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UNITED STATES SENATE
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
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UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND

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Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, it is my distinct honor to testify before you again on behalf of our brave service members and their dedicated families in the European Theater. As the Commander, United States European Command (USEUCOM), I have the honor to lead a dedicated group of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Guardians, Coast Guardsmen, civilians, and defense contractors who work alongside our NATO Allies and partners to secure the peace and advance American interests. My posture statement will: offer my assessment of the threats in the Euro-Atlantic security environment; describe our strategic approach to address these threats; detail USEUCOM's force posture throughout Europe; explain our operations, investments, and activities; and, in all of this, highlight the importance to America of NATO's modernization of its system of collective defense.

The Euro-Atlantic Security Environment

The United States faces a combination of challenges and threats in the Euro-Atlantic area that we have not seen in more than thirty years. Russia is waging a full-scale war in Europe and shows no signs of stopping. This presents the real potential for escalation into a wider war, and is cause for significant strategic concern to the United States. But when we view Russia's illegal and brutal invasion of Ukraine together with Russia's rapid military reconstitution; Russia's deepening ties with the People's Republic of China (PRC), Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran), and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK); Russia's continual machinations and malign influence in the Balkans and other sensitive areas; and Russia's persistent efforts to undermine allied cohesion, U.S. global influence, and Western values, we find a chronic and growing threat to American interests and to the security of our NATO Allies and all residents of the Euro-Atlantic area. This Russian threat is exacerbated by China's continued malign influence in the European Theater, continuing regional instability both inside and outside the USEUCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR); the ever-present threat of

27 violent extremist organizations; and climate change. In all, we see a Euro-Atlantic area that
28 faces more threats and dynamic challenges than at any time in the past thirty years.
29 Nevertheless, there are opportunities for the United States in this environment.

30 **Russia**

31 Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has fundamentally altered the Euro-Atlantic
32 security environment. It is clear that we have a long-term "Russia problem," and the war in
33 Ukraine is but one example.

34 This ongoing conflict is the largest war on the European continent since World War Two.
35 The Ukrainian people are fighting hard, from Kharkiv to Kherson, against a formidable and
36 ruthless Russian adversary. With the help of the United States, and invaluable help from other
37 allies and partners, Ukraine has inflicted significant damage upon the Russian military.
38 However, Russia relies on the mass and quantity available to a large country, and despite its
39 military's evident deficiencies and dysfunctions, continues to pose an existential threat to
40 Ukraine. Ukraine cannot sustain this fight alone. The United States, our allies, and partners
41 must continue to provide Ukraine with munitions, weapons, and materiel.

42 Russia remains a capable threat beyond Ukraine, and it's necessary to examine what
43 has and has not happened to the Russian military in Ukraine. Russia poses the most stressing
44 nuclear, biological, and chemical threat in the near-term and will continue to retain WMD
45 capabilities in the medium and long term. First and foremost, Russia's nuclear forces have been
46 unaffected by the conflict, and Russia retains the largest arsenal of deployed and non-deployed
47 nuclear weapons in the world. These continue to present an existential threat to the U.S.
48 homeland, our Allies, and our partners. Additionally, Russia continues to modernize its nuclear
49 forces, and continues to pursue efforts to develop nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic
50 missile systems, nuclear-armed hypersonic boost glide vehicles, nuclear-powered cruise

missiles, nuclear-powered underwater drones, anti-satellite weapons, and orbital nuclear weapons.

Moreover, during this conflict Russia's strategic forces, long range aviation, cyber capabilities, space capabilities, and capabilities in the electromagnetic spectrum have lost no capacity at all. The air force has lost some aircraft, but only about 10% of their fleet. The navy has suffered significantly in the Black Sea – but nowhere else and Russian naval activity worldwide is at a significant peak. Russian long range precision fires have increased in production, and Russia has also begun to buy ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and long-range drones from third countries who were previously outside this fight. In fact, it is mainly only in the land forces that Russia has suffered, losing over 2,000 tanks and 315,000 soldiers wounded or dead. However, Russia is reconstituting that force far faster than our initial estimates suggested. The army is actually now larger – by 15 percent – than it was when it invaded Ukraine. Over the past year, Russia increased its front line troop strength from 360,000 to 470,000. Russia's army increased the upper age limit for conscription from 27 to 30, which increases the pool of available military conscripts by 2 million for years to come. Russia has announced plans to pursue an ambitious ground forces restructure, increasing to 1.5 million personnel with an expanded footprint. This restructure includes plans to transform seven motorized rifle brigades into divisions and a new army corps. Russia plans to base some of these new formations in Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine, as well as Karelia in the High North, opposite Finland. Perhaps most concerning, the Russian military in the past year has shown an accelerating ability to learn and adapt to battlefield challenges both tactically and technologically, and has become a learning organization that little resembles the chaotic force that invaded Ukraine two years ago.

Russia continues to display a resilient economy and an ability to withstand sanctions and export controls. Last year, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasted a 2.1 percent drop in Russia's 2023 Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, by the end of the year, the IMF revised its estimate that Russia's GDP increased by 3%, primarily due to heavy investments in defense. Currently, the IMF outlook predicts Russia's GDP will increase by 2.6% in 2024. Russia is on track to spend 6 percent of its GDP on the military, with defense spending exceeding social spending for the first time since the end of the Soviet Union. This defense spending includes new manufacturing plants and factories for weapons production. Russia is on track to produce or refurbish over 1,200 new main battle tanks a year, and to manufacture at least 3 million artillery shells or rockets per year – over triple the amount the US estimated at the beginning of the war – and more ammunition than all 32 NATO Allied combined. Moreover, Russia has responded to international sanctions by adopting evasion and import substitution strategies that have allowed it to overcome challenges in acquiring key components, including microelectronics and machine tools. This has allowed Russia to continue to invest in high-end, exquisite weapon systems to offset U.S. strategic advantages, several of which were successfully tested this year.

In sum, Russia is on track to command the largest military on the continent and a defense industrial complex capable of generating substantial amounts of ammunition and materiel in support of large scale combat operations. Regardless of the outcome of the war in Ukraine, Russia will be larger, more lethal, and angrier with the West than when it invaded.

Diplomatically, Russia has used the past two years to attempt to alter the global security architecture by creating relationships that challenge the existing order. Russia, the PRC, Iran, and DPRK are forming interlocking strategic partnerships across the world's largest landmass. This block of adversaries is more cohesive and dangerous than any threat the United States has faced in decades. As of March 2024, the DPRK provided Russia with roughly 6,700 containers that could contain up to three million artillery shells. Iran has provided Russia

with drones, artillery, and missiles that have enhanced Russia's lethality in Ukraine. Russia and Iran have a billion-dollar weapons deal that includes domestic production of 6,000 drones by the summer of 2025. The PRC provided Russia with nonlethal assistance ranging from drones to computer chips, and increased its imports of Russian goods by 12% to \$117.8 billion in the last year. The PRC, Iran, and DPRK are sustaining Russia's economy and enabling it to continue its aggression in Ukraine. This new axis of adversaries will create strategic dilemmas within an increasingly challenging international security environment.

Peoples Republic of China

Getting China right is critical for European stability. PRC's expanding influence in Europe and its deepening partnership with Russia create complex challenges within this theater. PRC attempts to sow division and exert influence across Europe. China employs media manipulation and disinformation campaigns to subvert democratic institutions and sway public opinion. It employs trade coercion, boycotts of European goods, and export controls on critical raw materials to coerce policymakers in European states.

PRC's strategic approach undermines political cohesion in Europe. This includes investments in dual-use infrastructure directly impacting our collective security. China makes economic investments that superficially appear to be benign, but turn out to have pernicious effects on our security. PRC has spent the last decade investing in European ports, airports, utility companies, and telecommunications, putting at risk our collective sustainment and communication systems. For example, PRC's ownership of critical seaport infrastructure could seem purely commercial, but has been used to deny allied navies port calls, and calls into question the reliability of use for military reinforcement of the NATO Alliance. Similarly, the inclusion of Huawei's 5G technology in some NATO members' networks could necessitate their exclusion from vital communication and intelligence networks, decreasing interoperability among Allies and partners.

Certainly, PRC is closely watching the conflict in Ukraine – learning military lessons, political lessons, and trying to project those onto China’s own interests. Moreover, PRC’s increased support for Russia reveals the depths of the Chinese Communist Party’s commitment to partnerships that challenge our collective security. The continued “No-Limits” partnership between PRC and Russia positions PRC as a formidable adversary to European interests. This partnership is not just diplomatic; it extends to informational, economic, and military realms, aiding nations that exhibit hostility and aggression. For example, through its global propaganda machine, PRC directly parrots Russian disinformation narratives on Ukraine. The partnership between Beijing and Moscow raises questions about PRC’s broader strategic objectives in the European Theater. As PRC continues to position itself in support of Russia, it is foreshadowing its long-term position as a challenger to Euro-Atlantic security.

The Balkans

The situation in the Western Balkans has grown more tense in the past year. Negotiations to resolve internal political and social issues have not made progress. Russian malign influence to incite tension contributes to this regional instability. Violence has worsened – both spontaneous violence and that which is fomented from outside the country. Last autumn, attacks on Kosovo police and a Serbian troop buildup on the border of north Kosovo presented the highest threat of interstate violence since the end of the war in 1999, and illustrated the worrisome level of instability in the region. In response to the escalating tension, NATO sent troops from the United Kingdom (UK) and Romania to reinforce its peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. Additionally, the Alliance is reevaluating its force posture in the Kosovo peacekeeping mission to respond to the new threat environment.

Ethnic tension in Bosnia and Herzegovina also has the potential to escalate and destabilize the Western Balkans region. Russia’s activities to foment the tension between ethnic Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats aim to weaken the country and prevent deepened ties with the EU and NATO. Ethno-nationalist politics prevent Bosnia and Herzegovina from adopting

much-needed political, legal, and economic reforms that would advance its Euro-Atlantic integration. Bosnia and Herzegovina's Serb-majority entity, Republika Srpska, seeks to weaken state authorities and weaken relationships with the EU and NATO while maintaining close ties to Russia.

Finally, active Russian influence operations in North Macedonia, Montenegro, and other West Balkan countries continues to present challenges to alliance unity, as well as to general stability in the region. The narratives Russia promulgates stoke inter-ethnic tensions, and degrade support for the rule of law and democracy in general. Russia may not be alone; Serbia's role in these influence operations remains open to question, none of which is good for the region.

The Sahel

In the Sahel, economic instability, extreme poverty, and climate change are deeply intertwined with rapid population growth, youth unemployment, political and social fragility, corruption, and the pervasive threat of terrorism. These issues are not isolated; they are inextricably linked and have significant repercussions for European and NATO security. A key manifestation of this instability is the rise in irregular migration toward Europe. Large influxes of people entering European countries are straining resources, fueling political debates over immigration, and raising legitimate concerns about border security and the potential for extremist infiltration.

The recent withdrawal of United Nations (UN) peacekeepers from Mali marks a significant shift in the regional security dynamic. This development poses serious questions about the future stability of Mali, the broader Sahel region, and the void left by French and UN forces being filled by non-Western actors, notably Russia and PRC. Russia's increasing involvement in the region challenges our counterterrorism efforts and broader security interests. Meanwhile, PRC's expanding role, driven by its economic agenda, includes a growing presence in security affairs, contributions to UN missions, and arms trade. Russia and PRC's expanding

179 influence in the Sahel is one example of how they are influencing the global south to seek
180 advantages.

181 **The Levant**

182 The conflict in Gaza introduces complex security challenges for NATO and USEUCOM.
183 The increasing violence in the region and its consequent humanitarian crises raise the specter
184 of mass displacement and broader regional destabilization. Europe has struggled in the past
185 with issues related to mass migration; more would not help right now. Moreover, almost all
186 nations in Europe have significant expatriate populations in the Levant, and would be eager to
187 safeguard them in the event of a wider war. Finally, various NATO nations have diverse current
188 and historical relationships to the nations in the Levant, and a wider war could produce fissures
189 in the Alliance regarding an external issue at a time when unity is of paramount importance.

190 **Violent Extremist Organizations**

191 Violent Extremist Organizations continue to pose a threat to NATO Allies and U.S.
192 security interests in our AOR. Europe has suffered 18 terrorist attacks since 2018. Groups like
193 ISIS, despite territorial losses in Iraq and Syria, persist with their global agenda. ISIS' sustained
194 network and capacity for high-profile operations make them a resilient and dangerous
195 adversary. Along with the continuing challenge of lone actors and small groups, inspired by
196 foreign terrorist organizations, the threat posed by VEOs continues to challenge our European
197 Allies and even threatens US personnel abroad.

198 **Climate Change**

199 Changes in the climate continue to pose security challenges in the Euro-Atlantic area.
200 The retreat of the Arctic ice cap has been opening waterways in the High North, a phenomenon
201 Russia and China are eager to exploit. Extreme weather events strain resources, disrupt
202 economies, and increase the likelihood of conflicts in states with already fragile governments.
203 Climate change can worsen floods, fires, water shortage, and migration, and challenge regional
204 stability and security. Moreover, climate-related loss of agricultural productivity, shifts in fish

205 stocks, and water variability can lead to heightened geopolitical tensions and potential resource
206 conflicts.

207 As we look to the future, the security of the region, and by extension, the interests of the
208 United States and NATO, are intricately linked to the health of the environment and the stability
209 of the climate. USEUCOM will continue to engage in a comprehensive approach that includes
210 monitoring climatic changes, assessing the strategic impact climate change has on Euro-
211 Atlantic security, working with NATO on interoperability and energy security, and deterring our
212 adversaries from exploiting the climate crisis. Additionally, USEUCOM continues to develop
213 relationships and work with both United States and European climate change organizations to
214 develop innovative solutions. Through strategic planning, collaborative efforts, and proactive
215 measures, we aim to safeguard our interests, promote regional stability, and contribute to the
216 global effort against climate change.

217 **Opportunities to Expand Influence**

218 Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, in many ways, has had the opposite effect of
219 those intended. Indeed, it has actually produced opportunities to expand US influence abroad,
220 both through NATO and through bilateral relations.

221 It's well known that where Russia wanted to get less NATO, it got more: USEUCOM
222 celebrates the accession of both Finland and Sweden to the Alliance and notes that these
223 nations both increased our collective defense capabilities from Day One.

224 More opportunities exist in the neighborhood.

225 Georgia, historically a bridge between East and West and a stalwart NATO partner,
226 raised concerns in 2023 with actions that seemed to indicate a departure from its Euro-Atlantic
227 trajectory. However, today the government is taking steps to reform Georgia's economic and
228 political institutions to meet prerequisites for EU membership. There is strong evidence that the
229 government of Georgia desires to move closer to the West, just as the overwhelming majority of
230 the Georgian population has desired for three decades. Georgia's defense establishment

maintains a close relationship with USEUCOM and is taking steps to modernize its forces. Maintaining this positive relationship underpins U.S. influence in this important region and creates opportunities that extend beyond Georgia.

The situation in Armenia and Azerbaijan remains tense following Azerbaijan's military actions in Nagorno-Karabakh this past September. Azerbaijan's military success and Russia's failed role as a ceasefire guarantor have altered the regional balance of power. Importantly, Russia refused to aid Armenia during Azerbaijan's offensive, creating a significant rift between Armenia and Russia, and giving Armenia a strong impetus to move closer to the West. As a result, USEUCOM is strengthening its military relationship with Armenia, and the command conducted training exercises in Armenia for the first time in many years in 2023. USEUCOM applauds efforts to reach a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia. We see an opportunity to establish stability in the region while giving nations an opportunity to move out of Russia's coercive orbit.

Finally, Moldova has seized the opportunity to realize its West-leaning ambitions. The nation has intensified its efforts to rid itself of Russian coercive influence, and has embraced closer partnerships with Europe. USEUCOM has redoubled our efforts to help Moldova develop the resiliency and reform necessary to follow their chosen path.

These opportunities, when taken together, represent a chance to diminish malign and coercive Russian influence throughout Europe.

Opportunity in NATO

At the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, allied Heads of State and Government approved the three Regional Plans and gave NATO Allied Command Operations the approval to proceed with implementing and developing the Alliance's modernized collective defense system.

With approval of those plans, the first formal plans the Alliance has had in more than three decades, the Alliance is finally armed with a comprehensive blueprint for modernizing its system of collective defense. First, the plans have produced a force structure requirement, and

NATO now has an objective, reality-based driver for nations' defense planning and procurement. Second, NATO is now able to tie that force to specific geography and tasks, giving focus to the Alliance's operations, activities, and investments. Third, the force is now able to exercise against the requirements of our plans, instead of fictional scenarios. Fourth, the force now has objective readiness requirements that each one will be held to. On top of these enormous changes, Allied Command Operations will also emplace an updated Command and Control design, transforming headquarters once fit for peacetime and out-of-area-operations into warfighting headquarters ready to defend allied territory.

Throughout this fundamental change, the Alliance continues to exhibit unprecedented cohesion, focus, and determination. It is a strong statement of NATO unity that in considering the three Regional Plans – which cover 8 percent of the globe and over one billion people – there were no military or operational disagreements among the 31 Allies. More, the Alliance is backing up its ambition with money. In 2023 NATO saw a real increase of 11% in defense spending across European Allies and Canada. In 2024, NATO expects 18 Allies to spend 2 percent gross domestic product (GDP) on defense. In total, European Allies will invest a combined total 280 billion U.S. dollars in defense, which amounts to 2 percent of their combined GDP– a far cry from the three members who met the 2 percent goal in 2014.

This renewed sense of purpose and definitive plan of action give us the opportunity to create a more effective alliance with a more sustainable division of labor and effort, which will in turn give the U.S. opportunity to face all global challenges while still ensuring the deterrence of Russia and security of Europe. We need to be with NATO every step of the way through this transformation, which is so clearly in our interests.

USEUCOM's Strategic Approach

Our strategic approach to these challenges and opportunities centers on assisting Ukraine, deterring Russian aggression, strengthening the NATO Alliance, and responding to

crises while actively shaping the operational environment. It ensures the security and prosperity of the Euro-Atlantic region while preserving our shared values and interests with our Allies.

Supporting Ukraine

United States support for Ukraine demonstrates our commitment to upholding the principles of national sovereignty and international law – principles that underpin global stability and security. Failure to assist Ukraine poses a grave threat to its survival. Inaction will embolden Russia and establish a precedent that threatens the global security environment. The United States and our European Allies lead the global effort to enhance Ukraine's military capabilities through comprehensive training and arming. Continued U.S. leadership is essential for enabling Ukraine to defend its sovereignty and preserving stability, security, and democracy throughout Europe and beyond.

Deterring Russia from expanding its aggression into alliance territory is essential to preserve the rules-based international order, safeguard the sovereignty of nations within our AOR, and protect U.S. strategic interests. Russia's aggression poses a direct threat to the peace and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area. Now is the time to capitalize on Russia's failures in Ukraine by accelerating our modernization of capabilities, posture, and security cooperation to outpace Russia's reconstitution.

A strong and cohesive NATO is the cornerstone of deterrence, and therefore is the basis for peace in the Euro-Atlantic. The Alliance is more unified than at any point since the Cold War and is undergoing its most significant transformation in three decades as it modernizes its system of collective defense. In line with the Nuclear Posture Review, the United States is modernizing systems to strengthen strategic deterrence to ensure a strong extended deterrence capability and assurance to European Allies. Positioning the right U.S. forces throughout Europe to support this transformation is a necessary investment in our future security. As the Alliance continues to modernize, U.S. leadership is more important than ever.

While we assist Ukraine and work with NATO to deter Russia, we remain always ready to respond to unexpected crises within and beyond our AOR. Concurrently, through the proactive shaping of the operational environment, we create strategic dilemmas for our adversaries, neutralize potential conflicts, and establish conditions conducive to U.S. interests. These are interconnected, with crisis response delivering immediate security benefits, and shaping the operational environment ensuring long-term stability and deterrence.

We are poised to respond to the Euro-Atlantic's complex security challenges. USEUCOM's force posture is an extension of our strategic approach. It enables us to have the right forces, in the right locations, at the right time, with the right capabilities.

USEUCOM Postured Across Europe

USEUCOM's posture is the baseline for executing our strategy. It is both a reflection of our commitment and a testament to our ability to respond. Strategically positioned, we spearhead the U.S. government's efforts in support of NATO, ensuring our forces are not just present, but combat-ready, adaptable, capable of deterring, and if necessary defeat any threat. Our operations span the European Theater, utilizing the capabilities of our seven service components. From the Black Sea, where our efforts bolster Ukraine's defense, to the Baltic Region, where large-scale U.S.-NATO exercises enhance our interoperability, our posture is clear: we stand united with our Allies, ready to face and overcome any challenge.

The key to deterring Russia is having combat-credible forces in the right position. U.S. force posture in Europe includes 83,000 members of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard, many of whom moved their families across the Atlantic Ocean to become part of communities throughout Europe. The footprint for these forces includes main operating bases, forward operating sites, and cooperative security locations from Spain to Estonia, and from Iceland to Türkiye.

USEUCOM's land force consists of five U.S. Army brigade combat teams and two division headquarters. These forces enhance our deterrence posture along the Eastern Flank. United States Army Europe and Africa and V Corps' Forward Command Post in Poland provide command and control of our ground forces. We have positioned long-range fires, anti-air defense, sustainment, and communications equipment across Europe to support and protect our ground forces. U.S. continued investment in Army Prepositioned Stocks and facilities enable rapid integration of rotational combat units into the USEUCOM AOR.

In the air domain, USEUCOM will complete the stand-up of one U.S. Air Force squadron of fifth generation F-35 fighters at RAF Lakenheath this month and is on track to receive a second squadron by August 2025. The United States Air Forces in Europe and Africa provides command and control for these forces as well as for fourth generation fighters, bombers, tankers, and transport aircraft positioned in the UK, Italy, Germany, Iceland, Norway, and other European countries. Additionally, USEUCOM is working closely with our Allies and partners to decentralize the physical infrastructure required to generate air power by operationalizing the concept of Agile Combat Employment (ACE). ACE enables the sharing of infrastructure and capabilities necessary to support air platforms with our Allies and partners. Decentralized infrastructure located throughout Europe enables our Air Force to be more dynamic, survivable, and lethal.

USEUCOM's maritime command and control is provided by U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa and the U.S. Navy's Sixth Fleet from Naples, Italy, which controls Carrier Strike Group and Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Units, guided missile destroyers and other naval assets. Sixth Fleet will also receive one more guided missile destroyer in Spain this summer, with another arriving in two years. In addition, United States Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa provides command and control for Marine air and ground forces to conduct exercises, training, and operational support to USEUCOM missions. Finally, the U.S. Second

358 Fleet reinforces NATO's Western Flank in the Atlantic Ocean and into the waters of the High
359 North.

360 USEUCOM formally added the Department of Defense's fourth Space Force service
361 component, United States Space Forces Europe and Africa (USSPACEFOR-EURAF), this past
362 December. The component stood up at Ramstein Air Base and will serve both the European
363 and African Theaters. USSPACEFOR-EURAF is integral in creating networked, joint-space
364 architecture, and deepening relationships with allies and partners in the space domain.
365 Furthermore, this component enables us to respond to our adversaries as they find innovative
366 ways to threaten our national interest and security from space.

367 USEUCOM's Cyberspace Operations Division defends our cyber architecture from our
368 adversaries, hackers, and threat actors seeking to undermine our networks. Additionally, each
369 service component has a robust cyber capability to protect its networks from external threats.
370 USEUCOM also coordinates with U.S. Cyber Command to assist in bolstering the offensive and
371 defensive cyber capabilities of our allies and partners and in countering malign influence.

372 Special Operations Forces (SOF) maintain a persistent presence throughout Europe.
373 Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) continues to train Ukrainian SOF and support
374 joint operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. Special Forces stationed at Stuttgart and
375 Baumholder, Germany are focused on USEUCOM-directed tasks designed to counter Russian
376 aggression. Additionally, SOCEUR is expanding its relationships with Denmark, Finland,
377 Norway, and Sweden. NATO Special Operations Forces Command and SOCEUR are working
378 closely together and building interoperability that expands the U.S. and NATO Special
379 Operations footprint.

380 Our posture in Europe is a clear signal of our commitment and readiness to protect U.S.
381 interests, support our Allies, and maintain regional stability. USEUCOM's forces located
382 throughout Europe enable us to execute our strategy. Our success will be defined by our
383 operations, activities, and investments in the European Theater.

384

385 **USEUCOMs Operations, Activities, and Investments**

386 USEUCOM's operations, activities and investments (OAs) are aligned with our
387 strategic approach, and our success will depend on how well we: support Ukraine; deter Russia;
388 strengthen the Alliance; and respond to crises, all while shaping the environment in the Euro-
389 Atlantic area.

390 **USEUCOM Support to Ukraine**

391 USEUCOM's comprehensive support to Ukraine, which comprises military aid, training,
392 and logistics, all of which is coupled with the contributions of our Allies and partners, forms the
393 backbone of Ukraine's defense against Russian aggression. The Ukrainian people are acutely
394 aware their fate as a free and independent nation hinges on our assistance to help them defend
395 their homeland. Ukraine depends on our effort, and our responsibility to assist them is a driving
396 factor in our daily operations. The security of the Euro-Atlantic area also depends on it, as does
397 the sustainment of a US-led global order that has produced prosperity and peace for our country
398 for decades.

399 Since February 2022, the United States has committed more than \$44.2 billion in
400 security assistance to Ukraine through Presidential Drawdown Authorities, the Ukrainian
401 Security Assistance Initiative, and Foreign Military Financing. Our Allies and partners,
402 meanwhile, have also risen to the task: their collective contributions of our Allies are
403 substantially more than those of the United States. In some cases, Allied countries are donating
404 large portions, if not all, of their own military inventory and a disproportionate amount of their
405 budgets. When measured as a percentage of GDP, the U.S. ranks 14th in the top 25 nations
406 that have donated to Ukraine. EU institutions provided over \$80 billion in financial and
407 humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. Nevertheless, it is the leadership of the United States – our
408 adherence to and defense of our ideals, our strategic perspective, and above all our ability to
409 convene and influence other nations — that makes us the critical nation in this effort. It is the

410 United States that leads all like-minded nations to support Ukraine and to give them a viable
411 chance to defend their sovereignty.

412 Materiel contributions from the United States enable the Ukrainian Defense Forces to
413 defend their country against the larger Russian force. In 2022, the Department of Defense
414 authorized USEUCOM to activate the Security Assistance Group-Ukraine (SAG-U). SAG-U
415 includes a large non-U.S. component and aggregates Ukrainian requirements, works with the
416 Department of Defense, our allies, and partners to resource them, and then delivers those to
417 our Ukrainian partners. SAG-U also trains Ukrainian Defense Forces to operate and maintain
418 the complex weapons systems we provide, such as the M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank, F-16s,
419 and HIMARS.

420 SAG-U's efforts do not end with providing training and materiel. SAG-U also leads a
421 multinational effort to support the maintenance and repair of the donations we have given to
422 Ukraine, so the nation can continue to prevail in the grueling combat they are engaged in.

423 Critical to all these efforts is the sustainment and logistics support network established
424 within the borders of our NATO Allies. This network is the lifeline for the flow of equipment,
425 munitions, and material support to the Ukrainian front lines. It would be impossible to sustain
426 this without the mature logistical "footprint" and systems that exist in the USEUCOM AOR. This
427 logistics system is the envy of the Department of Defense, and is a key capability that we must
428 sustain even as we enjoy its benefits.

429 Our experience supporting Ukraine has shown that a healthy Defense Industrial Base
430 (DIB) and a strong Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program are just as important as ready forces
431 to generate enough combat power to sustain large scale combat operations. For example,
432 aligning the DIB to produce critical munitions and replenish stocks requires buy-in from industry
433 and a clear demand signal these munitions are needed. Vulnerable global supply chains and
434 competition for resources can quickly lead to production delays and, therefore, impair the
435 fielding of equipment at the time of need. We will keep helping the Services work with Congress

on streamlining and de-risking these processes as we continue supporting Ukraine and modernizing the DIB and FMS processes to enhance our long-term collective defense capability.

USEUCOM's Deterrence of Russia

USEUCOM seeks to deter Russian aggression by denying Russia its ability to gain advantage over NATO in geography, readiness, or domain. Our efforts are expressed as OAls and are virtually always embedded in the context of NATO efforts.

USEUCOM is the Department's coordinating authority for the Russia problem set. Our leadership of the Department's Russia Strategic Initiative is crucial in providing a cohesive understanding of Russia's intentions and shaping our collective strategic response. Congressional appropriations play a vital role here, enabling us to build and maintain a robust force structure, conduct vital training exercises, develop necessary infrastructure, and sustain combat credible force levels required to ensure the U.S. and Alliance defense posture can deter Russian aggression.

The forces within USEUCOM are the essential building blocks for deterring Russia, so investing in these capabilities sends a clear message to Russia about the U.S. resolve to respond to aggression and defend its interests globally. The presence of five brigade combat teams and two division headquarters within the USEUCOM AOR forms a robust defense against the unpredictable Russian threat. The presence of seven fighter squadrons is essential, and the upgrade of our air power to 5th generation technology enhances the ability to deliver precise effects in the complex battle space we face today. The strategic positioning of air and missile defense capabilities to safeguard our forces ensures our combined air, ground, and sea power can withstand an initial attack. Moreover, the readiness of our AOR for the rapid reception and mobilization of forces is essential for conducting large scale operations or sustaining any prolonged conflict. Modernizing and expanding USEUCOM's long-term prepositioned stocks enhances our readiness and positions us to fight and win against any

adversary if deterrence fails. We are working with our NATO Allies to create long-term storage facilities and maintenance complexes to host prepositioned equipment. For example when complete in May, the storage facility in Poland will be outfitted with M1 Tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, artillery, and support equipment that contributes to the equipment sets of 2 armored brigade combat teams in Europe. Investment in prepositioned infrastructure and maintenance facilities ensures our equipment will remain in peak war-fighting condition.

The European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) has been vital to this posture. EDI allows USEUCOM to maintain combat credibility by supporting rotational force deployments, infrastructure investments, and delivering the right capabilities at key locations throughout Europe. Continued Congressional support of EDI is an investment in Euro-Atlantic security and U.S. military capability. The FY24 EDI budget allocation of \$3.6 billion allows USEUCOM to support force presence, training exercises, and infrastructure projects that are enduring investments in U.S. and European security. Activities supported by EDI are clear demonstrations of the United States commitment to NATO and the collective defense of our Allies.

USEUCOM's exercise program demonstrates our war-fighting capabilities to fight anywhere in the AOR alongside our Allies. While USEUCOM conducts dozens of training exercises every year, there are three recent exercises that stand out as demonstrations of our combat credibility.

First, as I testify to you today STEADFAST DEFENDER 24 is on-going; it is the largest live exercise NATO has done since 1988, and is focused completely on building readiness to defend the territory of the Alliance. More than 90,000 service members from all 32 NATO Allies are participating in the exercise to enhance interoperability and strengthen the deterrence posture of the NATO Alliance

Second, the US-led, multinational maritime exercise in the Baltic Sea, BALTOPS 23 in June 2023 demonstrated the collective power of 17 nations. Over 6,000 service members

488 trained on anti-submarine, anti-surface, mine warfare, and naval coordination and shipping
489 guidance. The exercise strengthened combined response capabilities critical to preserving the
490 freedom of navigation and security in the Baltic Sea.

491 Third, USEUCOM participated in the annual German-led, air training exercise, AIR
492 DEFENDER 23. This is one of many success stories that show how our NATO Allies are taking
493 larger leadership roles to strengthen the Alliance. AIR DEFENDER 23 was the largest air-
494 training exercise in European history and involved the deployment of the most aircraft into the
495 European Theater since World War Two. USEUCOM participated in AIR DEFENDER 23 along
496 with 16 other nations to demonstrate our collective ability to reinforce the Eastern Flank with air
497 power.

498 **USEUCOM's Support to NATO**

499 USEUCOM's primary reason for being located inside Europe is to enable NATO, and
500 enabling NATO to deter, and if necessary defeat, Russia is the most important thing we do on a
501 daily basis. Our comprehensive commitment to the Alliance – through the deployment of forces,
502 rigorous training programs, and strategic investments – bolsters our collective defense and
503 enhances the interoperability of the Alliance. The more the US invests to strengthen the
504 Alliance now, the less we will need to provide in the future.

505 Our commitment to NATO's new focus on Deterrence and Defense of the Euro-Atlantic
506 Area is evident in both our relation to the Alliance's command structures and our participation in
507 its activities. There are more U.S. forces assigned, allocated, apportioned or affiliated with
508 NATO structures and plans than at any time in the past four decades. U.S. forces assigned to
509 Europe can now be tasked directly by USEUCOM to support the NATO's new defense plans.
510 This is a huge win for European and United States security. Rather than waiting for conflict to
511 arise before U.S. forces can be tasked to support NATO, USEUCOM can now provide
512 predictable and consistent forces in support of collective territorial defense. This supports
513 NATO's ability to execute its plans and helps influence Allies to contribute their own forces.

Our commitment to NATO defense plans is also evident in our active participation in allied planning and training exercises, which are transitioning from a focus on deployment to a focus on deterrence and large-scale territorial defense. Last year, USEUCOM participated broadly in NATO's flagship exercise, STEADFAST JUPITER 23. STEADFAST JUPITER 23 included the largest and most complex computer-assisted, command post exercise conducted in the 21st century. The exercise included more than 7,000 people from 17 NATO countries training on the Deterrence and Defense of the Euro-Atlantic Area. Future iterations of the STEADFAST series of exercises will continue to build interoperability as well as train on requirements outlined in the new NATO defense plans.

USEUCOM also leads our own flagship training exercise, AUSTERE CHALLENGE. Last year's event, AUSTERE CHALLENGE 23, included participants from Allied Joint Forces Command Brunssum, along with 15 other allied and partner countries. AUSTERE CHALLENGE 23 demonstrated our collective ability to project power across the USEUCOM AOR, integrating a diverse array of foreign forces in a multi-week training operation. We have just completed AUSTERE CHALLENGE 24, which included an unprecedented level of allied participation, and tied together U.S. plans with NATO's new Regional Plans for the very first time.

Moreover, USEUCOM's service components actively participate in training exercises organized by the militaries of our NATO Allies. These exercises are smaller in scope, but large in impact. For example, Finland led an asymmetric warfare exercise called SOUTHERN GRIFFIN which built special operations capability among NATO Allies. SOCEUR trained alongside Special Forces from Finland, France, the United Kingdom, and NATO's newest Ally Sweden. Other exercises such as LIGHTNING STRIKE/SPRING STORM, NEPTUNE STRIKE 23-2, and ATLAS GUARDIAN present additional opportunities for USEUCOM's service components to train alongside our NATO Allies and strengthen our collective defense and relationships.

Finally, USEUCOM supports the Alliance's effort to collaborate on innovative, modern opportunities that build defensive capabilities. For example, USEUCOM's air component supported the first-ever NATO Weapons and Tactics Conference (WEPTAC), which developed the framework for the first-ever "Ramstein Flag" exercise. This exercise, modeled on U.S. Red Flag exercises, will provide realistic, advanced, aerial combat training. Representatives from 24 NATO Allies attended WEPTAC and the inaugural "Ramstein Flag" exercise is scheduled to take place in the fall of 2024 in Greece.

Respond to Crises

While we work with allies and partners to prevent crises, USEUCOM maintains the ability and responsibility to respond to any crisis in our AOR. USEUCOM's power projection capability enables U.S. forces to deploy anywhere in the world. In addition to combat forces, we can also project logistical and medical organizations that provide essential resources during times of crisis or instability. USEUCOM works closely with our interagency and international partners to maintain readiness to prevent and respond to crises.

USEUCOM's geographical position enables us to support other Combatant Commands in crisis. For example, during the current conflict in Gaza, USEUCOM supported USCENTCOM with air and maritime forces for operations in the Middle East. Likewise, we routinely support AFRICOM's operations on the African continent. The constant interaction among our three commands allows us to solve "boundary problems," and ensures that in a crisis USEUCOM will be positioned and able to support either command to further US interests.

USEUCOM values our interagency partners and collaborates with our offices located around the European Theater. For example, our work with the Department of State on removal and abatement of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war in Ukraine contributes to the safety of civilians caught in the war's crossfire. USEUCOM also works with the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as the Joint Interagency Counter Trafficking Center, to enforce sanctions levied against Russia by the United States.

Our support to the Department of Energy and U.S. Agency for International Development in Europe provides winterization and infrastructure to areas in Ukraine effected by the damage caused by Russia's war.

USEUCOM Shaping the Operational Environment

USEUCOM deliberately engages in an array of activities and investments that shape the operating environment. Significant Security Cooperation Initiatives funded out of the International Security Cooperation Programs (ISCP), military sales, military construction, and key leader engagements (KLEs) inform the activities and attitudes of our Allies and partners. Our goal is to build support for U.S. interests that will have a positive impact on Euro-Atlantic security while simultaneously strengthening relationships with our Allies and partners.

USEUCOM's use of ISCP funding is critical to meeting our security requirements throughout the AOR. Our deliberate use of the \$295.08 million allotted to us by the Office of the Secretary of Defense goes directly to fulfilling critical requirements in the Baltics, Bulgaria, Georgia, Poland, and Romania. These funds will improve facilities, enable countries to purchase military equipment, and increase training of host-nation militaries.

Leaders from throughout USEUCOM have conducted over 800 KLEs in the past year. These engagements, and years of similar engagements before them, have been instrumental in fostering deep, enduring, trust-based relationships. One cannot surge trust at the time of need; the investment needs to be made beforehand and over time. USEUCOM's relationships in this AOR are fundamental in developing common understanding of the security environment; in reassuring our Allies and partners; in demonstrating our commitment to partnerships; and in realigning productive relationships with foreign countries. They are the bedrock of our efforts to maintain security in the Euro-Atlantic region, ultimately contributing to the security of the United States.

Improving NATO's Deterrence and Collective Defense Capabilities

As we continue to implement our strategy through OAs, our greatest strategic opportunity lies in the Alliance's transformation of its collective defense system. This transformation is not just about responding to current threats. It is a wholesale transformation of the operational forces and procedures of the Alliance, and represents a proactive step towards a future where collective defense of the Euro-Atlantic is more integrated, resilient, adaptable, and resilient to emerging challenges.

Conclusion

The bond between the United States and Europe is fundamental to American security. Our shared history, values, and objectives form the bedrock of this relationship. As we approach the 75th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty, we are reminded of the enduring strength of the NATO Alliance and its impact on regional and global security. With the continued support of Congress, our NATO Allies, and our partners, we will ensure European security remains synonymous with American security. Together, we will face the challenges of the future and continue to build a free, prosperous, and secure Euro-Atlantic area.

Thank you, again, for your continued support to our service members stationed throughout Europe and your commitment to protect our shared values and interests. Taking advantage of the opportunity to help Ukraine fight Russia sets the conditions for Ukrainian success on the battlefield and for the U.S., our allies, and our partners to outpace Russia's reconstitution, and secure the future of the Euro-Atlantic. With support to deter Russia, continued progress on the development of a resilient defense industrial base, and a more streamlined foreign military sales program, the United States will have every advantage as it supports NATO's transformation and sets the conditions for long-term security in the Euro-Atlantic.