

Stenographic Transcript  
Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

## **UNITED STATES SENATE**

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF UNITED  
STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND AND UNITED STATES  
AFRICA COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE  
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 AND  
THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Thursday, April 3, 2025

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1 TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF UNITED STATES  
2 EUROPEAN COMMAND AND UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND IN REVIEW  
3 OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026  
4 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM  
5

6 THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025  
7

8 U.S. Senate

9 Committee on Armed Services

10 Washington, D.C.  
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12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:31 a.m. in  
13 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger  
14 Wicker, Chairman of the committee, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Senators Wicker  
16 [presiding], Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Scott,  
17 Tuberville, Budd, Schmitt, Banks, Sheehy, Reed, Shaheen,  
18 Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Peters, Kelly,  
19 and Slotkin.  
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1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER F. WICKER, U.S. SENATOR  
2 FROM MISSISSIPPI

3           Chairman Wicker: Good morning. The Committee will  
4 come to order. And today, we welcome General Christopher  
5 Cavoli, the Commander of U.S. European Command, and General  
6 Michael Langley, the Commander of U.S. Africa Command. I  
7 thank them both for being with us today.

8           First of all, we meet today in the wake of the  
9 difficult news that we have been learning more about over  
10 the last few days. We've been saddened by the death of four  
11 American service members, and we now know the names of them  
12 all. They passed away in a tragic training accident in  
13 Lithuania. And so, we recognize them and send out our best  
14 to their families and friends.

15          But this morning we talk about two very important areas  
16 of responsibility. The European continent is now entering  
17 its third year of war as Russia continues, its brutal  
18 assault against Ukraine. There's no question who started  
19 this war. Despite the physical and psychological exhaustion  
20 and material constraints from the conflict, Ukrainian  
21 military and people have heroically and successfully  
22 continued to resist Russian efforts to subjugate them.

23          The war serves as a brutal reminder that Vladimir Putin  
24 has chosen to become an enemy of the West and to throw away

1 Russia's future. The Department of Defense is right to  
2 label China as our pacing threat. Nonetheless, Russia and  
3 its thousands of varied nuclear weapons continue to pose an  
4 existential danger to the United States and to our allies.  
5 Moscow's military aggression sows uncertainty and threatens  
6 vital U.S. interests every day as Europe remains by far our  
7 largest trading partner and source of investment in the  
8 United States.

9 The war in Ukraine has exposed the Russian Army's  
10 weakness, but it also has shown that Russia can adapt to  
11 changing circumstances and can endure heavy cost. The  
12 Russian industrial base aided by China, North Korea, and  
13 Iran has demonstrated its ability to sustain Putin's army.  
14 Russia would likely use any pause in fighting to  
15 reconstitute its military. I say all this to make a simple  
16 point: We cannot wish away the Russian threat.

17 Despite Russia's aggression, there are some who believe  
18 now is the time to reduce drastically our military footprint  
19 in Europe. This is a viewpoint with which I disagree. I'm  
20 troubled at this deeply misguided and dangerous view is held  
21 by some mid-level bureaucrats within the Defense Department.  
22 They've been working to pursue a U.S. retreat from Europe,  
23 and they've often been doing so without coordinating with  
24 the Secretary of Defense and the National Security Council.

1       As I have said, Russia is now mobilized for permanent  
2 war, withdrawing now would doom any hope of lasting peace in  
3 Europe. Right now, we have a unique opportunity in Europe.  
4 President Trump's leadership and the Russian threat have  
5 jolted Europe awake. Many nations have begun rebuilding  
6 their militaries. Our allies on the eastern plank, Poland,  
7 the Baltic states, and Romania are all spending much more  
8 than we are, much more than we are. The United Kingdom and  
9 France are awakening. Even Germany shows signs of stirring.

10       NATO should be led by the United States, but Europe  
11 should shoulder most of the military burden. We can achieve  
12 that by combining the right incentives with low cost  
13 assistance from the United States, including a drastically  
14 overhauled foreign military sales system. To build that  
15 NATO, we must maintain our current posture, which will serve  
16 as a bridge to the planned buildup of combat power by our  
17 European NATO allies. After three years of war, we probably  
18 should make some posture adjustments, including moving  
19 forces east. But we must maintain a strong military posture  
20 in Europe overall.

21       Failing to do so, risks tempting Russian adventurism  
22 before our European allies have been able to ramp up their  
23 forces fully and their capabilities. The Chinese Communist  
24 Party views its competition against the United States as a

1 global project. To China, the continents of Europe, Asia,  
2 South America, and Africa are all critical in Xi Jinping's  
3 unprecedented global military expansion. In particular,  
4 Beijing has been active on the African continent.

5 In Djibouti, China's naval base has grown  
6 substantially. It's now capable of hosting China's most  
7 advanced naval vessels and serving as an intelligence  
8 collection outpost against American and allied forces in the  
9 entire region. China is also actively pursuing a naval base  
10 in Africa's western coast, the Atlantic coast, which would  
11 provide an enduring foothold along the Atlantic Ocean.

12 According to General Langley, this would "Change the  
13 whole calculus of the geostrategic campaign plans of  
14 protecting the American homeland." Russia also has designs  
15 on the African continent. Its destabilizing strategy is to  
16 trade security assistance for access to Africa's abundant  
17 natural resources. This would help fund Vladimir Putin's  
18 malign activities around the world. At the center of  
19 Putin's Africa strategy is Libya, which serves as Russia's  
20 key logistical node and enables its activities across the  
21 continent.

22 I look forward to General Langley's assessment of  
23 Africa's importance to Vladimir Putin's strategic  
24 objectives, as well as his description of what's being done

1 to counter Russian efforts, particularly in Libya. We  
2 cannot ignore the enduring threat posed by ISIS and Al-Qaeda  
3 in Africa. Without sustained pressure, these vicious  
4 terrorists will reconstitute and continue to threaten  
5 America. President Trump was absolutely right to approve  
6 strikes against ISIS leadership targets in Somalia in recent  
7 weeks.

8 Our adversaries view their fight against America as a  
9 global fight. We see their efforts playing out across  
10 Europe and Africa in particular. Now is not the time for an  
11 American withdrawal from these theaters. We cannot allow  
12 the Chinese Communist Party and its partners in Moscow,  
13 Tehran, and Pyongyang, to overcome us strategically or to  
14 erode the ability to protect American interests around the  
15 world.

16 So, we have a lot of important topics to talk about  
17 today. I look forward to hearing our witnesses address  
18 these and many other concerns during this hearing along with  
19 my friend, the Ranking Member whom I recognize right now.

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

3           Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.  
4 And let me begin by adding my condolences to the families of  
5 those soldiers who perished in Lithuania.

6           General Cavoli, General Langley, welcome. Thank you  
7 both for appearing today. I'd also like to take a moment to  
8 recognize that this will be the final hearing before the  
9 committee for each of you, before your well-deserved  
10 retirements.

11          Chairman Wicker: No.

12          Senator Reed: Yes. Well, we could change that. Well,  
13 for four decades, you have stepped forward time after time  
14 to lead American service members, including in combat and  
15 through historically difficult challenges. You have made  
16 the United States safer. You have made our forces in Europe  
17 and Africa stronger. On behalf of this committee, thank you  
18 for your distinguished service to our nation.  
19 Congratulations to you and your families on your pending  
20 retirements.

21          For more than three years, EUCOM has been the backbone  
22 of the international effort to support Ukraine in its war of  
23 survival against Russia. EUCOM has enabled the Ukrainians  
24 to succeed on the battlefield while sending an unmistakable



1 message to America's adversaries around the globe. However,  
2 in recent months, the position of the United States has  
3 reversed. The Trump administration has repeatedly shown  
4 disrespect and contempt for NATO and our European allies.

5 The Trump administration has begun negotiating with  
6 Vladimir Putin, but has surrendered much of us strongest  
7 leverage for nothing in return. As the administration seeks  
8 to negotiate an end to the war, I would point out that  
9 Russia is not in a strong position. Putin has sustained  
10 staggering costs in Ukraine, including more than 200,000  
11 soldiers killed, and hundreds of billions of dollars of  
12 military equipment and weapons destroyed. Russia has even  
13 turned to North Korea for reinforcements.

14 In addition, Russia's closest ally in the war, Iran is  
15 weaker than it has been in decades due to recent Israeli and  
16 U.S. actions. In contrast, the Ukrainian military continues  
17 to hold its ground and to display impressive innovation on  
18 the battlefield, and the Ukrainian people remain resolute in  
19 the face of daily Russian brutality.

20 I would argue that there's never a time to appease  
21 Putin, but it is certainly not now. The Russians do not  
22 seem interested in actually negotiating or ending this war,  
23 and the Ukrainians should not be forced to make a deal that  
24 disadvantages them. General Cavoli, you have testified in

1 the past that Russia is, "A chronic and growing threat to  
2 U.S. interest."

3 I would appreciate your assessment of the war in  
4 Ukraine and your views on future U.S. military activities  
5 and investments needed in the EUCOM area to uphold our  
6 steadfast commitment to collective defense and America's  
7 security.

8 In Africa, our adversaries are focused on building  
9 trade relationships while seizing influence from us.  
10 China's military ambitions on the continent are no secret,  
11 from their growing presence in Djibouti to the more than 100  
12 seaports that have been constructed, financed, or operated  
13 by Chinese state-owned enterprises, and could be used as  
14 dual use for future military contingencies.

15 Russia has expanded its military engagement in Africa,  
16 also, including by restructuring the Wagner group's  
17 operations under an umbrella organization called Africa  
18 Corps, a historic irony of great proportions. They want to  
19 expand the reach of the Russian private military enterprise  
20 across the entire continent. Russia is also investing  
21 heavily in disinformation campaigns across the continent to  
22 spread anti-Western movements, undermine democracy, and  
23 promote Russian backed authoritarian leaders, especially in  
24 regions like West Africa.

1           It would seem that America's competitors recognize that  
2 to neglect Africa is to invite long-term strategic peril.  
3 General Langley given these challenges, AFRICOM must  
4 continue to explore new methods to maintain U.S. security  
5 interest in the region. To do so, it is important that your  
6 command receives the resources it needs to maintain  
7 engagement and increase situational awareness across the  
8 continent. I would appreciate your thoughts on the wide-  
9 ranging set of challenges and what your command needs to  
10 best address these challenges.

11           As we know, economic and political stability is  
12 essential for any partner nation anywhere in the world. For  
13 decades, we have relied upon our state department diplomats  
14 and the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID  
15 to develop deep lasting relationships that can outlast China  
16 and Russia's economic coercion. Indeed, until recently,  
17 AFRICOM had a senior USAID officer within the command who  
18 served as the senior development advisor and reported  
19 directly to the commander.

20           I'm deeply concerned that our soft power leadership in  
21 Europe and Africa has been badly crippled over the past  
22 several months. General Cavoli, General Langley, I would  
23 like to hear your perspectives on the critical importance of  
24 diplomacy and developmental tools to achieve our national

1 security objectives and how our competitors have sought to  
2 capitalize on the withdrawal of USAID from your regions.

3 Finally, I would highlight recent press reports that  
4 suggest President Trump may soon remake the entire U.S.  
5 combatant command structure, including dismantling AFRICOM,  
6 and merging it under EUCOM. This would be a mistake and I  
7 believe a harmful decision. Gentlemen, please provide your  
8 assessment of the harms of the U.S. vital interest if we  
9 reduce our engagements in Europe and Africa, and the  
10 opportunity that we provide for competitors like Russia and  
11 China.

12 Thank you again for your service, for your leadership,  
13 for your sacrifice, and thank your families also. Thank  
14 you, Mr. Chairman.

15 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed. Which one  
16 of you wants to go first?

17 General Cavoli: General Langley has volunteered me,  
18 Chairman. Thank you.

19 Chairman Wicker: You are recognized.  
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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL CHRISTOPHER G. CAVOLI, USA  
2   COMMANDER, UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND AND SUPREME ALLIED  
3   COMMANDER EUROPE

4           General Cavoli: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed,  
5   distinguished members of this committee, it's an honor to be  
6   here today along with Sergeant Major Rob Abernethy, to  
7   represent the men and women of U.S. European Command, and  
8   it's a privilege to be here sitting beside my friend,  
9   General Mike Langley.

10          Chairman, thank you and Ranking Member Reed, thank you  
11   for your condolences regarding our soldiers who were  
12   tragically lost. They have all been recovered. I would  
13   like to take a moment to salute the American leadership  
14   there, from General Donahue, to General Taylor, to General  
15   Norrie, all of whom have done a fantastic job. I would also  
16   like publicly to thank our Lithuanian allies and our Polish  
17   allies who left no stone unturned to help us recover those  
18   soldiers and who bent over backwards to give us every single  
19   thing we needed.

20          The Minister of Defense of Lithuania was on site every  
21   single day to make sure that her country was giving us what  
22   we could. We did a repatriation ceremony today, bringing  
23   the soldiers out, the streets were lined with Lithuanian  
24   citizens expressing goodwill and alliance with us. And I

1 would commend that video clip to any member of this  
2 committee or any American, and I thank them.

3 Before I begin, let me thank the committee, of course,  
4 for all your support to our service members and our mission  
5 over the years that I have served here. So we continue to  
6 face a very historic time in the European theater, Russia's  
7 war in Ukraine now in its fourth year, has revealed Russia  
8 to be a chronic threat, and we see in the future it will be  
9 a growing threat, one that is willing to use military force  
10 to achieve its geopolitical goals, and is today actively  
11 waging a campaign of destabilization across Europe and  
12 beyond.

13 Further exacerbating this threat from Russia are the  
14 deepening partnerships among our adversaries, Iran, the  
15 Communist Chinese Party, the DPRK, and Russia itself, and  
16 these are increasingly posing a global risk. But U.S. EUCOM  
17 and the NATO alliance have arisen to the challenge. NATO  
18 deterrence has held, war has not spilled into NATO  
19 territory. With support from a broad international  
20 coalition, U.S. European Command led the charge in helping  
21 Ukraine. We established Security Assistance Group Ukraine  
22 now commanded by Lieutenant General Curtis Buzzard, and for  
23 38 months of this war, SAG U.S. has delivered critical  
24 munitions arms and equipment from the U.S. and our allies to

1 the Ukrainians.

2 These efforts has been indispensable in enabling the  
3 Ukrainian armed forces, and they have empowered them to  
4 mount a courageous defense. And now NATO has taken up this  
5 task as well, establishing in record time in organization to  
6 take over much of SAG-U's mission. The threat of war has  
7 also led the NATO alliance to embark upon an historic  
8 campaign to fundamentally overhaul and modernize its  
9 military capabilities.

10 After years of underinvestment, too many years, our  
11 allies are finally optimizing the alliance for high-end war  
12 fighting. And within NATO, we now have the plans, the  
13 command and control, and increasingly the forces, and we  
14 have the focus to meet that mission. And while there's  
15 still much to do, our allies are investing at a rate we  
16 haven't seen since the end of the Cold War, a 40 percent  
17 increase in spending since February of 2022.

18 And throughout this intense and challenging  
19 transformation, the presence of U.S. EUCOM forces has been  
20 essential to the alliance's modernization efforts. We've  
21 converged U.S. headquarters with NATO command structures,  
22 we've increased combined training and exercises, and we've  
23 been accelerating European modernization and readiness.  
24 Through U.S. leadership, we are laying the groundwork for

1 European leadership, and thus for more years of peace and  
2 prosperity for the United States of America.

3 It's a long road ahead and a sustained vigilance and  
4 pressure will be required, but we will get there. This has  
5 been to protect vital U.S. interest. Our strengthened  
6 allies will increase our strength and our deep  
7 relationships, give us the access, the basing, and the  
8 intelligence necessary to do this. The first line of  
9 defense of our homeland begins in EUCOM, where our naval  
10 forces prevent Russian submarines from breaking out into the  
11 Atlantic.

12 U.S. ballistic missile defense of Israel starts with  
13 EUCOM ships positioned in the Eastern Mediterranean, and  
14 it's our job in EUCOM safely to evacuate Americans from the  
15 Levant. We are America's force forward in the world.

16 So as the Chairman and the Ranking Member noted, ladies  
17 and gentlemen, this is my last annual testimony to you, as  
18 I'm closing 38 years of service this summer. It's been  
19 really the honor of a lifetime to serve with our brilliant  
20 service members during these historic times. I continue to  
21 be inspired by their commitment to our nation's forward  
22 defense.

23 And I thank you the Congress for your unwavering  
24 support to our servicemen and women, to their wellbeing, and



1 to their vital mission. America is the greatest country in  
2 the world, and it is in large part because of our armed  
3 forces, which are the finest in the world. I look forward  
4 to your questions.

5 [The prepared statement of General Cavoli follows:]

6 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very, very much, General.

2 General Langley.

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL MICHAEL E. LANGLEY, USMC  
2           COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND

3           General Langley: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed,  
4           distinguished committee members, it's an honor to appear  
5           here today representing the outstanding service members,  
6           civilians, and families of United States Africa Command.

7           As I get closer to the end of my tenure of command, I  
8           remain in awe of the character and capabilities of the men  
9           and women willing to serve our nation. Our team of  
10          soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, guardians, and civilians  
11          perform valiantly, and I'm honored and proud to serve with  
12          them. Point be known, America remains in good hands. I'm  
13          proud to testify with my good friend, General Cavoli, the  
14          Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, and the commander of  
15          United States European Command. I like to extend my  
16          gratitude for his steadfast cooperation.

17          As you know, EUCOM and AFRICOM share service  
18          components, and every day our teams are coordinating to  
19          solve some of our nation's toughest security issues. Also,  
20          joining me today is a key member of the AFRICOM team, my  
21          command, senior enlisted Sergeant Major Michael Woods,  
22          United States Marine Corps. His 32 years of experience  
23          provide me with the critical insight needed to understand  
24          the operating environment. And he shows our partners what

1 true non-commissioned officer leadership looks like. I'm  
2 lucky to serve with him.

3 Now, everything we do at the United States Africa  
4 Command has one overarching goal in mind, achieving peace  
5 through strength. Now, this requires three things, a clear  
6 understanding of national security threats, a robust and  
7 dependable network of like-minded allies and partners, and  
8 appropriate resourcing to match military requirements. Now,  
9 as I've said in previous testimony, Africa remains a nexus  
10 theater from which United States cannot shift its gaze. It  
11 is home to terrorists who take advantage of conditions in  
12 Africa to grow and export their ideology.

13 ISIS controls their global network from Somalia. It is  
14 where the Chinese Communist Party actively works to change  
15 the international rules base order as a stepping stone to  
16 become the global hegemon. And it's where the Russian  
17 Federation seizes opportunities created by chaos and  
18 instability.

19 Now, to protect our homeland and United States  
20 interests, we must deter these nations and their malign  
21 actors from their goals on the African continent. Many of  
22 our security and economic interests overlap with those of  
23 our African and European partners. Successful outcomes  
24 enabled by burden sharing are beneficial for all. And as a

1 posture limited theater AFRICOM, we establish strength and  
2 work towards peace by enhancing the security capabilities of  
3 our African partners, through a robust system of alliances,  
4 exercises, training events, security cooperation, and  
5 foreign military sales programs are the backbone, our  
6 military activities on the continent. Through these  
7 activities, our forces lead by example with a warrior ethos  
8 and stand by our partners and enhanced trusts in the United  
9 States military.

10 So, the United States Africa Command seeks to match  
11 these capabilities with the current and emerging threats to  
12 ensure the security of our forces while advancing American  
13 interests. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance  
14 aircraft crisis response forces, counter unmanned aero  
15 system technology, and integrated air missile defense  
16 platforms are critical to accomplish our mission.

17 Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome your advocacy in  
18 ensuring that the necessary tools are in AFRICOM's hands.  
19 Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be here today,  
20 and I look forward to your questions.

21 [The prepared statement of General Langley follows:]

22 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Chairman Wicker: Well, thank you both for your  
2 excellent testimony. We're going to try to stay strictly to  
3 the five-minute rule in our question and answer. I,  
4 probably, Senator Reed, am going to take a second round  
5 myself, but we'll stick to the five minutes going forward.

6 General Cavoli, how long have you been watching Russia  
7 closely?

8 General Cavoli: Chairman, I began my Russia specialty  
9 in 1995 when I spent a year at the Defense Language  
10 Institute learning to speak and read and write the language.  
11 And I've paid attention to it and worked in jobs associated  
12 with it ever since. So, 30 years.

13 Chairman Wicker: You're not only conversational, but  
14 fluent in Russian. Is that correct?

15 General Cavoli: I have always maintained that rating.

16 Chairman Wicker: Yes. Well give us your assessment  
17 now. First of all, of what we have learned, what our  
18 military has learned during this two and a half years of  
19 conflict in Ukraine. What have we learned about Russia's  
20 military? Where are they now? And Ukraine's military  
21 capability and where they are now?

22 General Cavoli: Chairman, we've learned an awful lot.  
23 First of all, I should point out that early on in the  
24 conflict all of the services and the joint force established

1 a variety of cells and organizations deliberately to study  
2 the lessons of the conflict. And we've had everything from  
3 publications about it to seminars on it at a classified and  
4 unclassified level. And we have learned an awful lot.

5 Some of the things that we have gained as a military  
6 are well, they're technical, they're procedural, and they're  
7 sort of large-scale operations focused. So technically, for  
8 example we have learned an awful lot about Russian measures  
9 and countermeasures and how to counter countermeasures, a  
10 lot of technical stuff. We've seen a lot of growth in both  
11 the Russian capability and the Ukrainian capability in  
12 electromagnetic warfare, electronic warfare. And we have  
13 learned from that, and we have modified many of our  
14 procedures. I think you're familiar with the U.S. Army's  
15 transformation and contact initiative that is really based  
16 on lessons learned from Ukraine.

17 As a short example, our use of drones has changed  
18 deeply across the joint force. Before this conflict in the  
19 U.S. Army, for example, we had very few but large drones  
20 associated with large units. Now, we're proliferating  
21 smaller drones to smaller units and having a larger number  
22 of drones in lower and lower hands. Fundamental change in  
23 the way we are doing business. There are many, many other  
24 technical and tactical lessons we've learned.

1           At a meta level, sir, I would say some of the big  
2   lessons we've learned are about scale. The scale of this  
3   conflict is just awe inspiring. Thousands of tanks  
4   destroyed on both sides. The Russians have lost more than  
5   4,000 tanks, which is the inventory almost of the United  
6   States Tank course. So, the need for replacement, for depth  
7   of magazine, for resilience, all these are lessons that  
8   we're learning, and I believe the services are programming  
9   it as the years go forward. So, we've learned a lot.

10          Chairman Wicker: Before you continue on, in February  
11   of '22, we would not have dreamed of such a loss from Russia  
12   of tanks, would we?

13          General Cavoli: We would not have. I did not  
14   anticipate the war to go this long, and I did not anticipate  
15   Ukraine to be able to destroy so much of Russia's war  
16   fighting capability.

17          Chairman Wicker: I hope I didn't break your train of  
18   thought. So, continue.

19          General Cavoli: No. So, as we watch the Russians, we  
20   see that their level of skill in some technical areas is  
21   very high and is evolving during the course of the war, but  
22   it's mainly isolated in specific pockets. It does not  
23   appear to be generalizable across the force. And overall,  
24   the quality of their force, especially their ground force,



1 has been decreasing throughout the conflict. On the  
2 Ukrainian side, we see sort of the opposite. We see a  
3 military that started pretty much from an almost cold start.  
4 We had been helping them before the war, but not at the  
5 scale we began to after the war, and they've evolved and  
6 developed very, very quickly.

7 So we've learned a lot about institutional adaptation  
8 from watching both sides as well.

9 Chairman Wicker: If we or our NATO allies had to face  
10 Russia ourselves in a conflict because of what we learned,  
11 would we be exponentially better off today because of the  
12 lessons we've learned in the last two and a half years?

13 General Cavoli: Oh, oh, yes, Chairman.

14 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Say a word or  
15 two in a half a minute, about the Russian economy.

16 General Cavoli: So, the Russian economy has been both  
17 bolstered and distorted by this war. Specifically, the  
18 Russian government has had to turbocharge their defense  
19 sector. And in so doing, they have created a very strong  
20 inflationary pressures throughout the economy, but  
21 especially in the civil sector. They've responded to that  
22 with high interest rates to hold inflation down.

23 The central banker, Elvira Nabiullina, has the  
24 overnight rate. The prime rate is over 21 percent right

1 now. That is choking off the viability of the civil  
2 economy. So, one has a huge oversized defense sector, but  
3 an anemic civil sector. And that defense sector, as you  
4 know, Chairman, is not a productive center -- not a  
5 productive economy for the nation. It's productive for the  
6 fighting of the war, but beyond that, it is pretty much  
7 swamped things out.

8 It appears that it will be very difficult to unwind  
9 such an imbalance, and we'll need to consider that as we go  
10 forward.

11 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, sir. We'll continue this  
12 conversation. Senator Reed.

13 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and  
14 thank you gentlemen. General Langley, the presence of the  
15 United States on the African continent is not significantly  
16 military. Matter of fact, we don't have any troops there at  
17 all, but we do have, until recently, a state department and  
18 USAID presence. Can you indicate to us how valuable that  
19 presence has been to you?

20 General Langley: Senator Reed, as you know heretofore,  
21 we had a whole of government approach and some of the --  
22 some of the challenges on the African continent and we used  
23 that in past years. Now you know, given that USAID and  
24 number of capabilities are being folded under the State

1 Department we continue to look at ways to be able to  
2 leverage that in U.S. government pressure on especially our  
3 competitors, and achieving our strategic goals.

4 Senator Reed: Thank you. General Cavoli, could you  
5 give the committee a brief assessment of the battlefield?  
6 We hear a lot about Ukraine's challenges, but as I  
7 understand it, they are still holding significant territory.  
8 They are taking the fight to the Russians and innovating on  
9 the battlefield daily.

10 General Cavoli: Sure, Senator Reed. All of the above  
11 is true. So, if we take just a moment and go down the front  
12 line of troops, if you don't mind?

13 Senator Reed: Yes, sir.

14 General Cavoli: So, if we start in the northern part  
15 of the battlefield, the active battlefield area, that's the  
16 place where Ukraine, last summer pushed an advance into  
17 Russia in an area called Kursk. And they took a large part  
18 of Kursk. This is where the Russians introduced North  
19 Korean troops to help push the Ukrainians back out. They  
20 set an original goal of the end of September to have the  
21 Ukrainians out of Kursk. The Ukrainians today are still in  
22 Kursk. There is a sizable force holding a diminished, but  
23 sizable chunk of ground inside Russia in Kursk Oblast right  
24 now. And they're holding on very good defensive terrain.

1           South of there in Belgorod, the Ukrainians a couple of  
2 weeks ago pushed a smaller counteroffensive back into  
3 Russia. So, we still have a back and forth going up in that  
4 area. If we come down inside of Ukraine to some of the big  
5 battlefields up in Luhansk and Sevastopol, first of all  
6 there's the city just west of the old Bakhmut called Chasiv  
7 Yar. The Ukrainians and the Russians have been fighting  
8 over this city and the city the south of Toretsk for about  
9 eight months now.

10           In recent weeks, the Russian offensives have sort of  
11 petered out. They had been decreasing in scale, moving from  
12 company size to platoon size. Now basically small groups of  
13 infantry men trying to rush forward under artillery fire.  
14 And they have failed to gain ground in the last couple of  
15 weeks. In fact, the Ukrainians have taken a little bit of  
16 ground back from them.

17           If we come farther south from that, we get to Pokrovsk  
18 in Donetsk province where the Russians continue to tie to  
19 take Pokrovsk. They are stalled out on their axis, trying  
20 to encircle it. They got pretty close, but the Ukrainians  
21 have held the Russians back. That's on the ground.

22           The Russians seem to be suffering from a paucity of  
23 armored vehicles and a lack of manpower. The Ukrainians on  
24 their side have assumed very strong defensive positions well

1 dug in and appear to have solved some of their manpower  
2 problems that were so acute last autumn. They've increased  
3 the pool of people available for mobilization. They've  
4 increased the pool of people available for voluntary  
5 recruitment, and they've done a good job squeezing people  
6 out of headquarters to the front.

7 If we look in other domains both sides are relying on  
8 long range attack. The Russians largely with cruise  
9 missiles and glide bombs. And the Ukrainians are relying  
10 mainly on one-way attack drones, as well as some  
11 indigenously produced cruise missile systems, one in  
12 particular that I've got in mind that we could talk about in  
13 closed sessions, sir. I hope that helped.

14 Senator Reed: It does, sir. If the administration  
15 withholds war material, spare parts, and particularly  
16 intelligence advice, what would be the effect on the  
17 Ukrainian forces?

18 General Cavoli: First of all, it would obviously have  
19 a rapid and deleterious effect on their ability to fight,  
20 Senator. The Ukrainians depend on us, principally,  
21 uniquely, I should say, for their high-end anti-aircraft  
22 systems. So, the things that shoot down the ballistic  
23 missiles and the long-range attack missiles that the  
24 Russians throw at them almost daily, that is mainly supplied

1 by the United States. That would have an obvious effect.

2 If the Ukrainians were not able to receive intelligence  
3 from us, they would struggle to target, especially in-depth  
4 operational level targets, such as command post, logistics  
5 areas and things like that, which require a specific way to  
6 -- you've got to have very good intelligence to do that, and  
7 they would struggle to do that.

8 I do have to note that the Ukrainians have developed  
9 alternative sources. Many of our allies have stepped up  
10 their ability to produce things for the Ukrainians. Czechia  
11 this month is delivering more than 70,000 rounds of 155.  
12 So, there are some real advances. There's some  
13 diversification of their supply sources, but undoubtedly,  
14 the Ukrainians are very dependent on our assistance.

15 Senator Reed: Thank you, sir.

16 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed. Senator  
17 Fischer.

18 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General  
19 Langley and General Cavoli, thank you both for your many  
20 years of service to this country. General Cavoli, you  
21 service as both the commander of the U.S. European Command  
22 and also as the Supreme Allied Commander of Europe. That  
23 means you are responsible for the overall command of NATO  
24 military operations and forces, including the United States

1 nuclear forces that are deployed to those NATO countries.

2 NATO is a nuclear alliance. Our deterrent strategy has  
3 worked for over 75 years. Having an American serve as  
4 Supreme Allied Commander of Europe has been a key part of  
5 that strategy. General, can you, at this level of  
6 classification, walk us through how command and control of  
7 U.S. nuclear forces in Europe works today, including your  
8 role?

9 General Cavoli: Absolutely, Senator. So, to keep it  
10 at a very open level, the United States has always offered a  
11 certain amount of nuclear force to NATO to be employed by  
12 SACEUR. So, we have some nuclear weapons that in a conflict  
13 upon the agreement of the United States, and the rest of the  
14 nations would be turned over to SACEUR to be delivered by a  
15 variety of nations who are involved in this program, all of  
16 them NATO nations.

17 That all happens under the command and control of  
18 SACEUR. If SACEUR were not an American officer, we would  
19 have to find some other way to do that, and it would  
20 certainly not be as integrated with the rest of SACEUR's  
21 operations as it is now. So yeah, I basically, as the  
22 American Commander, have those weapons in my possession, and  
23 at the time of need as instructed, I would pass them to  
24 myself as the Supreme Allied Commander to employ in

1   accordance with the 32 nations.

2           Senator Fischer:  It sounds to me like the way the  
3   command works right now, we don't have a middleman involved  
4   in this.  It would be you as an American commander in  
5   consultation with the President, the commander-in-chief, who  
6   could, I believe, more easily and also with more knowledge,  
7   make decisions affecting the use of our nuclear weapons.  
8   Would you say that's a correct assumption on my part?

9           General Cavoli:  Yes, ma'am.  That's correct.  Because  
10   I am able to rehearse these procedures both in the American  
11   system.  I work very closely with General Cotton, for  
12   instance, from U.S. STRATCOM.  We can rehearse those  
13   procedures on a U.S. basis.  We rehearse the delivery  
14   procedures on a NATO basis.  And I, and key American  
15   elements of my staff at the NATO headquarters, at Supreme  
16   Allied Headquarters Europe, we are able to be the link in  
17   that chain that makes it seamless.

18          Senator Fischer:  Thank you.  The GIUK gaps, sir, it's  
19   always been a critical maritime choke point, but it has  
20   recently grown in its strategic importance to NATO.  In  
21   light of the increase we're seeing with the submarine  
22   Russian submarine patrols in the Atlantic, what do you see  
23   general as the largest challenges with respect to the GIUK  
24   gap?



1           General Cavoli: The biggest challenge is there, ma'am  
2   at an unclassified level, just the quantity of stuff we  
3   have, the quantity of equipment and the quantity of forces  
4   we have available to monitor the underwater activity there  
5   and to counter it. It's important to understand that the  
6   U.S. has a unique role here. We have capabilities that our  
7   allies do not have. They have capabilities in numbers that  
8   we need to augment ours. So, we work very closely together,  
9   but the U.S. component of those efforts is absolutely  
10   fundamental.

11          Senator Fischer: Thank you, General. General Langley,  
12   as we're considering Africa under your command, we have seen  
13   I believe an increase with the Chinese presence on the  
14   continent. Economic developments, military activities,  
15   investments on the continent. What would you see as the  
16   greatest concern to us security and also to regional  
17   stability in the area with regard to the actions that we are  
18   observing with the Chinese?

19          General Langley: Senator, I see three lines of  
20   operations by the CCP. One from geostrategic and their  
21   basing initiatives. As you well know in Doraleh in Djibouti  
22   is their first start, and as the Chairman talked about in  
23   his assessment. Then also other basing initiatives across  
24   the continent of Africa.

1           Then their geopolitical line of effort in trying to  
2   dislodge the overall leadership in their quest to be the  
3   regional hegemon as we start to look at their activities in  
4   the UN and trying to get geopolitical advantage over the  
5   west.

6           And then also geo-economic. They treasure critical  
7   minerals. They need those critical minerals not only for  
8   their defense and industrial base, but also for their  
9   greater industrial base. Those lines of efforts is what  
10   we're watching closely because they want to be the global  
11   hegemon.

12          Senator Fischer: Thank you very much.

13          Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Fisher. Senator  
14   Shaheen.

15          Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank  
16   you to General Cavoli and General Langley for being here  
17   this morning and for your many years of service to the  
18   country.

19          I want to follow up on Senator Reed's question about  
20   USAID's presence in Africa, or lack thereof now that this  
21   administration has closed down virtually all of the  
22   operations in Africa. This is the fastest growing continent  
23   in the world. It is a place where we're seeing increasing  
24   incursion by the Chinese, as you pointed out. So as we have

1 withdrawn our presence from countries in Africa, are you  
2 seeing additional Chinese presence come in to take over some  
3 of those services and programs that the United States has  
4 providing?

5 For example, in Rwanda, we had a program to help with  
6 women and children, and the challenges of childbirth. My  
7 understanding is that now that we have left that program,  
8 that the Chinese have come in to take it over, are you  
9 seeing that in places?

10 General Langley: Senator, I am seeing that. You know,  
11 there's a number of programs that we see that the Chinese  
12 Communist Party is trying to replicate. They can't do what  
13 we do. They can't do what we do. And PEPFAR we've extended  
14 the life span of a number of Africans by 20 years. They're  
15 trying to replicate that. They're trying to match what we  
16 do. So that's what we're seeing as we start to fold in the  
17 capabilities of USAID under State Department, China's trying  
18 to exploit that scene.

19 Senator Shaheen: And do you agree that it would be a  
20 huge loss if we don't continue many of those programs?

21 General Langley: Senator, I won't speak to the policy  
22 part of that, but it is a need. Those capabilities are  
23 needed for the U.S. to maintain a strategic advantage over  
24 the Chinese Communist party because we do it best. And the

1 Africans, they speak that they do prefer the United States.

2 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. General Cavoli, I want to  
3 follow up on Senator Fischer's question about the role of  
4 the SACEUR in NATO and in Europe, and the importance of that  
5 role in terms of nuclear weapon command and control. And  
6 partly because what we're hearing is rumors from the  
7 administration that they're thinking about eliminating that  
8 dual-hat responsibility.

9 I'm not going to ask you to comment on the policy point  
10 there, but how concerned would you be about the lack of  
11 control of nuclear weapons? Especially, should Article 5 be  
12 invoked?

13 General Cavoli: We would want those under the command  
14 of a U.S. officer, ma'am clearly.

15 Senator Shaheen: And Senator Reed and Senator Wicker  
16 both asked you a number of questions about Ukraine and where  
17 the war is now, and you were very forthcoming about that.  
18 As we look at potential negotiations on trying to end that  
19 war, what is the best leverage that we can have with Putin  
20 and Russia in terms of positioning Ukraine to be able to  
21 come to a negotiating table with a position of strength?

22 General Cavoli: Senator, I'd hate to try to insert  
23 myself into the negotiation process, which I'm not a part  
24 of, but I do think --

1           Senator Shaheen: Right, I meant really asking for your  
2 military --

3           General Cavoli: So, continuing to assist Ukraine on  
4 the battlefield daily, I think is very important.  
5 Continuing to enlist not just the material assistance, but  
6 the unity of our allies in this effort to support Ukraine, I  
7 think is also an important function to be done. I'll leave  
8 it to the administration to determine how to achieve  
9 leverage against the other side.

10          Senator Shaheen: Thank you. And as we talked briefly  
11 on the way in about the situation in the Western Balkans,  
12 and particularly in Serbia and in Bosnia Herzegovina, while  
13 Mr. Dodik has left the Republic of Srpska for the time being  
14 and is in Russia, can you speak to the ability of the EUCOM  
15 mission there to be able to take over, should there be any  
16 outbreak of violence? And then also if you could address K4  
17 and Kosovo and Serbia as well.

18          General Cavoli: Sure, Senator. So, with regard to  
19 Bosnia, yeah, good and bad that Mr. Dodik has left the scene  
20 for a little bit. We're working through that day by day.  
21 As you know, the operation Althea, the EU mission, the  
22 operational, the one step above commander of that is for the  
23 EU is my Vice Chief of Staff, a French three star named  
24 Hubert Cottereau. So, we talk about -- his office is about

1 10 feet from mine. We talk about this every single week.  
2 We feel comfortable with the level of forces they have  
3 available now. I'm grateful to France, especially for  
4 responding quickly with unpreviously committed forces to  
5 help. Last summer, they sent the Charles de Gaulle and two  
6 parachute battalions to show force in the area.

7 So, I think we're in a pretty good place there. I  
8 think Hubert and the EU know the various ways things could  
9 spiral up there and we can handle that. From the U.S. EUCOM  
10 side, I do meter in and out training forces. Our forces to  
11 train who while not operational, certainly have a  
12 stabilizing effect as they go in and out.

13 Kosovo, as you know, K4 remains on the ground. 4,300  
14 soldiers on the ground right now, of whom less than 600 are  
15 American. That is a place where our Italian and allies have  
16 really been carrying a lot of the weight. We have had  
17 reserve forces deployed in there to handle the elevated  
18 tensions for about a year now. We are expanding the size of  
19 the permanent force in order to relieve those forces, those  
20 reserve forces. And I believe we'll come to agreement on  
21 that very quickly and get that source.

22 The key nations really involved there are Italy,  
23 Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Hungary, who have been  
24 extremely responsive with their reserve forces.

1 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. Thank you very much.

2 General Cavoli: Thank you, ma'am.

3 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Let me  
4 observe. I'm doing a poor job of enforcing the five-minute  
5 rule, but General Langley, let me just follow up for a  
6 moment. As we dial back, USAID in Africa, China's not  
7 dialing back the Belt and Road Initiative anywhere in  
8 Africa, are they?

9 General Langley: Chairman, China's responding by  
10 trying to replicate what capabilities USAID was very  
11 successful across a number of years. They're trying to  
12 replicate that, whether it's in health diplomacy or any  
13 development type programs. They're trying to use that as  
14 extension of the Belt Road Initiative to gain favor by the  
15 African countries.

16 Chairman Wicker: And would you say it's not  
17 principally altruistic on the part of the Chinese  
18 Communists?

19 General Langley: Chairman, I'd say that they've made  
20 some missteps in the last couple of weeks, especially in  
21 Zambia with that spillage into the river that affects 5  
22 million people. So, they're getting a horrible start using  
23 the track analogy.

24 Chairman Wicker: But they do it in their own self-

1 interest, the Chinese?

2 General Langley: Absolutely.

3 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. And Senator  
4 Cotton, you are now recognized with the apology of the  
5 chair.

6 Senator Cotton: Gentlemen, welcome. Thank you for  
7 your service to the country. I know you'll be sad not to  
8 get to come here and testify in front of the committee  
9 anymore after today.

10 General Cavoli in his first term, president Trump  
11 withdrew the United States from the Intermediate Range  
12 Nuclear Forces Treaty. Finally, after years of Russian  
13 cheating with impunity, that's allowed our military to  
14 develop longer range missiles. The Army has been developing  
15 the long-range hypersonic weapon, a ground launch missile  
16 that has a range of up to -- well, it has a long range, I'll  
17 put it that way.

18 It appears that the Army's first multi-domain task  
19 force in the Pacific is slated to get this weapon first. Do  
20 you see a role for the long-range hypersonic weapon in  
21 EUCOM?

22 General Cavoli: I do, Senator Cotton. I think it  
23 would be very useful. I think coming out of the INF Treaty  
24 was a very important move, and it's one that we now should



1 capitalize on in all the relevant theaters. The Army's  
2 multi-domain task force, Long Range Fires Battalion is the  
3 real key component. It's got several systems in, as I think  
4 you know, and there is a move to -- there is a request out  
5 there to place one of those in Europe that I could get into  
6 in closed session in detail with you if you'd like, sir.

7 Senator Cotton: Okay. Thank you. General Langley,  
8 the Trump administration has conducted multiple airstrikes  
9 against Al-Shabaab targets since taking office. What's your  
10 current assessment of the threat that Al-Shabaab poses to  
11 our national interest and specifically to the U.S. Homeland?

12 General Langley: Senator, Al-Shabaab is especially a  
13 heightened terrorist threat, namely because they're  
14 colluding with the Houthis across from Yemen. And so we're  
15 watching that closely. The President and Secretary of  
16 Defense has given expanded authorities. I can talk about  
17 those details as far as expanded authorities, but I will say  
18 we're hitting them hard. I have now had the capability to  
19 hit them harder.

20 Senator Cotton: Al-Shabaab is in the Horn of Africa on  
21 the East Coast. There's obviously other terrorists  
22 operating throughout Africa associated with Al-Qaeda or as  
23 an Islamic state. What's your assessment of the threats  
24 that all those terrorists on the African continent pose, and

1 again, specifically pose to the U.S. Homeland?

2 General Langley: Senator, left unchecked they will  
3 have a direct threat on the homeland, whether it's just  
4 their networks or even their ideology. We remember 1  
5 January, 2025 what happened in New Orleans. Still there are  
6 some that have been indoctrinated by this by false ideology  
7 of Islam.

8 Senator Cotton: General Cavoli, coming back to you  
9 outside of your AOR, but I think perhaps with some follow-on  
10 effects, the Assad tyranny fell late last year that has  
11 imperiled Russia's access to its naval base in Syria. There  
12 have been reports that Russia is looking to replace that  
13 base elsewhere in the Mediterranean including potentially in  
14 Libya. How do you assess the situation in the Mediterranean  
15 and Russia's access to the Mediterranean since the fall of  
16 Assad?

17 General Cavoli: Senator, they've suffered a big loss.  
18 They've suffered the ability to maintain sustained maritime  
19 operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. It's much more  
20 difficult for them now. They are searching -- and I'll let  
21 Mike talk about this if I'd like to, sir -- they're  
22 searching for alternative basing to replace Tartus, which  
23 they've mainly lost on the North shore of Africa. They've  
24 failed so far to achieve a long-term agreement for a major

1 base. So this will be significant.

2 It's significant not only because we have a reduced  
3 presence of submarines, Russian submarines in the Eastern  
4 Mediterranean now. It's also surface vessels that find it  
5 harder to do sustained operations. And finally, it's much  
6 more difficult for Russia to sustain the operations, both  
7 overt and covert operations that they're doing in Africa  
8 without those bases. And the Alliance and U.S. EUCOM are  
9 both taking actions to try to make sure we keep them boxed.

10 Senator Cotton: General Langley, anything to add?

11 General Langley: Yes, Senator. I watch Maghreb  
12 closely. Russia does have initiatives because that is NATO  
13 Southern Flank from, from Morocco to Algeria and even  
14 Tunisia and Libya. I engage with them closely for shared  
15 objectives of denying the militarization of NATO Southern  
16 Flank.

17 Senator Cotton: Thank you, gentlemen.

18 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator  
19 Hirono.

20 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My thanks to  
21 both of you for your decades of service. I did want to  
22 mention the concerns that our European allies must have  
23 regarding what happened with Signal Gate. So, U.S.  
24 officials, including Vice President Vance and Secretary of

1 Defense Hegseth -- this is for General Cavoli -- uses Signal  
2 to communicate classified Yemen strike plans, putting the  
3 lives of our service members at risk. And in addition to  
4 sharing classified material on an unsecured network, the  
5 Vice President and Secretary of Defense spoke contemptuously  
6 about our European allies.

7 I think both of you very much know how important our  
8 allies are and how important it is for us to continue to  
9 strengthen our relationships with our allies. So it  
10 certainly doesn't help where we have our leaders in an  
11 unconscionable way of being contemptuous of them. General  
12 Cavoli, do you think sharing operation plans on unclassified  
13 systems puts our war fighters at risk?

14 General Cavoli: Ma'am, we have protocols to handle  
15 classified information. We'd adhere to them to the extent  
16 that we're capable. When there's a failure in that, we of  
17 course investigate

18 Senator Hirono: Answer is yes?

19 General Cavoli: Yeah.

20 Senator Hirono: Have you heard from our European  
21 allies, have any of them indicated to you their concerns  
22 about the security breach on our part?

23 General Cavoli: No, not directly. I've not had  
24 anybody ask me about that, or talk to me about that, ma'am.

1           Senator Hirono: What do you think they are thinking  
2 regarding the security breach?

3           General Cavoli: Ma'am, it's hard for me to put myself  
4 into their heads.

5           Senator Hirono: Is it reassuring to them?

6           General Cavoli: It's hard. It's hard. I can't, you  
7 know, characterize their thoughts, ma'am.

8           Senator Hirono: So, none of them actually said to you,  
9 what is going on in the United States?

10          General Cavoli: No. If one did, I would of course  
11 tell you.

12          Senator Hirono: That's pretty surprising. Don't we  
13 share intel with our European allies?

14          General Cavoli: Of course, it's one of the most  
15 important parts of our alliance and our bilateral  
16 relationships.

17          Senator Hirono: Do you think that the security breach  
18 that occurred with Signal Gate is reassuring to our allies  
19 in terms of their willingness to share security information  
20 with us?

21          General Cavoli: Senator, again, it's hard for me to  
22 characterize as somebody else's thoughts. But I have not  
23 had anybody pull back any of our intelligence sharing  
24 agreements, ma'am.

1           Senator Hirono: I find that surprising, but  
2 nonetheless, I hope so. There have been recent news reports  
3 that the Pentagon is considering combining AFRICOM and EUCOM  
4 into one command. For both of you, what is your best  
5 military advice on the strategic, operational, and resource  
6 implications of such a merger. General Langley?

7           General Langley: Senator, I won't speculate on the  
8 evolving policy, but I will say this, I'll just give  
9 comparison of the relevance of AFRICOM and our mission.  
10 Back in 2007, when we were stood up, we looked at the  
11 challenges across the globe, and especially the challenge of  
12 terrorism. At that time, the global presence of terrorism  
13 on African incontinent was 2 percent. Senator, today it's  
14 43 percent.

15           And then even adding on to a dual strategic type of  
16 perspective of our great power competitions both Russia  
17 Federation and the Chinese Communist Party activities on  
18 African continent is grand. So my responsibilities are  
19 great. So, for combined commander, it'd be a daunting task  
20 for integration.

21           Senator Hirono: So, would you agree that -- General  
22 Cavoli, that the challenges as General Langley put it have  
23 increased in Africa not decreased, and making it even more  
24 important that this combatant command continues?

1 General Cavoli: Ma'am, the challenges in Africa have  
2 increased exponentially over the last 10 years. Not just  
3 the terrorism that was there during the previous period of  
4 the last 20 years, but the increasing activity of Russia and  
5 China. Yeah, there are a lot of problems there, ma'am. And  
6 I'm satisfied with the problems I have in EUCOM.

7 Senator Hirono: Would you like to share your thoughts  
8 on yet another potential that's being contemplated -- change  
9 being contemplated by the administration and that is to give  
10 up our role as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander?

11 General Cavoli: Yes, ma'am. I think that would bring  
12 some challenges in terms of nuclear commanding control. It  
13 would put us in a position where, in an Article V situation,  
14 we could have for the first time since the First World War,  
15 large numbers of American troops under non-U.S. command.  
16 So, I think those are things that would have to be  
17 considered carefully.

18 Senator Hirono: Giving up this command, in fact, could  
19 really endanger our national security. That's what I hear  
20 you saying. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator  
22 Rounds.

23 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me begin  
24 by just thanking both of you for your service to our country

1 and to your families. We sometimes forget about the  
2 sacrifice they make when you are away. And we most  
3 certainly appreciate all of that. And once again we  
4 appreciate what you have done and continue to do for this  
5 country.

6 General Cavoli, our missile defense systems protect not  
7 just the U.S. homeland, but our deployed forces overseas,  
8 for example, in Europe and in the Middle East. Does EUCOM  
9 make use of any of the systems which require the use of the  
10 3.1 to 3.45 gigahertz band of the spectrum to fully operate?  
11 And I'm just curious.

12 This is something that I've asked every four-star  
13 uniformed officer as they've come before us, because there  
14 has been an attempt most recently to take away the exclusive  
15 use by the Department of Defense for the use of that part of  
16 the spectrum, and literally to sell it for commercial  
17 purposes, huge amounts of activity with regard to some of  
18 the best physics in the world per radar and so forth were  
19 found in there.

20 Can you share a little bit about what EUCOM does and  
21 whether or not would impact any of our capabilities in  
22 Europe?

23 General Cavoli: Yeah, we sure do use it, Senator. We  
24 use it principally in our Air and Missile Defense Systems,



1 as you pointed out, which are part the system that protects  
2 the United States Homeland from ballistic missile attacks.  
3 So more than that I could go into in classified session, but  
4 it is a source that would have to be worked out if we lost  
5 access to that bandwidth. Yeah.

6 Senator Rounds: Are you familiar with some of the  
7 physics involved and why we picked that particular part for  
8 our radars and so forth?

9 General Cavoli: I would never volunteer just how  
10 familiar I am with physics, but yes, a little bit.

11 Senator Rounds: Just to with regard to that, I mean,  
12 there is a reason why that particular part of the spectrum  
13 is being so closely protected by the Department of Defense.  
14 Is that fair to say?

15 General Cavoli: There is.

16 Senator Rounds: Thank you. General Cavoli also, can  
17 you describe how the Ukrainian armed forces, as well as  
18 their defense industrial base have evolved over time and  
19 just a little bit in terms of what you've observed?

20 General Cavoli: Wow, sure, Senator. So, in 2014 I was  
21 a one-star commanding our training enterprise in Germany and  
22 throughout Europe. And in 2015, I was given the task to help  
23 to set up a training center in Western Ukraine for the  
24 Ukrainians as a response to the invasion and the annexation

1 of Crimea that had taken place in 2014.

2 At the time, they were, boy, a hand-to-mouth army that  
3 was tied in a tight fight in their Eastern area, and had  
4 suffered from 30 years of post-Soviet neglect. They were in  
5 tough shape. Between then and 2022, they managed while  
6 maintaining a fight in the East, they managed to convert  
7 themselves into the force that was able to stop Russia.

8 This came with a number of important decisions from the  
9 United States, specifically an increase in aid and the  
10 initiation of lethal aid, the donation of javelins, I  
11 believe it was in about 2016 or 2017, we gave that. Since  
12 then, you know the trajectory sir, that they went from being  
13 basically minutemen with javelins stopping a Russian  
14 invasion to being an organized force that is increasingly  
15 able to generate force in a reliable and predictable  
16 fashion.

17 Very difficult to do, especially on the fly. It's  
18 taken a couple of years to get it going, and they've  
19 developed a defense industry that is producing many of their  
20 own munitions right now. In fact, I would say they're the  
21 world leaders in one-way attack drone technology.

22 Senator Rounds: Interesting. As you've watched this  
23 and observed this, you've watched what Russia has done as  
24 well. What would be your assessment of how Russia would

1 react to a conflict between the United States and China?

2 General Cavoli: I think clearly, whatever the United  
3 States does in the world Russia will find a way or will look  
4 for a way to turn the situation to its advantage and to  
5 seize opportunity. So, depending on the exact parameters of  
6 a conflict with China, exactly what the conditions were, I  
7 would expect Russia to try to take advantage of that either  
8 in the information domain or even physically.

9 Senator Rounds: Would it be fair to say that if we  
10 found ourselves in a theater conflict in the Pacific Rim  
11 region, highly, highly strong possibility that we would also  
12 find ourselves in a conflict in the European theater as  
13 well?

14 General Cavoli: Or other theaters as well, yes.

15 Senator Rounds: Thank you. General Langley, I did  
16 have questions for you, but I will put them in the record.  
17 I thank you for your service as well. Thank you, Mr.  
18 Chairman.

19 [The information referred to follows:]

20 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

21

22

23

24

1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Rounds.  
2 Senator King.

3 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Based upon the  
4 testimony this morning, I'd like to move, we extend the  
5 terms of these two generals for another four years.

6 Chairman Wicker: Without objection.

7 Senator King: Sorry, fellas.

8 [Laughter.]

9 Senator King: The bad news is you get to tell your  
10 families. I have to point out, Mr. Chairman, that in the  
11 hour that we've been sitting here, investors in the United  
12 States stock market have lost two and a half trillion  
13 dollars. And I think that's something that should be noted.

14 General Cavoli, it appears that the Russians and  
15 President Putin are engaged in what they consider a kind of  
16 waiting game, a grinding down in the conflict in Ukraine.  
17 Are the Ukrainians destined to lose?

18 General Cavoli: No, Senator. Thank you for the  
19 question, because I think it's an important one. There's  
20 nothing inevitable in war, and the Ukrainians are in very  
21 strong defensive positions right now, and are improving  
22 weekly their ability to generate force and to reinforce  
23 those positions. It is hard sitting here right now to  
24 envision a major Ukrainian offensive that clears everybody

1 you know, out of every square inch of Ukraine. But  
2 likewise, it's very hard to envision Ukraine collapsing and  
3 losing that conflict. I do not think there's an  
4 inevitability to a Ukrainian loss.

5 Senator King: And a follow up question, and you  
6 touched on this in answers to Senator Rounds. Describe the  
7 Ukrainian's evolution of their force over the course of this  
8 conflict. My sense is they've really gone, as you I think  
9 you mentioned, minute men with a rifle to a really serious  
10 modern military force.

11 General Cavoli: Yeah, absolutely, Senator. So in the  
12 beginning, they had a certain number of organized brigades  
13 in the East. But what really kicked in was sort of  
14 volunteers who spontaneously came in, organized under  
15 officer leadership General Syrskyi North of Kiev, was key in  
16 stopping that advance toward Hostomel, and then back out  
17 pushing the Russians out of Budjak.

18 They evolved from that. They consolidated that into  
19 Soviet style brigades, which they were used to with Soviet  
20 equipment. And then coming through late '22 and '23, we  
21 could see that that equipment, and especially their  
22 artillery ammunition of a Soviet caliber was going to be  
23 exhausted. And so, we had to help them convert to a largely  
24 western equipped and almost exclusively western artillery

1 equipped force, which is pretty complicated. We operate off  
2 of a different aiming circle.

3 Senator King: They've been effective in making that  
4 transition?

5 General Cavoli: It's amazing to do that under fire,  
6 under the pressure, one of the world's largest armies. It's  
7 a fantastic feat.

8 Senator King: Let me change the subject entirely for a  
9 minute. Please discuss Russian and Chinese activities in  
10 the Arctic and the risks in the Arctic. It strikes me that  
11 this is a looming threat area that we should be addressing.  
12 And I should mention, the reason it's becoming so important  
13 is the melting of the Arctic ice, which has something to do  
14 with climate change.

15 70 percent of the Arctic ice has disappeared in the  
16 last 40 years. So, talk to me about the strategic  
17 importance of the Arctic.

18 General Cavoli: Absolutely, Senator. So, from the  
19 U.S. perspective, the most important thing to understand is  
20 the shortest distance from Russian airfields to the United  
21 States is over the polar cap.

22 Senator King: And they are building up those  
23 airfields, are they not?

24 General Cavoli: They were before the war at a fast

1 pace. It's slowed down a little bit during the war, but  
2 they're still opening airfields and repairing existing ones.  
3 The other thing that comes out of the Arctic, sir, the  
4 Northern fleet in Murmansk comes up, sails down through the  
5 GIUK gap and breaks out, or tries to break out into the  
6 Atlantic from which they can hold key U.S. targets at risk  
7 with sub launch cruise missiles among other weapons.

8 Senator King: So we should be paying particular  
9 attention to the Arctic as a new domain, if you will, of  
10 potential conflict?

11 General Cavoli: And I think we are. The U.S. Northern  
12 command, so General Guillot, has the primary U.S.  
13 responsibility for it, but of course, strategic command also  
14 has activities up there. EUCOM has activities up there,  
15 because so much of the Arctic is in my AOR and NATO, of  
16 course, you know, almost all of the nations in the Arctic  
17 Council are NATO nations. The only one that's not is  
18 Russia.

19 So, we've recently been sponsoring tabletop exercises  
20 to make sure we understand the details of command and  
21 control and coordination of operations there.

22 Senator King: Thank you. General Langley, I'm out of  
23 time, but I'm very concerned about the rise of ISIS in the  
24 Sahel. That is a serious issue that we need to attend to,

1 that we're talking about great power competition, China,  
2 Russia, we can't forget about terrorism. Is that correct?

3 General Langley: Senator, that's correct. And the  
4 rise of ISIS by numbers in Sahel really more focused on the  
5 Isis elements in Somalia, because of their networks and  
6 Sahel they're growing in number, but not so much in  
7 capability. But we are still engaged, especially in coastal  
8 West Africa of like-minded countries to deter that from the  
9 outside in.

10 Senator King: Thank you.

11 Chairman Wicker: Thank you for that yes or no question,  
12 Senator King.

13 Senator King: Yeah, exactly.

14 Chairman Wicker: Senator Ernst.

15 Senator Ernst: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And first  
16 I want to express my condolences as well to the families of  
17 the four fallen, and as they begin their dignified transfer  
18 process, our hearts are with their family members as well as  
19 the entire 3rd ID family. So, General Cavoli, thank you for  
20 your respects to those family members.

21 Let's just start and talk a little bit about leadership  
22 because it has been brought up many times over the situation  
23 that I believe is being contemplated between SACEUR and  
24 European command. And you have expressed that you believe



1 it is important to have American leadership in those  
2 positions. Is that true, General Cavoli?

3 General Cavoli: Ma'am, that, of course, would be a  
4 policy decision. I merely laid out the advantages and  
5 disadvantages of it from a military perspective.

6 Senator Ernst: Thank you.

7 General Cavoli: From a military perspective,  
8 problematic.

9 Senator Ernst: Thank you. I do believe it is  
10 important, and I'll paraphrase a little bit, but the army  
11 definition of a leader is someone who inspires others to  
12 follow towards a common goal or objective for the good of  
13 the unit or the organization. And I would say, again, this  
14 is just me speaking Senator Ernst but I do think it is very  
15 important that America remains engaged on the world stage,  
16 and that we exhibit that type of leadership in order to  
17 secure our own national defense. Would you also believe  
18 that General Cavoli?

19 General Cavoli: I do agree with that, and I see it  
20 every day that our allies crave our leadership and are  
21 stronger with it, and they're stronger for us.

22 Senator Ernst: Thank you. And General Langley, I  
23 shared a quote with you yesterday. It is, "An American  
24 soldier is a hero standing still." And I looked it up. It

1 is General Patton that gave us that quote. Because you  
2 mentioned something about the convening, really the  
3 convening ability of our United States military. Can you  
4 speak to that please?

5 General Langley: Yes, Senator. You know, as the  
6 Chinese Communist Party and even the Russian Federation, are  
7 trying to encroach upon what we do as far as influence and  
8 cooperation with our African partners, they pale in  
9 comparison. You know, as evidenced by what we do in our  
10 conferences that we hold, or moreover, the exercises we  
11 have. Whether it's Obangame Express all those countries, a  
12 number of countries in the 40 plus are always wanting to be  
13 part of it.

14 Same thing as far as our express series, and we get our  
15 maritime members because of the illicit activities that  
16 China is doing in IEU fishing. All those qualities and  
17 shared objectives gives us a convening power and influence  
18 on African continent. There's no better type partner that  
19 the Africans can have than the United States.

20 Senator Ernst: No, thank you for that. And I remember  
21 a story that was shared with me a number of years ago by a  
22 special operator that was in charge of a small tactical  
23 unit. And they were brought into that situation because  
24 they were many warring factions in this particular area.

1 The French were there, few other nations were there as well,  
2 but none of them could get along, and they couldn't come  
3 together in a cohesive, collaborative engagement.

4 It took the Americans coming into that situation and  
5 providing leadership and guidance. And when that happened,  
6 all of those different factions were able to come together.  
7 So, talking about Americans being a convening authority, I  
8 think is exceptional. It is true.

9 So again, I'll just stress how important I think it is  
10 that the United States remain engaged on the world stage and  
11 provide that leadership. We don't have to provide all the  
12 boots on the ground, but certainly I think American  
13 leadership is valuable.

14 General Cavoli, I'll go back to you in reference to the  
15 war in Ukraine and Russia. Again, another story that I will  
16 share with you. When I deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom  
17 as a transportation company commander, we occupied a base in  
18 Kuwait. We ran convoys through Kuwait and Southern Iraq.  
19 On this sub camp in Kuwait, half was occupied by Americans.

20 Can you imagine who would occupy the other half of that  
21 camp? You don't have to know this. The other half of the  
22 camp was occupied by Ukrainian soldiers.

23 Why were the Ukrainians there? They were not part of  
24 NATO, correct? Can you guess why they were there?

1           General Cavoli:   Probably because we asked them to be  
2   there, and they responded positively because of our  
3   leadership position in the world.

4           Senator Ernst:   Absolutely.   And I share that story  
5   because so many people don't realize that the Ukrainians  
6   were there for us when we needed them.   Those men in -- it  
7   was all men, actually -- the Ukrainian men that were there,  
8   their soldiers, they were route clearing engineers.   I was a  
9   transportation company commander.   I'm very grateful that  
10   the Ukrainians were there for us.   I can't imagine how many  
11   American lives might have been saved by those Ukrainian  
12   soldiers.

13          So, again, I apologize for going over, but I just  
14   wanted to stress that we do not operate in a vacuum no  
15   matter where we are.   Our country is safer because we  
16   exhibit leadership and we have the convening power to bring  
17   many nations together.   And I thank you, gentlemen for all  
18   that you do for our great nation in so many different ways.  
19   God bless you both.   Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20          Chairman Wicker:   And thank you very much, Senator  
21   Ernst.   Senator Kelly.

22          Senator Kelly:   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23          I'd like to associate myself with Senator Ernst's  
24   remarks and echo them.   When I was in Ukraine just a few

1 weeks ago, one of the messages I heard from their Head of  
2 Intelligence, General Budanov and others, is if we stick  
3 with them, they will stick with us. Wherever we need them  
4 to be, they will be there. And when you consider that  
5 they're literally fighting for their survival and fighting  
6 for their lives to express to me how important our  
7 relationship was and what it means to them going forward, I  
8 think we have a friend we can always rely on.

9 But I am concerned about over the last few weeks the  
10 politics around this conflict have gotten us off track.  
11 And, but I'm curious, General Cavoli, from your perspective  
12 you know, friction between President Zelensky and President  
13 Trump. How do you feel our Ukrainian allies are handling  
14 this right now, and what concerns do you hear directly from  
15 them about our ability to support them?

16 I just had members of the Ukrainian Parliament in my  
17 office, and we were talking specifics. We're talking about  
18 ATACMS rounds, HIMARS, PAC-3 rounds for Patriots, AIM-120s,  
19 155 millimeter artillery rounds, GPS, these systems.

20 Can you just give me a summary about where you think we  
21 are with our support and what do they need to continue this  
22 fight?

23 General Cavoli: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Kelly.  
24 With me, my interlocutors who are principally general

1 officers or members of the Ministry of Defense, they're  
2 resolute. They're resolute, they're focused on a task, they  
3 have a defense to execute. And they talk to me about the  
4 practical aspects of that. You're correct, they do continue  
5 to depend on our support. Our support is in a wide variety  
6 of munitions especially, but also the provision of  
7 intelligence. They're very eager to maintain those.

8 And there are certain specific ones that I could talk  
9 about in closed session that are especially valuable. I  
10 did, however, earlier in open session mention air defense  
11 missiles is one of the most important because we're  
12 basically the sole provider of those for them.

13 Senator Kelly: All right. Thank you.

14 And I want to move to General Langley for a second  
15 here. Good to see you again, too, General. AFRICOM has  
16 continued to experience conflict arising from the uptick in  
17 violent extremist organizations. As our focus continues  
18 towards large scale combat operations in INDOPACOM in  
19 Europe, I'm concerned that our defense modernization and  
20 optimization will trend towards those theaters, but away  
21 from other issues that we can't ignore, the real threat of  
22 terrorism and gray zone operations, especially in AFRICOM.

23 It's critical that we don't lose sight of this real  
24 threat. And you previously highlighted, General, your need

1 for more ISR capability, calling ISR an active deterrent in  
2 Africa, yet we have limited platforms to go around. SOCOM  
3 has begun purchasing the OA-1K Skyraider aircraft, which I  
4 think could fill a requirement that you seem to have.

5 Can you talk a little bit about the importance of an  
6 armed ISR platform, like the OA-1K, especially one with a  
7 dual use capability that could fill the close air support  
8 gap?

9 General Langley: Senator, thank you. I'll speak to  
10 the capabilities of various ISR platforms in Africa,  
11 especially as far as our ongoing operations across Somalia  
12 and in support of the Somalia National Army. So, I'll just  
13 speak to the capabilities, the need for that armed ISR  
14 across since it makes sense and do responsible type  
15 targeting across the region. That's all too important.

16 So, I'll speak to the capabilities that every combatant  
17 commander needs more ISR in support of our operations.

18 Senator Kelly: And do you feel the OA-1K could fill a  
19 gap that you have in AFRICOM?

20 General Langley: Senator, I'll take any additional ISR  
21 and any enhanced technologies that would add to the  
22 credibility and our lethality of our forces.

23 Senator Kelly: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
24 Chairman.

1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Kelly. There is a  
2 vote going on, and we actually have a series of three votes.  
3 The hearing will continue and I'll pass the gavel to various  
4 members, but the hearing will not recess for the votes.  
5 Senator Scott, you're recognized.

6 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman. Thank both of you  
7 for what you do. Thank you for the men and women that work  
8 for you and serve with you. And I want to recognize, honor  
9 the four brave American heroes who lost their lives serving  
10 the country in Lithuania. So that has to be a tough day  
11 when that happens and talking to their families.

12 So General Cavoli, can you talk a little bit about the  
13 importance of what Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania are  
14 doing in contrast to historically at least maybe Germany's  
15 finally going to show up and do their part. But can you  
16 talk about the importance of what they're doing along the  
17 Eastern Flank and then in contrast to what the lack of  
18 investment that Germany's made in the past and the  
19 importance of what these countries on the Eastern Flank are  
20 doing?

21 General Cavoli: Sure, Senator. It's a great  
22 opportunity to talk about some of our allies, some of our  
23 newer allies, right? These are not plank owners. These are  
24 post-Warsaw Pact allies of the United States. Poland.



1 Poland's at 4.7 percent of GDP, right? As a benchmark, we  
2 are at about 3.4 percent. So this is a country that has had  
3 very rapid economic growth sustained over the last 15 years,  
4 and is committing it to correct an imbalance in their  
5 defensive capability.

6 They're buying vast quantities of U.S. equipment, by  
7 the way, but more important, they're integrating it with the  
8 alliance, and they're making it available to the Alliance  
9 for Collective Defense, which is fantastic. They are  
10 rapidly becoming the bulwark of our ground defenses on the  
11 Eastern Flank. And their Officer Corps is stepping up to  
12 the task as well.

13 If we come up through Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia,  
14 every single one of those countries has come above 2  
15 percent. Estonia is headed over 3 percent. Two of the  
16 three countries have reintroduced at least limited  
17 conscription. They're building defensive fortifications,  
18 and they have extremely well integrated national defense  
19 plans with our NATO defense plans. Very, very active. I  
20 spend quite a bit of time there working with them on their  
21 plans.

22 Finland. Of course, Finland never looked away from its  
23 national defense requirements throughout years and years and  
24 years since the Winter War of 1939. And they have happily

1 and seamlessly and quickly integrated their defense plans  
2 into our NATO defense plans. And in fact, they're  
3 contributing a three-star land component command to handle  
4 the potential ground fight in the high North for us. So  
5 very grateful to those countries.

6 Senator Scott: You want to talk about Germany?

7 General Cavoli: Germany has performed as an ally for  
8 many decades, sir. During the Cold War we know how strong  
9 they were. They, like many other nations in the alliance  
10 took a holiday from readiness and for sizing, and they're  
11 trying to correct that. It's a complicated situation  
12 politically, but I believe that Herr Merz, Friedrich Merz,  
13 has been able to negotiate as part of a future coalition.  
14 He'll be the future chancellor.

15 He is been able to negotiate at long last in agreement  
16 to be able to use deficit spending to be able to finance  
17 more rapid growth. And we look forward to having that  
18 happen. They have very solid plans for expansion and for  
19 modernization. We just need to see it get going.

20 Senator Scott: If you were placing troops in, you  
21 know, around the NATO alliance American troops without any  
22 past, where would you move troops, if you didn't have to  
23 worry about existing physical structures, things like that?

24 General Cavoli: Ultimately, what we would like to see

1 is sufficiently robust national forces to be the basis of  
2 the defense of any part of the Eastern Flank. In some  
3 places that's hard to see because just the nations are not  
4 large enough, the Baltic nations, for instance.

5 The second thing we'd like to see in those places is a  
6 reinforcement by a multinational alliance force. We have  
7 that in the three Baltic countries. We would like to use  
8 U.S. forces to be able to deploy rapidly from on the  
9 continent responsibly to the point of need. One of the  
10 differences between the Cold War and now is we were very  
11 sure where the battlefield would be during the Cold War.  
12 Now we have, you know, 2300 kilometers of expanse.

13 The U.S. forces bring capabilities that nobody else has  
14 and can move the fastest. So I need them in locations where  
15 they can be trained, ready, and where they have the  
16 infrastructure and the political agreements, the  
17 international agreements to be able to deploy quickly from.

18 Senator Scott. All right, thank you. Thank both of  
19 you for your service.

20 General Cavoli: Thank you, sir.

21 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator  
22 Tuberville.

23 Senator Tuberville: Good morning. Thank you,  
24 gentlemen for your service and good luck after retirement,

1 but you're not done yet.

2 General Langley, AFRICOM has historically suffered from  
3 short pause and manpower and ISR and security and all those  
4 things. Sounded like from your testimony that Africa's in  
5 trouble, 40 percent rise in terrorism. What's your most  
6 pressing need that you can tell us for what we can help you  
7 with?

8 General Langley: Senator, thanks for that question.  
9 My number one operational priority is protection of a force.  
10 And so, as I stipulated in my opening statement, I focused  
11 on matching capabilities to the threat. We matched  
12 capabilities to the threat first calls for integrated air  
13 missile defense, and it calls for ISR and other platforms  
14 would add to the capacity and capability of protecting the  
15 force.

16 In closed session I would be able to elaborate with  
17 more specificity. But all combat commanders always ask for  
18 those aforementioned type platforms.

19 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. Thank you. General Cavoli,  
20 how much closer today is Ukraine from this time last year  
21 winning this war against Russia?

22 General Cavoli: They're in a much better position not  
23 to lose it, Senator Tuberville. They have shored up their  
24 defenses. They've assumed very strong defenses, and they've

1 improved their forced generation capability. So they're in  
2 a much better position than they were. You know, depending  
3 on what the objective is, of course, which has always been  
4 the question in this chamber as well as others it would be  
5 hard for them to accomplish some things. But they're doing  
6 a good job of what they're trying to do now, which is hold  
7 their line.

8 Senator Tuberville: But they're trying to win, right?

9 General Cavoli: They're trying to win. They want to  
10 start by making sure Russia doesn't win.

11 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. Status of the F-16s that  
12 we've sent? I know it's not classified because Russia  
13 obviously knows what's happened to them.

14 General Cavoli: No, there are a number of F-16s in  
15 there. There are a number of pilots in there. There are  
16 more F-16s prepared to be deployed in there. There are more  
17 pilots in the training pipeline. Sir, I can give you the  
18 numbers in closed session. They are active, the planes are  
19 active and they fly every day. They've defeated a large  
20 number of cruise missile threats, and they've delivered an  
21 awful lot of offensive attacks as well.

22 Specifically, bombing attacks in the east. None of the  
23 F-16s has been from the U.S. though. They've mainly been  
24 from Northern European countries, Netherlands, Denmark.

1           Senator Tuberville: Status for Patriot systems that  
2 we've had there for several years?

3           General Cavoli: Yeah. They are up and running, sir.  
4 I can tell you exactly in closed session. But that has  
5 been, in my mind, a success story. Frankly, I was just a  
6 little bit dubious in the beginning. It's a complicated  
7 system. We train guys for a long, long time to be able to  
8 operate it.

9           The Ukrainians put their really, their best people  
10 against it and took to it like a fish to water. And in  
11 fact, we learned from some of their employment techniques  
12 right now.

13          Senator Tuberville: How effective have the long-range  
14 missiles that we've allowed Ukrainians to shoot into Russia.  
15 How effective has that been?

16          General Cavoli: Very.

17          Senator Tuberville: In all areas?

18          General Cavoli: Yeah. They've been extremely  
19 effective. Sir, I could go into this in private session,  
20 but the, the United States makes some very good weaponry and  
21 it's the ones we've donated have been very effective. In  
22 closed session I'd be happy to talk to you about a few of  
23 the things they've done with it.

24          Senator Tuberville: So where do you think the --

1 what's the status of Kursk as we speak today? After they've  
2 gone in, and obviously there's been a lot of battles, a lot  
3 of people killed, a lot of prisoners taken. Where does that  
4 stand?

5 General Cavoli: There is a Ukrainian force that is  
6 holding on inside Kursk Oblast inside Russia. They've got  
7 quite a bit of terrain. I'd give it to you in closed  
8 session, sir and how many troops, but they've got a sizable  
9 force there, and they maintain a well defended piece of  
10 terrain there. They've also augmented it with some terrain.  
11 They recently captured just a few kilometers in Belgorod  
12 just south of there.

13 Senator Tuberville: So, they gave up some. Now,  
14 they're taking it back. Is that what you're saying?

15 General Cavoli: That's correct. They've taken a  
16 little back farther south.

17 Senator Tuberville: Thank you --

18 General Cavoli: Thank you, sir.

19 Senator Tuberville: -- for your service, gentlemen.  
20 Thank you.

21 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Tuberville.

22 General Cavoli, the Russians are nowhere near capable  
23 of making a big push right now. Are they?

24 General Cavoli: That is my assessment, Chairman.

1 Chairman Wicker: And what nationality are the pilots  
2 of those F16s?

3 General Cavoli: They're Ukrainian.

4 Chairman Wicker: And where were they trained?

5 General Cavoli: They were trained in a variety of  
6 places. Some in Romania, some in the Netherlands, some in  
7 Arizona.

8 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. I think we have  
9 Senator Slotkin now.

10 Senator Slotkin: Thank you, Chairman. Generals, thank  
11 you for being here and for your really significant service  
12 to the country. We appreciate you. I'm sure you're not  
13 crying any tears that this may be your last hearing in front  
14 of the, this committee, but we're happy to have you.

15 And General Cavoli, I can't think of a general more  
16 associated with American's response to the invasion of  
17 Ukraine than you, given the role as SACEUR, that you've been  
18 playing for these last number of years. Just to establish a  
19 baseline, you said the Aspen Security Forum that supporting  
20 Ukraine is vital for American security. Can you confirm  
21 that you still believe that that is correct?

22 General Cavoli: I do believe that. Yes, ma'am.

23 Senator Slotkin: And you also said that, you know,  
24 Russia, no matter what, no matter how this war concludes,



1 was still going to be a big problem. Do you believe that  
2 after Russia invaded Georgia, then Crimea, then Eastern  
3 Ukraine, that if some sort of deal was reached with Vladimir  
4 Putin, especially one that advantaged him, that he'd be done  
5 with invading neighboring countries, that he would be done  
6 with adventurism in Europe?

7 General Cavoli: I do not ma'am. My professional  
8 assessment based on years of study is that this is part of a  
9 broader pattern in Russian history, and certainly in current  
10 Russian activity. How the U.S. oriented against that is not  
11 my call.

12 Senator Slotkin: Of course.

13 General Cavoli: But that is my assessment of their  
14 threat?

15 Senator Slotkin: Based on your experience on the  
16 ground and having to negotiate again, military to military  
17 with the Russians and others, do you believe that the  
18 Russians are a trustworthy negotiating partner?

19 General Cavoli: I believe they are -- I believe they  
20 are a very deliberate negotiating partner. I believe they  
21 are very strategic in their negotiations, even over small  
22 tactical things that I've been involved in over the years.  
23 And I believe they're highly proficient at it, and they will  
24 always chase their interests.

1           Senator Slotkin: Can we talk about how the  
2 relationship between Russia and China has evolved over the  
3 course of this war? Is it safe to say that since the war in  
4 Ukraine, Russia has become the biggest provider to China of  
5 military technology and equipment?

6           General Cavoli: They have certainly increased the  
7 amount they provide. I'm not a China expert, so I'm not  
8 sure who exactly the biggest is. And in closed session, we  
9 can talk a little bit about what exactly they've been  
10 providing. One of the things in reverse though, Senator,  
11 frequently I get asked you know, what sort of support is  
12 China providing Russia?

13           And I think one of the most pernicious types of support  
14 they provide is moral support to Russia. Because it  
15 justifies violation of another country's sovereignty, which  
16 I think is highly problematic, were it to become widespread.

17           Senator Slotkin: Yeah. I mean, just in open source,  
18 we can find that Moscow is helping Beijing develop  
19 submarine, aeronautic, and missile technologies in exchange  
20 for China's, as you say, moral support for Russia's war,  
21 maybe other things beyond moral support. And even though  
22 this administration has had very little to say about China's  
23 military role and about this partnership as they try and  
24 negotiate with Russia, and despite the Pentagon's new

1 national defense strategy, which says that they're focused  
2 on China, we really don't see a lot of visibility on this  
3 pernicious topic, which is an alliance stronger than ever,  
4 or relationship, at least stronger than ever between China  
5 and Russia. Is Russia helping China develop military  
6 capabilities that could impact the United States?

7 General Cavoli: You know, again, in closed session we  
8 could talk about it, but they're certainly cooperating not  
9 for the benefit of the United States.

10 Senator Slotkin: Right. But I mean, China, I mean,  
11 they can have other interests in other countries, but I  
12 think we are a primary focus for the Chinese military. I  
13 don't think that's a classified statement in any way. Do  
14 you believe that the Chinese are watching what we do in  
15 Europe, in Ukraine, and with Russia, and learning lessons  
16 that they may use, when it comes to potentially taking over  
17 Taiwan?

18 General Cavoli: They are.

19 Senator Slotkin: What are the lessons then that you  
20 think they're learning from this, watching us in this  
21 conflict as we now quickly move to negotiate with Putin, put  
22 a lot of trust in him, in the person that invaded a  
23 democracy? Do you think it makes them more likely or less  
24 likely to go ahead and try and take Taiwan?

1           General Cavoli: Ma'am, I think they're learning  
2 lessons at every echelon, one of them being the policy  
3 making and decision-making echelon, I'll leave that to  
4 others to comment on.

5           But at the military level, operationally and  
6 tactically, they're studying the conflict very, very hard in  
7 ways that we know they would apply to any potential conflict  
8 in Taiwan.

9           Senator Slotkin: Again, thank you for your service,  
10 your long service, both of you and I yield back to whoever  
11 is acting as Chairman.

12          Senator Banks [presiding]: Thank you. I recognize  
13 myself for five minutes. Germany is the biggest economy in  
14 Europe, twice the GDP of Russia, but it's also been the  
15 biggest free rider in NATO for decades. They've finally  
16 reached 2 percent of GDP on defense by some metrics, but  
17 they're still not a very capable force. Germany promised in  
18 2023 to deploy an armored brigade to Lithuania, and that  
19 brigade isn't going to be fully operational until 2027. It  
20 takes the nation that once fielded hundreds of divisions,  
21 four years to move a single brigade just a few hundred miles  
22 away from Germany.

23          General Cavoli, the Europeans are finally starting to  
24 spend more on their defense, but how long is it going to

1 take before their spending turns into real capability?

2 General Cavoli: Thanks, Senator. This is a very  
3 important question because we have been waiting a long time  
4 to get the levels of defense spending we're starting to see.  
5 Now there's got to be something to buy. So we have a lot of  
6 countries, 23 nations budgeting over 2 percent this year.  
7 Several going over 3 percent, I believe the number six are  
8 over 3 percent this year.

9 Now it's a matter of converting it into hardware and  
10 organizations. And our industrial base, both in Russia and  
11 on this side of the Atlantic is struggling to produce the  
12 relevant equipment and the quantities needed. So basically  
13 there's more money available than stuff right now, sir. I  
14 think the --

15 Senator Banks: Why?

16 General Cavoli: Well, our defense industrial basis on  
17 both sides of the Atlantic consolidated and atrophied under  
18 lack of orders. And then there are some bureaucratic  
19 problems in governments in terms of acquiring stuff so that  
20 it goes slowly. But I think this question of the elasticity  
21 of our defense industrial base, again, on both sides of the  
22 Atlantic, is one of the great strategic questions of the  
23 next 10, 15 years.

24 Senator Banks: Got it. The German defense minister

1 last year said that Germany needed to move towards spending  
2 3 percent of its GDP or more on defense. Do you think the  
3 Germans are serious about spending that much on their  
4 military?

5 General Cavoli: Yeah, I think they are, Senator. And  
6 the reason I say that is because Friedrich Merz was just  
7 elected as the next chancellor in Germany. And very  
8 rapidly, he, you know, sort of outlined the next coalition  
9 that he's going to be leading. And they came to an  
10 agreement to do a massive increase in defense spending far  
11 beyond the, you know, 100 billion euros they talked about a  
12 couple of years ago.

13 And the way they got there was by releasing the so-  
14 called debt break that prevented Germany from assuming  
15 deficit spending. So they have exempted defense spending  
16 from the debt break. This is an historic breakthrough for  
17 them, and it is the thing that's going to allow them to  
18 apply their rather prodigious economic resources to defense.  
19 They have a very strong plan to modernize and to expand.  
20 It's exactly in accordance with what I need as the Supreme  
21 Allied Commander, and I'm very eager to see this coalition.

22 Senator Banks: You feel like they're collaborating  
23 with you on that plan?

24 General Cavoli: Absolutely, sir.

1           Senator Banks: Good. How much would it strengthen  
2 your hand if all of our NATO allies increase their spending  
3 on defense up to 3 percent?

4           General Cavoli: Sir, I don't think you've ever met a  
5 general who wants less defense spending among the force  
6 providers. It would help a great deal.

7           Senator Banks: But it would strengthen your hand? It  
8 would help?

9           General Cavoli: Absolutely. And we're eager to see it  
10 come to pass, and we're especially eager to see it turn into  
11 real capability, which is going to require some improvements  
12 in our industrial capacity.

13          Senator Banks: It's clear that the United States  
14 should redeploy more of its units in Europe to the Pacific,  
15 but I also want to make sure that we do that in the right  
16 way. General, what U.S. capabilities are our European  
17 allies least capable of replacing right now?

18          General Cavoli: Yeah, they're least capable of  
19 replacing high-end Air and Missile defense on a large basis.  
20 They depend on us for significant intelligence collection,  
21 processing, exploitation, and dissemination. They depend on  
22 us for deep, long range fires. They depend on us for aerial  
23 command and control for large scale campaigns. They depend  
24 on us for the backbone of certain parts of command and

1 control.

2 Those are really the key things. There are a few  
3 things else that I'd like to go into closed session, sir.

4 Senator Banks: What capabilities are European allies  
5 most -- where are they most prepared to take over from us?

6 General Cavoli: Well, right now they do a variety of  
7 things without us, right? So today I have, I believe it's  
8 17 or 20 European ships, NATO ships turned over to my  
9 command, as SACEUR. Normally military forces are held by  
10 the nations, and then they turn it over to me for particular  
11 operations. I have zero U.S. ships working for me as SACEUR  
12 right now.

13 I have only 40 individual human beings, marines, who  
14 are participating in the operation to monitor the Baltic  
15 Sea. We call it Baltic Sentry. Everything is being done by  
16 our European allies in those cases. So they have a variety  
17 of things they can do for us in any one of those areas.

18 One of the most important things they do provide is  
19 intelligence. While we have exquisite capability collect,  
20 they have very deep understanding of their regions, and they  
21 have some capabilities that we struggle to match in that  
22 regard. And, you know, those intel sharing relationships,  
23 sir, are based on a broader relationship that we cultivate  
24 very carefully.



1 Senator Banks: Thank you.

2 General Cavoli: Thank you, sir.

3 Senator Banks. Senator Peters.

4 Senator Peters: Thank you. And I want to thank both  
5 of you for being here today, and certainly I've appreciated  
6 your participation in these hearings over the years. And  
7 thank you for your service.

8 General Cavoli, I want to begin by expressing my  
9 deepest respect for the soldiers that were lost in Lithuania  
10 last week. One of those soldiers that was lost was from my  
11 state of Michigan. And I just want folks to know that their  
12 service and their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

13 General Langley, Exercise Northern Strike in Michigan  
14 helps train thousands of service members from over 20  
15 countries at the National All Domain War Fighting Center.  
16 It's also known as NADWC. It's composed of Camp Grilling  
17 Training Center, and over 17,000 square miles of special use  
18 military airspace at the Alpena Training Center. NADWC  
19 provides realistic joint force training with our global  
20 allies and our partners.

21 In fact, Liberia has been a part of this exercise for  
22 the past several years. My question for you is, what role  
23 do exercises like Northern Strike play in advancing  
24 AFRICOM's strategic goals on the continent?

1 General Langley: Senator, thanks for that question.

2 You know, our joint exercise program is indicative of the  
3 influence that we have, positive influence in building  
4 institutional capacity for our African partners, and then  
5 the whole portfolio, and then the exercise that you, you  
6 mentioned as well adds to their institutional capacity.

7 That's why we're the preferred partner.

8 As we go forward, and they address their challenges in,  
9 in building security cooperation or the ability to address  
10 the multiple layered threats that these countries face, they  
11 choose the United States. I know that the Chinese Communist  
12 Party and even the Russian Federation through their throes  
13 of efforts of trying to replicate it. But they always come  
14 back to the United States to be the preferred partner for  
15 building institutional capacity. So for the exercise there  
16 and what Liberia does they chose right.

17 Senator Peters: Well, that's good. And I want to kind  
18 of pick up on that as in terms of the competition we have  
19 with both Russia and the CCP and their influence operations  
20 in Africa.

21 As you know, China employs strategic narratives to  
22 justify and enhance their presence in Sub-Saharan Africa.  
23 Through partnerships with African journalist training  
24 programs, the CCP integrates its perspective into local

1 media. It directly engages in more than 60 African  
2 political parties. But their most influential impact I  
3 think you would agree, has been the Belt and Road  
4 initiative, which has significantly impacted Africa's  
5 economic landscape through substantial investments,  
6 particularly infrastructure investments.

7 In 2023, African countries experienced a 47 percent  
8 increase in Chinese construction contracts, and 114 percent  
9 surge in investments compared to the previous year, which  
10 totals about 21.7 billion, a substantial amount. So my  
11 question for you sir is, can you expand upon the growing  
12 presence that China has in Africa politically, economically,  
13 and militarily, and how that is a threat to our very  
14 important strategic interest on the continent?

15 General Langley: Yes, Senator. Thanks for that  
16 question. China's trying to set the globe now. They want  
17 to be the global hegemon now. Chairman Xi has put out a  
18 2049 plan, but they want to get there earlier. So therein  
19 lies the importance that we engage and show assurance  
20 actions. But we just can't just harbor the facts. We  
21 harbor the facts, but we don't own the narrative. And  
22 that's being drowned out by the CCP and their campaign plans  
23 to be able to influence civil society, influence the  
24 militaries.

1           They can't replicate what we do, whether it be their  
2   trying to copy what we're doing in our IMET, or our  
3   International Military Education Training. It doesn't  
4   compare. And we match our efforts, whether it's Title 22  
5   funding or Title 10 funding. Whether it be security, the  
6   state partnership program, or the SFABs, Security Force  
7   Assistance Brigades.

8           They build institutional capacity like none other. Our  
9   African partners know that. So whatever is in the  
10   information space, we do need to meet it with a comparable  
11   narrative. Thanks, sir.

12          Senator Peters: Thank you. And once again, thank you  
13   to both of you for your service.

14          Senator Schmitt [presiding]: Thank you. Thank you.  
15   I'll call myself now. From Truman and Eisenhower through  
16   Reagan and Gates, U.S. leaders no matter how committed, NATO  
17   have made some interesting comments I think are worth  
18   highlighting here. General Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied  
19   Commander, noted that, "If in 10 years -- by the way, in  
20   1951 -- if in 10 years all American troops stationed in  
21   Europe for national defense purposes have not been returned  
22   to the United States, then this whole project will have  
23   failed."

24          Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State, said, "The United

1 States must lead, but it must not carry." President Kennedy  
2 said, "We want to make sure that NATO is not a fair-weather  
3 organization. The burden of freedom must be shared equally  
4 among its members." LBJ had similar thoughts, and his  
5 administration demanded offset agreements from West Germany  
6 to cover the costs of U.S. troops there.

7 President Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Nixon noted,  
8 "United States will participate in the defense and  
9 development of allies and friends, but America cannot and  
10 will not conceive all plans, design all programs, execute  
11 all decisions, and undertake all the defense of free nations  
12 of the world."

13 Casper Weinberger said, "Our European allies must  
14 recognize that security cannot be achieved by words alone.  
15 It must be backed by commitment and capability." Robert  
16 Gates, in his farewell speech to NATO, said, "There will be  
17 a dwindling appetite to expand increasingly precious funds  
18 on behalf of nations that are apparently unwilling to devote  
19 the necessary resources to be serious and capable partners  
20 in their own defense." Even Secretary Mattis said,  
21 "Americans cannot care more for your children's future  
22 security than you do."

23 While some of my colleagues have been wring their hands  
24 over the possibility that the United States might step away

1 from its role as a Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, I can  
2 tell you who isn't all that worried about it. It's the  
3 American people. Quite frankly, they probably thought that  
4 ended when Dwight D. Eisenhower was no longer the Supreme  
5 Allied Commander. And speaking of General Eisenhower, I  
6 read that quote, "If in 10 years all American troops in  
7 Europe for military purposes have not returned to the United  
8 States, then this whole project will have failed."

9 That's 70 years ago. Over 70 years ago. Time and time  
10 again, the United States is expected to shoulder Europe's  
11 defense while rich European countries sit back, issue  
12 statements, and undeliver. Some of my colleagues point out  
13 that since the war in Ukraine began, Europe has collectively  
14 spent as much on European defense as the United States, as  
15 if that's some great triumph. To me, it just shows how  
16 upside down this whole arrangement is. How is it even  
17 remotely impressive that the nations defending their own  
18 continent are only barely keeping pace with the country  
19 across the Atlantic?

20 If Europe really believes it's facing an existential  
21 threat from Russia, it should be spending not just as much  
22 as we have, but magnitudes, magnitudes more than we do. 10  
23 times, 100 times. That's what a commitment would look like.  
24 And please stop telling me that comparing spending in Europe

1 is even, that's laughably narrow. When you compare U.S.  
2 defense spending in Europe to Europe's, you ignore  
3 everything else America does worldwide, much of which  
4 directly benefits Europe.

5 Who ensures freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, when  
6 European trade flows there daily? We do. Who contains  
7 China's growing dominance across the Indo-Pacific,  
8 stabilizing global markets and maritime routes that Europe  
9 depends on? We do. Without U.S. global power projection,  
10 the European way of life wouldn't exist as we know it. And  
11 still, they won't even take primary responsibility for their  
12 own backyard.

13 If Russia really is a continent-wide threat, as  
14 European leaders say, then where is the urgency? Where is  
15 the mobilization? With few exceptions, Poland and the  
16 Baltic states, Europe is not acting like it's facing down a  
17 generational threat, not even close. And I'm getting tired  
18 of being asked to go home to Missouri and explain to working  
19 Americans, the people I represent, why they should send more  
20 money, more troops, more of their sons and daughters to  
21 defend a continent that refuses to defend itself.

22 Why should we care more about Moscow than people in  
23 Paris who are two hours away by plane? It doesn't make  
24 sense, and it's time to stop pretending that it does. For

1 80 years, we've told Europe to get serious about their own  
2 defense. They have blown us off. They haven't listened.  
3 Maybe they never will, as long as we keep doing the job for  
4 them.

5 So yes, maybe we should have a conversation about the  
6 Supreme Allied Commander role. Maybe having an American  
7 general in that seat furthers this ruse. We should have the  
8 debate, not simply dismiss it. Let's have an honest  
9 conversation about it. American priorities in Europe, what  
10 they should be. Let's stop confusing symbolism with  
11 strategy. And while we're at it, maybe let's stop waving  
12 foreign flags in the house floor when Americans can barely  
13 afford groceries.

14 Some of my colleagues seem to think that defending  
15 Ukraine matters more than defending our own border. I  
16 disagree and so do the American people. It's time to have a  
17 serious realignment, let Europe grow up and carry its own  
18 weight. America's job is not to babysit the world. It's to  
19 protect our people and our interests. Full stop.

20 General Cavoli, I had a bunch of questions for you, but  
21 I had to say what I had to say. So I guess since I'm the  
22 Chairman, I'll ask one question right now. Greenland. Can  
23 you just talk about the strategic importance and why that  
24 matters to the United States of America?



1           General Cavoli: Sure. I'll talk about it from my  
2 perspective as --

3           Senator Schmitt: Yeah, not from a policy perspective,  
4 from a military perspective.

5           General Cavoli: But from a military perspective,  
6 Senator, I'll limit my comments to my field of expertise,  
7 which is the European Theater, right? EUCOM AOR, and the  
8 SACEUR AOR. The key there is, it forms the western border  
9 of the Greenland Iceland UK gap, which is that body of water  
10 through which Russian submarines from the northern fleet in  
11 Murmansk come up, and then down through that gap. And once  
12 they get past that gap, they break out into the Atlantic.  
13 It becomes very tough to track them. It's a vast expanse.  
14 There are some acoustic things about the underwater  
15 geography that make it pretty tough. From those positions  
16 that they can achieve, they can hold the U.S. homeland at  
17 risk. Several important targets with land attack cruise  
18 missiles.

19           Greenland is the western boundary of that gap. So my  
20 access to it, their airspace and water space, bounding  
21 Greenland is absolutely critical for the United States.

22           Senator Schmitt: Senator Blumenthal.

23           Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Senator Schmitt. First  
24 of all, thank you both for your service, and I join many of

1 my colleagues in regretting your retirement. You both have  
2 been frank, informative, dedicated, and really models of  
3 public service. And I wish you well on behalf of all us.

4 General Cavoli, we've talked over the years about  
5 Vladimir Putin's murderous invasion of Ukraine. There's no  
6 question who the aggressor is here, and there's no question  
7 in my mind that the aggression, this murderous bloody  
8 assault is continuing with undiminished force against  
9 Ukraine. As you note very powerfully in your testimony,  
10 Russia is building its military strength. The Kremlin  
11 learns quickly and historically that it restructures forces  
12 as necessary. It's already reconstituting itself. It's  
13 tapping additional manpower and preparing to continue this  
14 assault, and at the same time, slow walking and playing us  
15 in supposed negotiations.

16 I'm not going to ask you to comment on the  
17 negotiations. I recognize that your mission is military in  
18 nature, but I would ask you how you would characterize  
19 Russia's ability to recoup its material and personnel losses  
20 in Ukraine. Will it succeed in rebuilding after its losses?  
21 And what kind of threat does that represent to American  
22 security interests?

23 General Cavoli: Sure, Senator. Thank you. So if we  
24 divide Russia's rebuilding capability into two big blocks,

1 personnel and equipment, I believe the personnel, they'll be  
2 able to build as quickly as they want to. They continue to  
3 maintain a conscription. You saw that just last week the  
4 Russian government announced its annual conscription drive.  
5 It increased by 10,000 over last year, 160,000 this year.  
6 With those numbers, they will be able to constitute the four  
7 size that they choose fairly quickly.

8 Be a little tougher, take them a little bit more time  
9 to organize it into the sort of organizations that they have  
10 said they want to build after the war. They want to have an  
11 army of about 1.5 million they've announced. They want to  
12 put a lot of it on the border of NATO and Northeastern  
13 Europe. It'll take them a little bit of time to do that,  
14 but we're talking a couple of years.

15 Equipment, that depends on how much more they lose  
16 inside Ukraine, sir. They've lost a vast amount of  
17 equipment inside Ukraine. They started the war with  
18 someplace near 13,000 tanks on active and in storage. And  
19 they're starting to approach near the end of that, near the  
20 end of the useful tanks in storage. So depending on how  
21 much more they lose, that will really determine how quickly  
22 they can regenerate.

23 They have expanded their capability to produce some  
24 things, artillery shells, cruise missiles tremendously. And

1 they're producing some things such as one-way attack drones  
2 in prodigious numbers that they weren't even producing at  
3 all before the war.

4 Senator Blumenthal: And I would characterize that  
5 capability as offensive. In other words, they're not  
6 defending against a possible invasion from Ukraine. They  
7 are preparing for continuing offensive actions against  
8 Ukraine and possibly NATO allies if they are successful in  
9 Ukraine.

10 General Cavoli: And I would add to that, Senator, that  
11 this is not just in the ground domain. They have long range  
12 aviation that practices daily, moving out and doing strikes  
13 across North America. They have their strategic ballistic  
14 missile fleet that their road mobiles that are constantly  
15 out there, and they have their submarine fleet that's  
16 constantly out there. So it's not just in those domains.  
17 And then there is of course, the cyber domain in which, you  
18 know, they're very active. We can talk about in closed  
19 session, sir.

20 Senator Blumenthal: Just one last question, General.  
21 Because I've heard from some of the critics of our military  
22 aid to Ukraine that there are significant numbers of weapons  
23 embezzled, stolen, missing from the aid that we are  
24 providing Ukraine. On every one of the visits -- I've been

1 to Ukraine six times now -- I've talked to our military and  
2 logistics folks in Poland, and they are tracking virtually  
3 every bullet that we have provided to Ukraine. And there's  
4 no evidence whatsoever of this kind of misconduct or  
5 misappropriation of our aid to Ukraine. Would you agree?

6 General Cavoli: Yeah, I do agree with that, Senator.  
7 There will be a challenge locating all of it later. You  
8 know, all of us have been in combat, realize that it's  
9 pretty easy to misplace things and to lose track of things.  
10 But we've seen no deliberate effort to transfer, sell, or  
11 steal weaponry. The Ukrainians are using it to defend their  
12 country.

13 Senator Blumenthal: My hope is that Russia will take  
14 seriously the efforts to peace and stop stonewalling and  
15 slow walking negotiation. But right now, they seem to be  
16 playing us and playing for time. And I want to thank you  
17 again for your incredible service, both of you to our great  
18 country. Thank you.

19 General Cavoli: Thank you, sir.

20 Chairman Wicker [presiding]: Thank you very much,  
21 Senator Blumenthal. General Langley, let me ask a few more  
22 questions here as we hopefully recess. Africa is a mineral  
23 rich, resource rich continent. Is that correct?

24 General Langley: Yes, Chairman.

1 Chairman Wicker: Oh, okay. And you can leave the  
2 microphone on. Are there success stories for the citizens  
3 of African countries when these larger more prosperous  
4 nations or companies from more prosperous areas come in and  
5 exploit these minerals? What I'm asking is, does it ever  
6 redound to the benefit of the citizens there in Africa?

7 General Langley: Chairman, there's very few cases.  
8 When the Chinese Communist Party is outed on them pulling  
9 out raw materials, not benefiting the, the populations of  
10 the host country, they've been trying to come up with ways  
11 how they can stay there and process only at the protests of  
12 the people of these African countries that host these  
13 mineral resources.

14 Chairman Wicker: So is there any exception? Can you  
15 point to any success story where the people of one country  
16 or one or two countries have actually benefited  
17 substantially?

18 General Langley: Not on China's behalf. Not on  
19 China's behalf. Just what happened in Zambia when they had  
20 the spillage into the river that services 5 million people.  
21 There are just these mining concessions. It just doesn't  
22 turn out real well for the African countries.

23 Chairman Wicker: And do the countries that are  
24 receiving entreaties from the Belt and Road Initiative, are

1 they more and more mindful of that now and therefore  
2 reluctant?

3 General Langley: Yes. And that's where you know, we  
4 need to be able to do information operations to illuminate  
5 some of the irregularities and some of the malign type  
6 activities of the Chinese in the African countries.

7 Chairman Wicker: Information and narratives are power  
8 then, aren't they?

9 General Langley: Absolutely. And as I said a few  
10 minutes ago, and I always will tout this, that we own the  
11 facts. We own the facts. We know exactly what the Chinese  
12 Communist party's doing, and to some degree what the Russian  
13 Federation is doing and their propaganda operations. But we  
14 don't own the narrative. Both of them own the narrative.

15 Chairman Wicker: We sure don't. One more thing for  
16 you General Langley, the approach that we have had with  
17 USAID and the other things like the President's initiative  
18 on aids. How does our U.S. approach compare and contrast to  
19 the approach of Russia in Africa and also communist China IN  
20 Africa?

21 General Langley: Well, Chairman, we've always had the  
22 lead. So what you're seeing in those two competitors or  
23 challengers, they're following in our wake. They see what  
24 works as far as our influence and deepening partnerships

1 through those soft powers, whether it be health diplomacy or  
2 whether it be in development type programs. So, they're  
3 following in our wake, trying to replicate what we do best.

4 And I think the African countries know this. And so,  
5 this is where as we start to look at going forward, State  
6 Department starts to reset these programs looking at what  
7 worked and what didn't work, and doubling down on what does  
8 work. I think we have enough capital built up in these  
9 countries for them to ensure their stabilization and also  
10 prosperity. The other two competitors are just trying to  
11 replicate what we do best.

12 Chairman Wicker: I can imagine a situation, though, in  
13 which the ruling elite of a country is receiving gratuities  
14 on the side that in order to the benefit of the strong man  
15 leader and not to the populace of the country. Does that  
16 sort of corruption and bribery go on with regard to the Belt  
17 and Road?

18 General Langley: Absolutely, Chairman. You know, I  
19 see this, and I don't mind calling them out, but Captain  
20 Traore in Burkina Faso. You know, as they know that both,  
21 you know, whether it's their gold reserves, all those  
22 proceeds are just in exchange to protect the Junta regime.  
23 There's a number of those examples across. Even in Sudan,  
24 what's going on with the Rapid Support Forces and Al-Burhan



1 of the Sudan forces. When you get down to it, is all about  
2 the revenue that can be drawn out of that. And there are  
3 nefarious actors in the CCP or in sometimes Russia, are  
4 complicit in those activities.

5 Chairman Wicker: Well, you can't imagine how  
6 frustrating it seems to me that this mineral rich continent  
7 has not been able to move to a utilization of the resources  
8 to benefit the people there after all this time. It's a  
9 puzzle that we haven't unwound.

10 Let me see if I can move to General Cavoli, and then I,  
11 I hope we can leave. You are aware of various voices coming  
12 from inside government here in the United States, as well as  
13 in the media that have spoken with approval about the  
14 Russian organized referendums in 2022 in so-called  
15 overwhelming Russian speaking provinces.

16 General Cavoli, tell us what you know and what you  
17 understand about the freedom of those organized referendums  
18 and the accuracy of them as a measure of public opinion.

19 General Cavoli: Sure, Mr. Chairman. I don't think I'm  
20 familiar with the voices in Washington that are talking  
21 about this, but I do remember them very well. They were  
22 referendums in Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson  
23 provinces. They were in September, 2022.

24 They were roundly condemned by nations throughout the

1 world and by international organizations. The Organization  
2 for Security and Cooperation in Europe called them  
3 illegitimate. The United Nations called them illegal. I  
4 think, I think the only country in the world that accepted  
5 the result of those referenda other than Russia was North  
6 Korea.

7 So they have widely been considered not to be  
8 legitimate for a variety of reasons about the way they took  
9 place and taking place during a conflict by an occupying  
10 power.

11 Chairman Wicker: So if members of Congress want to be  
12 informed by what happened in these referenda, if our  
13 negotiators in this peace process want to be informed by  
14 these referenda, what lesson should we take from the  
15 legitimacy of those of votes?

16 General Cavoli: Sir, I think that anybody who wants to  
17 know about it, it's pretty well-established history. It's  
18 pretty easy to find. I could certainly help direct your  
19 colleagues or anybody you want to sources on it. What  
20 conclusions can we draw? We can draw the conclusion that,  
21 you know, the Russian Federation was intent on absorbing  
22 those provinces and attempted to put a gloss of legitimacy  
23 over it by holding a referenda that had, you know, results  
24 like 99 percent in favor.

1 Chairman Wicker: Rigged results, correct?

2 General Cavoli: That was the widespread conclusion at  
3 the time in 2022. Yes, sir.

4 Chairman Wicker: And also, since you are a student of  
5 the Russian language yourself, is the fact that the Russian  
6 language is spoken in part of Ukraine, is that demonstrative  
7 of their loyalty with regard to their nationality?

8 General Cavoli: Well, we see linguistic minorities in  
9 countries all over the world, sir. There certainly is a  
10 dominant Russian language population in Eastern Ukraine. We  
11 see a Russian language population in Eastern Estonia. So  
12 it's not --

13 Chairman Wicker: And they consider themselves loyal  
14 Estonians, do they not?

15 General Cavoli: Yeah. It really doesn't have much to  
16 do with sovereignty at all. I mean, we have large  
17 populations in our country that don't speak English.

18 Chairman Wicker: That's the point I was trying to  
19 make. Senator Reed, we will be going into a closed session.  
20 Do you have any questions for the open session?

21 Senator Reed: I have a few questions, and thank you,  
22 Mr. Chairman. General Cavoli, in your military opinion,  
23 does the U.S. agreement with Denmark to facilitate access  
24 and basing needs in Greenland meet current military

1 requirements?

2 General Cavoli: Sir, I can only talk about the part of  
3 the military requirements that affect me. So our principle  
4 presence on Greenland, the United States personal presence  
5 on Greenland is the base at Pituffik in Northwestern  
6 Greenland. That is not under my operation or administrative  
7 control. That's a space force base. And I don't know if  
8 it's adequate for them or not.

9 From my perspective as both the Supreme Allied  
10 Commander and the U.S. European Commander, I have all the  
11 access and basing I need to prosecute the operations that  
12 we've talked about in the high North during this, during  
13 this Conference.

14 Senator Reed: So is that from your perspective,  
15 European Greenland, just to get the facts right, is within  
16 your area of operations?

17 General Cavoli: Greenland is within my area of  
18 operations as the Supreme Allied Commander. And it is  
19 within my area of operations as the U.S. European Command.

20 Senator Reed: And you feel at this juncture, we have  
21 all the capacity we need to confront the threats going  
22 forward?

23 General Cavoli: Yeah. Again senator, my part of that  
24 is what I can comment on. That's from the coast of

1 Greenland eastward, and northward to counter Russian threats  
2 coming out of there. I can't really speak for NORTHCOM's  
3 interest or anything like that.

4 Senator Reed: Thank you. If AFRICOM is dissolved and  
5 merged into EUCOM, you would've a responsibility for more  
6 than 50 countries. Do you have the capacity, the expertise,  
7 the infrastructure to do that?

8 General Cavoli: I would have the responsibility for 50  
9 more countries. Yeah.

10 Senator Reed: Exactly right.

11 General Cavoli: It would be a stretch, Senator. I  
12 mean, that's a wide span of control. I think that the  
13 organization, if it were, you know, aggregated, would  
14 possess the expertise and the capacity, because when AFRICOM  
15 was created in 2007, it was mainly created by cleaving it  
16 out of the EUCOM headquarters and establishing it separate,  
17 actually in some cases in the exact same buildings.

18 So my assumption would be that a lot of that capacity  
19 would have to come back to EUCOM in order to be able  
20 adequately to handle the threats and the problems that  
21 General Langley has talked about today. It would have to be  
22 studied very, very closely, of course.

23 Senator Reed: Thank you. I have one question for  
24 General Langley, it's just a comment. We've talked a lot

1 about the German contributions and it's increasing, thank  
2 goodness, but I think we miss some of the history here. For  
3 many, many decades, Germany was divided so that it's not the  
4 same country now that it was in the 1960s, et cetera, in  
5 terms of its economic capacity.

6 And the second point that strikes me is that for many,  
7 many years after World War II, there was a great reluctance  
8 upon Germany and indeed most other countries in the world,  
9 to see them create a powerful military force. We had seen  
10 that before, right after World War I. And so I think that  
11 has to be factored into their, one, their reluctance to  
12 expand on defense. But now I think it's a turnaround and  
13 they're putting a great deal of resources as they should.

14 Final question, General Langley. Have you had specific  
15 comments from any of your counterparts about the withdrawal  
16 of USAID from Africa? Have they commented to you, like, why  
17 are you doing this, or?

18 General Langley: Ranking Member, thanks for that  
19 question. I went to the meeting security conference about a  
20 month ago, or greater than a month ago. And, you know,  
21 after I got my direction from the Secretary of Defense what  
22 my priorities were especially with counter terrorism and  
23 also to deter China and their military activities on the  
24 continent, it kind of refined my mission.

1           Then I had to come up with my narrative to engage these  
2 countries to be very transparent and straight talk, of that  
3 we're going through the pause and we're in a reflection  
4 period of assessing what has worked in the past and what's  
5 going to work in the future, and what's going in the future  
6 will be more targeted to what their needs are but they also  
7 need to be able to build towards a sense of independent  
8 operations.

9           You know, I expressed this and talked to Cote d'Ivoire  
10 their MOD and even in Ghana the new President-elect you  
11 know, President Mahama. They understood that and also  
12 carried on that narrative. They appreciated me being  
13 transparent. Carried on that narrative when I went to  
14 Morocco as well, when we delivered the helicopters and they  
15 understand it.

16           And so, it's more of a burden sharing type message and  
17 also a regimented message of getting towards the host nation  
18 coming to the point of independent operations.

19           Senator Reed: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20           Chairman Wicker: And thank you, Mr. Ranking Member.  
21 This concludes the open portion of today's hearing. I'd  
22 like to thank our witnesses for their testimony, for the  
23 information of members and staff. Questions for the record  
24 are due to the committee within two business days of the

1 conclusion of this hearing. We will commence the closed  
2 portion of this hearing in Senate Security at the hour of  
3 12:10, 10 minutes past noon. And until then, we are  
4 recessed.

5 [Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]