question who funds whole-of-government or whole-of-nation solutions to a problem? We do not. Instead, we fund in pieces and parts. Department and agency projects entrust they come together somewhere to get the job done. Congress may want to look at funding incentives to promote collective planning.

Fifth, recognize that our critical weaknesses and gaps in defense are above the tactical level. Our standing campaign-level headquarters, primarily the U.S. Army Corps

and U.S. Marine Corps MEFs are rightly organized around conventional warfighting. The one operational-level SOF headquarters is primarily organized around the counterterrorism and direct action mission, as it needs to be.

A dedicated operational-level headquarters around the execution of indigenous-centric campaign such as Iraq and Syria today is merited. A hybrid soft conventional interagency U.S. Army base core that is designed for complex contingency merits consideration. These kinds of operations are no longer the aberration but in fact are the norm. We should organize accordingly.

Six, develop the 12XX funding authority like 1208 for CT, for soft formations now need access to funds to develop indigenous UW capabilities obviously approved by the country team, obviously approved by the geographic combatant commander in an approved campaign on the part of the United States or the foreign internal defense appropriate capabilities to counter a hostile country's unconventional warfare threats that are not CT-related.

Seven, the most prevalent forms of competition and conflict around the world today are resistance, rebellion, and insurgency. They manifest themselves oftentimes in the use of the tactic of terror and, if successful, they culminate in civil war. Yet despite its prevalence, DOD

has no professional military education dedicated to these forms of warfare, the service's own professional military education responsibility for their soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. The result is that a deep understanding of these conflicts, these most prevalent forms of war, within the ranks depends primarily on the individual initiative of the leader. There are some electives at the various command and staff in war colleges but the net result is that military leaders get very little formal education on this form of war.

More concerning to me is the fact that our Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and SIOP officers, and those who eventually become the leaders who learn the basics of population-centric warfighting in their qualifications course, but from that point on are in a professional military education program focused on essentially conventional warfighting.

Those who attended Army schools appreciated the -- those of us who attended the Army schools appreciated the year at Command and General Staff College and the Army War College, both institutions of which I am a graduate, and I appreciated the year with our conventional counterparts and some of the lessons certainly that are universally important to warfighting. But it did not make me much better really at the form of warfighting that I was to

practice on behalf of the Nation. SOCOM or the Army -- in my view SOCOM should create a career-long professional development path for those who are charged with being expert at indigenous warfighting.

Point number eight and my last point is we are the good guys. You know, our asymmetry again in my view is who we are and from where the U.S. Government and this great nation derives its strength. While Russia, China, and Iran must control their people, the strength of our country is our people and their belief in our form of government, the inalienable rights granted by our Creator, the guarantees of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I think that provides us and those that are privileged enough to have this as a form of government around the world the resilience that Dr. Carpenter was talking about in our social structure.

A deep understanding and commitment to the development and maintenance of world-class unconventional warfare capability can be a powerful tool in countering the use of surrogates in hybrid warfare by revisionist and revolutionary movements. It has the potential to impose costs on them. It holds them at risk. In addition to providing an offensive capability from which we can learn and stay abreast of the art and science of warfighting, it is in fact I think necessary as we see the evidence of an

emerging domain -- a new emerging domain of war, the human domain.

I am not optimistic, however, that DOD can address its deficiencies. It will need Congress' help. We should be asking on behalf of the American taxpayer if we knew in early 2002 what we know now, what would we do differently? What has SOCOM, the Army, and the Marine Corps as land components learned these last 16 years, and what does that portend for the future?

Multidomain battle might be the beginnings of a replacement for air-land battle but only if we acknowledge in my view that the human domain, this place where insurgencies, resistance, and rebellion happen, takes its place along the traditional four domains, land, sea, air, and space, and the newly acknowledged cyber. It appears in fact in my view the Russians have learned this lesson and are getting better at it, as we continue to admire the problem.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

[The prepared statement of General Cleveland follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator Ernst: Thank you to our witnesses.

We will start with our rounds of questions, and we will limit those to five minutes of questions and answers per Senator.

General Cleveland, if I could start with you, why were the Russians so successful in achieving their objectives of illegally annexing Crimea and destabilizing eastern Ukraine, and why do you think U.S. special operations forces are prepared today to counter situations like that in the future?

General Cleveland: Ma'am, I am not sure -- I mean, the Russians had a tremendous home-field advantage in Crimea, and we would have had to recognize and understand alongside the Ukrainian Government early, early on what was happening. I am not sure that we had our antenna out to be sensitive to that and then be able to react early enough to counter what was going on using many of the things that were spoken about earlier, being transparent, you know, shaming, bringing that out, providing perhaps some information warfare antidote to just the blitzkrieg, as was described on the information front.

I think that special operations forces today, as you have noted in your opener, we have been focused primarily on the CT mission. However, there is an element within SOCOM in the special operations community which has been

applying its trade in indigenous warfighting that maybe earlier on, had we had the political will to commit to supporting the Ukrainian Government in its early, early stages, we could have at least been a tripwire. We could have perhaps provided some capability. We would have shown perhaps resolve that we would not let this type of nefariousness stand.

But that is a policy decision. That is what you all get paid the big bucks for. So, again -- but I think that the tools were there. Whether they were considered in the deliberations and whether those that were in a position to advise were literate enough to provide what those options might look like, that I do not know. I was obviously focused still at Fort Bragg.

Senator Ernst: Absolutely. Thank you very much, General. I appreciate it.

Dr. Carpenter, to counter Russian information operations, you say that the United States should take a more proactive approach, including identifying and taking action against Russian misinformation or debunking those false stories, and I agree with you on that point. And can you explain to us what role the messaging in Russian films and TV shows plays into this information campaign, and then also what about social media and how that applies to the situation?

Dr. Carpenter: Well, Russia has made great use of the virtual monopoly that it has on broadcast television inside Russia but then also in occupied parts of Ukraine to be able to get its message out. And it relies on very slick programming that appeals to the folks that tune into TV. It is shows, it is other -- it is comedy, it is movies, but then it is also interspersed with propaganda. And so it is very difficult to combat when most people in these areas get their sources of information from TV.

And I think the way to go about combating that is to try to go and use the various platforms that we have available to get the message out in this information space. So I would actually separate this into two things. There are things that we need to do here in the United States so we have RT, we have Sputnik, which are Russia propaganda programs here in the U.S. Frankly, I would advocate using more regulatory tools to, for example, put a banner at the bottom of the screen saying this programming is financed by the Russian Government or is Russian Government programming so the people are aware. We still protect the First Amendment rights to watch what they want to watch, but they are aware just like we do with cigarette packages to warn them what it is that is inside the package.

In Russia and inside occupied Ukraine, it is a little bit more difficult. The BBG has developed some digital

tools so that is programming that is now available on a 24/7 basis that can get inside to Russia, but it is available on the internet. And so most people still tune into broadcast TV to get their news and to get sources of information.

But we need to push more. We need to get out a message not just -- we cannot just play whack-a-mole and continuously try to debunk every single fake news story that Russia puts out there. That puts us on the defensive. We need to start to put out information about what is going on in Russia in terms of corruption. You see the protests that just took place on Sunday across almost 100 cities within Russia, and so I think getting the message out will resonate in Russian society.

And it is just simply a matter of letting people know what is actually happening with their government. I think a lot of Russians to this day believe the government in Kyiv is run by fascists. They believe all kinds of fake news stories that have been peddled simply because they do not have an alternative source of information. So we need to get better at that.

The Baltic States have also been good at putting out some broadcast programming that aims at Russian-speaking audiences. It is limited to the Baltic region, but we should explore supporting them and trying to get that

broadcasting out to more Russian speakers.

Senator Ernst: Very good. Thank you.

Ranking Member Heinrich?

Senator Heinrich: Dr. Carpenter, what would be the technological limitations or other limitations to allow us to reach people on broadcast television as opposed to the internet platform from some of those neighboring states?

Dr. Carpenter: So I think --

Senator Heinrich: What kind of reach could we foreseeably actually have?

Dr. Carpenter: So I think it is very difficult to be able to broadcast into Russia itself because they control the means of both blocking foreign broadcasting and, as I said, they have a virtual monopoly on this. But that does not mean that we should not try, especially in regions like the Baltic. I was told by those who lived through the Soviet experience in the Baltics that those who lived near the Polish border would tune in to Polish TV, they would listen to -- even though Polish TV was also part of the Warsaw Pact, it was also propagandistic. But it was more open than Soviet television. And so they would listen, and then they would transmit those messages to friends and acquaintances and spread it through their social networks.

I think if you have broadcast programs in the Baltic, in Ukraine, in Moldova, in Georgia, in places on Russia's

periphery, it will seep into Russia. It may not be as effective as if you had broadcast television in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but it will go a long way. I think the Russian people actually crave more information, and when they are exposed to it, they will benefit.

Senator Heinrich: On a sort of related question, and this is really for any of you, given Russian employment of disinformation and digital trolls and bots in Western elections, including our own last year, and the fact that the issue that you, Dr. Oliker, brought up of people preferring their own information sources and discounting all others is certainly not limited to Europe. We see that very much the case in the United States today, people self-selecting information sources and almost living in parallel universes.

What lessons can we learn actually from countries like Estonia and others that have been on the frontlines of this dual world for longer than we have and have developed a sensitivity to the manipulations of the Russian Government? How can we take some of the lessons that they have had and utilize them in our own self-awareness of what is going on here and now? And this is for any of you really.

Dr. Oliker: Thank you. So I would actually say, you know, I was watching the protests in Russia on Sunday. One of the things that is most striking about them was the

number of youth that were out there. The protests we saw in Russia in 2011 and 2012 were mostly middle-aged and older folks. This was a lot of young people. And this is very preliminary, but my sense is they do not get their information from television. They get their information from the internet, from each other. The other thing we saw before the protest was some reports of conversations of faculty and students in Russian schools, which also evidenced a certain amount of critical thinking.

So I think there are actually lessons we can take from Russia here that -- and I do not -- you know, I do not know that governments can do this well but I think the private sector may be able to, which is about figuring out how to target youth, recognizing that youth are bright and are discerning and are, you know, perhaps intrinsically distrustful of what older people tell them and using that-- not so much using it as a propaganda tool of the U.S. Government but creating in the marketplace of ideas a real market for truth.

And I think that is something -- and we in the U.S. and our partners and allies in Europe can help support our private sector in doing that. But I very strongly do not think this is a government task.

Senator Heinrich: Do either of the rest of you have an opinion about what lessons we might learn from some of

our allies like Estonia?

Dr. Carpenter: So I would just say that we do need to get much more savvy about using social media to reach out to Russian youth. And I do not think it necessarily has to be a government-funded website or a government-run social media platform, but providing the content to others to be able to disseminate I think is important.

To give you an anecdote, about a year-and-a-half ago there was a woman in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg who was putting -- on her personal blog she was just simply putting stories from Reuters and AP on what was happening in Ukraine, and she was charged with treason and put in jail. So this demonstrates to me that the Russian Government is extremely sensitive to having this information even on a digital platform, even on a blog, and reacts accordingly.

So I think if we can get the information out there and, yes, it tends to be clunky when it is run by government public institutions, but there are ways we can partner with more commercial, private, sleeker outfits that are able to get the message out, and I think it will have a great effect if we do that.

Senator Heinrich: Thank you.

Senator Ernst: Senator Peters.

Senator Peters: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to expand some of the conversation and, Dr. Oliker, you brought this up is that, as troublesome as the Russian activities are, and they are very troublesome, it also I think indicates that we have some greater vulnerabilities across the globe in terms of some of the weakness in institutions that are essential. In fact, I think in your written testimony you talk about the only way we really protect ourselves and others against this is to have strong institutions.

And I was struck by the Munich Security Conference, which I had an opportunity to attend, and the theme of that was post-truth, post-order, and post-West, which are all pretty scary concepts to think about, moving away from order and away from truth. And if you do not have truth, how do you survive as a democratic society?

So in your testimony you talk about how the Russians do exploit those sorts of weaknesses with institutions. Could you explain a little bit or elaborate on where you think the greatest vulnerabilities are with our institutions and how do we strengthen them?

Dr. Oliker: I think right now the greatest vulnerability in our institutions is our own move away from truth. The stooping to the same level, the shift to an effort to influence rather than an effort to inform, and I think also affected very heavily by the way that the

internet-based news cycle creates a demand for information now before it has been processed and understood. I do not have a great solution for that one.

I do think that, over time, accountability, transparency, and to some extent regulation can make a real difference, but I do think our greatest vulnerability is that if everybody plays this game of muddying the waters, the people who are best at muddying the waters are going to win, and that is not going to be us.

I also think that our institutions have additional weaknesses which are that they were created for a different situation. I think our institutions do need reforms and they do need strengthening and they do need to be adapted for the situations we find ourselves in. And here I am talking about international institutions. I am talking about NATO. I think these things have served us tremendously well for a very long time. We are finding that people are not satisfied with the extent to which they serve them now, and I think it is important to look at how to adapt them.

I also think that in Europe we know that Russia does not feel it is served well by the institutions that have sprung up since the end of the Cold War, and Russia has not been happy about this for 25 years. I am not saying we appease the Russians. I do say that, as long as they feel

insecure, we are going to continue to have a problem.

Senator Peters: Well, if you look at the playbook of how someone who wants to take advantage of these vulnerabilities, we have seen the playbook before. You go after the press. You try to delegitimize the press and say it is all fake news. It is just not real and attack it. You keep people of certain press organizations out of press conferences, let us say, because you attack them. You attack the judiciary. You say there are so-called judges or folks of their certain ethnic background, and then you can operate perhaps when an institution that has to step up and actually be a counterbalancing institution like the United States Congress that refuses to really bring light and bring transparency when we know there have been activities that have undermined our basic democracy.

Is that why, Dr. Carpenter, you believe that we have to have a special prosecutor when we know we have direct attacks on our democracy? And if we are asking other countries to improve their institutions, to bring more transparency, how do we make that argument when we are not willing to do it ourselves?

Dr. Carpenter: Well, I think we absolutely have to do it ourselves. And in fact I would unpack that and say I think there are a couple of separate things that we need to do to get precisely at this corruption of our institutional

base. One is I think we absolutely need an independent special prosecutor to look at alleged ties between the Russian Government in the Trump campaign. I mean that to me -- we have advised other countries -- one of the conditions for Montenegro to get into NATO was that they establish an independent special prosecutor, and then when Russia attacked Montenegro on election day with an attempted coup d'état and cyber attacks --

Senator Peters: Right.

Dr. Carpenter: -- that special prosecutor was then brought in to investigate and has done a standup job in doing so. If we can advise Montenegro to do that, we need to be able to have the political will to do that here at home.

But I also think that in addition to investigating this particular instance of Russian interference in our electoral process, I think we need a 9/11-style commission as well to look at Russian influence operations in the United States writ large and what we can do about it. It will be independent. It will have time, not focus narrowly on the prosecution of this particular case, but look at a broader writ and examine what Russia is doing and how we can combat it.

And then finally, as I have said in my testimony, I think we need to stand up an operational body that is

composed of interagency players that is dedicated -- so within government, separate from the 9/11-style commission-- that will look at Russian influence operations and how to counter them.

Right now, we have a number of groups in the State Department, in the Pentagon. I participated in them. But I can tell you they are largely talk shops that try to diagnose the problem. They do not necessarily propose solutions, and they are not resourced to be able to do anything about it. So we need to have this sort of operational group that can specifically go after instances where we know Russia is interfering in our process and then try and eradicate that.

Senator Peters: Thank you.

Senator Ernst: Senator Fischer.

Senator Fischer: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Dr. Carpenter and Dr. Oliker, I assume that you both believe that Russia is going to attempt another grey-zone provocation? And, first of all, is that correct?

Dr. Oliker: I think eventually almost certainly. I think, you know, again, it depends on how you define the grey zone. If we are looking at action across borders that involve some military, quasi-military activity, I am probably looking at Moldova and Belarus more than I am looking at the Baltics.

But I do think that when the Russians do it, it is not a -- oh, I do not think the Russians are sitting around thinking where can we create a provocation. I do think that they tend to respond to what they see as threats to them with actions and sometimes actions in different areas, what we call horizontal escalation where you are attacked on one front and you respond on another. And I do think they are looking for point of weakness where they might do that.

But I do not think that for them Crimea and east Ukraine started out intentionally as a provocation of the United States, the West, and the global order. They were thinking of themselves very genuinely as defending their interests. When they realized, though, that they could affect the system that way, I think they got excited.

Senator Fischer: Before you answer, Dr. Carpenter, if I could just follow up. You said not the Baltics but Belarus and Moldova. Does that follow along with a comment you made then also that it may not be where they feel a direct threat but kind of a -- I do not know if you would say it is a diversion, a softball over someplace else to divert attention or just an opportunity presents itself in another country instead of where they might really be focused?

Dr. Oliker: So I think that the Russians are deterred

in the Baltics pretty effectively. The Russians would not have been so neurologically afraid of the incredibly unlikely contingency of Ukraine joining NATO if they did not believe in NATO. So, first point. The Russians have pretty much accepted the Baltics are gone.

This said, I think if the Russians feel that NATO is sufficiently weakened that there is a question there. There are certainly people in Russia who might develop designs on the Baltics. But right now, they are concerned about the Baltics, they are concerned about a Western military buildup there, they are worried about Kaliningrad. But if you look at it from their perspective and the way they write and talk about it, it is about the Western threat to them.

I think they also are spread thin enough with their operations in Ukraine and Syria with that, and they recognize the possibility that Ukraine might evolve to require even more, that they are not that interested right now in doing too much elsewhere. I could be wrong on that, but on the one hand they claim that they have very high manning levels. On the other, they have instituted a six-month contract. They do not send conscripts into combat but they are letting people sign a contract to become official military for just six months, which I take to mean they are having a hard time staffing even the limited

contingencies they are in, which makes it very difficult to stretch.

Senator Fischer: And, Dr. Carpenter, your thoughts, please.

Dr. Carpenter: So I guess I take a little bit of issue with that. I would distinguish between whether you are looking to understand whether Russia would carry out an operation like that in Crimea involving little green men, special forces in uniforms without insignias or whether we are talking about something a little bit even more covert than that, which is little grey men, the sorts of intelligence operatives who directed the seizure of buildings in the Donbas in the spring of 2014.

I think if you are talking about the latter, I think it is ongoing throughout Europe. I think we see influence operations of various degrees happening as we speak obviously in Ukraine but also in Georgia, in Moldova. If you look back just a couple years ago, an Estonian senior law-enforcement official was abducted from Estonian territory -- now, this is a NATO ally -- and taken to Russia. That was in a sense a grey zone provocation. It was not little green men crossing the border, but it was intelligence agents crossing the border and abducting and kidnapping.

As I mentioned in my testimony, there was an

assassination last week, exactly a week ago today, in central Kyiv of an exiled Duma member because he was revealing information about Russian Government ties to both Yanukovych and also the start of the war in Ukraine.

So these operations are happening each and every day sub rosa. But do I also worry about the potential for something that is more military that involves special forces either in or out of uniform? I do. I think that there is -- I think Belarus right now is also very vulnerable, although it is very closely aligned with Russia geopolitically.

But I think Russia believes that Belarus has strayed a little bit outside of the orbit, and it has therefore planned and exercised in September of this year Zapad 2017 where it has requisitioned 83 times the number of railcars to go into Belarus than it did when it last did this exercise in 2013. So something there does not add up in terms of just purely this being a traditional exercise. So I think Russia is exerting this sort of influence each and every day.

Senator Fischer: Could I follow up with just hopefully a short question? Is that okay, Senator Shaheen? Thank you.

Dr. Carpenter, when you mentioned that a NATO ally had basically had its borders breached so that one of its

citizens was kidnapped and then you mentioned other countries that are not within NATO and events that are happening there, so does being a NATO member help these countries or -- first of all, just yes or no. We do not have -- I am already over my time. But would it be more helpful to say Estonia, the Baltics if American soldiers were stationed there?

Dr. Carpenter: So I think it absolutely does help. I think the article 5 guarantee deters Russia from doing a lot of things in the NATO space than it might otherwise want to do. That said, I do believe there is still room for some of this covert provocation and other types of operations that would be below the level of conflict, below the level of Crimea as well. And yes, U.S. force posture, in addition to the multinational battalions that are deployed in the Baltics, would augment that deterrent force.

Senator Fischer: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Senator Ernst: Senator Shaheen.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you. And thank you, both Chair and Ranking Member, for holding this hearing.

Dr. Carpenter, I want to start with your recommendations that we need an independent investigation of Russia's meddling in our elections because I absolutely

agree with you. And I am puzzled by why we do not have more of the country outraged about this and why Congress is not outraged about this. This is not a partisan issue. This is about Russia meddling in our elections. That takes their activities in the United States on a political level, on espionage, whatever you talk -- to a whole different level. And they are not only doing it here, they are doing it in Europe. And so what message does it send to Russia that we have failed to take action in response to their activities?

Dr. Carpenter: Well, I think it is incredibly provocative that we have thus far failed to seriously investigate this. I think we still have time to do so. But this was an influence operation aimed at the heart of American democracy, and if we do not respond, Russia will learn the lesson that it can continue to probe and it can continue to push the boundaries. And it will interfere again, and it will continue to meddle in our process.

You know, there was an article that appeared in the Associated Press indicating that Mr. Manafort, who was campaign chairman, had proposed in fact confidential strategies, and I quote, "that he would influence politics, business dealings, and news coverage inside the United States, Europe, and the former Soviet republics to benefit President Vladimir Putin's government," end quote. That is

from an AP story.

I cannot verify whether that is correct or not, but I can say if it is correct, then we have a former campaign manager for our President who was involved in the type of influence operation that we are discussing, the grey-zone operation that we have been talking about in all these other countries here in the United States if this is true.

Senator Shaheen: Well, I agree.

Dr. Oliker, one of the things that you said I think in response to a question from Senator Peters was that Russia's actions in Crimea and Ukraine were not looked at as a provocation of the West. That really is very different than everything else I have heard in the Foreign Relations Committee and the Armed Services Committee about what Russia is doing. The explanations that I have heard in both of those committees from our witnesses has been that Putin is looking at how he can restore Russia's sphere of influence and how he can undermine the West, and he sees the United States as the best opportunity to do that. And so his actions are taken with that aim in mind. So do you disagree with that?

Dr. Oliker: So the way I would describe it is that Russia has been very unhappy with the security order that emerged at the end of the Cold War. If --

Senator Shaheen: Let me just interrupt you for a

minute --

Dr. Oliker: Yes.

Senator Shaheen: -- because one of the things that I have heard from those people who were part of the effort with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union was that there were real efforts, outreach efforts made at a time when Vladimir Putin was working for Yeltsin to try and get Russia more engaged with the West, to try and point out that the expansion of NATO was not aimed at threatening Russia; it was aimed at protecting the West. So that does not square with what you are saying.

Dr. Oliker: We have gone back and forth. Twenty-five years is a long time, and we have gone through phases of trying to engage the Russians and doing that less. The Russians, however, after a very brief period of indeed thinking that engagement was possible, began to view the United States as looking to limit and contain them, as they had in the past. And, again, there have been times when Russian Governments, including Vladimir Putin's, have thought there was room for cooperation.

The problem has been that the Russian vision of cooperation is one of the quality of Russia and the United States as two great powers making decisions. The U.S. view has been of Russia as one more power that should certainly be at the table but not driving the decision-making. And

that fundamental disagreement has been I think at the core of the problem, that they expect far more than the United States has been able to give.

Senator Shaheen: General Cleveland, again, I could not agree more with what you are saying about efforts that we need to make to address the new threats that we are facing and that we have our military primarily designed to address conventional warfare. Testimony to that is that I have been on the Armed Services Committee now for over five years, and I never heard anybody talk about population-centric wars in those hearings.

So you talked about changing military to address the new threats that we face, whether they be grey-zone threats or cyber threats and that Congress would need to do that. Are there efforts within the military to make some of these changes? And I ask you that -- I asked a question about our ability to respond to what we are hearing from Russia in terms of, you know, that future warfare is one part conventional -- four-to-one unconventional to conventional warfare. And I did not get an answer that we have a strategy to address that. So are you seeing other places within our military where we ought to be looking to try and encourage a more robust response to the threats that we face today?

General Cleveland: I think, you know, part of the

problem is that it is the old "if the only thing you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail" sort of problem, right? We have defined what is war along what has been very convenient for us and where we were very successful.

Senator Shaheen: Right.

General Cleveland: And the problem is our ability to dominate in that space -- and I have written some articles about that that I have asked that they put in the record just in case you want to read some more about it, but our ability to dominate there by necessity has pushed folks into traditional forms where the weaker -- and I put Russia in that basket as well -- will use these techniques and have used these techniques since time immemorial against the stronger.

And the problem and challenges that we have been able to -- probably up through Vietnam -- get away with using largely conventional forms of warfare against even population-centric wars with some success because you did not have a 24/7 news cycle, you did not have everybody with a smartphone sitting there as a reporter, and you did not have international bodies that actually start bringing people up on war crimes. And so population control measures and things that you in the past would use or even the, you know, reduction of cities if you go back far enough, just no longer are acceptable.

There is a growing recognition that that aspect of our warfighting, that environment if you will, has shifted out from under us. And there is discussion about, okay, what do we do about that. But it is like the 180-pound running back that gets the task of hitting, you know, the 290-pound defensive end, right? That 290-pound defensive end represents a pretty robust, you know, military-industrial complex, you know, to use Ike's term, that is kind of built to protect the Nation a certain way. And that 180-pound running back cannot hit him shoulder pad to shoulder pad. You really have to go at the knees. In other words, there is something fundamentally -- and that is where in my own way of thinking about this is we for too long have been kind of saying let us bounce these ideas off of conventional warfighting. And that just has not worked, right?

And so my own analysis is I go to the more fundamental assumptions and ask myself whether those assumptions that built this military-industrial complex if you will are still valid. And my answer is not completely. And that space that has changed is why I say that what is emerging is in fact this human domain of warfare where any domain, just like what was imposed with cyber, requires you to build -- you know, have a concept in order to dominate there and build the right assets, you know, the concept,

and then build the doctrine, the organization, the DOTMLPFs as the military terms it, in order to dominate there.

So there is awakening, I think, a growing understanding. I think there is reluctance because budgeting is a zero-some game, and if you say I am going to-- you know, think about what happened with cyber. You created cyber as a top-down issue. All services have to cut out pieces of their budget to do what? Build a CYBERCOM and so forth.

So you are entering dangerous territory when you say, well, really what has happened in these wars, a domain of-- the human domain has emerged because now your military campaign and the success of it depends on your ability to actually fight successfully in these population-centric wars. And so if you backwards engineer from that, you say, okay, well, then what does it take to fight there? And what you bump up against is two philosophies. Either you need something new, which I would say 16 years after Afghanistan we probably ought to start asking that question, or you use differently what you have. And I would say that is what we have been doing for this entire period.

And so I think that there is a growing understanding of it. Whether that understanding internally can lead to developing these new tools and taking more out of other

people's budgets, I am skeptical of that. That is why I say -- and I am not saying that, you know, it has got to be a lot, but, you know, I think if you look at Afghanistan and Iraq, I go back to my closing, you have to ask the question, you know, what would we have done differently? And I have got to hope that it would be something different, right? Because we have not delivered on the political objectives that were set in force.

Senator Shaheen: Right. Thank you very much.

Madam Chair, could you share with the committee the articles that General Cleveland has submitted?

Senator Ernst: Absolutely. We will make sure those get to the committee members.

[The information referred to follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator Ernst: I think we have time if you would like just briefly a second round of questions. We will conclude with that second round.

Dr. Oliker, you note at the end of your written comments that you do not think a Crimea-like scenario is what we need to worry about in the future. And as we witness continued grey-zone activities from Russia throughout the Baltics and Balkans, I am worried about what scenario we might possibly see there in the future.

Specifically, I am concerned about Russia's involvement in Serbia right now and its impact on Iowa's sister country. We have a state partnership program with Kosovo, so I do get very concerned about those activities in Serbia and how they might lead to activities with Russia and Kosovo. So just last week, General Scaparrotti said he shared my concerns about Russia's activities in Serbia as well. So what type of Russia scenarios do you think we might see in the future specifically, you know, in that region?

Dr. Oliker: I am also concerned about the Balkans, and I think they bear watching. I think the Russians are very much testing the waters for what is possible and what they can get away with. I think that -- as I said, I do not think they went into Ukraine thinking that this was a way to get a standoff with United States, but they got one,

and it has been more advantageous to them than they thought, and it has given them opportunities to push in other areas. And I think very much the Balkans are one of them.

This said, one of the things I worry about most is not things that are intentional, you know, action response, but things that are unintentional. I worry a lot about Russian military provocations in the seas and the air of Europe. I worry about us operating in close proximity in Syria. I worry about things that could go wrong because there is so much distrust for very good reasons and because there -- you know, there is a danger of overreaction on both sides.

So, you know, what I worry about most -- I worry about what the Russians might do in the Balkans, but what I worry about most on the day-to-day level is that somebody is going to shoot down an airplane.

Senator Ernst: Right. Right. Those greater implications.

I thought it was interesting, Dr. Carpenter, that you mentioned the railcars that are being purchased with Russian dollars. And that was brought to my attention by the Kosovars. They mentioned that there are railcars that have been purchased that are located in Serbia that have been run into Kosovo. So there are some concerns out there. They are wondering, you know, what is going on,

what type of propaganda is this that exists out there. Do you have any brief comments on those types of activities?

Dr. Carpenter: So earlier, I was referring to the railcars that Russia is using to conduct its Zapad exercise in Belarus, but in Serbia as well there were railcars that illegally tried to enter into the territory of Kosovo and that had come from Serbia.

I would say that Russian influence in Serbia is growing by the day. The pressure that Russia is exerting on the government in Belgrade is enormous. But I think almost more nefarious is the pressure and the ties that Russia has with Serbia's neighbor, particularly Republika Srpska within Bosnia and Herzegovina. And there the ties between the Kremlin and Milorad Dodik, the President of Republika Srpska, are incredibly close, and Russia has essentially been supporting Dodik's efforts to talk about secession from the rest of Bosnia, which would be a disaster for the whole Balkans and can plunge the region into war yet again.

And so you have these active attempts by Russia in Bosnia, in Serbia, in Macedonia as well to undermine political structures and to use influence operations to penetrate government institutions, and it is all lubricated by corruption.

And while the Serbian Government has been trying to

find a way to pursue European Union integration, Russia has also come in and you have had the Russian Ambassador make comments in Belgrade about why is this in Serbia's interest?

Senator Ernst: Right.

Dr. Carpenter: So clearly, they are fomenting opposition to Euro-Atlantic integration into Western norms and standards across the region.

Senator Ernst: Thank you very much.

Ranking Member Heinrich?

Senator Heinrich: General Cleveland, I want to go back to something you mentioned in your testimony. You talked about potentially looking at something similar to section 1208 authority that we use in counterterrorism operations. Could you talk a little bit about, you know, what would it look like to have 1208 authority-like structure for grey-zone entities that might be partnerable?

General Cleveland: Certainly. Again, I think 1208 and the strength of 1208 is in its ability to tap into SOCOM's very expedited processes to obtain equipment and to deploy forces in order to work with partners without having to go through the security -- cooperation security assistance apparatus, right, which has done well by us I think for the most part. I think it needs some review overall and streamlining, but it is certainly not good

enough for helping an advisor who goes into a country to say I need to build a CT force.

For instance, my own case in Paraguay, for instance, we did that and we used 1208. And you were able to get money invested. You bought equipment and weapons, and it was done through open contracts that SOCOM had, and they showed up with the counterparts fairly rapidly. If you go through the security assistance system, they have obviously a process in place to protect us from abuse and all that other kind of stuff. SOCOM has a process as well, but it is much more streamlined.

A 12XX program would do the same thing for countries that it is not necessarily a CT problem, but it is actually training forces in order to recognize, for instance, counterterrorism or unconventional warfare activities. It might be something that would have to be expanded to perhaps provide a country's police with some training as well. Its military perhaps would have to be competent in some elements of their own form of unconventional warfare, stay-behind activities if they are overrun, for example.

Senator Heinrich: Right.

General Cleveland: And as it exists right now, there is really not a pot of money that the soft forces can call upon to do that in what I think is the -- with the agility that is necessary given the problem there.

Senator Heinrich: Yes, I think that is something we may want to look at in the upcoming NDAA process as we move forward.

I want to go back to you, Dr. Carpenter, for one final thought and then I will relinquish the balance of my time. But, you know, it occurred to me that the recent Supreme Court decision around Citizens United has created a very different situation in our internal domestic elections than what has historically been the case. And I have seen this in my own elections. I am sure all of my colleagues have watched as there has been less transparency as to where the money is actually coming from within elections.

And in most national elections now you have a preponderance of the financing of advertisements and things within elections actually not originating with the candidates themselves. So you may have a Democrat and a Republican running for Congress someplace or running for the U.S. Senate, but the majority of the actual financial activity in that election is actually from third parties who it is not clear where the financing is coming from.

Do you see that fundamental lay of the land right now within our own election structure as an opening for Russia to be able to potentially manipulate, especially given their expertise at moving financial resources and networks?

Dr. Carpenter: Absolutely, Senator. I think it is an

eight-lane highway that allows Russia to plow financial resources into our electoral system. Russia has perfected this over the years. They do not use Russian Government institutions to funnel this money. They often use Russian oligarchs or not even oligarchs but businessmen who have ties to the Kremlin. These businessmen then funded NGOs or other types of organizations that are registered in the country where they want to have influence, and then those institutions in turn rely on shell companies and other types of organizations that are subsidiary to them to be able to fund money to candidates, to media organizations, to NGOs.

And we saw spontaneously the emergence of NGOs, for example, in Romania that were anti-fracking that had come out of nowhere seemingly because Russia obviously had an interest in preventing that from happening due to its monopoly on gas flows to Western Europe.

So they are very adept at using all kinds of shell companies to funnel resources to political candidates and parties that suit their interests, not necessarily that are pro-Russian but in Europe that are euro-skeptic, that are either far right or far left, but that serve Russia's purpose in one way, shape, or form and advance their interests. And so, yes, Citizens United in my view has opened up floodgates for this type of money to pour into

our system.

Senator Heinrich: Thank you.

Senator Ernst: I want to thank our witnesses for joining us today for this subcommittee hearing. I appreciate your input, your thoughts. Ranking Member Heinrich, I appreciate your participation as well.

And with that, we will close the subcommittee meeting on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. Thank you, witnesses.

[Whereupon, at 11:31 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]