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**Senate Foreign Relations European Affairs Subcommittee Testimony
“Transatlantic Security Challenges: Central and Eastern Europe”
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Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me here today to discuss the transatlantic security challenges we face in Central and Eastern Europe as a result of Russian actions in Ukraine. As you know, we in the Department of Defense have been preparing for this year’s NATO Summit, which the United Kingdom will host in Wales in September 2014. Given the Russian Federation’s illegal actions in Crimea, our focus has shifted to the immediate question of how this crisis will reshape the transatlantic alliance, the upcoming Summit and, more broadly speaking, NATO as a whole. My remarks today will have a two-fold focus: U.S. policy and actions in the short term to reassure Allies and dissuade further Russian illegal use of force, and long-term implications of the recent events on our bilateral European relationships and within NATO.

Reassuring Allies

After Russia’s illegal actions in Crimea, the United States took prompt steps to provide reassurance to NATO Allies and partners in Central and Eastern Europe. We augmented NATO’s peacetime Baltic Air Policing mission by deploying 6 additional F-15s. We deployed 12 F-16s and approximately 200 support personnel to Lask, Poland, to supplement the U.S.-Poland Aviation Detachment (AVDET) training rotation. We extended the USS TRUXTUN’s stay in the Black Sea through March 21 to conduct exercises with Romanian and Bulgarian naval forces, and have just ordered the USS DONALD COOK from its new homeport in Rota, Spain, to the Black Sea to further build interoperability with Allies and partners in the region.

As emphasized by President Obama in Brussels on March 26 and reinforced by Secretary of State Kerry at the April 1-2 NATO Foreign Ministerial, the United States wants to ensure a continuous, augmented presence along NATO’s borders at least through the end of the year that draws on the different capabilities of NATO in the air, on the ground, and at sea to reassure our

Allies and demonstrate our commitment to European security. We are also assessing and updating NATO plans, and remain prepared to meet our Article 5 commitment to our NATO Allies.

In addition to reassuring Allies, we are also taking action to reassure Ukraine of the U.S. commitment to our partnership. On March 14, at Ukraine's request, the United States conducted an Open Skies observation mission over Ukraine territory. We are planning to send officials to Kyiv to help plan a humanitarian assistance Command Post Exercise (CPX). The Department of Defense in coordination with the Department of State is working with Ukraine to review and prioritize its defense assistance requests for non-lethal materials and supplies. The first round of this process was completed last week with the delivery of 300,000 Meals Ready-to-Eat to Ukraine.

Last week, senior defense officials from the Office of the Secretary of Defense and U.S. European Command traveled to Kyiv for Bilateral Defense Consultations with their Ukrainian counterparts. Although part of the discussions addressed Crimea and the buildup of Russian forces at the border, the majority of the discussion was spent on mid- and long-term bilateral defense cooperation. The U.S. government is working with the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense to review the use of Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military and Education and Training (IMET) funds based on Ukraine's new security situation, and re-evaluating our mutual goals for defense institution building and professional military education in Ukraine.

Russia's actions have also increased the sense of direct threat to our other non-Allied partners in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, particularly Moldova and Georgia. The Administration is already exploring ways to support these important partners. The U.S. government has tools at its disposal to contribute to this support effort, including security assistance resources, senior leader engagement, and defense cooperation activities. Notably, senior DoD and State officials visited Moldova last week, to review with Defense Ministry officials our continuing defense cooperation, and an interagency delegation plans to visit Georgia later this month.

Maintaining NATO as the Transatlantic Cornerstone

Mr. Chairman, Russia's illegal military action against Ukraine challenges our vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. It changes Europe's security landscape, and in doing so reinforces the importance of our bilateral defense relationships with European partners and within NATO.

NATO has a critical role in regional security: it serves as the organizing framework to ensure that we have Allies willing and able to fight alongside us in conflict; provides an integrated military structure to support Alliance political decisions to take action; and represents our common values of democracy, individual liberty, and rule of law. NATO has evolved since the Cold War to have three core missions: deterrence and collective defense; crisis management; and cooperative security. Collective defense has always been the most fundamental purpose of the Alliance and is the essential glue that holds the Alliance together, even during non-Article 5 operations in areas important to transatlantic security such as the Balkans and Libya. After more than a decade of out of area operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere, NATO will need to balance its collective security and crisis response capabilities to place more emphasis on high-end deterrence and defense while making its forces more deployable and sustainable.

Keeping NATO strong both politically and militarily is critical to ensure NATO is prepared for the nearly continuous crises it has responded to over the past 20 years, and the enduring challenges outlined at the 2012 Chicago Summit: ballistic missile proliferation, cyber threats, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and instability from North Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. Ensuring Alliance preparedness is complicated by the evolving threat picture, including Russia's activities, and the European economic crisis that is compelling Allies to cut government spending, including defense investment and force structure.

While the United States must be ready to meet these emerging threats, we would prefer to meet these challenges together with Allies and partners. Allies continue to look to the United States to lead the way in keeping NATO strong, capable, and credible, and President Obama has been clear on the importance of the transatlantic Alliance, stating that "our commitment to NATO is the most important element of U.S. national security, as well as European security."

The September 2014 Summit will occur three months before the transition of the NATO military mission in Afghanistan, the Alliance's largest and most challenging operation in its 65 year history. The themes expected for the Wales Summit include Afghanistan; the future of NATO (capabilities, training, and partnerships); and the transatlantic bond. A main Summit deliverable for the United States is a successful transition from a combat mission to a train, advise, and assist mission in Afghanistan. More broadly, the United States has focused on these priorities:

- Making NATO the transatlantic core of a global security community by institutionalizing and expanding NATO's capability to build defense capacity;
- Deepening the relationship between NATO and its most capable partners; and
- Reaffirming the Allies' commitment to increase defense spending and better share the burden of defense.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Johnson, and Members of the Committee, Russia's actions in Ukraine have required us to revisit the importance of the transatlantic alliance. The Summit in Wales is an opportunity to carry forward the critical work our Alliance is conducting. In Wales, we will underscore NATO's accomplishments in Afghanistan, Libya, and the Balkans – successes delivered despite financial crisis. But as we confront current challenges, most starkly demonstrated by Russia's actions, we must also invest in the future. NATO relies on individual Allies for the bulk of the capabilities needed for future operations. We must find a way to ensure that NATO will be able to maintain critical capabilities in this period of austerity. We can ensure the greatness of this Alliance into the next decade in spite of fiscal and security challenges, but we must invest the extra effort to work collectively and to support those institutions that facilitate our cooperation.

I look forward to your questions.