

UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

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NATO:

Reviewing the Agenda & Assessing Potential Outcomes of the Warsaw Summit

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Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, Members of the Committee, I am honored to participate in this hearing addressing the challenges now confronting the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the decisions the Alliance will make during its summit meeting in Warsaw on July 8 and 9th.

NATO is the institutional cornerstone of transatlantic security. This Alliance serves our national interests by leveraging the political legitimacy and military capacity of its European and North American members. It is history's most successful military Alliance, and it remains as relevant today as it has ever been.

NATO's meeting Warsaw next month portends to be its most significant summit since the end of the Cold War. No previous summit in this era has had to address a set of challenges as complex, proximate, and forbidding and as those now present on the Alliance's eastern and southern frontiers.

The most urgent of these challenges is the destabilizing combination of Russia's geopolitical assertiveness and growing military power. The decisions NATO promulgates in Warsaw must present a credible deterrent to Russian aggression, revitalize the vision of a Europe whole, free, and secure, and ensure that all allies share equitably the burdens that flow from these objectives. These are three criteria by which to measure success or failure at the Warsaw summit.

The Challenge from Russia

President Putin's ongoing invasion of Ukraine is but one element of a revanchist policy that he has articulated and exercised since taking office in 1999. His central objective is clear – the reestablishment of the power, territorial control, and hegemony of the former Soviet Union. Putin's campaign history includes Moscow's attempt to subvert Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution, the 2007 cyber attack against Estonia, the separatist movement in Moldova, energy embargoes against Lithuania and Ukraine, and the 2008 invasion of Georgia.

His strategy is multifaceted, leveraging the full scope of Russian economic and political power. It integrates information warfare as well as extensive intelligence and criminal networks to exploit the weaknesses of neighboring states.

Putin's strategy ultimately rests on a foundation of Russian military power. Under his personal direction, the Kremlin has driven forward a determined modernization of Russia's armed forces. Some \$700B has been dedicated over this decade to expand the Russian fleet, introduce 5th generation aircraft, deploy new missiles, increase his nation's special forces capabilities, and militarize the Arctic.

This modernization effort has been effective. It has increased the ability of Russian forces to rapidly mobilize and deploy in mass over great distances. It has integrated into Russian operations the use of long-range precision strike weapons – as was recently demonstrated by Russia's use of Kalibr cruise missiles to destroy targets in Syria. It features a significant investment into Russia's tactical and strategic nuclear arsenals. And, it has yielded a military more capable of conducting sophisticated combined arms operations.

These capabilities have been demonstrated and refined through an aggressive array of large scale exercises, a good number of which have involved between 100,000 and 160,000 personnel. They feature rapid deployments over Russia's vast territory and the integration of nuclear and conventional warfare. Among the more notable exercises have been no-notice snap drills that have simulated the seizure of territory of NATO allies and partners across the Baltic Sea, as far West as Denmark.

The contingency the Alliance's political leadership must address today is Russia's ability to rapidly mobilize and deploy significant forces for the seizure of limited swaths of territory along its periphery. NATO must counter Russia's increased ability to undertake such a mission and complete its execution before the Alliance's political decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council, has had a chance to achieve consensus on what had transpired and whether or not it would be worth the costs and risks of reversing that aggression.

Defining Success at the NATO Summit

Addressing this contingency and the geopolitical ramifications of Moscow's ambitions and military power has emerged as a, if not the, principal focus of this July's NATO summit. The strategy and actions Alliance leaders promulgate in response to his challenge must a present credible deterrent to Russian aggression, revitalize the vision of a Europe whole, free and secure, and ensure that all allies contribute equitably to the missions that flow from these objectives.

Assessing NATO's Emergent Forward Enhanced Presence

Last winter, the Alliance committed itself to establish an "enhanced forward presence" in Central Europe. NATO leaders appear to be on track to approve plans for the deployment battalion level units in each of the Baltic States and Poland and an improved force posture in the Black Sea region.

Battalions – roughly 800-1000 troops – are small units when juxtaposed against the divisions of Russian airborne, mechanized, and tank units deployed in Russia’s Western Military District and the sophisticated aircraft, air defense systems, helicopters, ships, submarines, and missiles that reinforce them.

If these NATO battalions are to be an effective deterrent against such a force of this magnitude, they must be able to survive for at least a limited amount of time amidst an aggressive attack. They must have sufficient lethality to impose costs on an aggressor – even if the expectation is not to defeat that adversary. And, the Alliance must demonstrate readiness and determination to quickly reinforce these battalions. To be credible, NATO’s forward enhanced presence will require the following:

- **Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Assets:** These forward deployed units will need ISR to mitigate the advantages proximity provides Russian forces. Advance warning will be key to minimizing the risk of surprise by aggressor forces, enabling time needed to hunker down and move to defensive positions.
- **Air Defense:** In an environment where air and missile threats are significant and proximate, air defense, and possibly missile defense, capabilities will be needed to protect these battalions.
- **Lethality:** As previously noted, such limited deployments alone cannot be expected to defeat the large combined arms assault Russia can unleash across its border. But, these units can bristle with the firepower necessary to impose significant losses upon an aggressor. These battalions will need significant anti-armor capabilities, perhaps even their own artillery and tanks.
- **Integrated NATO-Host Nation War Plans:** The war plans that guide these forward deployed elements will have to be integrated with those of their host nations. This is to ensure full synchronization of effort by NATO and national forces in time of crisis and conflict. Exercising this integration is critical not only to refine these plans, but also to demonstrate combat readiness to an adversary.
- **Reinforcement:** The Alliance must be postured so that it can reinforce on short notice these forward based assets. Some progress is being made on this front. This month, two large multinational exercises featured scenarios focused on the logistical and combat challenges of reinforcing forward deployed forces amidst a high intensity conflict. Poland hosted ANEKDONDA 16, the largest air, ground, and sea exercise conducted by NATO allies and partners in Central Europe. It featured 31,000 troops, including 14,000 U.S.

personnel. The U.S. Sixth Fleet hosted BALTOPS 16, a large scale multinational maritime exercise demonstrating the Alliance's capability to secure sea lines of communication and conduct amphibious operations in the Baltic Sea.

These exercises were important first steps, but they were nationally hosted not NATO hosted exercises. The Alliance will have to launch in the near future brigade and division level exercises focused solely on the plans it finalizes for its forward enhanced presence.

- **NATO Command Authority:** In an environment featuring an aggressor whose advantages include proximity, speed, and massive firepower, NATO must delegate to its commander the authorities necessary for them to marshal in real time Alliance military assets in the event of provocation and/or aggression. The North Atlantic Council is not likely to have the decision-making speed necessary for the full spectrum of contingencies these forward deployed assets must address.

During the Cold War, NATO's generals and admirals were entrusted with the authority to deploy forces and engage opponents in analogous scenarios. This trust needs to be returned to the Alliance's military chain of command.

Over the decades of that by gone era, the Berlin Brigade served as an effective deterrent. It was a fighting force equipped with tanks, artillery and armored personnel carriers. A massive deployment of NATO forces on the border between the two Germanys stood ready to reinforce the Berlin Brigade on a moment's notice. These forces were regularly exercised to make clearly evident the war plans the Soviets would "trip" into action if the Allied outpost in Berlin was ever attacked.

Moscow will closely observe the capability and preparations that accompany NATO's emergent enhanced forward presence. It will be will be readily apparent whether or not this force is a steely reflection of Alliance commitment to its collective defense mission.

Rolling Back the Grey Zone

A second critical issue that will define the Warsaw summit is the Alliance's relationship with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. Russia's incursions into Ukraine and Georgia and its continued occupation of Moldova's Trans-Dniester region is a direct threat to the vision of a Europe whole, free, secure and at peace. Putin's aggression against these countries was triggered simply by their desire to join the West.

To date, the West's responses to this aggression has not caused President Putin to change course. His forces continue to occupy Ukrainian, Georgian, and

Moldovan territory. In Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, they are being reinforced and in the latter they continue to attack Ukrainian forces. In Georgia, Moscow continues to encroach upon Georgian territory through limited land grabs, informally called “borderization.”

The failure of the West to more forcefully leverage its economic weight, political power and security assistance against this aggression has allowed a grey zone to reemerge in Europe’s strategic landscape consisting of nations whose aspirations to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic community continues to be challenged by Moscow’s territorial and hegemonic aspirations.

A reinforcement of NATO’s eastern frontier should be accompanied by a significant deepening of the Alliance’s security relationship with these nations, particularly Ukraine. The NATO summit presents an opportunity to reanimate the vision of an undivided and secure Europe and erase the red line Moscow has been allowed to redraw across the continent.

Toward this end, NATO leaders at the Warsaw Summit should embrace Ukraine’s and Georgia’s European and transatlantic ambitions, including their desire to join NATO. These nations should be given a clear roadmap toward that goal, recognizing it will take them time to meet the political and military criteria necessary for membership.

Second, the Alliance should incorporate Georgia and Ukraine into the maritime, air, and ground force initiatives it is developing for the Black Sea region. Their territories would be useful to for anti-submarine, air defense, ISR other operations necessary to counter Russia’s effort to leverage its occupation of Crimea into an anti-access/area-denial bastion spanning across that sea. The first hand experiences of Ukrainian and Georgian troops have defending against Russian battlefield tactics should be integrated into the Alliance’s training and exercises.

Third, the Alliance should expand the security assistance it provides Ukraine. The time is long overdue for the United States and others to grant Ukraine the “lethal defensive equipment” it has requested, including anti-tank, air defense and other weapons. Russia’s large scale exercises, the base it is building on Ukraine’s eastern frontier, and its military build-up in Crimea underscore the challenges Kyiv would face should Putin decide to drive deeper into Ukraine, a possibility that cannot be discounted in light of Moscow rhetoric and belligerent military posture.

NATO should also conduct exercises and ISR operations in Ukraine to signal solidarity, train the Ukrainian armed forces, and provide them better situational awareness.

None of these actions would threaten Russia’s territorial integrity, but they would complicate Russian military planning and increase the risk that would come

with further aggression deeper into Ukraine. They would help erase the red line that Moscow has been allowed to draw across Europe.

Failure to transform the NATO-Ukraine partnership in this way will not avoid conflict with Russia, it will only ensure that Ukraine remains weak in the face of Russian aggression. That is not only an enticement for Putin's revanchist ambitions, it is yet another recipe for an enduring military confrontation with Moscow.

Transatlantic Burdensharing

Finally, in order for the Warsaw Summit to be a success, our NATO allies must demonstrate commitment to share in all the burdens that come with addressing the full spectrum of challenges before the Alliance.

Today, as part of its response to Russian aggression against Ukraine and other military provocations, Washington has reversed course on a mistaken withdrawal of U.S. combat capability from Europe. It deployed an armored brigade combat team on a persistent, rotational basis to Central Europe. It committed to preposition in Europe an equipment set for a second armored brigade. That is on top of the two army brigades and the air and naval assets the US has long stationed in Europe, not to mention the ongoing construction of the European Phased Adaptive Approach missile defense system.

It will be important for Europe, particularly Western Europe, to make a significant contribution to the Alliance's forward enhanced presence. Reports that Germany, Canada and the United Kingdom are the only allies able and/or willing to contribute battalion level elements to this effort is disturbing. France (whose generals command NATO's second strategic command, Allied Command Transformation), Italy, Spain and others need to make similar contributions. Failure to incorporate a robust West European element into NATO's enhanced forward presence would risk transforming a needed demonstration of Alliance resolve and determination into a reanimated and divisive issue of burden-sharing.

Closing

Mr. Chairman my remarks focused on the NATO-Russia relationship. The Warsaw summit, of course includes other pressing matters, including the Alliance's mission in Afghanistan and chaos that defines the Alliance's southern front. But, the threat posed by Russia is distinctive for its urgency and proximity, the scale for Russian conventional forces, and the risk of nuclear escalation.

For these reasons, presenting a unified and credible commitment to the Alliance's core defense mission and the vision of a Europe whole, free, and secure must stand at the top of the Summit agenda. This will require strong leadership

from the United States, but success in this regard will not only underscore the vibrancy and relevancy of NATO, it will reinforce the prospects of peace.