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EUCOM Commander Testifies before House Armed Services Committee Mar. 28, 2017

THORNBERRY:

The committee will come to order.

Last week, the committee heard from experts on hybrid warfare, which is also known by several other names. Today we focus on one of the regions that has experienced many, if not most, of the tactics that we had discussed. From the little green man in Ukraine to political assassinations as recently as last week, to buying influence and political parties, Snap exercises to intimidate neighbors and of course cyber-attacks of various kinds, Europe has seen all of that and more.

Meanwhile, the Russians continue to invest in their nuclear weapons, their anti-access area denial capability and in a variety of other capabilities designed to reduce or eliminate any technological military advantage that the United States have had in the past. We know that one of their primary goals is to divide and weaken NATO, arguably the most successful military alliance ever.

To discuss these issues today we are pleased to welcome NATO supreme allied commander and commander of the U.S. European Command, General Curtis Scaparrotti, not for the first time, but for the first time in this capacity.

Before turning to him, let me yield to Mr. Smith for any comments he'd like to make.

SMITH:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome General, it's great to see you again, I always appreciated your leadership out of Joint Base Lewis McChord -- you're out there and appreciate your leadership even more in Europe.

And I agree with the Chairman's opening remarks, we look forward to your testimony. But Europe is, you know, as great a challenge as we've had since the end of the Cold War now. And I won't belabor the point because we've all heard about it, but Russia is reasserting itself, not just in Eastern Europe but in many ways, in Western Europe, trying to influence elections trying -- basically trying to undermine liberal democracy.

Vladimir Putin's goal is to make the world safe for autocratic dictatorships and undermine the values that we hold dear in this country, which is representative democracy. And he's doing that, frankly, on a very low budget using a lot of cyber a lot of intel operations and I think we -- we have to get smarter about how we counter that and a lot has been said about that, I look forward to your comments.

Last thing I will say is, obviously the big question we have is what should our presence be in Europe as a deterrent to what Russia is doing? Because that I think should be the goal. Putin's not stupid, they are nowhere near as strong as they were during the height of the Cold War. So, basically, he's trying to have influence on the cheap, but the higher the cost the less likely he is to engage in his destabilization efforts.

Does a larger presence by us in that region act as that deterrent, and, if so, what should that presence look like? So those are some questions I know we need -- need answered and obviously you know we want to refer -- reaffirm our commitment to NATO and its enduring importance in all of our alliances in Europe in terms of maintaining the peace and stability in the world we want.

With that, I yield back, I look forward to your testimony.

THORNBERRY:

General, without objection your full written statement will be made part of the record and at this time your recognized for any comments you'd like to make. Thanks again for being here.

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, thank you, Chairman Thornberry and Ranking Member Smith and distinguish members of the committee. I'm honored to testify days, the commander, the United States European Command on behalf of over 60,000 permanently signed service members as well as civilians, contractors and their families who serve and represent our nation in Europe. Thank you for your support.

European theater remains critical to our national interest. The transatlantic alliance gives us a unique advantage over our adversaries, a united, capable war fighting alliance resolved in its purpose and strengthened by shared values that are been forged in battle. EUCOM's relationship with NATO and the 51 countries within our AOR provides the United States with a network of willing partners who support global operations and secure the international rules-based order.

Our security architecture provides more than one billion people a safeguarded transatlantic trade, which now constitutes almost half of the world's GDP. However, the security architecture is being tested and today we face the most dynamic European strategic environment in recent history. Political volatility and economic uncertainty are compounded by threats to our security system that are trans-regional, multi-domain and multifunctional.

In the east, a resurgent Russia has turned from partner to antagonist as it seeks to reemerge as a global power. Countries along Russia's periphery, including Ukraine and Georgia, struggle against Moscow's malign activities in military actions. In the southeast, strategic drivers of instability converge on key allies, especially Turkey; which has to simultaneously manage Russia, terrorist and refugee flows.

In the south, violent extremists and transnational criminal elements on terror and corruption from North Africa to the Middle East; while refugees flee to Europe in search of security and opportunity. And the high North, Russia's reasserting its military presence and positioning itself for strategic advantage in the Arctic.

In response to these challenges EUCOM has shifted its focus from security cooperation and engagement to deterrence and defense. Accordingly, we are adjusting our posture, plans and readiness so that we remain relevant to the threats we face. In short, we are returning to our historic role as a war fighting command focused on deterrence and defense. EUCOM's transition would not be possible without congressional support of the European Reassurance Initiative.

Thanks in large measure to ERI, over the last 12 months EUCOM has made clear progress with an enhanced force presents complex exercises and training, infrastructure improvements, increase pre-positioning of equipment and supplies, and partner capacity building throughout Europe. But we cannot meet these challenges alone.

In response to Russian aggression, EUCOM has continued to strengthen our relationship with strategic allies and partners, including the Baltic nations, Poland, Turkey and Ukraine. EUCOM has also strengthened ties with Israel, one of our closest allies. Above all, EUCOM has supported the NATO alliance which remains, as Secretary Mattis said, "The bedrock for our Trans-Atlantic security."

SCAPARROTTI:

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

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

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

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

Thank you. And Chairman, I look forward to the questions.

THORNBERRY:

Thank you sir.

Both Mr. Smith and I mentioned some of the tactics Russia has used but can you step back for a second and summarized -- and obviously this open session, what they are doing with their military capability? How, and in what areas, are they advancing their capability and -- and how does it relate to us? Just kind of a general picture of -- of their military capabilities.

SCAPARROTTI:

Chairman thank you.

I think if you look at their forces from what we know as hybrid or asymmetric means, to conventional, to nuclear, They are modernizing this force in every one of those categories. Within the hybrid, for instance, we're well aware of their use of cyber, their use of this disinformation or information confrontation as they call it.

And, in fact, the in recent months they announced new elements within their force that focus on information confrontation, information operations. So they're focused on that and, in fact, I would add here that when you look at their view of the spectrum of conflict, unlike our view, there's includes those activities below

what we would call the level of or that the threshold of conflict. It includes political provocation, information operations, disinformation, cyber, et cetera.

So it is a functional part now their doctrine, I believe, and they put it into play. In the conventional realm there upgrading the systems that they have, their naval ships their -- their airplanes, et cetera. As well as building new ones for the future. They refitted their aircraft and their ships for some of their newer munitions which are very capable -- caliber system, for instance, can be placed on the ground, in the air, at sea.

So it's a multifunctional system. It gives them long reach and precision, et cetera. So that's how they're there advancing in their -- their force. Their nuclear forces as well across all the areas they been increasing their capability really refining their capability from the old systems. And one of the things you see this, it is disturbing is the fact that they're using a similar weapon systems that can either be conventional or nuclear which then makes it difficult for us to clearly understand what they've employed.

And secondly, within their doctrine again, they've made the statement openly that they see a use for nuclear tactical capabilities within what we would consider a conventional conflict, which is very alarming. So that's how I would I would categorize their movement at this time.

THORNBERRY:

OK.

Let me just remind all members that immediately following this open hearing we will have a close session with General Scaparrotti where we can go into more detail on classified matters. Again that'll be immediately upon the conclusion of this open hearing.

Mr. Smith.

SMITH:

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Could you give us some idea of the importance of the presence of U.S. troops in Europe as a deterrent to what Russia is doing? And what size force do we have there now and what size force you think we should have and how would that presence help us to deter the activity that -- that has been described?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, first of all our -- our presence there is -- is -- and always has been a very important component of the alliance. The NATO -- you know, NATO alliance, of which were one of 28 nations as well as our partners in Europe.

We have the best military in the world. It works across multi- domain, it's a joint functional force, and it provides it -- it provides a critical element to -- to our partners. It also, in operating with them, builds interoperability which is essential, you know, within -- within the alliance itself.

Today, we have about a little over 60,000 of all services stationed in Europe. It -- it provides a force that allows us to deter today. But, you know, with this committee and ERI, we are looking to modernize that force to put us in a better posture. Particularly given Russia's modernization that they're on that I just described. We need a greater force there.

I think potentially, in the land component either rotational or rotational enduring footprint of an armored division, for instance. Within the Air Force, we have a pretty good posture there. A very capable posture. But again, they're looking forward to adding, you know, a fifth generation aircraft; which are important given the modernization, again, of Russia.

And with the Navy; again, at additional naval component on rotation through Europe in order to deter. But specifically with respect to -- to antisubmarine warfare, which is an area of concern with the Russians. We're still dominant in that domain. But we have to continue to invest in order to properly deter and also remain dominant.

SMITH:

Thank you.

One last question, specifically on the Ukraine; what -- what more could we be doing to help the Ukraine both fight off the Russian insurgency in the East? And then also to just strengthen their government, which I understand is still plagued by corruption and plagued by inefficiency and that's part of the problem.

Because if Putin is unsuccessful in the Ukraine or if the cost gets too high for his interference there, I think that's, you know, the on the best deterrent we could give to further activity. Because that's sort of, you know, where -- I don't know if it's where he started, but it certainly where he's had the most public involvement. What more could we be doing the Ukraine?

SCAPARROTTI:

Sir, I've been to Ukraine twice now; both in their training area and out -- out to the -- to the NATO. I -- I would say first of all I'm very impressed with their military and its discipline.

What we have provided them in terms of our training capability as well as equipment is being well used. And they're very eager in terms of their ability to learn more. So we presently are involved in reform of their government and capacity building within their security -- within their security system. We need to continue that.

I'd -- I don't know that it's more, I think it's probably a little better organization across the whole of government. Within the training environment, what we do with other NATO allies there is very effective. Again, they're -- I've been out to it and seen it done over the past year. I think better organization there would help, there's things we can do to continue to refine it.

The Ukrainian forces are learning and they're getting better. And we need to consistently adjust. In terms of weaponry, I -- I personally believe that we need to consider lethal defensive weapons for Ukraine. They're fighting a very lethal, tough enemy, it's a Russian proxy, really, and -- and the Russian's provide some of their newest equipment there in order to test it. They've tested UAV Sensor to shooter techniques, et cetera, which are lethal and -- so we need to continue to support them and -- in my view, to have the appropriate weapons to defend Ukraine.

SMITH:

Thank you.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Wilson.

WILSON:

Thank you Mr. Chairman and General thank you very much.

I've had the extraordinary opportunity to visit with you and I know firsthand your extraordinary dedication and success and it's just heartwarming as the proud dad of three sons in the Army -- I particularly appreciate -- even one in the Navy, we appreciate you. And -- just thank you so much.

With your service in the European Command and your previous assignment, of all things, to United States Forces Korea, you faced extraordinary challenges. Sadly, with the, so many permanently assigned forces not in your command, currently now, how is this being addressed and do you feel that we have enough military assets regionally to properly deter Russian aggression against the NATO alliance?

What other forces, in particular, do you need to properly deter any aggression? In addition, would the presence of these forces be accepted and welcomed in Europe?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, thank you very much it's good to see you again.

And, within Europe, we can do our job today, we can deter the Russian forces that we see, we can counter terrorism, which is a part -- a key part of our -- our mission, we can enable our partners. But if you look at the environment today and how it's evolving and particularly the modernization I mentioned with Russia and the creativity of our -- of the terrorists that we face as well, we need to ensure that we build a force that's relevant to that threat and can continue to deter.

So, for those things that I need one, it's, you know, I need intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance in greater numbers than I have now because to deter properly I have to be able to have a good baseline of Russia, in particular, so that I know when things change I can posture my forces properly. So I need increased ISR to have good indications and warning and be able to set that posture properly over time.

Land force capabilities, which I mentioned earlier, but it's particularly the enablers of an armored division, of fires brigade, an engineer brigade, air defense. Those kinds of systems in the numbers that I need there as we move forward with -- now done on a rotational basis, but perhaps a rotational enduring are some -- some mix of that. Increase naval capabilities.

It would be helpful to have a carrier support group, an amphibious forces more put -- more than I have them now. I have them rotational as they go to other combatant commands, an increase of that would help us in deterrence, would help us reinforce our interoperability with our partners and work with our partners.

SCAPARROTTI:

And, particularly, I've noted ASW, antisubmarine warfare, because of the advances that Russia, in particular, is making in the undersea domain.

Enhance missile defense, as we seen everyplace in the world, ballistic missiles are proliferating and that's a very tough area. And then finally, munitions, both modernization and appropriate stockpile so that I have what we need if -- if deterrence fails and we have to respond to crisis.

WILSON:

Thank you for being so specific. I'm concerned that the military as a whole is facing a stark readiness crisis. Funding for training, maintenance and repair, new equipment and future development of equipment has been short.

Aside from the aforementioned additional forces you may need, what shortfalls are you in particular saying in your command? Please assess the readiness of the challenges the European Command and what resources are required to increase readiness in your area of responsibility.

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, I think, first of all when it comes to readiness I'm -- I am fortunate in that particular rotational forces; both Air Force, Army, Navy, etcetera; they're ready when they deploy. They come to me as a ready force. And I would tell you that -- that they depart as ready or -- or more ready when they leave Europe, because of our ability and -- and training capacity there.

So we're good in that area. That's still, though -- given the budget today and the demand against the op-tempo, as well, modernization that the services face. You know, increased funding, particular for our pilots, it would increase their capabilities within Europe. It -- it would be helpful, even at this point, to increase their capability to fly more. That's both Army -- that's Air Force as well.

When you go to our support within Europe, you know, we've been underfunding all the facilities that support not only are forces but support our families. And that's another area that, as we look at it -- it's a -- it's function of readiness as well. And it's something that today we don't fully fund and would be helpful to the force too.

WILSON:

And I want to thank you. And I have another question, concluding the European Deterrence Initiative's very important and been very successful. And I know the South Carolina Army National Guard is grateful that we had a unit just leave for Poland.

So thank you for your success.

THORNBERRY:

General, just so I'm -- I'm clear, when you list ISR, antisubmarine warfare, missile defense; those are things you need more of, correct?

SCAPARROTTI:

They are things that I need more of and we also, when we get into the classified section I can talk to each of those in terms of capabilities and advancement we need to make given modernization of our adversaries.

THORNBERRY:

Okay, thank you, I just want to be clear.

SCAPARROTTI:

That's correct.

THORNBERRY:

Ms. Gabbard, you're good?

GABBARD:

(OFF-MIKE).

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Norcross?

NORCROSS:

(OFF-MIKE)

THORNBERRY:

She didn't want to. I'm sorry, you're good? You want to wait? OK.

Ms. Hanabusa.

HANABUSA:

Thank -- thank you, Mr. Chair...

(UNKNOWN)

(Inaudible)

HANABUSA:

... and thank you, General.

General, I'm kind of curious, I mean, I was here for the 2014 QDR and, you know, it's sort of like how we set the tone. And I don't recall in that QDR, or the QDR before that, that I had an opportunity to review -- I was not here for that, that there was a major concern about Russia.

And as a matter of fact, I thought the philosophy was more along the lines that we thought we could kind of bring them around and they would become an ally of us. Then it seems like something occurred and all of a sudden...

(AUDIO GAP)

HANABUSA:

... by some our greatest threat. So can you explain to me, General, how we go from thinking that there maybe they'll be part of NATO and all of a sudden this like we've gotta protecting NATO...

(UNKNOWN)

(OFF-MIKE)

HANABUSA:

... and protective 51 countries that really part of EUCOM's comes AR.

(UNKNOWN)

OK, one of you guys asked.

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, yes, I think prior to 2014 -- as I said, the transition we're making in Europe right now is one from engagement and cooperation to deterrence and defense. And we made that -- what the real trigger was -- I mean, we began to see the modernization and where Russia was going prior to that.

But 2014, the annexation of Crimea, the occupation of Ukraine, for instance was enacted. Clearly set out that we have Russia as a competitor that is willing and did break international law. And I think what you see in their activities today often is pushing, wherever they can, against the international norms.

They still occupy Ukraine and Georgia, for instance, with troops without invitation. We've seen their activities in cyber that -- that are, at a minimal, criminal, in some cases. An attack on -- on the Ukrainian power grid. Most recently, Latvia believes they were a part of an attack of their government web system. And then their attempt to -- to influence or inside of our election and probably France and Germany and others.

So I think, you know, if you look at their actions, it tells us that we have a nation here that -- that we need to be very sober about. I -- we don't seek conflict with them. Deterrence, in fact, has its mission to prevent conflict or war. But, at this point, Russia has not been very responsive to the international community in advancing Ukraine, Crimea, etcetera.

HANABUSA:

So, General, what is your strategy that you would propose, to this body, as to what is necessary to prepare for -- for Russia whatever they may or you may be afraid that they're going to do? I think we like to have some sort of certainty of what -- you know, what do you think the most probably scenario would be and what is then what you need to have?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, for example, I think Russia will continue to press against the international norms. They -- they want to regain great power status and the actions they're taking, in their view, is to ensure that.

What we need to do is we need to demonstrate strength. We need to be strong, that is what Russia respects. They are opportunistic, where they see weakness they will take advantage of it when it's in their interest.

We need a whole government approach to this, it's not -- in fact, the military is not the major part, it's the smaller part of this. We exist as a postured force to really provide muscle to our diplomacy, to information, to economics, etcetera.

We need to invest in the capabilities to make sure that we have a relevant force. A part of deterrence is, you know, the capability and the credibility and the final thing is communication. And -- and I think communication with Russia is an important part to play in this. Finally, strengthen our partners.

HANABUSA:

General, do you believe that the -- the concept of the triad and, you know, basically our nuclear forces is - - is part of that deterrence structure that you need to have in the EUCOM?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yes I do. I think the -- the triad as it exists and the safe and credible nuclear deterrent is very important, particularly given Russia's capabilities.

HANABUSA:

Do you think that's the only force that Russia understands? Or would respect, I guess is the word?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, I -- yes, I think that -- that they do focus on the strength of their opponent and I think they are optimistic. Where they see weakness and they believe that they can gain their interest or objectives they will -- they will move out on that.

HANABUSA:

Thank you Mr. Chair, I yield back.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Turner.

TURNER:

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

General, good to see you again, thank you for your efforts in keeping us safe and helping us to plan for the defense of the United States and our allies, thank you for your strong statement on the issue of arming Ukraine, congress has passed very strong resolutions calling for the same, including authorizing arming of Ukraine.

So I appreciate your assessment of that circumstance and the advice that -- that they bear investing in with the -- with the defensive armament. As you know, I'm very active in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. I appreciate your participation with NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Several members of the Armed Services Committee are very active in that. You know, it gives us an opportunity to interface with members of the various parliaments of the 28 nations.

Recently, we had a group of parliamentarians into Washington and we invited RAND in to conduct a military exercise based upon the RAND Russia-Baltics report that the exposed vulnerability of our Baltic NATO members. It was intriguing because a lot of the time that we spent on the presentation was informing our partners of Russia's current military posture, deployment and capability.

So I'd like you to talk to minute

TURNER:

So I'd like you to talk to minute about how do you keep our NATO partners informed? And is that a part of what you have to do of informing our partners of Russia's posture and the threat from Russia? Also then, if you would talk about if you believe that the forward stationing of an armored brigade combat team in Europe on a permanent basis, rather than rotational, would be helpful in your deterrence quest.

And could you also give us just a brief discussion of how you've seen that the European Reassurance Initiative, our effort to pre- position equipment and to reassure our allies, has the transition of the past year? Thank you.

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, first of all it is one of my responsibilities to work with our allies; both as a EUCOM commander to the -- to the 51 nations, but specifically as the ISAC and NATO command with the 28 nations. We do that through a number of means; personal visits of myself and other leaders, information to the North Atlantic Council, exercises within -- within the -- within Europe, either with partners and/or NATO. And we invite leadership -- political leadership as well to those.

And finally, we do CMX or a crisis management exercise that brings in the leadership in NATO about every couple years. Probably similar to what you experienced, in order to inform them of not only the capability of our adversaries but the nature of war today. You know, it's -- decision space is much tighter. Information moves much faster. Those are the kinds of things too that I think it's helpful to discuss with the leadership.

Secondly, in terms of a -- a -- the rotational brigade; I would prefer to have a -- an enduring armed force in Europe. That's -- that's a service decision, they provide right now is a rotational force. I'd prefer to have an enduring one because of the force then becomes accustomed to the environment. It forms relationships with our allies, they become well known over the period of time of several years that our service members are then stationed there. And have a greater appreciation for the -- for the problem set.

And then finally, within ERI; ERI is advancing very well. And I thank this committee for your support of that. Without ERI, we would not be postured to deter today as I've said we are. It is -- it is what has allowed us to improve that posture today, with a rotational brigade there with the ability to reinforce NATO with -- with one of the enhanced forward presence battle groups from the U.S. and Poland.

With additional support with air and naval forces, we've used it to improve infrastructure so that we can move forces into Europe and around Europe and station forces in a more flexible agile way. All of those things have made a significant difference and they also make a difference to our allies because we don't do this alone. We do this as an -- you know, as an alliance and, just as our battle group will have Romanian contingent with it and others, that's common when we train in Europe as well.

TURNER:

Thank you General.

The -- the -- the aspect of informing our partners -- it's very interesting to me because this is their neighborhood but yet it seems like the United States still takes a lead on allowing our European partners to understand what their threats are and what the posture in -- in the European arena is?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, I think -- you know I -- part of this, and I think it isn't just Europe, you know, the environment has changed, the nature of warfare has changed and so -- it's -- it's easy sometimes not to realize that and then realize what the impacts of those changes are.

So that's the importance of doing the CMX of -- of getting out and keeping our allies informed and then, you know our -- both our military and our policy leaders have to also engage in that so that they learn as well because this environment's continuing to change and it has dramatically since 2014, for instance.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Carbajal.

CARBAJAL:

Thank you Mr. Chair.

General Scaparrotti, you state that Russia is now the top theater priority, the Secretary of Defense has stated that Russia's aggressive actions have violated international law and are destabilizing. The message to this committee has been consistent, that Putin and the Russian Federation, seek to disrupt the international order and the cohesion of the international organizations like NATO and E.U.

You stated in your testimony that deterring Russia's -- deterring Russia requires a whole of government approach. Unfortunately, I do not believe we have used the whole of government approach, especially as this branch of government has refused to investigate Russia's effort to disrupt this country's democratic process. General, there are not many who can supersede your expertise on Russia.

Today, you have presented this committee with strategies to confront the Russian threat militarily. However, I am sure that you agree that it will take more than just military strength to effectively combat a state that is undermining and threatening democracies globally, including America's.

General, can you provide this committee the type of whole of government approach necessarily or necessary to effectively deter Russia?

SCAPARROTTI:

Thank you, sir.

Russia is an adversary that employs whole of government, we see them work politically. We see them use economics as leverage. We see them use information to influence populations, some of that is disinformation as well. And so, for us to be effective we have to respond across all those domains as well.

So as a government in -- and we did this during the Cold War, as a government we had overarching objectives with respect to the Soviet Union then, but we need overarching objectives today. We need some lead agencies, like a lead agency information, that has authorities to integrate across the different agencies in the government with respect and information.

We need to approach them economically with the same overarching objectives. So, you know, it's a very general description but that is literally where we need to go, every agency focused on our approach to Russia and again, it's -- it's to influence them and not to have conflict. But to avoid conflict with them and yet protect our interests.

CARBAJAL:

Do you find that we are being effective?

SCAPARROTTI:

I would say that we're not as effective as we could be. We -- we can organize, particularly as whole of government, in a -- in a better way and I believe we will. I think the -- I think that at least my leadership and what I know is focused on that and we have work to do.

So we can be more effective, particularly in the information domain where, you know, we have I think very good capability, good talent, creativity. And -- and we just need to -- to move out on that a bit.

CARBAJAL:

And not to make it so simplistic, but what could this Congress do to address the highest priority that perhaps is our weakest link in being more effective?

SCAPARROTTI:

Why, I think provide the leadership in those objectives. Provide leadership toward a -- you know, a -- a cohesive integrated governmental approach to this problem. And then as you do, finance those efforts as well.

CARBAJAL:

Thank you. Thank you very much.

I yield back, Mr. Chair.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Wittman.

WITTMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Scaparrotti, thanks again, appreciate you joining us here and thanks again for your service. It's always been an honor to visit you when -- when we've had the opportunity in places like Korea and -- and elsewhere.

I wanted to ask you about the mission of the enhanced forward presence battalions are located in the Baltic nations and Poland. Can you give us a little lay down about what those units are there training and preparing to do? And do these battalions effectively deter Russia? How does Russia look at that with a total force presence there?

Obviously, with Russian forces along the border there in the Baltic nations -- as we visited the Baltic nations, they are deeply concerned about the presence of armor, artillery units and Russian troops stationed along the border. It does our presence there with -- these with these enhanced forward presence units, is that a significant deterrence? And -- and how do we use those units in coordination with our allies, both in training and in presence?

SCAPARROTTI:

The enhanced forward presence is a -- in -- in -- in NATO terms they call it battle group. It's a battalion task force.

WITTMAN:

Yeah.

SCAPARROTTI:

But it is -- it is combined with -- in Poland with Polish troops. We have Romanian troops as a part of that and others. And we operate with Polish forces in the defense of -- of their nation. It is under NATO operational control. It is a very significant force.

I think it has a significant impact on -- on deterrence. This is a very strong commitment from the 28 nations of NATO that they are -- that they will honor Article 5, that an attack on one nation is an attack on all. And so, while some may say, well it's four battalion task forces. It is four battalion task forces, but it's a statement that's backed by 28 nations and all of their capability; not just military but economic informational, et cetera.

Russia does respect NATO. It's one of the reasons that they're trying to undermine NATO and -- and -- and fracture it.

WITTMAN:

Yes.

SCAPARROTTI:

Is because they do respect NATO. So I think it is effective. The last thing I want to say is, is that while we do focus on a battle -- a task force, it's connected to the other domains. We -- we connect with our air, our maritime and those others that we can bring to bear. So we can find it as we fight today.

WITTMAN:

As I visited there are allies express two desires, one is increased U.S. presence as a permanent presence there in the Baltic states, and of course we talked to them about rotational presence and I try to convince them, you actually have more troops there on a rotational presence that know your country and know

operationally then you would if you had just a battalion. But they're all about, let's have a battalion presence there.

So I want to ask about how your conversations, whether allies have gone about their view of our commitment and that element of presence. And then, secondly too, when Secretary Mattis went there and had a heart to heart discussion about the commitment that NATO nations need to make as far as funding their militaries, give me your perspective on whether you see that commitment growing?

Is it growing in the right ways to make sure that they're working with us to create that presence and that deterrence and how important is it, in the minds of many of our allies there, for that -- for that permanent presence which is, you know, we've moved away from since the days of the Cold War?

SCAPARROTTI:

The -- first of all I just visited each of the Baltic countries a week ago. And every country, as you said, they ask for permanent presence of U.S. forces. And I've said publicly that -- that they have near permanent presence of U.S. forces, it is rotational but it is enduring.

WITTMAN:

Right.

SCAPARROTTI:

And we're committed to that as long as these conditions exist. The one upside of a rotational force is -- is that we are bringing rotational forces through and much more of our force structure then become familiar with the environment...

WITTMAN:

Yeah.

SCAPARROTTI:

... the people, the challenges, their allies, in Europe That's a benefit to it. And so, for instance from the Army Chief of Staff's perspective that's very good for his force...

WITTMAN:

Sure.

SCAPARROTTI:

... as you rotate different units through so...

WITTMAN:

Yeah.

SCAPARROTTI:

... and -- and that's good for us if we had to respond to a crisis we would certainly bring forces from the stage to do reinforce us. I think they understand that, I would just say they're very appreciative of the United States contributions to their defense, there's no question about that.

In terms of funding growth, we have seen a change in NATO and a response. Last year was the first year that was the trend was not down in terms of percent of funding of GDP across the 28 nations. It turned up.

This year it was an increase of 3.8 percent, I think it is. But 22 nations have increased their budget this year. I said I was just in the book the Baltics, for instance, Estonia already meets the two percent, Lithuania and Latvia both told me they will meet it by 2018 and probably go beyond that.

So countries are responding. What's important is this too, though, I would point out, is that we meet the 20 percent agreement for modernization...

WITTMAN:

Yeah.

SCAPARROTTI:

... because they have to be a relevant force as well.

WITTMAN:

Right.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Brown.

BROWN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and General, thank you for your presence here. Thank you for your service and your leadership in Europe.

A few decades ago I had the privilege of serving with 180 or so thousand Army personnel when we are defended the Fulda Gap, we won the Cold War, a lot is changed since then. I participate in a lot of interoperability exercises, re-forager and a number of others with, you know, French and British and German forces.

BROWN:

My question has -- and we relied a lot on their -- their infrastructure, particularly the transportation and communication network. my -- my question has to do with that infrastructure, you mentioned in your written infrastructure.

You mentioned in your written testimony, as well as I think you briefly touched upon it today, that the expansion of the alliance to include central and European -- central and eastern European countries as made a little more challenging with the lack of a common transportation network.

So as you anticipate what could be a Russian aggression on the eastern flank of NATO, could you briefly describe some of the challenges that you would have in feasibly moving both U.S. and in NATO forces along or across multiple sovereign countries and getting the permissions and the support of roads, bridges, rail, and the like?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yes. In the days that you trained there, and I trained there as well, we had a very good basis and understanding of the -- of mobility; whether it's rail, air, ground, bridge construction, weight that it would take. We had a very good understanding of Europe and how to move our force.

Over the years of partnership, the last 20 years or so, we began to atrophy that. We don't have as good understanding of -- of our road networks and particularly those nations that were once a part of Warsaw Pact to the east that are now partners with us. So we're developing that. And we're working that hard with our -- with our partners.

The alliance countries are doing a lot. Germany in particular's been very helpful, but we're having to take a look at do we have the rail capacity? Are the -- are the bridges strong enough and which ones can we move across? Those kinds of things. And with EFP and our rotational brigade, those two in particular, we have been exercising that.

Final thing I'd like to say is the allies contributed to this. They're all becoming a part of mobility and infrastructure that we need to have an agile force in Europe.

BROWN:

And can you state whether or not we currently or -- and if not, whether we should be making any investments in that infrastructure considering the security interests that we have?

SCAPARROTTI:

We are currently making investments in that, as well as our allies, and we should continue to do that. We - - we have to have some agility. We won't know exactly how things may roll out if there's a crisis, nor where it may happen. We're -- we're routinely not as good at -- at being very precise in that determination in the future.

So we have to develop infrastructure and mobility within Europe that allows us a good deal agility. And we need to train against that as well in exercising.

BROWN:

Thank you.

I yield, Mr. Chairman.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Scott.

SCOTT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, good to see you again. Part my questions revolved around rail, the difference in the gauges. The fact that our equipment is so large now that it won't go through some of the tunnels that have been there for so long. I'll shift then to lift capacity -- our large lift capacity. If we can't get our equipment there by rail or by tunnel, do we have the -- the lift capacity, with the retirement of the C-5s that we had last couple of years, that we would need?

And would we have the ability to land on those planes with their weight where we would need the equipment?

SCAPARROTTI:

As you can imagine, we're -- we're looking at all this with respect to our plans. STRATCOM could probably give you the -- or Transportation Command could give you the -- the best response to that. But as I've conversed with them and we look at our plans, we can move. It's little slower than I might like at this point.

I am concerned about the future in terms of the investment not only in military that also civilian ships and aircraft that we routinely rely upon in a -- in a crisis. And in -- in that area we need to continue investment, or we'll continually meet greater challenges here in the future. From what I have seen in our planning.

SCOTT:

Yes sir, I'm concerned about that as well. I think that lift capacity, especially large lift capacity is something that we need to revisit.

We talked about the JSTARS in Europe I very serious concerns about is the number of units we have go ion for major overhauls, major depot maintenance, that you would potentially end up with a shortage of that, do you see the demand for JSTARS decreasing and what effects are there if there is a moving target indicator gap?

SCAPARROTTI:

This is particularly important against a large force like Russia so that we do have good information, we understand movement and change, that's how we build indications and warnings and the ability to react appropriately. So it's very important to us.

I'm concerned about the reduction as we bring on new aircraft which we -- we need to do. I do not have all that I like to have the day to provide the INW that I need in Europe.

SCOTT:

As we discuss the upcoming budget, potential decreases in funding to the State Department are concern I think of most the people on this committee.

How much more difficult does this make your mission and what challenges do you face for these potential shortcomings in the budget and how does it potentially hurt our partnerships in the region?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, you know I -- in terms of where the budget's at is not mine to comment on, but I would say that, as I noted earlier, our problems all the problems we face in Europe require a whole of government approach and they require, you know, approach with partners in the same fashion.

So if you look at how I counter transnational threats of terrorism inside of Europe. Military's a part of that, we have that cell that runs that in EUCOM, but most of the works done by treasury, state and others across our agencies to complete that work and enable us to do it. And -- and again I think that in the deterring Russia it's a whole of government approach as well. Diplomacy should be a priority and we, as a military, with the right posture provides some muscle for diplomacy to work.

SCOTT:

General, I appreciate your service and with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield the remainder of my time.

THORNBERRY:

Mrs. Murphy.

MURPHY:

General Scaparrotti thank you for being here today. I want to start by noting that deep concerns about the current administration's continued publicly questioning our --out alliances and the sanctity of the post-World War II international order.

I think it's a dangerous narrative that reflects an internal and external threat to national security. Externally, the rise of Russian aggression in the -- and Russia's use of hybrid warfare tactics are directly intended to read the credibility of U.S. leadership in the world. And internally, here at home there's a growing sentiment that we should withdraw from the world.

Isolationism resonates on in our own country with people who are worried about their livelihoods being taken away by increasingly interconnected world and who are on increasingly weary of being involved in protracted conflict overseas. But this view is populist and perilous. You know well thought that our alliances help prevent larger conflict around the world every day and sure up our security at home. And, in your testimonies, you've spoken a lot about the successes of the European reassurance initiative, or ERI, to reassure analyze and deter regional aggression.

What policies, authorities, capabilities, have been particularly useful in the success of ERI? And then what authorities and investments do you still need to complement the ERI efforts, especially in the emerging cyber domain?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yeah, thank you very much.

In -- in terms of ERI, the focal areas have been the rotational force presence that we have. So it supports that rotational brigade -- armored brigade, it supports the rotational combat aviation brigade. It supports our enhanced forward presence to (ph) battle group in -- in Poland. It supports an expansion and pre-positioning of stops -- stocks of the airfields that we will have available to use day-to-day and in a crisis.

It provides the pre-positioning of stocks for Army forces so that I can build combat power that's not in Europe if I need to in a crisis. It's enhanced our training and interoperability with our allies. We're doing -- I wouldn't say more necessarily, we're doing better exercises that are integrated with allies and reinforce interoperability that is relevant to the adversaries that -- that we'll face.

It is -- it has helped us with antisubmarine warfare, for instance. Which is another area that I noted. So it is -- it's very important. I would tell you, as I look to the future, I -- I will continue to need it for those same reasons and more. But it'll be across all the services and it'll tackle the correct posture that I need. And the -- and the capabilities that I need deter Russia.

Finally, I didn't -- I didn't mention infrastructure, although I said it several times. It has been a fundamental in making infrastructure upgrades in airfields, bases and other places that enable the movement not only of our forces, but the allies as well.

MURPHY:

And then, given your experience as the commander of U.S. Forces Korea, do you think that the ERI model can be effectively exported to the Asia-Pacific region to deter provocative and aggressive behavior from actors like North Korea and China?

SCAPARROTTI:

You know, really comes down to -- to -- to specified funding. And to me, it would be -- it certainly could be a concept used in the Pacific. But I think what's important, and what's important even within ERI, is that we have, you know, a predictable funding into the future. Because really, as a military, that's most helpful. It allows us to plan ahead and set objectives in the future and know that we'll be funded to -- to reach that and -- and set the readiness that we need.

MURPHY:

Thank you, sir. And I yield back the remainder of my time.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Cook.

COOK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's good to see you again, General. I was there with Chris Gibson last summer. Just like when we met in Korea, you're very, very candid. Your comments about the -- the U-2 in Korea and some of -- of the last time on -- on the readiness. I -- I thought gave us a great insight into what's going on.

We were there, one of things I was concerned about is -- I don't know how you sleep at night. I asked you the same thing I think in Korea. I think you just have more nightmares in this new job than the last one, but we won't go there. Because I have my own, I'm in Congress.

Anyway, the pre-positions -- concerned about the obviously the RAND study; the two T14, the modernization of the T-90 et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. and when we're there we went out and looked at

some of the pre-positioning that had changed. And obviously, like the gentleman that -- that it asked you the question about the folio gap years ago.

Boy, we don't have that many troops in our pre-position forces. We have to go a long, long ways and looking at some of the warehouses and the condition I -- I knew it was bad but I didn't think it was that bad. And -- can you comment?

Am I just being alarmist about one of 20 different things and -- but I -- I share those same -- I don't think we're going to have the lift, everything else, if we don't have pre-positioned forces and equipment there, I think we're going to be behind the power curve. Is...

SCAPARROTTI:

We can deal with the challenges we have today with the posture we have but it's at increased risk. And it's increased risk -- if we have a conflict it's going to be increased casualties, it's going to take more time, et cetera. I will sleep more comfortably as our posture improves.

And that's why ERI's so important, that's why getting, you know, the pre-post stocks that you mentioned in places is important, it's why, you know, the service chiefs are focused on readiness today to ensure that we've got forces that are ready for the -- for the challenges they face with a -- you know with a peer like -- with an adversary like Russia.

So we've got a good bit of work to do. In the closed session I can -- I can be more frank about those things that are most concerning to me.

COOK:

I'm going to switch gears a little. I'm going to put on, partly, a foreign affairs hat. Montenegro, the vote yesterday was 98 two in the senate, it looks like that's going forwards and, from a military standpoint, I think you know about the -- the signs of Russia on that country and the importance of that country militarily and politically in NATO. So I was optimistic.

How do you think the possibilities, whether that's going to happen and, obviously, this is going to give you another nightmare or headache or what have you, but to the I was one of those ones pushing for Montenegro?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, I think we have two nations, one of which is ours to confirm that within the alliance. So I expect fully that they will be, I think it's critical that Montenegro does become a part of the alliance as is planned. For Russia, this is something they did not want to see happen.

As you know they went to great lengths to try and undermine Montenegro's accession to NATO. So I think it is critical that -- that this occurs, and I said before, I think that Russia has every objective of ensuring that there's not another country that joins NATO in the future. I think that's their objective.

COOK:

Once again, I would think you so much, looking forward to seeing you get over there and I yield back.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Suozzi.

SUOZZI:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, I want to add my voice to the chorus of praise for the great work that you've devoted your life to and were very grateful to you for your service and you really do have an awesome responsibility. I'm -- I'm new to this and I'm very concerned about the things that aren't easy to measure. You know it's easier -- it's easier and you do a great job to measure troop movements and hardware and things like that.

But in your testimony you talk about, Russia has employed a decade's long strategy of indirect action to coerce, destabilize and otherwise exercise a malign influence over other nations. And you talk about the neighboring states of Moldova and Georgia in the Balkans. And then you say, additional Russian activities short of war range from disinformation to manipulation.

Examples include Russia's outright denial of involvement in the lead up to Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea, attempts to influence elections in the United States, France and elsewhere, it's aggressive propaganda campaigns targeting ethnic Russian populations among its neighbors and cyber activities directed against infrastructure in the Baltic nations and Ukraine.

So everybody I think now agrees that Russia's been, you know -- Ukraine was easy to see and what they did there was such a negative action. And the cyber threats, everybody agrees that that's a big part of their strategy these days. Propaganda; influencing the media. Russian oligarchs spreading money around in all different places of the world from Ukraine to -- to Europe -- European elections.

So when you talk about the whole of government approach, they're not as easy to measure these different things that they're doing. I'm a big advocate that we need to give some aorta punch in the nose, some aorta clear manifestation that, we don't like what you're doing. And we need to go after the oligarchs with financial sanctions and try and pay more attention to sending a clear message that "you can't mess with us that way."

What is the one thing that you would like to see the whole of government -- really not just related to more hardware, more positioning of troops, more the things you're advocating for. What's the one thing you'd like to see the rest of government do to give them a strong message that, you can't do this to us or you're gonna have to pay a price?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, I think the whole of government approach -- I think one of the most important things we can do is get organized in the information campaign.

SUOZZI:

Whose -- whose job is that?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, you know, I think today the way it rests is with State traditionally has that. We have the GEC. But again, they, you know, they -- they have to be resourced. We as a government have to say...

(CROSSTALK)

SUOZZI:

This is a priority.

SCAPARROTTI:

... and it's a priority. And provide the integration, provide them the authority to integrate in a way that would have that effect. But when you look at the way Russia's working today with disinformation. Even -- even the way that they approach different countries in Europe and in the public world and RT -- Russian TV, et cetera. We have to compete in that environment. We have to compete in it. We had to show strength that - that also supports our values.

I though we outta be very strong in our values in doing this as well. And I think that would have a great effect. It's interesting because in many countries in the East -- even though they're doing all of this, there are countries that -- that the populace is not -- not necessarily swayed by what they hear from Russian.

SUOZZI:

Yes.

SCAPARROTTI:

That's not true at all of them. It depends -- it depends on where you're at, but it's interesting to me. And yet, you know, if we made -- if we made a greater -- you know, a greater effort in this area, I think we could -- we could see some good benefit.

SUOZZI:

So you'd like to see some more strength from America as far as coordinating the information campaign, preferably using the State Department as they've traditionally done, to try and get this information out there and then send a message clearly back to them.

SCAPARROTTI:

Absolutely, and to work with our allies.

SUOZZI:

I have 59 more seconds in my time. But I just wanted to say that, you know, I was speaking to the Italians. The Italians' biggest concern of the whole world right now is Libya. And, of course, that's the -- the tunnel where, you know, they've closed off through Turkey and now everybody's coming up through Libya.

What is it we should be doing to try and help stabilize Libya or to try and create environment where that's less of a -- a channel for people to be migrating from the rest of Africa and the surrounding region?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, Libya's not part of EUCOM. It's -- it's -- it's AFRICOM domain. What we are doing basically in EUCOM is to assist our allies with the both the refugees that come from there and there -- the challenges in Europe they have with that. As well as countering the transnational threats that are coming out of the instability in the North as well.

SUOZZI:

But you're hearing the same concerns from the Italians that -- that's their big concern is what's going on Libya.

SCAPARROTTI:

Yeah, sure. I mean, if you go to the southern part of Europe the more imminent threat to them is -- or challenge, I wouldn't say it's a threat, it's a challenge, it's the...

(AUDIO GAP)

SCAPARROTTI:

... flow of refugees...

(AUDIO GAP)

SCAPARROTTI:

... terrorist threat. Those two are more prominent than Russia. If you go to the east of Europe it's obviously Russia. But -- but all of those challenges are true for all the nations in Europe.

SUOZZI:

Thank you General.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Kelly.

KELLY:

Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you General Scaparrotti for being here.

I have two questions so I'd like to kind of contain the first one to the first two and half minutes so I can get into the second. This committee has consistently supported ERI and now EDI. In fact, last year we tried to shift a large portion of the EDI to base budget funding.

One of the reasons is that by budgeting through OCO we don't have a complete FYDP for EDI so we can't plan and we can't see how you're planning for these activities. In fact, I can't think of much that would concern Putin more than to see a five year EDI plan and budget.

Can you provide the committee with your best military advice on what and EDI FYDP would like, broken down by budget activity, before we mark the F.Y. '18 NDAA?

SCAPARROTTI:

Sir, when we -- when we in EUCOM have produced our request for ERI, we've done it in a very deliberate fashion. Based on the guidance from congress as to what ERI's purpose is, across all the services that support me and EUCOM. And so it's a -- it's a detailed list, we scrubbed it against things like -- you know, we questioned ourselves.

Is this something that really ought to be in base or ought to be a service expense, not a part of ERI? So I think we did a very faithful job of that and provided it to OSD and we can certainly break that out in terms of, we not only had the categories but also the prioritization that we -- we provided OSD as well. And assuming that -- that there's no issue there, I can tell you we've done the work.

KELLY:

And you agree that it's much better to have a five year plan rather than a one year and we don't know what the budget is. I mean, it's about baseline funding as opposed to OCO is much better for us to plan. And, also, shows our allies our commitment, would you agree General?

SCAPARROTTI:

I -- I -- as I've said before, said that we need predictable long term budgeting so that we can plan out ahead as opposed to a year at a time.

KELLY:

And thank you and -- I'm -- I'm an old Guard member, I grew in the '80s, I grew up as part of the reforgers and all those things in Europe. When we had three ACRs who had second, third and 11th, we may have had more but -- those were our screening forces, those weren't even talking about the divisions and corps behind them and our commitment to the European theater. We no longer have that.

I actually visited Hohenfels near Nuremberg last year and -- and saw the -- the difference in what it looked like in the '80s versus now. I'm also a big, strong proponent of our National Guard and our Guard and Reserves. We have eight National Guard divisions, we have 32 BCTs of which ten are armored, I believe, or heavy BCTs in the Guard and Reserve.

I'm also a big, strong proponent of our National Guard and our Guard and Reserves. We have eight National Guard divisions, we have 32 BCTs of which ten are armored, I believe, or heavy BCTs in the Guard and Reserve. If we kept one heavy BCT that's an active component over there and integrated a divisional rotational from the National Guard of maybe two heavy and one light or -- you know one heavy with another heavy plus a light -- it gives training opportunities to those division headquarters, it gives terrain familiarity, it gives so many things.

What do you think about that and including also like your engineer and your ADA and your aviation assets, to go with those guard divisions on maybe a five year one -- one division for five years -- I mean for one year and then -- you know, through a five-year cycle.

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, you know, as I've said before, it's really a service function for them to determine. I make the requirement. There's a number of ways that -- as you said, there's a number of ways we can fulfill my requirement and there's pros and cons of each. And -- and -- and you know, as you noted, rotational units

provide a lot of experience to our force. And it provides a force that then has knowledge of Europe. So those are the advantages of that.

KELLY:

And -- and one other thing, I think you can look at deployment -- your RSOI a little differently. Rather than having to send a Guard unit that's 100 percent ready on day one, if you send them to the European theater as a division, those BCTs can actually get those rotations at Hohenfels and other places rather than at the NTC.

And so the end product is a completely trained and ready to fight division in BCTs, as opposed to sending one over there that's already ready. I think maybe you get to trying and be ready across the spectrum. Would you agree with that?

SCAPARROTTI:

What I -- What I need is a trained and ready unit at the point of employment. So certainly we can use our capabilities in -- in Europe if that's the most efficient way to get there. And I would just add that, you know, the Guard plays an important role in what we do in Europe every day. The partnership that they've form with each of the countries is really quite remarkable. Twenty-some years of relationship that builds trust.

KELLY:

Thank you.

And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Gallego.

GALLEGO:

Thank you, General. First off -- and we'll be switching direction a couple times -- do our European partners support the provision of lethal defense equipment to Ukraine?

SCAPARROTTI:

I -- I haven't discussed that specific issue with -- with most of our partners. As you know, there are -- there are some of our allies in Europe that are supporting Ukraine, they train right -- right along beside us. So they're -- they are as convicted as we are in supporting Ukraine protection their sovereignty. I can say.

GALLEGO:

And switching gears -- thank you, General, for that answer -- how should we holistically approach deterrence and our response to hybrid threats in Europe? Specifically from Russia? Are -- are other measures such as sanctions effective in dealing with hybrid activity?

Or should we be looking at -- at -- should we be looking at potentially a military response for some level of hybrid activity?

SCAPARROTTI:

I -- I -- first of all I think -- for instance, you mention sanctions. Again, I think that a response to Russia has to be a whole of government approach and that's -- that's the economic part of that. That's important that we retain.

I think -- as I've said, I think demonstrating strength in every area is -- is significantly important with Russia. I think that we've got to have the right posture of our military. And when you look at deterrence; you look at capability, credibility and then communication. And communication being, do we communicate our intent and our objective? And -- and does Russia understand that so there's no miscalculation? And then a part of that militaries is an enhanced missile defense as well.

GALLEGO:

I yield back my time.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Rogers.

ROGERS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General, good to see you again. Thanks for being here. And thank you for your --- your service to our country. I especially appreciated your comments earlier today about the United States needs to provide some lethal force capability Ukrainian military.

I've been there twice and going back next month and they're begging for something to fight with. And this is a life or death battle for them, so I appreciate your candor on that. I want to talk to you first about the INF.

In your best military professional judgment do you believe that Russia in the foreseeable future will return to compliance with the INF treaty?

SCAPARROTTI:

I don't have any indication that they will at this time.

ROGERS:

How much longer do you think that the United States should continue to unilaterally comply with that treaty?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, that's really a policy decision. What I would say is that, from my perspective, is that we have to respond to their violation of that treaty, one way or the other, we have to take steps we have to address it, but it is a policy matter.

(CROSSTALK)

ROGERS:

What steps would you take -- what steps would you take? What would recommend to the president that we take?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, first of all I think we -- we confront them and then we consider what actions we might take in terms of our capabilities in order to deal with the advance that their violation of treaty incurs.

In other words, the risk that we're taking because they're not following that treaty and how do we respond to it.

ROGERS:

OK. I want to turn to the nuclear weapons ban. What are some of the military risks to the alliance and our allies if NATO members sign onto do -- sign onto and thus comply with the draft of U.N. nuclear weapons ban that's currently being negotiated?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, sir, I -- my view is that the nuclear weapons ban is just not realistic. I mean it -- it is occurring in a world where we have North Korea, in particular, who is in violation of U.N. sanctions and Resolutions, multiple ones, and show no respect for the international community's directive.

Russia, who is -- who is also aggressively improving their modernization of their -- their nuclear weapons, etcetera. So I think we're in a world today where that's just not realistic, at this point. I think it something that probably all of us would -- would like to see and, you know, a world without nuclear weapons. But I don't think we're at the point to exercise that -- that ban at this time.

ROGERS:

Do you believe that it would be inconsistent for NATO members who signed onto the Warsaw communique to also sign onto that treaty?

SCAPARROTTI:

Again, that's -- that's each nation's sovereign decision, but I think it would be.

ROGERS:

Thank you.

I yield back Mr. Chairman.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Garamendi.

GARAMENDI:

There's a lot of questions we ought to get to here and probably quickly to the classified hearing. So I'm going to be very quick. There's -- our new president has created considerable concern about the role of the United States vis-a-vis the European Union and NATO. Has that -- that uncertainty caused you problems in your work as NATO -- with NATO?

SCAPARROTTI:

No, our mil to mil relationships within the alliance are strong. We've continued to do what we need to do as an alliance of military components to -- to protect the transatlantic region.

GARAMENDI:

Is there clarity, in your mind, as to what the administration's policy is with regard to NATO?

SCAPARROTTI:

The secretary of Defense attended the last Defense Ministers and had sat through two days of sessions and was very clear in terms of America's commitment to NATO. As well as in Munich at the Munich Security Conference, and the vice president spoke there as well. So I think that they were very clear in our commitment to NATO.

GARAMENDI:

Well that's not the entire story is it? There are other people that have commented in various ways.

SCAPARROTTI:

What I would say Congressman is -- is that, there has been uncertainty, throughout our election, et cetera, that the secretary and the vice president spoke on behalf of the administration. I -- I do believe that Secretary Tillerson's attendance at the foreign ministry -- at the foreign ministers conference coming up, as well as a president's attendance in May will reinforce our commitment.

GARAMENDI:

Is it important in your work that there be clarity from the administration with regard to its commitment to NATO and Europe?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yes.

GARAMENDI:

Well, we'll hopefully have that in the near future. Down into the weeds for a few moments, you mentioned the issue of being able to move material and troops and the role of the civilian organizations in doing that. We have a hearing coming up at the end of this week with TRANSCOM.

And specifically on the issue of ships, the Ready Reserve and the MSP. Do you see the -- are -- are -- do we have sufficient ships, planes, to address any contingency that you might face at your role in EUCOM?

SCAPARROTTI:

Again, that's -- that's best answered by them. But I can tell you from my experience in the past year and a half that -- that they and I have concern about particular civilian support in both ships and air. And that we have to invest in those. I haven't recently sat down with them to get the actual facts, but that's my -- my view in dealing with a planning that we're -- we've done.

GARAMENDI:

Your -- your last two commands have been at the far edge of the world, so you would know. I think I'll let it go at that point.

Thank you and I yield back my time.

THORNBERRY:

Ms. Stefanik.

STEFANIK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, General Scaparrotti, for your leadership.

You and I have had the opportunity to discuss the importance of countering Russian propaganda and malign influence in the information space. And during our last conversation you mentioned the Russia Information Group, which is a -- a working level interagency group to counter Russian -- Russian aggression. I'm pleased to see the efforts of this group and the State Department's Global Engagement Center.

But my question for you is, what aren't we doing that we need to be doing in this area to more effectively counter Russian propaganda? We discussed a lot of the improvements that have been made in terms of grappling this issue, but what more do we need to be doing?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, I think, you know, we -- we do have a -- a structure. We have the group that you mentioned, for instance, that -- that is multiagency, et cetera. But we actually have to, you know, provide it direction and resourcing on a larger scale than it's -- then it's been done to this point. That's -- that's the first thing.

Second thing is, I think we have to be more direct in our values and our messaging. If we think back to the Voice of America, there's -- in Europe today there are those in the Eastern countries that tell me that they recall when they were in the Warsaw Pact hearing the Voice of America and the difference it made. Those are the kind of things we need to do on a greater scale than we're doing today.

STEFANIK:

So let me ask you this, as you know, in last year's NDAA we expanded the mandate of the Global Engagement Center which is within the State Department to include state-sponsored entities of propaganda such as Russia. Are there -- how can we empower the global engagement center? And a larger question is, is that the right coordinating body within the State Department?

SCAPARROTTI:

Again, I -- I think whether that's the right coordinating body, I think is probably best determined by the State Department. Not I. I really can't tell you best how they should organize for this. But I think it's a good start. It's an agency that we know we can go to that's empowered within state to conduct this mission.

And so, again, my experience with it is that this is on a much smaller scale than we need today. We have an opportunity here, I think, to focus on this and perhaps, with a new administration, etcetera, we can begin to empower that more and reinforce it. And whether that's exactly the way it should be, I think we'll see as time goes on.

STEFANIK:

You mention in your response to some of the other questions the importance of working with our partners. What can we do to better leverage more the NATO Strategic Communication Center of Excellence in Latvia, similar to the way that EUCOM and NATO leverage the NATO Special Operations Headquarters?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yeah, we as -- in EUCOM are actually connecting with that node. We in EUCOM are connecting with E.U. and NATO, for instance. So what we're trying to do is form nodes and, on the cyber side, that's a very important one in Estonia. And then, through that, reinforce this network that defeats a network, so to speak, that's what we have to do.

And so we're working -- I mean that's one of our basic model within EUCOM to empower that. And, on the NATO side, they have approved a strategic direction, is what I would call it, there. That enables parts of our chain of command, within NATO, to -- to link with EUCOM's command. So I think there's the beginnings of this we just need to begin to -- to reinforce it and develop it.

STEFANIK:

And my last question is, two years ago in the F.Y. '16 NDAA, this committee noted concern about hybrid and unconventional threats and directed DOD to submit a strategy for countering unconventional and hybrid threats. Unfortunately, the DOD has yet to submit or even begin to coordinate with other government agencies.

In our language, in the NDAA, we also noted that, quote, "Most state sponsors of unconventional warfare such as Russia and Iran have doctrinally linked conventional warfare, economic warfare, cyber warfare, information operations, intelligence operations and other activities seamlessly, in an effort to undermine U.S. national security objectives and the objectives of U.S. allies alike."

First, do you agree with this assessment still and the need to develop such a comprehensive whole of government strategy? And second, in terms of countering hybrid warfare, are we any closer to linking all of our tools and capabilities?

SCAPARROTTI:

I agree that we have to have a holistic, whole of government strategy, as you stated. I think we're closer. I think we -- you know we're not sitting still, we're making progress. And particularly, I can speak to the military side of this.

As I said, we're working with our allies through established nodes. Our special operations forces, in particular, are very good at this and they're active. Not only in what they can provide us in this domain but also building capacity with our allies.

STEFANIK:

Thank you.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Larsen.

LARSEN:

Thanks Mr. Chairman.

General, welcome. I have a question to clarify some Pentagon math I'm trying to figure out. Goes...

(LAUGHTER)

... maybe you can help. Goes back to your comments about wanting to -- a division in -- in EUCOM. So I'm trying to figure out, were you suggesting that you wanted an additional brigade on top of the two brigades to get to a division or are you suggesting an additional division on top of two brigades?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yes. I'm suggesting an additional division because what I need is I need armored and mech brigades. The two I have there today are, you know, a cavalry, light cav as well as a -- an airborne entry brigade combating team.

LARSEN:

Yeah and then along with that headquarters presumably.

SCAPARROTTI:

Yes. And -- and the enablers. But the reason that division's so important is because it -- it's at that level you can then have the -- the command and control communications capability to -- to integrate the different domains in the way we fight. And then that division brings the enablers, like appropriate artillery, engineers, air defense, et cetera, that fill out a proper defense.

LARSEN:

And then does that -- does your concept then come with additional pre-positioned forces -- or equipment, that is? Pre-positioned equipment? Are we looking at, sort of, supporting the division with pre-po or -- or equipment coming with the division itself?

SCAPARROTTI:

So today the -- the pre-position stocks that we're building are an integral part of that division. So that it would -- so that people would fly, over fall in on, and I would have a division filling that out. So that -- that's the plan today. The plan today is a rotational brigade and then up re-po the provides remaining -- or the remainder the resources.

LARSEN:

All right, thanks. Thanks for clarifying that, appreciate it. See, Pentagon math, sometimes pretty easy. Can you talk about a little bit the high North? Is -- there's some comments in your written testimony on Russia's investment in its area of the Arctic. Which there's some rational basis to that because as the ice receives, they no longer -- nor can much of anyone rely on ice to sort of protect your surface.

We're active in the Arctic Council, the U.S., along with Russia and Norway and five other countries as -- as active members of the Arctic Council. And then a lot iof observers as well. Just kind of what -- since it's mentioned in your written testimony about the high North, what do you suggest from a EUCOM perspective, or even from a NATO perspective, would be a -- an appropriate response?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yes, sir. I -- I agree that, you know, we've typically look at the Arctic as a place for commerce, a peaceful place, not a militarized part of the world. And what I see today is -- is Russia refurbishing some of it's older bases. They're placing in radar, ground forces, etcetera, that -- that could -- that could potentially influence the flea -- free flow of trade in the Northern Sea Route.

I think our concern is -- is that -- they certainly, as you said, you know that -- that -- that trade route follows most closely to their...

LARSEN:

Right.

SCAPARROTTI:

... you know, to their border. So they have the right to -- to take steps that most countries would take to secure that. I think most of our influences is whether they're taking steps that would influence then internationally accepted free flow of trade in the North Sea -- or and along the North Sea route.

Secondly, I'm concerned about the high north because -- because their -- their Northern Fleet operates out of there. And they're building capabilities in that as well. That, just as we did in the Cold War, we have to properly deter and be aware of.

LARSEN:

Yeah, that's great. Thank you very much.

I yield back.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Knight?

KNIGHT:

Thanks, General.

I was -- I just have a couple brief questions. I was one of those graphs (inaudible) reformed folded (inaudible) kind of guys. And look at the map here, just -- just a quick question to kind of help us understand.

As -- as we are there in the '80s and there was a totally different aspect of having 50 posts over there. And, you know, I don't know how many hundred thousand troops were there. Compared to today, when NATO is so much different and we have so many more countries that we are working with.

When I was over there with the Chairman a couple years ago, we were watching Polish soldiers and we were in Romania and it was very enlightening to me to watch the Poles and the Americans worked together and it was just easy to see the -- see the symbiotic relationship that they had there. Tell me how that works?

When we're doing three rotations, either a unit is there, a unit is coming home or a unit is preparing to go. How does that work well when we're talking about Polish soldiers and Romanian, that we can work together and use them for certain areas that we couldn't back in the '80s, obviously, because of the change to NATO?

SCAPARROTTI:

You know, sir, first thing I'd think about is the fact that, as you mention, our allies in NATO and in Europe, not just -- but our partners as well as those 28 nations, you know, they've been overseas with us in -- in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in other areas, Bosnia, Herzegovina, etcetera.

Over the years we've developed relationships and we've refined interoperability. Secondly, we're a force that used to deploy. I mean, our -- all of our military forces, of all services, are good at expeditionary operations and -- and routinely deploying and falling in with host nations, with allies. We've really developed this and I think that makes a difference, it's what you're talking about.

And so, when you see the ease that we work with the Poles -- with the Poles for instance, you mentioned them -- I served with -- with the Polish elements in -- in central Iraq, I served with them both tours in Afghanistan. I know many of their leaders, our forces are used to working together. So when we fall in we know how to communicate, we know how to make those linkages, etcetera.

KNIGHT:

Yeah and I -- I'm going to yield back here Mr. Chairman, but I think that that's one of the most important things to our military right now is our connections to the allies and our connections over the last 20 years or more, even going back to the early '90s where we've been in combat with a lot of these -- these folks and we've seen how they react and we've been training with them and they've been training with us so it's -- it's a very close relationship.

Thank you Mr. Chair.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Courtney.

COURTNEY:

Thank you Mr. Chairman, thank you General for your testimony.

Just want to follow up on Mr. Larsen's questions regarding the High North and the Arctic. I mean, you described I think very pointedly the upgrade in terms of military facilities that Russia is engaged in, in that part of the world.

There's another aspect, I think, which I wanted to focus on second, which is that they've actually filled a pretty aggressive claim through UNCLOS in terms of continental shelf rights. And I just wondered if you could sort of talk about that in terms of, again, your concerns about making sure, you know, maritime freedom of the seas continues and -- and -- and of course, as I think you are probably expecting.

I just wanted to ask whether you think the U.S. should actually stop handcuffing itself and -- and ratify that treaty so we can get into these kinds of claims, international claims process?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yes sir, first of all, I don't know the details of -- of their claim, but that's obviously one of the concerns that we have about this for the future and I do believe that we should be a part of the UNCLOS Treaty. We adhere to those -- to the international norms today, already, as most nations do. That simply gives us an actual seat at the table and a vote legally, etcetera.

COURTNEY:

As though -- we found out with the South China Sea we actually were not even allowed standing to participate in that ruling...

SCAPARROTTI:

Right.

COURTNEY:

Which again, had just huge consequences in terms of our country's military -- you know, posture, etcetera. So you've also mentioned, you know, again, the -- the focus that you're engaged in terms of antisubmarine warfare in your opening remarks and a couple other questions.

I guess I -- I -- what I'd like to ask is the Office of Naval Intelligence has a document which is unclassified; the Russian Navy Historic Transition, which sort of walks through some of the new shipbuilding activity that Russia's engaged in. So in terms of, you know, you're -- you're saying we need to have antisubmarine activity.

What's -- why? I mean, what -- what are -- what are they doing with submarines?

SCAPARROTTI:

We remain dominant and have, you know, as we have been in -- in that. My point is is we can't be comforted by that. They're producing several different classes of new submarines. They're very capable and will challenge us. And so we've -- and we do have plans to increase ours, but we need to continue to invest in that.

As well as those other systems that help us with the -- with antisubmarine warfare. And I can talk to that in more detail in a closed session as well.

COURTNEY:

Thank you. Because, again, as the -- the -- this unclassified document makes clear --I mean, just based on Russia's geography -- I mean, the submarine force is the backbone of the Russian Navy. It's just -- it's just where they -- you know, where they are situated that's the platform that can get them out into international waters, isn't that correct?

SCAPARROTTI:

That's true. The other thing I would point out is is the systems that they're placing on them today gives them good reach from wherever they're located, as well. Black Sea, etcetera.

COURTNEY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield back.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Bacon.

BACON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And it's an honor to have you hear today. Thank you for your leadership and hard work and thanks bring your (inaudible), one of the smartest guys I know. Good to have him here.

I wanted to start by saying I second your desire to put more ground forces in Europe. I think we need it for durance. I think it's a needed to reassure our Polish and Baltic friends in particular. One of the most important missions that you have, in my view too, is the ballistic missile defense mission that we're doing with Israel right now.

SCAPARROTTI:

First part...

BACON:

You give us an update, where we're at with that? Are we at a a real status quo? Are we building onto it? What else you need for that important mission?

SCAPARROTTI:

The -- Israel, as I said in my comments...

(UNKNOWN)

(OFF-MIKE)

BACON:

OK, thanks.

SCAPARROTTI:

... one of our -- it's special ally, but one of our closest in Europe. Our -- our staff has very regular and routine exchange of intelligence and discussions with them. I mean it is -- it is remarkable. We -- we are just now going through another one of our exercises.

And part of that is the missile defense, so that we stay trained as -- as partners in -- in that mission. That mission is very solid; we continue to train on it, we continue to increase capabilities. The Israelis continue to increase their capabilities as well. I do have some needs with respect to that. I'm very confident of our ability to support Israel, but -- but I have some needs to respect that and I can talk about that in the closed session more specifically.

BACON:

One of the concerns I had; and I was part of that mission early on, Hadana (ph) Ramstein (ph); is a mismatch between Iran's capabilities versus how defend. And a lot of this defense becomes really deterrents or counterstrike so that they fear, you know, doing the first strike. But that takes a lot of coordination with CENTCOM.

How is that coordination with two different COCOMS work -- that seem is right there?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yeah, the -- an experience question from having dealt with this -- with this seem. But the actually, it -- it works very well. We've done integrated planning now, any place that we have that seems, you know, interfere with a plan or be a subject of a plan so the dynamic of this environment that we live in where virtually everything that any one of our COCOM deals with is multi-regional, it has some connection across their border.

We've -- we've become much more agile at working with each other. I'm pretty -- I'm very confident of our relationship with -- with COCOM actually, with CENTCOM in particular.

BACON:

One last question, we want to expand our presence in EUCOM but yet we're still -- we're continuing to reduce our infrastructure there and when I came in, in '85, I think we've cut our presence in Europe by over half, maybe two thirds even.

And when I was the commander at Ramstein I note that we were continuing to find bases that we wanted to close. Is it prudent to continue to close multiple bases in Europe while we're trying to expand and expand deterrents with Russia?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yeah, we've -- we've actually taken a look at this since I've been in command, I'm sure that General Breedlove did before me. A good many of those that we had planned for closure, I agree with moving on. We've got about 15 left now, there are some of those that we're looking at that I think is worth another look, given the dynamics of the day, because we've got to get our posture right.

So I think -- holistically, as a program, it was profitable, but there are some of those today that -- that we're going to take a look at, that remain.

BACON:

OK. I appreciate that you're re-looking at that. My instinct tells me we're cutting too much. At the same time, realizing that we want to expand it just doesn't -- doesn't make sense, so thank you. Chairman, I yield back.

THORNBERRY:

Mrs. Speier.

SPEIER:

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

General, I got to tell you, your presentation here is so compelling and I really appreciate the clarity with which you spelled out the infractions, maybe that's too timid a word to use, but the infractions that Russia has engaged in over these many years. Have you had the opportunity to brief the president?

SCAPARROTTI:

I have not.

SPEIER:

If you were in a position to brief the president and were asked, would you recommend that the president condemn these violations by Russia, in terms of the INF treaty and the CFE Treaty?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, I think -- you know, first of all, I give best military advice on -- on our military activity, etcetera. That'd be a decision that the president would have to make.

SPEIER:

No, I understand that but do you think that the conduct by Russia rises to the level that would suggest that we speak out publicly about Russia's engagement in so many areas that border Russia?

SCAPARROTTI:

I would say, personally, that -- that I believe that we should confront the Russians on -- on the violations, etcetera. I've said that publicly and that would be consistent with my personal opinion or advice.

SPEIER:

Do you think that they have engaged in enough bad behavior that we should impose greater sanctions on them?

SCAPARROTTI:

Again, I think that's something that's considered holistically, but I think that there is -- that more that we probably need to do, across the entire government, in order to have the -- the proper influence on -- on Russia.

SPEIER:

You have spent a fair amount of time, certainly last week and I believe today as well, when you testified in the Senate about the Russian information warfare campaigns that they've engaged in. And I couldn't agree with you more, I think that we've been asleep at the switch in terms of, you know, showing a countervailing force to their misinformation.

Do you think that in order to kind of beef up our efforts, besides finding the Voice of America to a greater degree, what else would you recommend that we do?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, I think that -- that we have to within our government determine a lead agency that is empowered to integrate the remainder of our government in the information sphere. And then resource, whatever that resourcing level would be, in order to get our -- our message out in a -- in a way that is at a level that it -- that it has influence.

I -- I just don't think that we're organized to do what we're capable of doing in terms of the information and the message that we send. And this isn't just about a message to Russia. This is actually about assurance to our allies, etcetera.

SPEIER:

There's been some misinformation, I think, that's been offered up regarding the New START Treaty with Russia. I do you think it's a bad deal?

SCAPARROTTI:

You know, I -- I -- as I look back on the treaties and understanding why they were put in place, I -- I think they're actually productive. What we need is to ensure that everyone that's a part of the treaty adheres to the treaty. And then, if they don't, we decide what steps ought to be taken.

As opposed to -- to -- in another words, we have to acknowledge whether the treaty's actually in force. You know, for CFE, the Russians have said -- I think about 2011 or so they said that they were setting it aside. So these are things that we need to come together and -- and address.

SPEIER:

There was an article in the New York Times, a huge spread, yesterday on is our military big enough? And showed, you know, how some of our greatest adversaries, Russia being one, spend \$60 billion a year on its military and we spend \$540 billion. There was a lot of interesting commentary in that piece about -- by persons arguing that you know, you -- you build up a force when you're going to war.

Do you have any comments about that piece? Did you read it and if you haven't I really be interested in you going through it and giving us some advice on what you agree with and what you don't.

SCAPARROTTI:

All right, thank you. I haven't read it, but I'd -- I will read and I'll provide you a response if you'd like.

SPEIER:

Great, thank you.

I yield back.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. O'Halleran.

O'HALLERAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, General, thank you and your command for all you do for our nation.

I have a question. I'm going to go back to Turkey here for a little bit. You made a statement that the Turkey has long been, and remains, an ally of the United States. That word "remains," why did you put that in there?

SCAPARROTTI:

It's a good -- well, I -- it -- it just happened to -- I put it in there because they remain an ally. They're -- to be frank, you know, that there is some concern about their drift -- given some of the drift to authoritarianism. I would tell you that -- that they remain a close ally with us.

I've spent a good deal of time in Turkey. I have a good relationship with their chief of defense and we're focused on transparency with them, on supporting them in their objectives as well as ours with respect to counterterrorism and the coalition efforts in Syria. So that's going well. But I -- I do have concern.

O'HALLERAN:

Right. In -- your statement also identifies that that it -- that Turkey maintains a complicated relationship with Russia. Given its position in -- in the Black Sea and with Syria and Iran and the -- its internal conflicts and everything else that's going on in that area along with the -- its Russian issues.

What is the status of the U.S. military relationship with Turkey, which I think you answered a little bit, what are the challenges moving forward and what are the implications given the Russian actions in the region?

SCAPARROTTI:

Again, our mil to mil relationship's very good and despite the attempted coup and the many challenges they face they have been very committed to both the support of and protection of our forces that operate out of Turkey and are important to our coalition efforts. Of the challenges that we have, certainly we see all the challenges there that we see in Europe.

I mean they have an internal insurgency, a terrorist fight against PKK, they have the refugee issue, about three million and then they have a conflict on their border where we have troops and are operating as well as Russia, Iran and others, that's a challenge. And that's part of what we spend a good deal of time on, making sure that we are transparent with each other, we understand each other's objectives and figure out how we can be complementary in that. But it's -- it's probably the most difficult problem set I've seen in my career, frankly.

O'HALLERAN:

And I'm sure we can go on further on that but I've sat here and listened to the word state or State Department mentioned many times and, you know, we have a cut proposed by the president in the State Department budget, what is the importance of the State Department -- State Department in your role and your ability to complete your mission?

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, the State Department, as well as the other agencies are -- are fundamental to what I do in Europe. Again, I -- I strongly believe in a whole of government approach. I think that we lead with diplomacy in the State Department, that the military's posture there is to -- to -- intent is to give muscle to that diplomacy.

You know, our intent is that we never have to employ our military in a conflict in Europe. That we -- we prevent conflict and to do that we -- we need a strong diplomatic core.

O'HALLERAN:

And I guess that's the --- just a comment, that's the issue in my head that is problematic as far as any cuts to the State Department given the other issues we have in the world and the need for us to maintain strong relationships with all these countries and -- and -- especially countries like Turkey, which are so complicated.

So -- and I yield, thank you General.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Langevin.

LANGEVIN:

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for your testimony here today and thank you for your great service to our nation. I regret that I couldn't be here for the early part of the hearing. I was in a competing hearing on -- dealing with cyber security issues which is another important topic of national security importance. But I thank you again for your testimony. So I apologize if some of the things I may of -- may ask have already been covered but, let me get to it.

So, General, I understand that Secretary Tillerson has recently decided to forgo meeting with his NATO counterpart in April and instead travel to Russia later in the month. You know, I wanted to get your perspective on, what does this say to our NATO allies that our secretary of State is choosing to visit with Russia, a nation, by the way, that has meddled in our elections and possible colluded with the administration rather than meet with them.

SCAPARROTTI:

Well, as always, you know -- when when NATO meets particularly for the foreign ministers conferences, you know, they welcome the United States representative there as one of the central members. It's my understanding now, that the meeting will be on 31st March. And the -- NATO agreed with United States to find a date that was -- was good for all allies.

And so at least my last report, I expect that we will have a foreign ministers on the 31st of March and -- and Secretary Tillerson will be in attendance.

LANGEVIN:

Very good, thank you for that update.

SCAPARROTTI:

Thank you.

LANGEVIN:

So, General, I know that we -- we just sort of touched on this -- this topic with my -- with my colleague who just spoke before I did. But following the president's release of his -- his skinny budget -- so I'm highly concerned about the potential cuts to the State Department budget, which proposes a 28 percent reduction from last year's levels.

Now, we spend money through the State Department and USAID in order to further our international diplomatic relations so that we might avoid and prevent war. So with a cut like that, what -- what effects do these cuts have in the EUCOM arena and how will they hinder our -- our allies as we collectively seek to deter an aggressive and unruly Russia?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yes, sir. I -- I can't comment on the -- on the cuts themselves or the impact that might have in Europe. State Department will -- will determine that. But I've said that -- that the importance of the State Department and the work that we do in -- in European Command is just fundamental.

I have a deputy, for instance, my senior poll-lad (ph) is an ambassador and plays a significant role in my headquarters, as do -- as does State and all the embassies in -- in all of our missions in Europe. So I think it's paramount that we -- that we maintain the capacity to continue to work as a team.

LANGEVIN:

OK. General, something that we probably often overlook is that EUCOM is the primary resource of personnel and -- and equipment to AFRICOM, which is a growing area of -- of security challenges, if you will. And -- and how does that -- that draw (ph) of resources, is that hindering your ability to do your job in the EUCOM arena? And are we -- are we not properly resourcing the AFRICOM arena at this point?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yes, sir. The relationship between I (ph) and AFRICOM is actually quite good. We do share component (ph) commands and often we deploy forces in support of AFRICOM's operations. So it is working. It does impact from time to time on my mission as well as General Waldhauser's because we have a force that's -- that's pulled in two different directions at times.

My greatest concern is making sure that we understand risk, I and General Waldhauser, with the chairman of the joint chiefs. That when we deploy forces that haven't been planned for, say, a response to a potential crisis or a mission in AFRICOM, that -- that I can verbalize the impact on the EUCOM commission and that we as leaders understand the risk that we're taking in that regard. That's another way of saying that I think we do need more force structure there.

This is working OK, it's (ph) a good working relationship, but it does, from time to time, put a strain on our force and its readiness.

LANGEVIN:

All right. Is your assessment that we're (ph) too often taking too much risk in -- in...

SCAPARROTTI:

No, not too often taking too much risk. There's been a -- there's been a couple of times in the year that I've been in command, probably two, that I was concerned enough that I -- you know, that we had a discussion and I had a discussion with the chairman and we -- we -- so we all understood and made the appropriate decision. And so I'm confident that we can make the right decision and not take unnecessary risk.

But that's -- so that gives you an idea of how often that comes up in a year's time.

LANGEVIN:

Thank you, General. I have other questions that I'll submit for the -- the record.

But I'll yield back.

THORNBERRY:

Mr. Lamborn.

LAMBORN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General. And I'm going to make this real brief and ask you to answer for the record, so that we can keep our schedule moving along here today and also because elements of your answer might be more appropriate in a closed setting. But I represent Fort Carson, which has an armored brigade combat team over in the Baltics and Bulgaria and Poland, they're doing a great job. They're rotational as opposed to enduring, like you were saying earlier, but I think it has great promise for the future.

But what are the challenges that we're learning from this extended rotation as far as infrastructure and host country capacity and things like that that -- that's a sensitive topic that I'll just take for the record. And then, also, what are our readiness problems that we're learning and that -- that we need to improve on from a funding standpoint? I hope to go over and see these great troops later this spring. But if you could supply those answers for the record, I would appreciate it.

SCAPARROTTI:

I will. Thank you.

LAMBORN:

Thank you so much.

THORNBERRY:

General, we hadn't really today touched on your role in dealing with the terrorism threat in Europe, could you just touch on that briefly?

SCAPARROTTI:

It's -- it's one of the central challenges, Chairman, in Europe and with our allies today. In EUCOM we formed a cell as a part of the headquarters that addressed counter -- transnational threats to counter those. It is a -- it is multiagency, it's not just military. And our concept is tri-nodal concept of where we are building the relationship with E.U., in particular the Europol, and through the E.U. nations as well as NATO with a headquarters in JFC Naples. And then with our other partners as well, outside of NATO, to really strengthen that network.

Everything from information and intelligence sharing, analysis of the transnational threats as -- as, you know, as well as capability, sharing capabilities, building partner capacity, etcetera. It struck me, as I was there, that we have, particularly within the alliance, an organization with headquarters, processes, troops if needed, ready made in order to form a response to this. And all 28 nations in NATO are part of the coalition to fight ISIS today, so I think it fits well and it's one of the key things that we do in Europe.

THORNBERRY:

And -- and on the 28 nation, did I understand you earlier to say that 22 of the 28 nations are increasing their defense spending this year?

SCAPARROTTI:

That's correct, 22, and 10 within the -- there's a 20 percent mandate toward modernization, 10 nations have met that as we go into the year. So that's good news. We expect to see that improving as well as we go -- go forward.

THORNBERRY:

And you've had several questions today about the European Reassurance Initiative and any investments we are making in infrastructure and so forth to make that work. Are the eastern European nations making investments toward that goal as well?

SCAPARROTTI:

Yes, Chairman, they are. They have -- in every country, they've invested themselves in -- in facilities to support our mechanized and armored units in terms of motor pools, et cetera. Barracks facilities, also transportation hubs for the movement of forces. And so they've -- they've also invested in it. And (ph) I think it underscores the importance that they see in -- in our efforts as well as NATO's enhanced forward presence.

THORNBERRY:

Finally, just a comment. General, today you have gotten a number of questions about Russian violations of the INF Treaty and you've also got a number of questions about information warfare, for lack of a better expression. Both are subjects of some frustration for me. I wrote numerous letters and had numerous briefings on the INF Treaty violations to try to get the Obama administration to take this more seriously, to call the Russians hands, to have an adequate response. And for some reason, they were reluctant to do so.

On information warfare, Mr. Smith and I've been pushing a whole- of-government approach to being more engaged in this ever since the Bush administration when it became clear that the terrorists were doing a better job than we in -- in information warfare through the Obama administration. I'm glad to have more people engaged in the -- in -- in these issues. We've got some new converts now.

But my point is I want -- I want to encourage you to continue to have a strong voice within the military and because of your -- both of your hats within the government at large. Because, for whatever motivation, our government needs to take treaty violations more seriously and to develop better capability on information warfare. I think you can help. We will certainly be pushing that as well. And as I say, I'm glad to have some new converts to those causes.

With that, this hearing will stand adjourned. And in roughly five minutes or so, if it's OK with you, we will get back together upstairs in a classified session. Thanks.

SCAPARROTTI:

Thank you, Chairman.

-30-