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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, it is a tremendous honor to testify before you as the 20th Commander of United States European Command (USEUCOM). USEUCOM has contributed to Euro-Atlantic collective security, peace, and prosperity since its inception in 1952. USEUCOM's area of responsibility (AOR) spans 53 sovereign nations and city states, 24 territories, three oceans and 11 seas, and includes 30 of 32 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Allies. The entire Joint Force is represented across USEUCOM's six service components (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Special Operations, and Space Force) and one cyber element. There are tens of thousands of U.S. Service Members—permanent and rotational—and Government Civilians representing American interests across Europe.

Key to USEUCOM's success is aligning our operations, activities, and investments (OAI) to harness Europe's unique strategic advantages—its geographic location, collective military capabilities, and economic capacity—to protect vital U.S. interests and increase burden sharing so that our Allies can assume primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe. USEUCOM can ensure the region remains a platform for U.S. Homeland defense and Joint Force power projection, and that NATO remains a combat-credible, force-multiplying Alliance capable of sustaining deterrence and defeating aggression against Allies in Europe and North America.

THE EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The Department of War's (DoW) 2026 National Defense Strategy (NDS) emphasizes that the United States faces “one of the most dangerous strategic environments in our Nation's history.” China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and others are increasing their collaboration and cooperation as their interests align against the United States and our Allies. Together, they seek to undermine our advantages and challenge our vital interests at home and abroad. This opportunistic alignment presents a challenge to U.S. and Allied priorities around the world.

Challenges

China constitutes the United States' most significant global competitor, capable of challenging—and in some cases threatening—U.S. security, freedom, and prosperity around the world. In the European theater, China is leveraging its economic and diplomatic relationships to expand its influence and reach. Chinese companies have made significant investments in European critical infrastructure, including seaports, information technology, electric-power generation, and public transportation. China's prominent access and influence within Europe presents Beijing with points of leverage it could exploit at the expense of the United States and our Allies. Additionally, Chinese commercial activity and scientific interest in the Arctic continues to grow. For example, Chinese commercial shipping along the Northern Sea Route experienced sustained growth in 2025, with 14 container voyages traversing the Arctic to Europe. China's scientific expeditions and research efforts across the Arctic also provide opportunities to collect data on weather and ice conditions, seabed geology, ocean currents, and navigational feasibility. Indeed, China's regional engagement is not for peaceful purposes; it is intended to gain a military advantage. The steady growth of China's commercial and research operations in the Arctic demonstrates Beijing's commitment to normalize its stake in Arctic governance, develop dual-use military capabilities, and gain greater operational familiarity with extreme-cold weather conditions, presenting greater risk to U.S. and Allied interests throughout the region. Moreover, China's military cooperation with Russia deepened in 2025, with the two countries conducting their "Joint Sea" combined naval exercise in the Sea of Japan as well as a joint air patrol over the East China Sea and the Western Pacific.

Meanwhile, Russia is an enduring regional challenger, capable of threatening the Homeland as well as U.S. and Allied interests across Europe. For example, Russia continues to hold the largest nuclear weapons stockpile in the world. Russia also maintains increasingly lethal air and maritime capabilities.

The Russia-Ukraine War illustrates Moscow's historical willingness to use military force, at significant human and financial cost, to accomplish its geopolitical objectives. These include ambitions to expand its territorial control and broaden its influence—particularly in the east European region, but globally to a lesser extent. Russia's partnerships with China, Iran, and North Korea have emboldened

Moscow's war effort against Ukraine, sustaining it with financial assistance, materiel support, and technological cooperation. China has become a critical economic partner for Russia and has helped Moscow circumvent Western sanctions and export controls. Iran has produced and shared missiles and drones—and the underlying technology—with the Russian military. North Korea has committed over 12,000 troops, in addition to munitions and materiel, to the Russian war effort.

As the United States endeavors to broker a cessation of hostilities and mutual agreement between Russia and Ukraine, stabilizing European relations with Moscow will remain a challenge, as many of our European Allies regard Russia as an existential threat. In accordance with U.S. policy guidance in the 2025 National Security Strategy (NSS), USEUCOM is working alongside our interagency partners to “reestablish conditions of strategic stability across the Eurasian landmass, and to mitigate the risk of conflict between Russia and European [Allies and partners].”

Beyond state-based military threats, the expansion of illicit drug trafficking and migration, the evolving presence of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), and the persistent threat of violent extremist organizations (VEOs) challenge the security and stability of Europe. USEUCOM is working closely with the interagency, our NATO Allies, and European partners to counter the illicit flow of drugs and money between Europe and the Western Hemisphere. USEUCOM's activities, such as support to law enforcement, amplify the DoW's efforts to combat illicit trafficking in the Western Hemisphere. China, Russia, and others directly benefit from the dangerous effects these activities and actors have on regional stability and security. Disrupting this illicit trade weakens transnational terrorist and criminal organizations who threaten U.S. national interests and American lives daily. USEUCOM stands ready to support those Allies who wish to take a leading role countering transnational terrorist and criminal organizations operating in the Mediterranean Sea.

The United States cannot bear the burden of meeting these threats alone. Recognizing this challenging security environment, our NATO Allies agree that modernizing Europe's warfighting capabilities and capacity is necessary as the Joint Force addresses other global priorities. To that end, NATO Allies have already taken important steps to increase defense spending and generate the strategic

readiness required for them to assume primary responsibility for Europe's conventional deterrence and defense.

Regions

USEUCOM's northern flank—spanning from the Arctic, across the North Atlantic, through the Greenland, Iceland, United Kingdom, and Norway (GIUKN) Gap, and to the Scandinavian High North—encompasses key geography central to U.S. security and economic interests. Specifically, the Arctic is emerging as an increasingly viable air and maritime approach to North America and Europe, attracting increased interest and activity from Russia and China. As new shipping routes emerge, and new resources are discovered, the Arctic only grows in strategic importance. The potential for destabilizing activities in the region, such as commercial sabotage, threatens all domains, requiring coordinated, multi-domain responses. The extreme environment, limited infrastructure, and vast geography present challenges that complicate domain awareness, movement, logistical support, and survival. Further, the GIUKN Gap is a strategic chokepoint that is the primary geographic area and best opportunity to reliably locate and track advanced Russian nuclear-powered submarines (SSN) and guided missile submarines (SSGN) before they can maneuver within cruise-missile range of the eastern seaboard of the United States. Our northern flank Allies, for their part, are enhancing their Arctic and extreme-cold weather capabilities through coordinated defense initiatives, increased investments in military infrastructure, and regular joint exercises. Additionally, the Alliance is launching enhanced Vigilance Activity (eVA) Arctic Sentry to align NATO operations with the national activities of select Allies in the Arctic.

Along NATO's eastern flank, Russia's geographic proximity and advantageous lines of communication enable Moscow to rapidly mass significant ground forces along NATO's border at a time and place of its choosing. This poses strategic dilemmas to the Alliance's ability to effectively mobilize forces for a synchronized, forward-positioned denial defense in the event of a contingency. With the recent accession of Finland and Sweden into the Alliance, NATO welcomed two Nordic nations with a long and proud history of self-defense. While this adds 830 miles of NATO border with Russia—creating time, space, and geographical implications for the theater—Finland and Sweden strengthen Europe's

conventional military capabilities along the eastern flank and enhance Allied presence in the Arctic. NATO Allies across the Baltics, as well as Poland and Romania, are building up their denial capabilities and munitions stockpiles, including low-cost autonomous and unmanned capabilities, to strengthen the Alliance's forward posture and counter Russia's geographic advantages. For example, with a \$1.1 billion purchase of 250 Abrams Main Battle Tanks through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) system, Poland is demonstrating its commitment to fielding capabilities required to deter and defend Allied territory.

The European depth nations—such as Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands—represent a critical hub for the European defense industrial base (DIB) as well as logistics and sustainment networks. The Euro-Atlantic DIB plays an essential role in ensuring NATO's highly capable militaries can generate and sustain Europe's conventional defense, providing the requisite capabilities to defeat aggression. Thus, European Allies must be able to protect critical infrastructure, power projection platforms, prepositioned stocks, and lines of communication from disruption or attack.

USEUCOM's southern flank spans a wide area—from Portugal and Spain in the west, through Italy and the Balkans along the Adriatic Sea, all the way to Greece and Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The region presents unique challenges to the Alliance, such as avenues of approach into Europe for TCOs and VEOs. Consequently, illicit trafficking and illegal migrant flows across the southern flank disrupt regional stability and security. The Mediterranean Sea also includes sea lines of communication crucial for global trade and military logistics. The region plays a key role in the Joint Force's ability to project power globally, including the Middle East and Africa. In the Balkans, persistent ethnic tensions, political instability, and competing external influences create a complicated security environment. The NATO Kosovo Force, or KFOR, mission remains the primary security guarantor in the Western Balkans as a trusted agent with all parties.

USEUCOM'S STRATEGIC APPROACH

The DoW's strategic priorities, as outlined in the 2026 NDS, are clear. First, the U.S. Joint Force prioritizes the defense of the Homeland above all while preserving American interests in the Western Hemisphere. Second, the Department prioritizes deterring China in the Indo-Pacific through strength, not confrontation. Next, the United States emphasizes the importance of burden sharing with Allies and partners as they play the leading role in providing for their own defense, while the Joint Force continues to provide limited but critical support. Lastly, DoW leadership intends to supercharge the U.S. DIB by energizing industry partners, creating clear demand signals to incentivize commercial production, both from traditional and nontraditional vendors.

To support the Department's objectives, USEUCOM has prioritized three mission areas: 1) Protect the U.S. Homeland; 2) Project U.S. Combat Power; and 3) Position the Alliance to Deter and Defend.

Protect the U.S. Homeland

As Secretary of War Hegseth outlined in his initial Message to the Force, the United States "will reestablish deterrence by defending our Homeland" across domains. To that end, every U.S. Combatant Command (CCMD) is charged to defend the Homeland and American citizens abroad. Leveraging Europe's geographic advantages, USEUCOM's AOR includes strategic approaches to the Homeland which the Command defends across all domains. This includes the prevention of Russian SSNs and SSGNs from getting within cruise-missile range of the Homeland undetected, as well as the interdiction of Russian long-range aircraft threatening the Homeland during crisis or conflict. Ready and capable early-warning systems, bolstered by shared intelligence from our Allies, provides USEUCOM the ability to execute coordinated responses against multi-domain threats to the Homeland.

Guarding the strategic approaches to North America in the maritime domain through the GIUKN Gap and in the air domain over the High North is a core duty of USEUCOM. USEUCOM and NATO facilities, forces, and intelligence structures are the primary means of detecting and tracking Russian SSN and SSGN deployments. Our Allies, who also share a vital interest in defending the GIUKN gap, often

provide amplifying capabilities, such as P-8 overflights that help maintain all-domain awareness of Russian surface and subsurface activity. Further, USEUCOM coordinates with U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), and U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) to conduct air interdiction of threats to the U.S. Homeland.

We also cannot lose sight of VEOs and TCOs that operate through and within the European theater, threatening U.S. interests in Europe and the U.S. Homeland. USEUCOM is working alongside our interagency partners through a whole-of-government approach to neutralize VEO and TCO threats to the U.S. Homeland. Through these partnerships, we also help our European Allies and partners develop their own capabilities to detect, monitor, and counter these threats to U.S. and Allied security.

Project U.S. Combat Power

USEUCOM plays an essential role supporting the Joint Force's global operations. USEUCOM's proven ability to project power in and beyond the region enables the United States to protect national interests, respond to crises, and preserve the President's options. U.S. posture across the European theater allows the Joint Force to take advantage of Europe's unique, strategic geography. This forward position allows USEUCOM to support other CCMDs with critical logistics, ready forces, and lethal capabilities at the time and place of need. For example, in early 2025, USEUCOM forces in the eastern Mediterranean Sea supported U.S. Central Command's ballistic missile defense operations by defending Israel against threats from Iran and terrorist groups.

Key posture locations in Europe preserve the President's military options in crisis and enable the rapid deployment and sustainment of combat-credible forces, as USEUCOM demonstrated during Israel and Iran's 12-Day War in June 2025. Specifically, Operation MIDNIGHT HAMMER and the recent seizure of the sanctioned "Bella 1" oil tanker illustrate how USEUCOM's unique geographic position and theater advantages contribute to global operations. USEUCOM's ability to project power is underwritten by the strength of U.S. relationships and our access, basing, and overflight agreements with European Allies and partners, allowing U.S. forces to transit to and through Europe from key strategic locations across the globe on short notice. Maintaining USEUCOM's ability to project combat power ensures the

Joint Force can always achieve its priority missions, even as it stands ready to act decisively against other threats, at the President's direction.

Position the Alliance to Deter and Defend

USEUCOM continues to position our European Allies to deter and defend against aggression by increasing burden sharing so that our Allies may assume primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe. As the Commander of USEUCOM (CDRUSEUCOM), I also hold the role of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) within NATO, entrusting me with the authority and responsibility to lead the combined militaries of 32 Allied nations in peacetime, crisis, and conflict. These authorities enable me to leverage the collective power of the Alliance to manage and mitigate military risk on behalf of both NATO and the United States. They also enable me to facilitate and accelerate burden sharing among Allies in my SACEUR capacity, leveraging my deep understanding of U.S. policy objectives, approaches, and strategic guidance as CDRUSEUCOM. Importantly, USEUCOM also provides extended nuclear deterrence to backstop the Alliance while enabling Europe's conventional defense with limited but critical capabilities in theater to safeguard U.S. interests.

Increasing Allied Burden Sharing

Throughout its history, NATO has successfully adapted to its strategic environment. During the Cold War, NATO stood as a bulwark against the Soviet Union's communist expansion in Europe. After the Cold War, NATO took the lead managing crises in the Balkans. Just twelve hours after the September 11th terrorist attacks, NATO invoked Article 5 for the first and only time in its history. Our Allies not only committed aircraft to help secure American skies but also went to war by our side in Afghanistan and Iraq for over two decades. With the threat now at *their* doorstep, our NATO Allies are once again committed to meet the moment. This requires military might, equitable burden sharing, and combined-joint interoperability.

As key actors increase cooperation and collaboration around the world to undermine U.S. and Allied interests, our European Allies have agreed to strengthen their warfighting capabilities and capacity. Catalyzing credible deterrence and defense requires members of the Alliance to meet their Article 3

obligations and be willing and able to uphold their Article 5 commitments. USEUCOM will position the Alliance to deter and defend by implementing a burden-sharing strategy that maximizes the Allies' contribution to Europe's defense and ensures NATO Allies assume primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe.

Within the Alliance, we are empowering our European Allies to take on greater leadership within NATO's command structure. Notably, the United Kingdom and Italy have agreed to assume command of NATO's Joint Force Command (JFC) Norfolk and JFC Naples, respectively. This transition will occur in the coming years in accordance with NATO's established processes. By transferring select leadership roles within the Alliance, our NATO Allies will be better positioned to command and control (C2) Europe's conventional defense.

Allied Defense Spending

Thanks to U.S. leadership, NATO Allies pledged to invest 5% of their gross domestic product on defense—including 3.5% on hard military spending and 1.5% on dual-use societal resilience—making history at The Hague Summit in June 2025. While additional investment will help the Allies modernize and reach their NATO capability targets, money is just one part of the equation. Our Allies have begun addressing manpower gaps and materiel shortfalls, but modernized capabilities require greater production capacity and timely delivery from the entirety of the Euro-Atlantic DIB. USEUCOM continues to work with DoW leadership to identify co-production and co-sustainment opportunities with European Allies and partners to address Euro-Atlantic DIB shortfalls.

Modernizing Conventional Capabilities

In 2021, NATO published its cornerstone strategic concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area (DDA), ushering in a new era for the Alliance focused on collective defense and modernization. Now, NATO Allies are using their increased defense spending to develop new capabilities, grow capacity, and enhance force readiness. The Alliance also established campaigning and contingency plans for the first time in decades, which include peacetime vigilance activities and policing missions. NATO's three regional defense plans in the event of a contingency are at the crux of its

strategic concept for DDA. Collectively, these plans identify operational military force requirements for Europe's conventional defense, making them an essential tool for driving Allied capability investments. In other words, NATO's defense plans define the Alliance's warfighting requirements, which drive Allied investments that spur modernization.

U.S. Foreign Military Sales

According to the 2025 NSS, bolstering "Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe through commercial ties, weapons sales, political collaboration, and cultural and educational exchanges" is a priority for the United States. Accordingly, European Allies and partners continue to signal high demand for U.S.-manufactured defense articles and services. Since Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, for example, our European Allies and partners have spent nearly \$150 billion to purchase U.S. defense articles and services through the FMS system. Today, USEUCOM's total FMS portfolio is valued at over \$300 billion. Under the recently announced America First Arms Transfer Strategy (AFATS), European Allies and partners will have streamlined access to the capabilities required to bear primary responsibility for conventional deterrence and defense.

Theater Nuclear Deterrence

NATO has been a nuclear Alliance for 75 years. During this time, USEUCOM has provided an essential component of the U.S. nuclear umbrella which guarantees our Allies' security. As one of two CCMDs with the responsibility to maintain and, if directed by the President, employ nuclear weapons in defense of the United States and our Allies, USEUCOM maintains a credible, forward-deployed theater nuclear deterrence posture. As outlined in NATO's strategic concept, the Alliance's nuclear forces, "particularly those of the United States, are the supreme guarantee of the security of the Alliance." In addition to supporting Alliance nuclear operations, USEUCOM coordinates with USSTRATCOM in support of global strategic operations and extended nuclear deterrence, as necessary.

Support to Europe's Conventional Defense

Dual-hatted as CDRUSEUCOM and SACEUR, I can leverage critical U.S. and Allied enabling capabilities in support of a European-led conventional defense of Europe. Providing limited but critical

U.S. conventional capabilities and enablers to support the Alliance's collective defense strengthens NATO's warfighting capacity to interoperate at scale, providing the Joint Force greater flexibility to focus the majority of its combat power on other global priorities.

USEUCOM POSTURED ACROSS EUROPE

USEUCOM's selfless Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines, Guardians, Special Operators, Coast Guardsmen, and Government Civilians personify the warrior ethos and proudly represent the United States of America on foreign soil. They stand ready to defend the Homeland and protect American interests across the Euro-Atlantic region. USEUCOM's ready forces also enable the Command to strengthen Allied capability and capacity through combined exercises and training, build collective warfighting readiness, and position our Allies to take the lead for Europe's conventional defense. Therefore, USEUCOM and its Service Components require sufficient and sustainable resources and capabilities—balanced against the Department's global priorities—to operate at scale to protect the Homeland, project U.S. combat power, and increase Allied and partner burden sharing.

In the land domain, U.S. Army Europe and Africa (USAREUR-AF) is driving land force transformation in Europe to meet strategic objectives, positioning our European Allies to take the leading role in land-domain capabilities to deter aggression and maintain regional stability. For example, combined exercises with our NATO Allies, such as DEFENDER EUROPE 2025, focus not only on theater-level force employment but also on demonstrating lethality and interoperability with Allies and partners for large-scale combat operations. Through these exercises, USEUCOM can verify and certify the readiness of Allied units supporting NATO plans and operations. Additionally, USAREUR-AF is taking the lead on positioning our eastern flank Allies to operationalize all-domain deterrence through a data-enabled forward posture that harnesses lessons learned from Ukraine. Those efforts are anchored by NATO's Forward Land Forces (FLF) Battlegroups and host-nation defense forces with limited but critical U.S. support. In doing so, USAREUR-AF is increasing the combat credibility of the FLF as well as accelerating experimentation initiatives with a focus on ground-robotic capabilities at echelon.

In the air domain, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Africa (USAFE-AF) delivered major operational, strategic, and modernization gains in 2025. USAFE-AF took charge of force protection efforts during the 12-Day War, integrating theater-wide protection activities, and provided essential enabling support to Operation MIDNIGHT HAMMER—posturing assets and a total force package of 125 aircraft to enable a B-2 stealth strike package on an 18-hour mission while synchronizing multi-theater war plans. Across the theater, infrastructure investments improved War Reserve Material storage capacity and readiness, strengthening U.S. global power projection. Additionally, USAFE-AF advanced nuclear deterrence by executing a significant overhaul of nuclear facilities, modernizing and enhancing nuclear capabilities on the European continent. Nuclear readiness was further strengthened through numerous complex, joint nuclear-weapons movements spanning multiple CCMDs and Allied nations, and NATO's premier nuclear-deterrence exercise, STEADFAST NOON. To bolster NATO interoperability and readiness, USAFE-AF facilitated the delivery and integration of F-16 aircraft to Slovakia and Bulgaria for eastern flank air policing and supported the Polish Air Force in publishing its first Air Force Strategy aligned to NATO collective defense requirements and key U.S. systems, such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

In the maritime domain, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (USNAVEUR-AF) defends maritime approaches to the Homeland and key lines of communication, projects power across the Atlantic and beyond, and supports a critical leg of our nuclear triad. In the High North, carrier strike group operations routinized U.S. presence, signaled a demand for increased Allied burden sharing, and demonstrated freedom of navigation in Arctic waters. In the Baltic Sea, BALTOPS 25—a 20-day exercise including more than 40 ships, 25 aircraft, and about 9,000 personnel from 16 NATO Allies—provided an opportunity for USNAVEUR-AF to integrate with Allies, demonstrating warfighting capability, layered defense, and the strength of our regional partnerships. In the Mediterranean, our maritime forces operated alongside our NATO Allies during Exercise NEPTUNE STRIKE 2025 to demonstrate long-range strike and anti-submarine warfare capabilities. To C2 these maritime capabilities, USEUCOM continues to work alongside DoW leadership to identify long-term C2 options pending the scheduled

decommissioning of the USS *Mount Whitney* command ship in FY 2030. Further, the Command looks forward to the arrival of a sixth Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer as well as an ocean surveillance ship, both of which will enable USEUCOM to secure key terrain in the maritime domain.

The Command's maritime capabilities complement U.S. Marine Forces Europe and Africa (USMARFOREUR/AF), whose presence in the High North, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, and Mediterranean enable sea control from the shore. MARFOREUR/AF participated in several combined exercises focused on enhancing the amphibious and naval-infantry capabilities of European Allied forces, particularly in the Baltic and Nordic regions. For example, exercises like BALTOPS 2026—designed to strengthen deterrence and interoperability in the Baltic Sea—highlight our Allies' eagerness to work with our forces to grow their own littoral defense capabilities. During EXERCISE KRAKEN, U.S. and Swedish forces successfully integrated new technologies into maritime operations. This exercise was a valuable opportunity to refine our combined tactics and procedures. The exercise demonstrated the effectiveness of combined U.S. and Swedish maritime operations, while highlighting areas for improvement in communications interoperability and night-operations capabilities. MARFOREUR/AF also enhanced the Command's ability to respond to crises through exercises and planning activities focused on non-combatant evacuation operations and other contingency scenarios.

In the space domain, U.S. Space Forces Europe and Africa (USSPACEFOREUR-AF) provides critical support to U.S. and NATO operations by improving Allied interoperability and readiness and integrating commercial space technologies to enhance situational awareness. Over the last year, USSPACEFOREUR-AF provided space electromagnetic warfare support during Operation MIDNIGHT HAMMER and the 12-day Israel-Iran War in June 2025, protecting friendly forces and improving the survivability of presidentially directed strikes. USSPACEFOREUR-AF also expanded situational awareness by operationalizing rapid collection and dissemination of commercial imagery, providing unclassified, shareable reporting on issues such as electromagnetic spectrum interference, illegal shadow-fleet activity, and adversary military operations and force posture in Eastern Europe. In partnership with the U.S. Space Development Agency, USSPACEFOREUR-AF successfully demonstrated enhanced

resilient, low-latency satellite communications crucial to Joint All-Domain Command and Control, or JADC2. The successful demonstration was a key step toward the Army and Navy's adoption of the Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture (PWSA). Finally, the effort established a landmark partnership with Norway to integrate PWSA into NATO terrestrial networks—advancing Allied interoperability and combined C2. In the cyber domain, USEUCOM—enabled by the Cyber Operations–Integrated Planning Element (CO-IPE) and in coordination with U.S. Cyber Command—strengthens collective cyber defense across Europe through bilateral and multilateral frameworks. These efforts improve Allied capability and capacity to detect, defend against, and respond to malicious cyber activity, while enhancing C2, interoperability, and readiness through a robust exercise and engagement program. By building durable internal defenses and expanding partner contributions to combined operations, USEUCOM reinforces deterrence, preserves freedom of action in theater, and bolsters the collective defense posture of NATO and key partners.

In terms of special operations, U.S. Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) counters hybrid threats to U.S. and Allied interests, enhances NATO interoperability, and drives innovative solutions to special operations requirements. SOCEUR disrupts hybrid threats, destabilization efforts, and special reconnaissance activities through expanded information and intelligence sharing and operational synchronization with our European Allies and partners. Through joint exercises and other burden-sharing initiatives, SOCEUR strengthens special operations capabilities and interoperability among NATO Allies. For example, exercise ADAMANT SERPENT 2025 brought together 400 special operations troops from the United States, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark to rehearse rapid deployment and unified operations in arctic and sub-arctic environments. These exercises, along with other capability-development efforts, position Allies to increase their special operations contributions to NATO. Further, SOCEUR's Theater Edge Innovation Lab conducts iterative-technology innovation, operational assessments, training, and tactical-exploitation support to address DoW special operations requirements in support of the U.S. defense innovation ecosystem.

USEUCOM STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Across USEUCOM's priority mission areas, the Command is pursuing and implementing several initiatives to maximize the Joint Force and NATO's collective strength to achieve national objectives.

Strategy Alignment Implementation

First, USEUCOM is adapting its plans and OAs in alignment with the NSS and DoW strategic guidance. For example, our defense plans ensure we can defend the Homeland, support the Joint Force as it balances global resource requirements, and continue to provide limited but critical conventional support to NATO. As NATO updates its own defense plans, USEUCOM will identify opportunities to proportionately tailor U.S. force contributions as Allied warfighting capabilities and capacity increase. To support the Department's priority lines of effort, USEUCOM updated its resourcing and targeting priorities for theater intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms and sensors. USEUCOM will continue to adjust these efforts in line with global Joint Force requirements and will leverage Allied capabilities to support Alliance-wide, all-domain awareness.

USEUCOM's Efforts to Increase Allied Burden Sharing

In alignment with the NSS and DoW's strategic guidance to increase Allied and partner burden sharing, the Command is prudently and expeditiously transferring primary responsibility for Europe's conventional defense to our European Allies by helping them increase their warfighting readiness, capability, and capacity. Indeed, the first step to burden sharing is burden shifting. Therefore, USEUCOM will prioritize actions that shift NATO's security architecture from a U.S.-centric model to a European-centric model, fostering Allied ownership of defense efforts. A European-led conventional defense requires our NATO Allies to reach several milestones—strategic aimpoints—in the years ahead. Resources will be directed toward those areas that have the greatest impact on NATO's collective defense posture.

To achieve these objectives, USEUCOM will, in close collaboration with Allies, identify capability gaps, prioritize targeted assistance and cooperation, enhance Allied interoperability and readiness, and enable the deliberate transition of deterrence roles and missions to European Allies. To that

end, and in accordance with U.S. policy, USEUCOM is implementing a deliberate, sustainable, and effective burden-sharing strategy that is both conditions-informed and time-bound. Progress toward burden-sharing goals must be measurable and transparent. USEUCOM will support Alliance processes that establish clear metrics for reporting progress, contributions, and accountability.

For our Allies to assume primary responsibility for Europe's conventional defense, helping them achieve their NATO Capability Targets is paramount. USEUCOM is focusing on these targets to accelerate this approach and strengthen our Allies' warfighting capabilities, especially as our NATO Allies reach their 5% defense spending pledges. Greater European investment in a responsive and resilient Euro-Atlantic DIB will improve Allied capability development and force planning in support of NATO's Regional Plans, thereby increasing burden sharing.

USEUCOM forces are immersed in a dynamic training environment designed to enhance readiness and increase lethality. The Command trains, exercises, and leads alongside Allies to generate Alliance readiness for combined, joint operations. As such, USEUCOM is right sizing our exercise program to place NATO's theater-wide C2, force structure, and interoperability at the forefront of our focus. USEUCOM's combined exercises with NATO provide the Joint Force and our Allies tools to integrate new technology and refine tactics, techniques, and procedures. Exercises like NATO's STEADFAST DEFENDER 2024—with 90,000 troops, 50 ships, 80 aircraft, and 1,100 combat vehicles—are critical to rehearsing maneuver warfare and C2 at scale, demonstrating Allied resolve and commitment to reestablishing deterrence on the European continent. Looking ahead, STEADFAST DEFENDER 2027 will provide an opportunity for our Allies to evaluate their progress towards increased warfighting capability and capacity. USEUCOM will work alongside Allies to also ensure standardization of ammunition, fuel, and communication systems to optimize coalition warfighting. USEUCOM also enjoys a mutually supportive relationship with the National Guard Bureau, which provides low-cost exchanges with 30 European nations through its long-standing State Partnership Program (SPP). The SPP strengthens military-to-military relationships, builds Ally and partner defense capacity, and provides

unique training opportunities for National Guardsmen, increasing their warfighting readiness and lethality.

USEUCOM will also prioritize existing Allied burden-sharing constructs, such as NATO's FLF Battlegroups, eVAs, and air policing to enable the Allies' conventional defense of Europe with limited but critical U.S. support. Under the FLF concept, for example, NATO has identified eight "framework nations" to bolster defense in eight eastern flank "host nations." Each framework nation will station a standing, battalion-sized battlegroup capable of expanding to a brigade on order, in its respective host nation. Finland is the ninth host nation, set to welcome Sweden as its framework nation in 2026. These visiting framework nations provide the core combat power for each battlegroup. Importantly, the North Atlantic Council has already agreed to the FLF concept as a burden-sharing framework. Other ongoing burden-sharing operations include eVA Baltic Sentry and eVA Eastern Sentry, in addition to the recently announced eVA Arctic Sentry. In the maritime domain, eVA Baltic Sentry counters Russian malign activity, such as undersea cable cutting, in the Baltic Sea. In the air domain, eVA Eastern Sentry deploys aircraft in response to Russian incursions of Allied airspace.

USEUCOM also leverages its military-to-military relationships to identify opportunities to share costs with our NATO Allies. Several eastern flank NATO Allies have offered to increase cost sharing as part of our larger burden-sharing efforts to support the Alliance. Allies have demonstrated willingness to bear the costs of U.S. force presence, providing a projected \$4.5 billion for military infrastructure. As such, training and exercises often occur in locations funded by Allies. For example, through an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, Poland has contributed approximately \$300 million to date to build facilities at Zagan-Swietoszow Training Areas, in addition to other facilities that support U.S. power projection and sustainment. NATO Allies are also increasing contributions to the NATO Security Infrastructure Program fund to ensure the Alliance has a ready pool of resources for collective defense.

USEUCOM's Support to Ukraine

The President's objectives for the war in Ukraine are clear: stop the bloodshed, achieve a ceasefire, and settle the conflict. To that end, USEUCOM is supporting the U.S.-brokered peace process

with military planning for peace monitoring to inform diplomatic negotiations. Additionally, USEUCOM coordinates and executes U.S. security assistance to Ukraine alongside our NATO Allies. For example, to safeguard vulnerable population centers and critical infrastructure across Ukraine as negotiations unfold, President Trump directed the transfer of additional interceptors for previously donated air defense platforms, including PATRIOT and NASAM systems. Meanwhile, through the Critical Ukraine Requirements List and Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List, commonly referred to as the CURL/PURL initiative, vital support to Ukraine is sourced from the United States and paid for by our Allies and partners. In 2025, NATO Allies pledged more than \$4 billion in military equipment and munitions for Ukraine through the PURL initiative. Overall, European Allies and partners have committed more than €300 billion in financial, humanitarian, and military assistance to Ukraine since February 2022, €200 billion of which has already been allocated.

USEUCOM's Innovation Efforts

USEUCOM must harness the power of innovation, learning from the modern battlefield and adapting our processes, technologies, and approaches. The European theater is a living laboratory USEUCOM can use to experiment and battle test new equipment, new tactics, and new approaches alongside our Allies and partners. Exercise and training programs provide opportunities for rapid innovation, which is essential for the Joint Force and NATO to evolve to meet the demands of warfare, both today and in the future.

The war in Ukraine has served as a test bed for new technologies, improving our understanding of the modern battlefield. In a dynamic environment that pushes the boundaries of warfare beyond traditional capability development cycles, the conflict highlights the requirement for military innovation and adaptation at speed. The lessons learned in Ukraine span all domains, including areas such as layered air defenses, logistics, and electronic warfare. Areas such as UAS development and counter-UAS warfare are becoming ubiquitous across multiple domains in every theater with implications on future force design. For example, using combat-informed data harvested from Ukraine, U.S. and Allied forces are developing concepts that will improve multinational integration and the battlefield incorporation of

autonomous systems across domains. These adaptations and innovations are shaping U.S. and NATO training events and exercises while also informing future force design across the Alliance and Joint Force.

Furthermore, the DoW innovation ecosystem is supporting and learning from the ongoing conflict through direct partnership with USEUCOM. The Office of the Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment and the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), for example, successfully prototyped next-generation, long-range one-way attack platforms in Ukraine with both U.S. and Ukrainian firms. Additionally, the DIU is simultaneously fielding Ukrainian-inspired first-person view drones to USEUCOM units for training. Conversely, DoW initiatives, such as the Drone Dominance Program, are leveraging the best practices of Ukrainian drone manufacturers to scale small UAS domestic production. Our partnerships with the broader innovation ecosystem create a symbiotic relationship where the United States and our industrial base benefits from our support to Ukraine.

USEUCOM continues to incorporate emerging technologies into our own processes and activities. As the DoW fields new Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled tools, the Command is using them to enhance our own innovation efforts to improve efficiency and agility. USEUCOM is using an AI-enabled approach to design exercise plans and develop training concepts, thereby reducing costs and personnel demands. For example, JACKAL STONE 27 will incorporate AI-enabled tools as part of a command post exercise to stress test USEUCOM's crisis response capabilities in the European theater.

Beyond innovating for the battlefield, USEUCOM is also modernizing its headquarters operations through AI-enabled tools that accelerate analysis and decision-making, in line with the Department's vision to out-think, out-decide, and out-pace adversaries through rapid planning, operations, intelligence, logistics, and other workflows. The Command is leveraging AI-enabled tools to more rapidly and efficiently analyze open-source information, improving our situational awareness of the security environment. USEUCOM will continue working with the Department, interagency stakeholders, and Allies and partners to develop new tools and identify new applications to foster innovation.

CONCLUSION

It is a privilege to serve alongside the men and women of USEUCOM as they continue working with DoW leadership, interagency stakeholders, NATO Allies, and European partners to achieve our national objectives in Europe. The Command will continue to work to maximize the Joint Force's operational flexibility and readiness by accelerating Alliance modernization and driving warfighting innovation. In doing so, USEUCOM can ensure the region remains a platform for U.S. Homeland defense and Joint Force power projection, and that NATO remains a combat-credible, force-multiplying Alliance capable of sustaining deterrence and defeating aggression against Allies in Europe and North America. USEUCOM is prepared to deter and defeat threats to U.S. vital interests in and from Europe, uphold our Article 5 obligations to the Alliance, and fulfill the President's commitment to *Peace through Strength*.