

# U.S. POLICY IN EUROPE

---

---

## HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND  
REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

—————  
JUNE 26, 2018  
—————

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



Available via the World Wide Web:  
<http://www.govinfo.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

BOB CORKER, Tennessee, *Chairman*

JAMES E. RISCH, Idaho	ROBERT MENENDEZ, New Jersey
MARCO RUBIO, Florida	BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, Maryland
RON JOHNSON, Wisconsin	JEANNE SHAHEEN, New Hampshire
JEFF FLAKE, Arizona	CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, Delaware
CORY GARDNER, Colorado	TOM UDALL, New Mexico
TODD YOUNG, Indiana	CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, Connecticut
JOHN BARRASSO, Wyoming	TIM Kaine, Virginia
JOHNNY ISAKSON, Georgia	EDWARD J. MARKEY, Massachusetts
ROB PORTMAN, Ohio	JEFF MERKLEY, Oregon
RAND PAUL, Kentucky	CORY A. BOOKER, New Jersey

TODD WOMACK, *Staff Director*

JESSICA LEWIS, *Democratic Staff Director*

JOHN DUTTON, *Chief Clerk*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND  
REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION

RON JOHNSON, Wisconsin, *Chairman*

JAMES E. RISCH, Idaho	CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, Connecticut
JOHN BARRASSO, Wyoming	EDWARD J. MARKEY, Massachusetts
ROB PORTMAN, Ohio	BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, Maryland
RAND PAUL, Kentucky	JEANNE SHAHEEN, New Hampshire

## CONTENTS

---

	Page
Johnson, Hon. Ron, U.S. Senator From Wisconsin .....	1
Prepared statement .....	1
Murphy, Hon. Christopher, U.S. Senator From Connecticut .....	3
Mitchell, A. Wess, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC .....	4
Prepared Statement .....	7

### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

The Committee Received No Response From Assistant Secretary A. Wess Mitchell for the Following Questions Submitted by Senator Bob Menendez ..	27
Responses of Assistant Secretary A. Wess Mitchell to Questions Submitted by Senator Benjamin L. Cardin .....	30
Open Letter to Presidents of Parliaments of European States .....	36



## U.S. POLICY IN EUROPE

---

TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2018

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND  
REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:49 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Johnson [presiding], Portman, Murphy, and Shaheen.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RON JOHNSON, U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN

Senator JOHNSON. Good morning. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation is called to order.

I am happy to welcome Assistant Secretary Wess Mitchell to discuss U.S. foreign policy in Europe.

Mr. Secretary, I really appreciate you coming, and looking forward to our back-and-forth.

I would ask consent that my opening—my written opening remarks be just entered into the record. I just want to make a couple of quick points.

[The prepared statement of Senator Johnson follows:]

#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR RON JOHNSON OF WISCONSIN

Good morning and welcome. The Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation is meeting to examine U.S. policy in Europe. We are joined today by Assistant Secretary for Europe and Eurasia, Wess Mitchell, who will provide a window into the Administration's thinking on this important subject.

In February 2007, Vladimir Putin gave a speech at the Munich security conference in which he formally announced Russia's return as America's foil on the international stage. Putin's speech was an astonishingly frank attack on America's role in the world. Significantly, Putin did not confine his litany of complaints to specific American policies; he targeted the very nature of the U.S.-led rules-based international system. According to Putin, this system and its institutions were nothing more than instruments for furthering American hegemony. The U.S. and Europe reacted with irritation and surprise but took little concrete action. Didn't Putin know that history was over?

In the decade since, Putin has done much to demonstrate his sincerity. Russia has invaded Georgia and Ukraine, violated arms-control agreements, modernized its nuclear arsenal, propped up the Assad regime in Syria, used energy exports for geopolitical coercion, conducted continuous cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns against the West, and interfered in numerous democratic elections, including our own. Finally, we have begun to wake up. The Trump administration's National Se-

curity Strategy is a clear-eyed recognition that great power competition is once again the prime mover in international politics. There is broad consensus in the West that Russian aggression in Eastern Europe and the Balkans is a serious threat that must be checked. Indeed, we will spend much of our time today discussing how that is to be accomplished.

However, Russia is not the only irritant in U.S.-Europe relations. Disputes over trade, defense spending, and Germany's decision to push forward with Nord Stream 2 have cracked transatlantic solidarity. While these are difficult issues, we must remember they are not without precedent. Like any close relationship, we have experienced significant disagreements before—Suez, Pershing missiles, and Iraq come to mind. But the historic, cultural, and political bonds that unite us have always proven stronger than the transitory disputes that threaten to divide us. I have no doubt they will prevail again over our current quarrels.

Senator JOHNSON. I am an accountant. I like data. There are two relatively big issues that have been brought to the fore in the last 18 months. One relates to NATO's—our NATO partners meeting their 2 percent commitment. The question I always had, okay, 2 percent—have the limited number of them actually meeting that—What does that mean, dollar-wise? And we did ask the State Department. And, in 2016, that shortfall was about \$122 billion worth of defense spending. Now, in 2017, according to testimony, they have increased spending, about 14.4 billion. It is slated to go up another 10 billion in 2018. So, now the shortfall is about 98 billion. We are told that, over the period from 2019 to 2024, another 35-and-a-half-billion-dollar shortfall will be filled, leaving a 62-billion-dollar shortfall 8 years after 2016. So, it just kind of puts that into perspective, in terms of what that actually is.

And, as I have discussed this with our European allies and friends and partners, I always try and make the point that this is not just President Trump making this point. He is really speaking for the American public. If Europe expects America to be steadfast in our relationship, the least Europe can do is spend that 2 percent and, you know, contribute their fair share.

The other point I want to make is—and the other, you know, bone of contention, obviously—is trade. We hear, you know, the massive trade deficits. The fact of the matter is, we export—in 2017, we exported—America—about \$528 billion into the EU. We imported \$629 billion from the EU, leaving a goods-and-services trade deficit of about 101 billion. That is about 19 percent of what we export.

Now, I understand that the President is trying to reset our trading relationships, shock our European partners into really reducing tariffs. I think the best term that the President has introduced into this debate is reciprocal treatment. It would be great if we could have total reciprocity in our trading relationship, with no trade barriers, whether tariff or non-tariff barriers. That is a worthy goal. Hopefully, we can achieve that goal as quickly as possible.

Dr. Mitchell, I also did read your speech to the Heritage Foundation. And just kind of—I do not want to steal your thunder, but I thought it was pretty salient, because I do not think it is included in your testimony, that you said in that speech, “Coming into 2017, the administration inherited a failed Russian reset, a conflict in Ukraine that had already cost 10,000 lives, a failed red line with Syria, the largest migration wave in recent European history, an EU that was navigating the first formal exit of a member state in its history, and an insolvent Iran agreement that had helped en-

able a scale of Iranian expansion from the Persian Gulf to the borders of Israel not seen since antiquity.”

These are some enormous challenges. We still face them. New challenges are growing every day. This is—you know, I am 63 years old. I really cannot remember a world that seems to be so destabilized, so many threats coming from so many different directions. So, I think this will be a pretty interesting conversation today.

And again, I appreciate your willingness to testify.

With that, I will turn it over to Ranking Member Murphy.

**STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER MURPHY,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT**

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Ambassador Mitchell, for being with us here today. As I hope you know, I tell visitors into my office from Europe regularly how lucky we are that you have chosen to take up this very difficult assignment. I want to congratulate you on some recent good news with respect to an agreement between Greece and Macedonia, which hopefully paves the way for Macedonia to join some of the most important European and transatlantic institutions. And, once again, I thank you for your service and your willingness to serve.

That being said, we had a nominee to be the Ambassador to the EU before this committee last week, and it is fairly ridiculous that it took a year and a half to get an Ambassador to Brussels. But, he characterized the moment that we are in today with respect to the U.S.-Europe relationship as just part of the normal ups-and-downs in the transatlantic relationship. This simply is not true. The relationship between the United States and Europe is in crisis. It has never been this bad in the postwar era. It is getting worse by the month. And if it collapses, as I would argue it is on pace to do, then the entire world order, based upon a joint U.S.-European drive to spread open economies and participatory democracies to the world, collapses, as well.

I know this sounds hyperbolic, but I really do think the stakes are this high. I think the state of the relationship, if it is even a relationship these days, is in that bad a state. And I do not even have time to run through the gauntlet of abuses that this President, in a short year and a half, has heaped on Europe. But, here are just a few:

He has unilaterally backed out of the two most important diplomatic achievements between our two continents in the last decade, the Paris Accord and the Iran nuclear agreement. He started a trade war, that the Chairman referenced, with Europe, perceiving our European allies to be global economic adversaries rather than partners. He regularly personally attacks European leaders on Twitter, reserving the most vicious treatment for Germany, the undisputed leader of the EU. He cheered, as a candidate, and still cheers, the breakup of the European Union, parading Nigel Farage around D.C. like some sort of revolutionary hero. He traffics European white nationalist propaganda through his social media feed, trying to open, rather than heal, racial and ethnic divides in Europe. And he recently announced that Russia should rejoin the G7

without even a single consult with our European partners about what message that would send, given the fact that Russians' behavior in the region has gotten worse, not better, since Trump's election.

This has all led one of the greatest friends of the U.S.-Europe relationship, Foreign—Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, to say, "Is Putin interfering and trying to destabilize the policies of the EU? Yes. But, Trump, at the moment, is far worse. The President's hostility towards the EU is making the challenges that we face jointly all the more difficult, from Brexit to the rise of populism, tensions in the Balkans, finding a solution to immigrant flows, countering Russia's energy dominance and interference politically in the region, fighting terrorism. The United States should be standing side by side with our allies in Europe, not trying to break apart this relationship."

I hope that you will continue to serve as a bulwark against the worst of these attacks from this President. But, you and the other supporters of the U.S.-EU alliance are losing this argument with the—within the administration, badly, so far. We are very lucky to have you and many others trying to win that argument, but, unfortunately, you have come out on the wrong side. And I look forward to exploring some of these topics over the course of this hearing.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

Dr. Wess Mitchell is the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. Prior to his appointment, Dr. Mitchell cofounded and spent 12 years building the Center for European Policy Analysis. He is the author of numerous articles, reports, and books on transatlantic relations and geopolitics. Dr. Mitchell received his Ph.D. in political science from Freie University, in Berlin, Germany.

So, Secretary Mitchell, do not be constrained by the 5 minutes. I mean, give us your full opening statement, then we will start with questions.

**STATEMENT OF HON. A. WESS MITCHELL, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Dr. MITCHELL. Thank you, Senator Johnson and Senator Murphy, members of the committee. I appreciate you calling today's hearing. I am very happy to have this opportunity to talk about the strategy that is guiding the administration's approach to Europe and Eurasia.

Next year will mark three decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall. We—as we celebrate the triumph of Western democracy over communism, we must remind ourselves that this outcome was not inevitable. It was a product of active, intense, and prolonged effort by the United States and our European allies.

I think it is now very clear, in retrospect, that history did not end in 1989. Today, as both of these Senators have mentioned, Europe is once again a theater of serious strategic competition. Europe today faces pressures on multiple fronts: strategic campaigns from Russia and China, record waves of migration, Iranian ambitions in the Mediterranean and the Levant, and a crisis of confidence in European institutions. Our Europe strategy begins by ac-



knowledging that America and Europe must take the reality of strategic competition seriously. Our goal is—was outlined by President Trump in Warsaw, and that is to preserve the West. We cannot succeed in that task without Europe, which, together with the United States, is the West and the heart of the free world.

Preserving the West begins with strengthening our physical defenses. The United States has demonstrated our resolve by reaffirming our commitment to NATO Article 5 and putting real resources into the defense of Europe. We are providing military assistance to Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, the Baltics, and other European countries. For fiscal years 2018 and 2019, the administration has requested more than \$11 billion in new funds to expand the European Deterrence Initiative.

Our allies are stepping up. At U.S. urging since January 2017, every NATO member but one has increased defense spending. The number of allies that will spend 2 percent on defense by 2024 has tripled, and the number allocating 20 percent to major equipment has nearly doubled. In that time, the alliance, as a whole, has raised defense spending by 5.1 percent, or \$14.4 billion, and we project a further \$10 billion increase this year, the largest such increase in a generation.

But, material strength is only part of the equation. Taking strategic competition seriously requires that the United States and Europe replenish our shared commitment to the cause of freedom that, since antiquity, has been the West's foremost gift to the world. Russia and China both represent a coherent model, stability founded on authoritarianism and brute force harnessed to certain aspects of market competition and commingled with state-run politicization of the economy.

Both Russia and China want to break the West. Russia wants to splinter it, and China wants to supplant it. One place where they are especially aggressive is in Central and Eastern Europe. Our first priority here is to check Russian aggression. In recent years, a revanchist Kremlin has attempted to forcefully redraw borders, intimidated and attacked neighbors, launched disinformation and cyber campaigns against the West, and engaged in military build-ups on its western frontiers.

We seek a better relationship with Russia, but that can only happen when Russia stops its aggressive behavior. We will not compromise our principles or our allies. As Secretary Pompeo has said, the years of soft policy that enabled Russian aggression are over. We will continue to raise the cost of Russian aggression until President Putin chooses a different path.

Since January 2017, we have brought sanctions against 213 Russian individuals and entities. In response to the Skripal attack in the United Kingdom, we helped to organize the largest expulsion of Russian spies in recent history, and sent more than 150 intelligence officers back home to Russia. In partnership with EUCOM, the State Department is leading the U.S. Government's effort to counter Russian disinformation. We continue to demand that the Russian government uphold its international commitments and allow its citizens to exercise their fundamental freedoms without fear of retribution.

In parallel, we are building up the means of self-defense for the frontier states most directly threatened by Russian militarily, Ukraine and Georgia. We lifted the previous administration's restriction on enhanced defensive assistance and helped both states improve their defensive capabilities. Simultaneously, we are striving to keep Ukraine on the path of reform, most recently by urging its leaders to adopt an anticorruption court that meets IMF standards and to set gas tariffs to market prices. And we are working to strengthen U.S. political, military, and economic engagement with Georgia.

Across the eastern frontier, from the Baltic to the Black Sea and into the heart of the Danubian Basin, we are working to build stronger long-term bulwarks against the Chinese and Russian inroads that weaken our allies' security and undermine their ties to the democratic West. We are working with allies to strengthen the resilience of their political systems and to combat corruption, improve their military readiness, diversify energy supplies through projects like the Southern Gas Corridor, Krk Island, and BRUA Pipeline, and increase regional coordination through projects like the Three Seas Initiative, Visegrad, and Bucharest 9.

Throughout this region, we are animated by the urgent need outlined in the National Security Strategy to compete for positive influence. Nations here have greater strategic options than in the past. The memory of 1989 is fading. We must be diligent to defend Western principles, but we must also be willing to engage diplomatically much more robustly than we did in the recent past. Criticism bereft of engagement is a recipe for estrangement. We must provide a viable alternative to allies and reach out to them constructively or expect to lose them to rival spheres of influence.

Europe's southern frontier, the Mediterranean Basin and its littorals, is another point of strategic focus. Rallying our allies to take Europe's southern frontier more seriously will be a major focus of the upcoming NATO Summit. We are working with allies to increase and coordinate contributions to operations in the Middle East, secure Europe's borders, get NATO more deeply engaged in the counterterrorism business, and project stability in North Africa and the Middle East.

The Eastern Mediterranean poses particular challenges. Russia has increased its naval presence there and is seeking to solidify a sphere of influence. Turkey faces profound external and internal challenges. It is a steadfast partner in defeat-ISIS efforts and migration, and an indispensable component in counterbalancing Iran. We look forward to working with the newly reelected President Erdogan on these challenges while also making clear that issues in our bilateral relationship need to be resolved.

Our immediate concerns are to secure the release of Pastor Andrew Brunson and other unjustly detained U.S. citizens and local Embassy staff, to prevent Turkey's purchase of the Russian S-400 system, and to develop a modus vivendi for our respective forces and local partners in stabilizing Northern Syria and preventing ISIS's return. We encourage President Erdogan to immediately implement his pledge to lift Turkey's ongoing state of emergency, and to take additional measures to represent the views of all of Turkey's citizens and strengthen Turkey's democracy.

In parallel, we are constructing a long-term strategy to bolster the U.S. presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. We are cultivating Greece as an anchor of stability in the Mediterranean and Western Balkans, and working to systematically strengthen security and energy cooperation with Cyprus.

We are also increasing U.S. engagement in the Western Balkans. Through active U.S. diplomacy and close coordination with the EU, we supported Prime Minister Tsipras and Prime Minister ZaeV in achieving a potentially historic breakthrough in the Greece-Macedonia name dispute. We opened up communication channels with both Serbia and Kosovo, and are promoting reforms in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In all of these areas—anchoring the Western alliance, securing Central and Eastern Europe, and stabilizing the South—we are committed to finding a common way forward. In the past 9 months, I have made 29 visits to European countries and given more than 22 speeches. Through this outreach, I have seen that what unites the West is far greater than what divides us. While strong U.S. positions on Iran, trade, burden-sharing, and Nord Stream 2 may not lead to immediate agreement with allies, the long-term cost of neglecting these things far outweigh whatever short-term benefits we get from the appearance of political unity today.

On all of these fronts, our message is the same. We must act. We can debate, strategize, and coordinate, but we must act. We cannot continue to defer action on things that make the West collectively weaker against serious rivals. Our task is one of strategic renovation, doing the hard work of shoring up and strengthening the West now so that we do not have to later, on terms that are much less favorable. As Metternich said, “To preserve is to act.” I am committed to doing exactly that, and I am convinced that we will succeed, with Europe, together.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Mitchell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. A. WESS MITCHELL

Thank you Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the Committee for calling today’s hearing. I am happy to have the opportunity to talk about the strategy that is guiding the Administration’s approach to Europe and Eurasia.

Next year will mark three decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall. As we celebrate the triumph of Western democracy over communism, we must remind ourselves that this outcome was not inevitable. It was the product of active, intense, and prolonged effort by the United States and our European allies.

History did not end in 1989. Today Europe is once again a theater of serious strategic competition. It faces pressures on multiple fronts: strategic campaigns from Russia and China, record waves of migration, Iranian ambitions in the Mediterranean and Levant, and a crisis of confidence in European institutions.

Our Europe strategy begins by acknowledging that America and Europe must take the reality of geopolitical competition seriously. Our goal, as outlined by President Trump in Warsaw, is to preserve the West. We cannot do so without Europe, which together with the United States is the West and the heart of the free world.

Preserving the West begins with strengthening our physical defenses. The United States has demonstrated its resolve by reaffirming our commitment to NATO Article 5 and putting real resources into the defense of Europe. We are providing military assistance to Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, the Baltics and other European and Eurasian countries. For fiscal years 2018 and 2019, the Administration has requested more than \$11 billion in new funds to expand the European Deterrence

## INITIATIVE

Our allies are stepping up. At U.S. urging, since January 2017, every NATO member but one has increased defense spending. The number of allies that will spend 2 percent on defense by 2024 has tripled. And the number allocating 20 percent to major equipment has nearly doubled. In that time, the Alliance as a whole has raised defense spending by 5.1 percent or \$14.4 billion, and we project a further \$10 billion this year—the largest such increase in a generation.

But material strength is only part of the equation. Taking competition seriously requires that the United States and Europe replenish their shared commitment to the cause of freedom that since antiquity has been the West's foremost gift to the world. Russia and China both represent a coherent model—stability founded on authoritarianism and brute force, harnessed to certain aspects of market competition and commingled with state-run politicization of the economy.

Both Russia and China want to break the West: Russia wants to splinter it and China wants to supplant it. One place where they are especially aggressive is in Central and Eastern Europe. Our first priority here is to check Russian aggression. In recent years, a revanchist Kremlin has attempted to forcefully redraw borders, intimidated and attacked neighbors, launched disinformation and cyber campaigns against the West, and engaged in military buildups on its western frontiers.

We seek a better relationship with Russia. But that can only happen when Russia stops its aggressive behavior. We will not compromise our principles or our allies. As Secretary Pompeo has said, the years of soft policy that enabled Russian aggression are over; we will continue to raise the costs of Russian aggression until President Putin chooses a different path.

Since January 2017, we have brought sanctions against 213 Russian individuals and entities. In response to the Skripal attack in the UK, we helped to organize the largest expulsion of Russian spies in recent history and sent more than 150 intelligence officers home to Russia. In partnership with EUCOM, the State Department is leading U.S. government efforts to counter Russian disinformation. We continue to demand that the Russian government uphold its international commitments and allow its citizens to exercise their fundamental freedoms without fear of retribution.

In parallel, we are building up the means of self-defense for frontier states most directly threatened by Russia militarily: Ukraine and Georgia. We lifted the previous administration's restrictions on enhanced defensive assistance and helped both states improve their defensive capabilities. Simultaneously, we are striving to keep Ukraine on the path of reform, most recently by urging its leaders to adopt an anti-corruption court that meets IMF standards and set gas tariffs to market prices. And we are working to strengthen U.S. political, military, and economic engagement with Georgia.

Across the eastern frontier, from the Baltic to the Black Sea and into the heart of the Danubian Basin, we are working to build better long-term bulwarks against the Chinese and Russian inroads that weaken our allies' security and undermine their ties to the democratic West. We are working with allies to strengthen the resilience of their political systems and combat corruption, improve their military readiness, diversify energy supplies through projects like the Southern Gas Corridor, Krk Island and Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria (BRUA) pipeline, and increase regional coordination through projects like the Three Seas Initiative, Visegrad 4 and Bucharest 9.

Throughout this region, we are animated by the urgent need, outlined in the National Security Strategy, to compete for positive influence. Nations here have greater strategic options than in the past. The memory of 1989 is fading. We must be diligent to defend Western principles. But we must also be willing to engage diplomatically much more robustly than we did in the recent past. Criticism bereft of engagement is a recipe for estrangement. We must provide viable alternatives to allies and reach out to them constructively. Or expect to lose them.

Europe's southern frontier—the Mediterranean Basin and its littorals—is another point of strategic focus. Rallying our allies to take Europe's southern frontier more seriously will be a major focus of the upcoming NATO Summit. We are working with allies to increase and coordinate contributions to operations in the Middle East, secure Europe's borders, get NATO more deeply engaged in the counterterrorism business, and project stability in North Africa and the Middle East.

The Eastern Mediterranean poses particular challenges. Russia has increased its naval presence there and is seeking to solidify a sphere of influence. Turkey faces profound external and internal challenges. It is a steadfast partner in Defeat-ISIS efforts and migration, and an indispensable component in counterbalancing Iran. We look forward to working with newly re-elected President Erdogan on these challenges, while also making clear that issues in our bilateral relationship need to be

resolved. Our immediate concerns are to secure the release of Pastor Andrew Brunson and other unjustly detained U.S. citizens and local embassy staff; to prevent Turkey's purchase of the Russian S-400 system; and to develop a modus vivendi for our respective forces and local partners in stabilizing Northern Syria and preventing ISIS' return. We also encourage President Erdogan to implement immediately his recent pledge to lift Turkey's ongoing state of emergency, and to take additional measures to represent the diverse views of all of Turkey's citizens and strengthen Turkey's democracy.

In parallel, we are constructing a long-term strategy to bolster the U.S. presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. We are cultivating Greece as an anchor of stability in the Mediterranean and Western Balkans and working to systematically strengthen security and energy cooperation with Cyprus.

We are also increasing U.S. engagement in the Western Balkans. Through active U.S. diplomacy and close coordination with the EU, we supported the visionary leaders Prime Minister Tsipras and Prime Minister Zaev in achieving a potentially historic breakthrough in the Greece-Macedonia name dispute. We have stepped up communication with both Serbia and Kosovo. And we are promoting reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In all of these areas—anchoring the Western Alliance, securing Central and Eastern Europe, stabilizing the South—we are committed to finding a common way forward. In the past nine months, I have made 29 visits to European countries and given more than 22 speeches. Through this outreach I have seen that what unites the West is far greater than what divides us.

While strong U.S. positions on Iran, trade, burden-sharing, and Nord Stream 2 may not lead to immediate agreement with allies, the long-term costs of neglecting these things far outweigh whatever short-term benefits we get from the appearance of political unity today. On all of these fronts, our message is the same: we must act. We can debate, strategize and coordinate. But we must act. We cannot continue to defer action on things that make the West collectively weaker against serious rivals. Our task is one of strategic preservation through renovation: Doing the hard work of shoring up and strengthening the West now so that we don't have to do so later on terms that are less favorable. As Metternich said, "to preserve is to act."

I am committed to doing exactly that. And I am convinced that we will succeed, together. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Dr. Mitchell.

I am just going to ask one question, and then I will turn it over to Ranking Member Murphy.

We had an interesting conversation in my office before the hearing, here, and I had asked you previously, you know, To what extent do we know the dollar investment that China is making into, you know, all of Europe, and particularly Central Europe? And you actually did give me a figure on that. Now, in your testimony, you mentioned, a couple of times, the pressure of the influence that both Russia and China are trying to yield within Europe. But, we also talked a little bit about Hungary. Can you, first of all, tell us how much China is investing, how strategic their investment is, and just give us your thoughts, in terms of what is happening in Hungary?

Dr. MITCHELL. Thank you for that question, Senator.

The Chinese investment in Central and Eastern Europe is serious, it is strategic, and it is growing. The exact dollar amounts are hard to pin down, but a good estimate is, between the—2005 and 2017, People's Republic of China invested more than \$24.19 billion in the 16+1 countries that form Central and Eastern Europe. To give you a sense of perspective on this, China is the primary financier of a high-speed railway link between Budapest and Belgrade that is valued at approximately \$3.8 billion alone.

As a frame of reference, the United States, and OPIC in general, oversees—is somewhere between 40 and 60 billion, worldwide. For Europe and Eurasia, if you are looking at the amount of aid and

assistance that we put out, it is something like 1.13 billion, total, including supplemental funding, excluding Central Asia.

So, I think the scale of what the Chinese are putting into this region is considerable, in monetary terms. They are also very strategic with these investments. They use what you could call “debt-book diplomacy,” where they invest in strategic properties and infrastructure on pretty easy terms, and then they wait until countries cannot service the debt, and they claim the infrastructure. They are sharpening their outreach in soft power and the creation of Confucius Centers. So, they are competing for influence. And I think, from a U.S. and a Western perspective, we have to acknowledge that we have lost a lot of ground in Central and Eastern Europe. '89 is an increasingly distant memory for a lot of people.

And one of the most serious objectives that I think we have to have, that my team and I are working on, this year and into next year, is the 30th anniversary of 1989. It is a magnificent opportunity for the U.S., through our outreach and public diplomacy and aid, to reengage hearts and minds in that region. And that is an endeavor that will take a lot of focus and effort, but I look forward to working with this committee to increase the Western and U.S. presence in Central and Eastern Europe.

Senator JOHNSON. But, again, you have encouraged me, and I have made a couple of trips now to Serbia and Kosovo, paying attention to them. You know, whether we can actually get the EU to integrate them anytime soon is another question, but paying attention and trying to engage. But, we also talked a little bit about Hungary and Poland. I mean, the—both leaders have come under criticism, here, but you have a—you know, from my standpoint, a policy of positive engagement, if that is a—can you just kind of speak to that?

Dr. MITCHELL. Well, I think we have to engage, Senator. I think we have lost ground, in part because our rivals are showing alacrity and creativity to the Russians, as well, but in part because of unforced error on our part. And I think, you know, a number—I would just start from zero and say, we—to your point, we did deprioritize Central and Eastern Europe as a strategic theater. I think we did that, starting after 2011, for some very good reasons at the time. From 2009 onward, we had a reset and a pivot to Asia. So, we were de-emphasizing Central and Eastern Europe both militarily and diplomatically. The Russians and Chinese were not. And, in many countries in this region, I think you see that the Russians and Chinese have gained considerable political and economic yardage. I think, in the recent past, when the United States has often been harder on our allies, like Hungary or Poland, than we are on Russia, through periods like the reset, I think that that has been a mistake. I think it created vacuums that others have filled.

So, in our approach, going forward, what we try to do is strike a balance. We have to be clear about our principles and what we stand for. That is who we are. And we will never stop being clear about our principles, both publicly and privately. But, I think we have to balance that with increased diplomatic engagement. The Chinese and Russians are in these countries on a regular basis at senior levels of government, spending lots of money on infrastruc-

ture. If we just show up occasionally and we do nothing but criticize, we can expect to lose ground.

So, I think we have to strike that balance very carefully. And, first and foremost, we have to get back in the game and compete for hearts and minds.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Listen, it is no secret, I think that our strategy with respect to Europe is a, just, total debacle. And it is not your fault. I understand you do not share the views of this President with respect to the attacks that he has launched on Europe or some of the policies he may be implementing towards Russia. But, you are the only one that we can ask, so let me try to get some clarification on what our policy is.

Let us start with Russia. The President recently announced a new U.S. policy to bring Russia back into the G7, reversing the previous policy of requiring Russia to implement the Minsk agreement before being invited back in to join the G7. Why did our policy change?

Dr. MITCHELL. Thank you for that question, Senator. And let me answer both the first and second part of it.

The first part of it, I would say, on our approach to Europe, I think it is well articulated in the President's Warsaw speech. And I think his starting point, and the starting point of this administration, is to say we are not going to strengthen the West by continuing the polite fiction of some areas of U.S. and European policy that are weakening us, collectively, and probably preventing the United States from wanting to stay engaged in Europe, long term. So, burden-sharing, Iran, imbalances in trade, Nord Stream 2, all of these have been positions that we have staked out very forcefully because we believe, if you do not address those things in the years ahead, the West, collectively, will be worse off.

On the issue of Russia, the administration has been clear that the door to dialogue with Russia is open. We have stated that repeatedly at various levels. We have opened avenues of communication on Ukraine, on Syria, on cyber. An improvement in the bilateral relationship, however, can only happen when Russia stops its aggressive behavior. So far, we have been disappointed in the Russian government's unwillingness to accept responsibility for its actions. With regard to upcoming developments, vis-a-vis Russia on the G7, the Department does not—has—we have nothing to announce at this time. I think what we have been clear on, and what I will continue to fight for, is an approach to Russia that is open to dialogue but does not sacrifice our principles or our friends.

Senator MURPHY. But, just to be clear, the President expressed his desire for the G7 to bring Russia back in, with no preconditions. Regardless of what the State Department has to announce, you are not in charge of U.S. foreign policy. The President is. And he announced that his desire is to bring Russia back in, without preconditions. I mean, we all watched him say it on TV. Is that not the President's position?

Dr. MITCHELL. Well, I think that is extrapolating somewhat from the comments that he made. As I understand the President's view

of Russia, this is a—this is the—one of the world’s largest nuclear powers. We have to be open to dialogue. We have to reach out and keep the channels open. But, I think this administration, in the last year and a half, has done more to take tough stance on Russia than the previous administration did in its first 6 years in office in a reset that helped pave the way for the Ukraine war. So, I think our record on Russia—if you judge this administration by our actions, the stance we have taken on sanctions, 213 individuals and entities in the last year and a half, what we are doing on Nord Stream 2, what we are doing to buck up our allies, I think we have a good record.

Senator MURPHY. Let me—listen, the administration got dragged, kicking and screaming, to implement those sanctions, by people on this panel. So, to suggest that the administration is leading on a set of sanctions that you were forced to put into place by legislation passed by this Congress, I just—I think it is—I have great respect for you, Ambassador. I think that is stretching the bounds of how this played out.

The President recently tweeted, “The people of Germany are turning against their leadership as migration is rocking the already tenuous Berlin coalition. Crime in Germany is way up. Crime in Germany is up 10 percent since migrants were accepted. Other countries are even worse. Be smart, America.” This is pretty exceptional, that the President is openly campaigning against the leader of the most important country inside Europe, tweeting that Germany is turning against their leadership. We know that the statistics he references are not true. In fact, crime is down 10 percent, not up 10 percent. But, why is the President openly trying to undermine Chancellor Merkel’s political support in Germany? How does that support U.S. objectives?

Dr. MITCHELL. I think the situation with migration in Europe is one that we have to take very seriously. And in the last few months, in Italy, Austria, Germany, France, I think publics in these countries have been very clear that they want stronger borders, they want to protect the nation-state, and—

Senator MURPHY. I guess, that is not my question. My question is—this is a very personal attack on Chancellor Merkel. He is saying that the people of Germany are “turning against Chancellor Merkel,” and using his social media, using his voice to criticize her and to cheer those that are politically opposing her, side by side with an Ambassador to Germany who has openly stated he is going to use his position to help conservatives across the continent, politically. My question is not about our position on migration. My question is, Why is the President weighing in on the political circumstances of the Chancellor? Why is he using his voice to try to politically undermine the Chancellor? You could disagree with me that you do not think that tweet is doing that, but it certainly sounds, when you say that Germany is turning against Angela Merkel, that you are trying to undermine the Chancellor.

Dr. MITCHELL. Well, I interpreted the President’s tweet to be an expression of concern about the state of migration in the Western world, generally. And I think we have been slow to wake up to this challenge. It is a divisive issue in a lot of our societies. I think, as I understand the President’s statements on this, we have to take



migration seriously. The—it—migration—irregular migration in Europe is challenging societies at all levels—economically, socially—and it cannot be addressed by simply saying that the door is wide open, without a discussion about—a serious public policy discussion about how we regulate and moderate the flow of irregular migrants.

On Ambassador Grenell, I think his comments were taken out of context. He has made clear that he is not endorsing any particular candidate or political party. We have a very robust dialogue with the German government on a lot of areas of the relationship, and expect that dialogue to continue. Ambassador Grenell has since clarified his comments and noted that it is not U.S. policy to endorse candidates or parties, and he was making general observations in the interview.

My focus overall in the relationship with Germany is to increase engagement in all areas possible. We have a very strong bilateral relationship with Germany, a lot of areas of cooperation in security, counterterrorism, trade. I take the long view. I think the transatlantic relationship and the U.S.-German relationship have been through a lot of storms in our history. That should not lull us into complacency. I think we have to be very proactive in building up as much cooperation as possible. But, I think the relationship is a lot more healthy than is often made out in the media.

Senator MURPHY. Okay, thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Portman.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your holding the hearing.

And, Ambassador Mitchell, good to see you. Three quick questions.

First has to do with something that might be viewed as more of a U.S. priority than a European priority. But, I think it is both. And that is how to screen investments. I understand you talked earlier about the fact that China has invested about \$24 billion in Europe since 2001. As you know, we have a CFIUS process, here in this country, which, while imperfect, allows us to screen investments. The same is not true in Europe. I was recently in Europe, in Eastern Europe, talking about a number of issues, including Senator Murphy's and my legislation on disinformation and how we are coordinating with them to push back against Russian disinformation, primarily. And this issue came up. And there was actually an interest, on behalf of some of the countries, in working with us to help understand how we could come up with a way to view investments, from a national security perspective.

So, my first question to you is whether you have worked on that. How do you feel about it? And has the State Department done anything to share best practices and exchange information and coordinate efforts with our allies to prevent adversaries from using commercial tools to undermine our national security?

Dr. MITCHELL. Thank you for the question, Senator.

It is a very timely question. When I was in the Czech Republic last week, we held the—a meeting of the U.S.-Czech Strategic Dialogue. And this was one of the items of discussion. We are working closely, through our embassies, with Central and Eastern European countries. There are different ways to go about creating a national

security filter. There is different models that can be used. The point of emphasis in all of them is to find a mechanism by which allied government can draw a differentiation between investments that are purely commercial and market-oriented and those that are animated by or create—could create a pathway to abuse of national security concerns. So, we are in active, ongoing dialogue with our allies on that. In Central Europe proper, it is a particularly important subject, and it is something I have been closely engaged on.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, good. Well, I would encourage you to continue to do that. And, for those who are listening who are wondering why this is a big deal for the United States, it is a backdoor to the United States. In other words, if European firms become owned, let us say, by a Chinese company that might have a national security interest, and particularly in obtaining technology in the United States, we then contract with that company in Europe that has now not gone through the CFIUS-type process with regard to Chinese investment. We could circumvent our process here. So, I think it is really important for us, as well as for our allies in Europe. And I hope you will continue to work with them on that. I think it is in our interest that they do have a screen.

With regard to U.S.-Russian relations, you made an interesting point earlier, which is that you can look at the rhetoric or you can look at the results. And it is pretty impressive, in terms of what this administration has been able to do, in terms of pushing back in some very specific areas. The sanctions were talked about. Understandably, Congress is a little more forward-leaning on some of those sanctions. But, the administration did sign the legislation and has implemented those sanctions. And the sanctions are appropriate as to, not just Crimea and the illegal annexation, but also other issues. And I think that is appropriate, to keep these sanctions in place.

With regard to providing lethal weapons, defensive weapons, to the Ukrainians to be able to defend themselves, we worked with the Obama administration for years on that issue. No—it was unsuccessful. And initially in the Trump administration, there was some concern. But, at my recent trip to the Ukraine, I was able to see the results, which is that now the Trump administration is providing the Ukrainians the means to defend themselves. And the Javelin missiles being, of course, the most striking example of that, but other equipment, as well, including anti-sniper packages to be able to push back against what is happening on the line of contact, where I was able to go, over the Easter period.

So, my question to you is, If there is a Russian Summit, which it looks like there will be, here, coming up, do you expect that these sanctions are going to become part of the conversation? I expect they will. And what is your view on that? There has been some criticisms of the way some of these sanctions have been implemented, from people who would like to be tougher on Russia. I know Russia will push back the other way. What do you expect will happen at that Summit? And what will your be—your advice be?

Dr. MITCHELL. Thanks for the question.

I know there has been a lot of speculation about this, and I would just say that we are going into all aspects of our engagement with the Russian Federation with eyes wide open. We remember

the example of reset. I think we have had two consecutive administrations—it is not even a partisan issue—prior to this administration that started their term with a positive opening to the Russians, and that was abused, and then ended their term with a regional war. That is not something that we are going to replicate.

On the issues of—issue of sanctions, specifically, I have read the legislation very carefully, and CAATSA, in particular, spells out what would be needed in the way of changed Russian behavior in order to see a lifting of sanctions or a softening of sanctions. That is law. It is stipulated very specifically. We will abide by the law as it has been formulated. I think we have to be able to say, in our conversations with the Russians, what specific actions would be needed to address our concerns, whether it is lifting sanctions or changing the overall temperature in the relationship. And in all of these areas, in the case of CAATSA, it is defined very specifically. On Ukraine, leaving Eastern Ukraine, the matter of Crimea, cyber, what is happening in Syria, I think that is very clearly spelled out. And we will continue to abide by the letter and spirit of the law.

The broader point that you make on Russia, I think, is an important one that transcends multiple administrations. And it is this increasing pattern of a Russia that abuses openings early in an administration's term. And we have seen that often enough that I think the U.S., collectively—I think both parties, and certainly this administration, is alive to the tendency of Vladimir Putin to abuse one-sided openings. I think that the reset was illustrative in this regard. I remember the open letter that several Central and Eastern European friends of America wrote in the early days of the reset, and warned us that if we open this door to one-sided engagement, not only would Putin abuse it, but we would likely have a war on our hands. And that proved, sadly, prophetic. We stepped back on missile defenses for Poland and Czech Republic, we stepped back on promoting democracy in the post-Soviet space, and we see the consequences of that. So, you had the pivot, you had the reset, we withdrew our—the last U.S. tanks from Europe.

And I think that is important to keep in mind, simply because we had a solid, secure period in the previous administration that I would characterize as the perception of engagement, but the reality of disengagement. And, I think, in this administration, in our first year and a half, we have a very strong track record. And I think we have exactly the opposite. While it is often described as disengagement, I think we are very engaged in Europe right now. Look at what we are doing on EDI, look at our stance on Nord Stream 2, look at what we are doing on Iran. So, I think we may not agree with our allies on the tactics on every one of these things, but we are in close dialogue, we are committed to finding a joint way forward, and I think we will.

Senator PORTMAN. With regard to Ukraine, just for a second—my time is expired—I suspect one of the issues to be raised at the Summit is President Putin asking to make decisions about Ukraine without Ukraine at the table. That certainly has been the approach they have taken in the past. Again, in your role, I expect you to have strong views on this. How would you advise the President on this issue of Ukraine? And specifically, the sanctions and what is going on in the contact line on the eastern border of Ukraine.

Dr. MITCHELL. Well, I am not going to engage in too many hypotheticals. I will say that, on Ukraine, we have been very clear in our public messaging, and I think the legislation is clear, what specific actions would be needed on the part of the Russians in order for us to lift sanctions. And I think we have shown our resolve in this matter, not least by providing defensive aid to the Ukrainians and to the Georgians.

I think, you know, beyond that, our overall mindset has to be that we keep the door open to constructive dialogue where there are shared areas of interest. It is increasingly hard to see where there are shared area of—areas of interest to the Russians. But, I think we owe it to the American people and to international stability to keep open to the idea that we can find those areas, particularly in counterterrorism. But, again, I will not engage in hypotheticals. I—we will see where the process leads. But, I think we have been very clear about where the boundaries are.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate the comments.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary Mitchell, for being here today and for all of the good work that you are promoting in Europe.

In your statement, you say very clearly that we seek a better relationship with Russia, but it can only happen when Russia stops its aggressive behavior. Do you think Russia has stopped its aggressive behavior?

Dr. MITCHELL. No, ma'am.

Senator SHAHEEN. So, this week, National Security Advisor John Bolton is heading to Moscow to plan a summit with Vladimir Putin here in the United States, where President Trump is talking about having what appears to be a very positive meeting with Vladimir Putin. What kind of message does that send to our European allies about our willingness to be tough with Vladimir Putin?

Dr. MITCHELL. Thanks for the question, ma'am.

You know, our European allies consistently say to us that they want the United States to have a less adversarial relationship with Russia. I think they see that—they see the need to strike the same balance that we see and the previous administration saw, a need to strike a balance between engagement where there are shared interests—I am a skeptic that there are many areas, but we have to be open go that—and balancing that for a strong messaging on interests and values.

In terms of the National Security Advisor's outreach, I call that diplomacy. And what I would say is that, whether that leads to a better relationship, or even a meeting, is up to the Russians. I think we have been publicly clear what the standard is for seeing a change in the relationship with Russia, on Syria or on Ukraine. We have been crystal clear in our messaging on the need for the Russians to stop meddling in our own internal affairs. But, whether that—

Senator SHAHEEN. But, let me—

Dr. MITCHELL.—leads to—

Senator SHAHEEN.—let me just interrupt you there, because I would agree that—I mean, we may disagree about the motives, but

I agree that the actions over the last year and a half have been tough on Russia, because of the sanctions that were passed overwhelmingly by a bipartisan Congress, and that that has been very important. But, we have not—there is a difference between what we are doing and what we are hearing out of this White House based on Russia. And the concern that I have got is—you are talking about, “Russia needs to stop meddling in our internal politics and our internal economy,” and yet we have not heard this President even acknowledge that Russia is meddling in, and is continuing to meddle in, American elections. And there are concerns about what that will mean for the upcoming midterms. So, despite the fact that the intelligence community has said that, and I think a number of people within the State Department have acknowledged that, the President has not acknowledged that. And that is the disconnect that I am concerned about and about what this kind of a summit—what kind of a message that sends to Russia, and whether they will misinterpret what the intent of the United States is.

Dr. MITCHELL. I understand your question. And I would say, judge us by our actions. We—our goal, at this point, is to ensure that any dialogue we do have with the Russians—and it is not yet clear whether there will be one—but, to ensure that, in any interactions that we have the Russians, we are doing so from a position of U.S. strength. And I think we have accumulated that position of strength and leverage in the past year and a half very well.

Senator SHAHEEN. As you point out, the proof is in the pudding. And so far, we have not seen any actions really taken to address Russia’s meddling in the United States, other—by the President. So, I look forward to seeing what might come out of that kind of a summit.

But, I want to switch to NATO, because, as Senator Murphy pointed out and you acknowledged, we have made—we have seen progress between Greece and Macedonia on the naming issue. And what do you think that means for the potential for Macedonia to join NATO? And are you concerned about the—what we are seeing—the demonstrations that we are seeing in both Greece and Macedonia, and whether that will deter the governments of both of those countries in their resolve on this issue?

Dr. MITCHELL. Well, thank you for that question.

It is a critical issue, and I will just say it is—making progress on the name dispute has been a major point of focus for our team. To answer your question directly, I would say, yes, I am concerned. I am specifically concerned about the potential for Russian meddling. We saw this with Montenegro. Russian representatives have been making very threatening statements. And I think there is a high potential, particularly on the Macedonia side, for the Russians to try to interfere with this. We have made clear to the Russians we are watching it closely, and it is not in Moscow’s ambit to decide Macedonia’s future. We are working together with—to strengthen Macedonian institutions. We have excellent security cooperation with the Macedonians. And I am in frequent contact with senior leaders there. Also, we know Russian methods.

More broadly on your question, the next steps on this are that the Macedonian parliament has—the Macedonian parliament has

ratified the deal, but it has to be confirmed by a public referendum. And then the parliament has to adopt the necessary amendments by a two-thirds majority. We would then expect to see Greece ratify the agreement only after Macedonia has made the constitutional changes. And then we expect to see NATO extend an invitation to what would be North Macedonia at the summit in July. We are hopeful that the EU will decide to open accession negotiations. That is much less certain right now than the NATO path. We—

Senator SHAHEEN. Have you had a chance to talk to the EU about that?

Dr. MITCHELL. Yes, we have.

Senator SHAHEEN. Have they—

Dr. MITCHELL. We are in—

Senator SHAHEEN. Have they given you any indication of what they might do?

Dr. MITCHELL. We are in frequent dialogue, daily dialogue, with—particularly with the French, on this matter. The French have some concerns that—we are working with them to help understand their concerns and chart a way forward. I am optimistic that we will see that. As you know, we are coming up on a council meeting. But, I think everyone recognizes that what the Greek and Macedonian leaders have done is truly historic and, if it is successful, has the potential to be something on the scale of Dayton for its implications for the Balkan Peninsula. And, really, I would expect to see a tailwind from that in how we approach Serbia-Kosovo, how we approach Bosnia-Herzegovina. And I—and we are committed to using that opening, not just on the name issue itself, but to get a ripple effect in other parts of the region.

Senator SHAHEEN. So, if there is a summit between Vladimir Putin and President Trump, will you and Secretary Pompeo be advising the President that he should raise the issues of Russian meddling in Greece and Macedonia, and in the Balkan region in general, as one of the issues for their discussions?

Dr. MITCHELL. The issue of Russian meddling is at the forefront of all interagency discussions about Russia. It is a central reality that we are very focused on. So, my short answer to your question would be yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. And are you aware that the President has, in any of his conversations with Vladimir Putin, raised those concerns?

Dr. MITCHELL. I am not aware of the—and we often do not reveal the content of all private diplomatic conversations, but I know the administration has frequently and publicly raised the concern.

Senator SHAHEEN. The President has frequently and publicly raised the concern?

Dr. MITCHELL. The administration.

Senator SHAHEEN. But, not the President.

Dr. MITCHELL. I would have to review the record, ma'am.

Senator SHAHEEN. I would love to have you review the record and share with this committee any occasions in which the President has raised those concerns publicly.

Dr. MITCHELL. Happy to do so.

[The information referred to was not available at time of print]

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

As long as we are talking about dialogue, I think it is important, and I think we need to do it from a position of strength and resolve. There is no doubt about it. And, Dr. Mitchell, I think you are aware, Ambassador Huntsman encouraged me to lead a delegation, which Senator Shaheen was going to join, as well. I think it was going to be in January 2017. And then, unfortunately, Senator Shaheen was denied entry. So, we called it off. We were not going to let the Russians play the game. Now, Senator Shelby is going to be leading a delegation next week, and I signed on to that. I am not sure whether they are going to let me in. My plans are still up in the air. I want to go. So, I guess I would just encourage you to use whatever contacts.

The dialogue is good. I think it should be a goal to improve relations with, you know, a power that has 7,000 nuclear weapons, that is putting pressure on Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, and trying to gain greater influence. Dialogue is good, but, from a position of strength. So, again, I will just encourage you to—I want to go, and I want to try and improve those relations, but, from a standpoint of strength and resolve.

We meet, I think all of us meet, frequently with our European partners. I have made more trips to Europe than I probably intended to in 2017. One of the reasons is, I want to reaffirm, certainly Congress's—you know, our branch of government's—our strong, unanimous commitment to those strong strategic alliances with both NATO and the EU. I am hopeful, in those discussions, that people realize that, long term, those are strong relationships. Do you get the same sense? I mean, you know, obviously—and again, I am—I kind of appreciate your testimony here. By ignoring problems—I am not one to ignore problems. I want to get right in. If there is conflict involved, fine, but get the problem resolved and move forward, in terms of long-term, strong relationship. Do you get the sense that that is the attitude as you are dealing with our European partners, that they can separate the short-term troubles versus what the long-term outlook is?

Dr. MITCHELL. I do. I get the impression, in our conversations with members of NATO and the EU, there is a growing realization that history did not take the course that people expected it to take, from the vantage point of 1989, that the world is becoming more competitive geopolitically, that the West faces very serious challenges from China and Russia and Iran. And I think the political willingness to engage those challenges has increased.

You know, this is not the first administration to raise the matter of burden-sharing or Nord Stream 2. I think what is changing is both the urgency, which is what the United States is raising it, but also there is—it is—I think it has been a wake-up call for Europeans to see things like the Ukraine war on their own doorstep, 10,000 casualties so far, the irregular migration flows as a result of the conflict in Syria. So, geopolitics is back.

And, on a long-term basis, if we take it a—if we take a long view and we say—in a few years' time, we look back and we are able to say that we increased burden-sharing, and Germany, in particular, met its 2 percent commitment, that we killed Nord Stream 2, that we got a fairer and more reciprocal playing field in inter-

national trade and transatlantic trade, and that we got a framework in place for dealing with Iran, I think that would be a pretty good run. I think we can look back and say, on that basis, the West, as a whole, is collectively better off for the strategic competition.

None of these things that we are working on in our diplomacy are things that we are approaching from a narrow U.S. self-interest. They are in the American interest. But, in most cases, they are things that we have raised repeatedly with European allies in the past, and that we want to make headway on.

Senator JOHNSON. And we are making headway, particularly on the burden-sharing. It was interesting, when I first joined this committee, I believe Senator Murphy was Chairman of the subcommittee at that point in time, and we met repeatedly with European partners. And, back then, if you remember, the discussion was all about Edward Snowden, Angela Merkel's cellphone, that type of thing. And then Charlie Hebdo happened. And I have not heard that since. And it really is the serious nature of—the threat of terrorists pose to all of our societies, and the need for us to maintain strong partnerships, and particularly share the intelligence, which is the first line of defense against that. Do you believe that our intelligence-gathering and—sharing and cooperation—is that as strong today, or stronger, than it certainly was before Charlie Hebdo?

Dr. MITCHELL. Our intelligence and law enforcement cooperation with European countries in a NATO framework, EU framework, and on bilateral bases, is exceptionally strong.

Senator JOHNSON. So, again, that is a good positive outlook in terms of what a relationship is.

Just talk a little bit about—again, this kind of goes back to a conversation we had in our office—the different approach that both Russia and China use, versus the U.S., when it comes to investing in foreign countries.

Dr. MITCHELL. Well, I think the Russians and Chinese have done a better job than the West, collectively, in the last few years, integrating matters of commerce and investment into a geopolitical or a strategic vision. They—the Chinese, in particular, tend to view commercial investments abroad as a matter of state. And my perception is that they—the Chinese have tended to approach these questions with a much more long-term filter or framework in mind. And I think, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, you see the results of that, a quiet, skillful building up of influence, relationships, and investment over the last several years, that the Chinese have undertaken through the 16+1 and the One Belt, One Road. I think we have to acknowledge that these are serious, well-thought-out, well-resourced, long-term efforts. And we have to be candid about the goal. And the goal is very much to undermine the Western order, both politically and economically.

The West, by comparison, I think, has tended to segment strategic issues and trade. I think we have also tended to see—or tended to imagine that the institutional enlargements of the immediate post-Cold-War period were a straight-line trajectory that was sort of an arc of history or an end of history that implied a certain amount of lassitude on our part. And I think the events of the last



several years have been a real wake-up call that Europe is not a post-geopolitical environment.

I think we have—I think we are catching up quickly in understanding the need to compete in that environment, but the message of the National Security Strategy, first and foremost, is that that is a serious and prolonged strategic competition with big-power rivals, that counterterrorism will always be important and a priority, but it will not retain the salience in U.S. foreign policy that it did from the—from 9/11 until a couple of years ago, that we have to shift into a different mindset for the West, in general. And that requires some tough choices for our societies.

Senator JOHNSON. So, real quick, you know, America, we spend about 1 percent of our Federal budget on foreign aid; in the past, oftentimes, with very little—very few strings attached, you know, really just showing the compassion of the American public. China does it—goes about it a little differently, do they not? I have certainly heard anecdotal evidence, where they will build, let us say, a port, but then make a loan, which the country obviously cannot pay off, default the loan, all of a sudden they own the port. Is that kind of a standing operating—standard operating procedure with—

Dr. MITCHELL. That is a—

Senator JOHNSON.—the way China goes about—

Dr. MITCHELL.—that is a good generalization. I think that is an accurate characterization. I would just add that the Chinese tend to apply less in the way of obvious near-term strings. There are strings attached. Countries find, down the road, when they can no longer service the debt, that they—chunks of their infrastructure are claimed. So, there are strings attached. They are less immediate. And I think the Chinese have also tended to have more of a relationship-based approach to national elites, who, in many of these countries, are corruptible, and corruption remains—I would argue, corruption is the single-biggest problem, even among some of our allied states in Central Europe. And the Chinese are very brazen in using those pathways of corruption.

Senator JOHNSON. Where we cannot do that. You know, so—yeah, so that is a big difference. It is—I hate to say this—a huge advantage they have, in terms of making those types of strategic investments with the delete.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Just two quick comments on the conversation we are having about Russia, and then I want to change the topic to try to get another set of questions in before the time is over.

Listen, I—you and I have a different analysis of what happened in 2013 in Ukraine. I do not want to litigate it here, but I do think it is a convenient conceit to suggest that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was a consequence of a set of American policies from 2008 to 2013. I can, frankly, make a very different argument to you, that it was, in fact, the success of the transatlantic relationship that had brought Ukraine to the point at which they were considering joining the European Union that panicked Russia into a mistake that they will pay for, for a very long time, unless Trump gets his wish and they are brought back into institutions like the G7.

And I also do not think that there is a lot of evidence that Russia's bad behavior is getting better. In fact, I would argue that it is getting worse. You have seen significant democratic backsliding in Poland, Hungary, Turkey, that has been cheered by the Russians. You have seen the United States effectively outsource diplomacy in Syria to the Russians and to the Turks. Big, major, new Russian investments in places like the Balkans at levels we did not see during the Obama administration. And the continued partnership between the Russian government and the Trump administration with respect to pushing Trump's agenda. Schumer's shutdown was trending on Twitter because of Russian government propagandists who were pushing that storyline in the U.S. media. They have not given up on their attempts to try to influence the American political dialogue. So, I do not think that there is evidence that their bad behavior is getting—is lessening. I think, frankly, it is getting worse and worse.

Let me turn to the Iran nuclear agreement, because I would love to have you talk to us for a few minutes about what our strategy is. The announcement that we were going to pull out of the agreement was not unexpected. The message has been sent, from what I understand, that we are going to reimpose U.S. sanctions, but also secondary sanctions. As you know, Chancellor Merkel and others in the European Union are attempting to try to keep the Iranians to their end of the agreement, which, in their minds, involves, for instance, keeping Iran's access to banking systems, such as the SWIFT system.

So, I guess my question is a bigger one, but it has two parts. What are our plans to continue to roll out previous sanctions, such as secondary sanctions, on European companies that are doing business with the Iranians? And how on earth do—does the administration plan to do what they said they were going to do, which is put together a series of sanctions that are tougher than the previous set of sanctions? Because, right now, we seem to be in a world in which the Europeans want no part of that, they want to continue this relationship with Iran to try to get Iran to refrain from restarting their nuclear program. We seem to be a little unclear as to exactly what the pace of the reimposition of the sanctions are. And, to most folks, there seems, today, as if there is absolutely no hope of ever being able to put back together a set of sanctions than were stronger than the ones that we had back in place. Flesh this out a little bit for us.

Dr. MITCHELL. Sure. Thank you for those questions.

On the first point, I would—I completely agree with you, and I want to be crystal clear on this in a public setting, that there is one person responsible for the Ukraine war, and that is Vladimir Putin. I think it is important to acknowledge: in recent years, U.S. policy, as Secretary Pompeo has said, helped to create an environment, a permissive environment, that aided—indirectly aided many of Putin's aggressive aims, which is to say the decisions we make in U.S. policy do help to create a context in—that our rivals can either exploit or not exploit. I think the reset was a big part of that.

My point is, we should not have a double standard, where an administration can go for 6 years with a very lopsided courtship of

an authoritarian Russia, where we were pulling back on our values and our interests, but it is somehow off bounds for this administration to even talk about planning a meeting with the Russians to explore whether it—whether there are points of cooperation. I take your overall point. Vladimir Putin is the one who was responsible for the Ukraine war.

On the issue of Iran, you know, the Secretary recently outlined our approach. It, I would argue, is a much more comprehensive strategy, in that, in addition to imposing financial penalties, it focuses also on engaging the Iranian people, creating a deterrence structure for our regional allies, and dealing with ballistic missiles and malign activity.

It is interesting, unlike our European allies, our Middle Eastern allies were very much not pleased with JCPOA. They saw, both in monetary and in military terms, how JCPOA created an opening for Iran to become more aggressive. So, I think the—our focus, at this point, is working with all of our allies, not just in Europe, but in the Middle East and in East Asia, to build a comprehensive international framework.

What I have seen in our interactions with the Europeans in talking about Iran, both pre- and post-decision on the JCPOA, is, I think there is a fair and wide consensus between ourselves and European allies on analysis of the Iranian threat, much more so than there was before we started this process. Our European interlocutors acknowledge the need to deal effectively with ballistic missile proliferation, with arming the Houthis and bringing the Revolutionary Guard into Syria. President Macron, when he was here, had a four-point formula, or four pillars, that are very similar to the U.S. approach.

Senator MURPHY. On—right, on non- —right, I understand that. But, you are talking about non-nuclear activity. I submit that we can continue to work with the Europeans on non-nuclear activity. But, let us just get the—let us just get the playing field straight today. The Europeans today are not interested in reimposing new nuclear sanctions on Iran. They are interested in trying to hold together the set of economic benefits that will entice Iran to stay in the nuclear agreement. That is Europe's position today.

Dr. MITCHELL. Well, I think we will know more about Europe's position in coming days. There is some difference of opinion among different members of the E3 and then from the EU. We will know more about their collective perspective on this when we have more dialogue in the near future.

What I would say, though, is, I think there—the self-policing of European companies, the flight of European companies doing business in Iran away from Iran, has changed the equation, in the sense that, when European leaders look at Iran and they see their own businesses are voluntarily removing themselves from the equation in Iran, I think that creates a different playing field.

Senator MURPHY. Yeah, it still does not sound to me like a strategy about how you get the Europeans into a fundamentally different place than they are today. I mean, it is true that, today, the Europeans are trying to—that Merkel, in particular, are trying to hold this deal together. And there does not seem to me to be any strategy to reverse their position, or any short- or medium-term

hope to ultimately rebuild a set of sanctions that were tougher than the ones that we had. I know that you can hope for that to be true, but part of the reason that most of the foreign policy establishment surrounding the President begged him not to do this was that they knew that that would be a likely impossibility.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

I would like to go back to the Balkans, because, as you know, recent electoral issues in Bosnia-Herzegovina have contributed to concerns about stability there. And I wonder if you could talk more specifically about what we are doing to work with the international community to try and encourage a fix to allow elections to move forward.

Dr. MITCHELL. Thank you for that question, Senator.

I have been personally very engaged on this issue. And when I was in the Balkans last week, this was a point of discussion. Two broad strands to this approach. The first is, we are working very closely, particularly with the European Union and other regional allies, to use the small window that we have in the lead-up to the elections to really push for electoral reform. And I think Kovic, in particular, will be the key. We are working with the Croats, in particular. When I was in Zagreb last week, we believe that they will be the key to formulating the House of Peoples in a way that allows for a stability but also equal representation. In a parallel track with NATO, we have supported the British approach in NATO, in the lead-up to the summit, of lowering some of the conditions with regard to the defense properties so that we can have a clearer path to a discussion about NATO prospects, essentially so that Srpska lista is not exercising a de facto veto.

I would—on the Balkans, in general, I would like to get back to the place we were when Bosnia-Herzegovina was the main and biggest problem of the Balkans, so to deal with the name issue and deal with Serbia-Kosovo and get more attention to Bosnia-Herzegovina. I do think the conditions there create a very attractive opening for the Russians to meddle.

Senator SHAHEEN. And there is no doubt about that. Not just in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but, as you point out, in Kosovo and Serbia and throughout the Balkans. So, I think the more we can do to help stabilize the situation, the better.

I want to turn, finally, to Turkey, because there are a number of issues with Turkey that I know the State Department is very concerned about. And one of those is their continued pursuance of the S-400 air defense system from Russia, which obviously would be in violation of CAATSA law. So, can you talk about what the administration is doing on that front? And if Turkey does accept delivery of that system, when would we invoke sanctions under CAATSA?

Dr. MITCHELL. Thank you for that question.

As you know, Senator, I have been very engaged with the Turks on this. It is a very serious matter. We have been clear, in all of our communications with the Turkish government, that acquisition of the S-400, which we would assess to have occurred when there is actual—an actual delivery of the technology—we have been

clear, on multiple occasions with the highest levels of the Turkish government, there will be consequences. First and foremost, what is spelled out under CAATSA, Section 231, we will abide by that. And when a—when we determine that a transaction has been made, we will impose sanctions in accordance with the—CAATSA, Section 231.

We have also been very clear that, across the board, an acquisition of S-400 will inevitably affect Turkish—the prospects for Turkish military industrial cooperation with the United States, including F-35. I have—I think we have to put this in the context that this is a crucial ally and partner. What they are doing for us and with us on Defeat ISIS is absolutely essential. We work with them very closely in intelligence and in other areas, but this has the potential to spike the punch. And I think we cannot be any clearer than saying that both privately and publicly, that a decision on S-400 will qualitatively change the U.S.-Turkish relationship in a way that would be very difficult to repair.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I think that is an important message for Turkey to hear. As I am—think you are aware, I have been involved in efforts, with Senators Lankford and Tillis, to try and delay the delivery of F-35s to Turkey, because of—primarily because of their holding, without any reason, American citizens, particularly Pastor Brunson. And I appreciate that, at last week's ceremony with Lockheed Martin on celebrating the partnership with Turkey on the F-35, that the State Department did not send a representative to the ceremony. I think it is, again, part of trying to send a clear message to Turkey about what our views are. And—but, I do know that there is some confusion about whether planes have actually been delivered. It is my understanding that DOD officials have said that we have already begun delivery of planes. It is my understanding that that is not the case. Can you confirm for us whether any planes have actually been delivered to Turkey?

Dr. MITCHELL. As you probably know, this—Senator, the—in this program, the U.S. maintains custody of aircraft until their transfer, which normally occurs after a lengthy training process. In my view, that is helpful for us in these circumstances, because it gives us time to continue the messaging. My understanding is that we are in the training phase.

We have watched developments on the Hill. We know some of what is being considered on F-35. We believe that we have existing legal authorities that would allow us to withhold transfer, under certain circumstances, including national security concerns. Given that, we believe that we continue to have the time and ability to ensure Turkey does not move forward on S-400 before having to take a decision on F-35. We are being very clear, in our messaging to the Turks, that there will be consequences. Beyond that, I would request the ability to discuss it with you in a classified setting.

Senator SHAHEEN. I am happy to do that. As you know, those—the provisions that are in the NDAA and in the appropriations bill are also on track for passage, so there will be additional ability to cite the acts of Congress in dealing with Turkey.

Can you tell me, to the extent that we can make this information public, how many American citizens we believe Turkey may be holding in prison?

Dr. MITCHELL. We can confirm dozens of U.S. citizens, mostly U.S.-Turkish dual nationals, that have been detained or deported since the start of the state of emergency. You are aware of some of the legal and privacy restrictions on our ability to discuss it in this setting. My understanding is that there are roughly two dozen detainees. Most are detained on criminal charges or foreign terrorist charges. Of that number, I believe four have signed privacy waivers. And we also have three locally employed staff who are being detained.

Senator SHAHEEN. And can you talk about what we are doing to try and address those improper detentions, and who we are talking to in the Turkish government, and the extent to which we are bringing this up with President Erdogan?

Dr. MITCHELL. The subject of these detained citizens, but particularly American citizens, is at the forefront of our agenda with Turkey. And as important as these other areas are all the way up to the level of the Secretary and the President, it tops our list when we talk to the Turks. And the point that we have tried to make repeatedly is two things. Number one, Turkey does have legitimate security concerns that need to be addressed. And we have tried to help address those, including in Syria. In parallel, we have tried to help the Turks understand that, if they continue to unjustly detain American citizens, it will significantly alter the tenor of our relationship.

We appreciate that Capitol Hill has created leverage for us in some of these areas. We use that leverage to the maximum ability. We explore every inch of leverage that we have on these. We raise it constantly.

I will just use this setting to lay a very strong marker on the case of Andrew Pastor—Pastor Andrew Brunson, in particular. I have been in close touch with his wife and in his family—with his family. We have looked at the arraignment, in terms of the case that was brought against him, in both English and in Turkish. There is nothing there. This is as manifest a case of unjust detention as we have seen. There are limits to how far we can go in transactionalizing things with any ally or with any country, but we have examined every option, and we message it all the way to the highest levels, and will continue to do so.

Most immediately, we are hoping and expecting to see President Erdogan act on the pledge that he made during the campaign expeditiously to lift the state of emergency. And we are monitoring that very closely.

Senator SHAHEEN. And I know I am out of time, but, if I could, Mr. Chairman, just follow up with another question.

Because I know that, in the past, we have often assumed that, after elections, it would be easier to deal with President Erdogan and Turkey. That has not necessarily proved to be the case. And is there any reason to believe that he may be more responsive after these elections?

Dr. MITCHELL. It is a good question.

We are—we have consistently said that we respect the democratic desires of the Turkish people. We were concerned about some irregularities in this election. We are concerned about the state of human rights. I think, in the period after the election, our ap-

proach is going to be to continue to find those areas where we can cooperate and strengthen the relationship. As I said, Turkey is a strong ally and partner that has legitimate security concerns. So, we are going to continue to try to strike that balance.

I am not going to try to look in a crystal ball. I would just say that I think President Erdogan knows what our expectations are about our people, about the weapon systems, about all aspects of the relationship with other allies in the region. And we are going to use every opening that we have to message that, but also try to get this relationship on a better track. It—Turkey—keeping Turkey on a track towards not only the political West, but the geostrategic West, has to be a prime objective for U.S. strategy in the region.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Thanks, Senator Shaheen. I appreciate you bringing up the subject of Turkey. Turkey's treatment of Pastor Brunson is simply outrageous, and I think they need to understand that every Member of Congress is highly concerned about it. I appreciate your and Senator Tillis's lead on it.

Mr. Secretary, I appreciate your strong statement on it, as well. That would be a really big step, in terms of helping to improve relationships with a very important country.

My final question is—we have not talked about the Baltic states. I have always been concerned, you know, particularly after Russia's invasion of Georgia, Crimea, Eastern Ukraine, you know, what could be next. Our response now, with lethal defense and weaponry into Ukraine, hopefully sends a pretty strong signal. Can you just give me your assessment, in terms of the dangers of Russian meddling in the Baltics?

Dr. MITCHELL. I think those dangers are very real, sir, and I think the Baltics—the Baltic states, their security and political relationships with the United States have never been stronger. These are model democracies, really set the standard in the—across the region for strong Atlanticist bulwarks. I think we have to be diligent in this area, both militarily and with regard to hybrid and cyber threats. And we have strong pathways of coordination with all three of these countries.

Senator JOHNSON. Well, Dr. Mitchell, we really do appreciate your service. Incredibly important relationships we are dealing with in a very unstable environment and world. So, you know, thank you for your service, for your testimony.

And, with that, the hearing record will remain open for the submission of statements or questions until the close of business on Thursday, June 28th.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:06 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

#### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

THE COMMITTEE RECEIVED NO RESPONSE FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY A. WESS MITCHELL FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEDEZ

At the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, the member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance issued a declaration welcoming Ukraine's and Georgia's NATO member-

ship aspirations and stated NATO's support for the two countries' applications for Membership Action Plans (MAP). Recent developments on the Macedonia name dispute have also increased prospects for that country to make progress toward NATO accession. Meanwhile, we have seen significant backsliding on democratic rule of law in some NATO states like Hungary and Poland.

*Question.* Will the United States urge that the 2018 NATO Summit joint communique reiterate aspirations for the eventual NATO membership of Ukraine and Georgia?

Answer. [No Response Received]

*Question.* How will the United States and its NATO allies address the issue of Macedonia moving to join the alliance and what specific steps will be taken at the summit to boost such prospects?

Answer. [No Response Received]

*Question.* Will the NATO Summit communique reiterate that respect for democratic values and the rule of law are core foundations to which all alliance members must adhere? How will the United States engage at the Summit on democratic backsliding in NATO member states?

Answer. [No Response Received]

Russian government aggression and interference against our allies and partners in Europe has increased dramatically in recent years. Across Europe, the Kremlin is advancing disinformation campaigns, corruption, cyber hacking, intrusion into domestic political affairs, and efforts to create energy dependency to threaten our European allies. As President Trump prepares to meet with President Putin, it is critical for him to confront—clearly and directly—this aggression in all its varied forms, and to marshal a whole-of-government strategy to respond.

*Question.* Will President Trump object to the Kremlin's interference in elections and democratic processes in the U.S. and across Europe during his July 16 meeting with President Putin? Will he reiterate longstanding calls for Russia to reverse its illegal annexation of Crimea and its violent aggression in Eastern Ukraine?

Answer. [No Response Received]

*Question.* What actions is the Administration taking to combat state propaganda in Europe? How is the Global Engagement Center (GEC) engaged in this with regard to Russian disinformation, and have any GEC projects in Europe been launched?

Answer. [No Response Received]

*Question.* What efforts is the State Department making to ensure continued coordination with the EU on maintaining sanctions against Russian malign actors, particularly as the bloc prepares for a renewal vote on its existing sanctions regime? How is the Department pushing for expanded EU sanctions, to reinforce U.S. efforts under CAATSA?

Answer. [No Response Received]

Russia's illegal occupation of the Crimean peninsula and covert military and political interference violate the freedom and sovereignty of the Ukrainian state. The United States has historically supported the freedom, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of our Eastern European allies, as we did in the Welles Declaration of 1940, but President Trump's reported comments that Crimea is Russian because of the prevalence of Russian speakers there raise questions about whether United States policy on the peninsula is in flux. Meanwhile, Russia's illegal occupation continues to generate dire human consequences—with estimates that at least 50 individuals from Crimea are currently held in Russian custody on politically-motivated grounds.

*Question.* Will the Administration formally issue a policy statement akin to the Welles Declaration, stating our commitment to the sovereignty of our European allies and that the United States will never recognize Russia's illegal annexation and occupation of Crimea?

Answer. [No Response Received]

*Question.* Is the U.S. government engaged in discussions with the Russian government on the release of Ukrainian political prisoners, such as Oleg Sentsov and Aleksandr Kolchenko, who were arrested in Crimea and are currently languishing in Russian prisons for their support of an independent, sovereign Ukraine?

Answer. [No Response Received]



*Question.* How is the U.S. government engaged in promoting respect for human rights and religious freedom in Crimea, including for journalists, civil society activists, and members of non-Russian ethnic groups?

Answer. [No Response Received]

I am concerned that, without successful efforts to visibly hold corrupt actors accountable and break the grip that a small group of oligarchs has over Ukraine's political and economic life, our anti-corruption efforts to date will be stymied. The passage this month of legislation to establish an independent anti-corruption court in Ukraine was undermined by the dismissal of a finance minister who had been active in promoting transparency measures.

*Question.* What role does imagine the United States will play in the establishment and functioning of such a court?

Answer. [No Response Received]

*Question.* What will be the appointment process for judges to an independent anti-corruption court? What role will the international community have in the safeguarding the political independence and credibility of the appointment process, and specifically, what will be the extent of American involvement in the selection of judges?

Answer. [No Response Received]

Turkey continues its occupation of northern Cyprus amidst reports of efforts to influence the culture, politics, and demographics of the north of the island. It has also failed to offer or accept confidence-building measures to move the parties back toward peace talks.

*Question.* What action is the Administration currently taking to build a closer security and defense relationship with Cyprus, including high-level engagements and practical exchanges? Is the Administration willing to lift the embargo on U.S. arms sales and transfers to which Cyprus is currently subject?

Answer. [No Response Received]

*Question.* What is the State Department's strategy to encourage a change in Turkey's posture on Cyprus and renew progress on peace talks?

Answer. [No Response Received]

The inauguration of a new prime minister in May after weeks of peaceful, pro-democracy protests presents a new opportunity for the United States to support Armenia's democratic development, peaceful relations with neighbors, and resilience against Kremlin influence and corrupt, anti-democratic spoilers inside the country.

*Question.* What approach is the State Department taking to support democratic elections in Armenia, including by supporting domestic and international observers and providing rapid assistance to OSCE or other key actors?

Answer. [No Response Received]

*Question.* What other assistance and diplomatic efforts is the State Department undertaking, including through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, to respond to recent developments in Armenia and boost progress in the country on democratic, judicial, media, and anti-corruption reforms?

Answer. [No Response Received]

*Question.* How is the State Department helping Armenia to resist aggression from external actors like Russia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan, who may seek to block democratic reforms or seize on its transition to advance their own ends?

Answer. [No Response Received]

The position of a Special Envoy on Northern Ireland remains vacant. The lack of a dedicated U.S. point person on Northern Ireland leaves us poorly equipped to push for full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and the protection of elements that are core to peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland.

*Question.* When will the Trump Administration appoint a Special Envoy on Northern Ireland and an ambassador to the Republic of Ireland?

Answer. [No Response Received]

*Question.* What is the State Department doing to address deficiencies in the parties' implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, particularly in light of Brexit negotiations?

Answer. [No Response Received]

---

RESPONSES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY A. WESS MITCHELL TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

It has been nearly six months since I released the Senate Foreign Relations Committee minority staff report, 'Putin's Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security.' You and I have previously discussed this report.

*Question.* What do you and your staff make of the report's findings and recommendations?

Answer. Russia has shown through its aggressive actions that it rejects the post-Cold War order. Russia's efforts have extended beyond traditional military campaigns to encompass a suite of "hybrid" tools used to gain influence. Safeguarding the United States and our Allies and partners from Russian malign influence campaigns is a core component of the Administration's Russia strategy, our diplomatic engagement with partners and allies, and our foreign assistance. I agree Russian efforts to undermine democratic processes and the sovereignty of its neighbors are unacceptable and require a whole-of-government response. We are working across the U.S. government, as well as closely with Allies and partners, to deter and defend against these activities both at home and abroad.

*Question.* Is there any effort to implement any of the report's recommendations?

Answer. The Department works across the interagency, as well as closely with Allies and partners, to deter and defend against Russian malign activity both at home and abroad. The Department works on a whole-of-government basis that combines diplomatic, foreign assistance, intelligence, and law enforcement lines of effort to:

- Expose Russian malign behavior and combat misleading narratives in the press.
- Target our foreign assistance to increase the resilience of our partners to resist and counter Russian pressure. We support programs to improve good governance; expand civic engagement and independent media; enhance cyber security; increase defense capabilities; strengthen rule of law and anti-corruption measures; and promote European integration, trade diversification, and energy security.
- Promote positive, truthful narratives about the United States and its Allies to reinforce the importance of Western institutions and values to partner governments and populations that are most vulnerable to Russian influence.
- Develop and fund programs that help foreign audiences recognize false narratives and stave off attempts at influence.
- Work with partners and Allies to share information and exchange best practices, including through multilateral Centers of Excellence.
- Provide concrete support to partner countries in response to specific threats, including cyber threats.
- Enhance partner capacity to mitigate cyber vulnerabilities and respond to threats through technical assistance and bilateral and multilateral diplomatic engagement.

These efforts are coordinated across the interagency at every level to ensure a comprehensive approach.

*Question.* Are you concerned about Russia's reported involvement in Mexico's democratic process ahead of its July 1 election, and, does the Administration remain concerned about Russia's possible meddling in our democratic institutions and processes ahead of the 2018 midterm elections?

Answer. Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy and self-governance and any efforts to improperly influence Mexico's elections would be completely unacceptable. We are aware of concerns of Russian involvement in Mexico's electoral process that were raised early in the campaign season, but we are confident in Mexico's democratic process and the oversight of the Mexican Election Institute to accurately reflect the will of the Mexican people.

The Department of State works closely with other departments and agencies to protect our nation against potential interference in our election processes. As the lead foreign policy agency, we warn the Russian government when its behavior is

unacceptable, work with our interagency partners to impose costs in response, and build international coalitions to actively deter malign Russian activities and to share best practices. We will continue to support the domestic efforts of the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice and, as appropriate, state and local officials to secure our elections, leveraging all necessary and available Department resources to counter Russian interference efforts.

There has been a recent uptick in violence and prejudice in Europe that has impacted not only racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse populations living in Europe, but also American servicemen and women, diplomats, and students. Through the State Department authorization and appropriations processes, I and other members of Congress have asked for a State Department focus on advancing diversity and promoting integration of all segments of the population in Europe, including religious, racial, and ethnic minorities.

*Question.* What is the Department currently doing to address the violence and advance integration generally? For Roma, Afro-descent, Muslim, migrant and refugee populations?

*Answer.* The Department of State works with our European partners to combat intolerance, foster inclusion, and promote respect for human rights, including those of persons belonging to vulnerable groups, including the Roma, people of African descent, Muslim, migrant, and refugee populations, and other ethnic and religious minority groups. Doing so is a core element of U.S. foreign policy and consistent with our commitments under the OSCE's Helsinki Principles and other international covenants.

The Department also reports on acts and violence and discrimination against such groups in our annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and International Religious Freedom Reports. In addition to bilateral and multilateral diplomatic engagement, U.S. foreign assistance in Europe and Eurasia supports and empowers civil society in these areas, helping to foster increased inclusion of minority and disadvantaged groups; and works collaboratively with government and civil society partners to identify and learn from successful strategies for inclusion and integration of refugee populations applicable to the European and Eurasian context.

I will continue to work closely with the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and with the OSCE's respective Tolerance Representatives, to condemn and combat intolerance and hate-motivated crimes against members of vulnerable populations, including migrants and ethnic and religious minorities.

*Question.* In my capacity as OSCE Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance, can we partner on a specific initiative to advance diversity and promote integration in Europe?

*Answer.* The Department of State always welcomes involvement from members of Congress on important issues at the OSCE, including advancing diversity and promoting integration in Europe. We appreciate how active you and the rest of the Helsinki Commission have been within the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, where the U.S. delegation has always been a strong supporter of tolerance and non-discrimination. The Department would be interested to receive your ideas for any initiatives. Assistant Secretary Mitchell would welcome the opportunity to discuss.

The European Parliament recently hosted the first ever People of African Descent week, where over 100 hundred Afro-descent elected officials, civil society and private sector leaders highlighted increasing hate crimes and discrimination in employment, justice and other sectors impacting the 10–15 million citizens and others making up Europe's Afro-descent population. Recommendations included the European Union adopting a Framework Strategy for the Inclusion of People of African Descent and increased civil society and private sector funding for Afro-descent led initiatives. The U.S. has long supported efforts focused on vulnerable groups, including detailing abuses in the annual human rights reports and supporting empowerment initiatives such as start-up and other funds for entrepreneurial and human rights efforts on the ground.

*Question.* What is the Department currently doing to address the situation of People of African Descent in Europe? What more can be done?

*Answer.* The Department of State remains committed to protecting and promoting the human rights of all persons, including people of African descent. Democracy and stability are most secure when all people, including the most vulnerable, live freely without fear of violence or discrimination. The United States works with governments in Europe and Eurasia both bilaterally and in cooperation with the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to combat intolerance and xenophobia, foster inclusion, and promote the security, safety, and

human rights of persons belonging to vulnerable minorities, including those of African descent. As noted in your question, the Department also reports on acts and violence and discrimination against members of this community in our annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

*Question.* In my capacity as OSCE Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance, can we partner on a specific initiative to advance diversity and promote integration in Europe?

*Answer.* The Department of State always welcomes involvement from members of Congress on important issues at the OSCE, including advancing diversity and promoting integration in Europe. We appreciate how active you and the rest of the Helsinki Commission have been within the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, where the U.S. delegation has always been a strong supporter of tolerance and non-discrimination. The Department would be interested to receive your ideas for any initiatives. Assistant Secretary Mitchell would welcome the opportunity to discuss.

*Question.* I have repeatedly asked for the Administration to appoint a Special Envoy to Combat and Monitor Anti-Semitism in part given recent anti-Semitic incidents taking place in western and eastern Europe. Do you have any information on whether someone will be appointed in the near future?

*Answer.* Secretary Pompeo told Congressman Smith in May he would do his best to see a Special Envoy to Combat and Monitor Anti-Semitism (SEAS) appointed soon. In the absence of a SEAS, we have continued our strong diplomatic efforts to combat anti-Semitism. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback and his team have been meeting with Jewish leaders to hear their concerns and, along with our embassies, have been pressing governments in Europe and elsewhere to take steps to protect Jewish and other religious minority communities and promote religious freedom.

*Question.* As Ukraine works to advance democracy, protect human rights, and counter corruption, one particular area of concern relates to manifestations of anti-Semitism, other forms of extremism, and building revisionist national mythologies in ways that have stoked tensions with neighbors and allies. Violent attacks against Roma have significantly escalated over the course of this year. The most recent attack, on June 23, resulted in the death of a 24-year-old man, David Papa. What is the United States doing to help Ukraine end this violence, hold perpetrators accountable, and counter extremism?

*Answer.* The Department of State is committed to promoting and protecting religious freedom, ethnic tolerance, and combating anti-Semitism internationally. We regularly raise our concerns regarding the rehabilitation of controversial wartime figures and manifestations of hate, neo-Nazism, and persecution of the Roma community with the Government of Ukraine. The U.S. Ambassador and embassy officials in Ukraine closely monitor and condemn incidents of anti-Semitism and anti-Roma manifestations. They strongly advocate for the protection of religious heritage sites through regular meetings with the Presidential Administration, ministry officials, and members of parliament.

In our Human Rights and International Religious Freedom Reports, the Department of State regularly reports on anti-Semitic and anti-Roma incidents. These include physical and verbal attacks, vandalism of Jewish community property and desecration of Holocaust memorials, and the rehabilitation of individuals who were associated with anti-Semitism and collaborators who killed Jews during World War II.

*Question.* The United States has invested considerable time, money and personnel in the Western Balkans in general and Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular. However, Bosnian political players have repeatedly failed to undertake constitutional or other reforms to make government more functional and effective, and outside forces have contributed to instability. Some have argued that outside forces have been able to make inroads in Bosnia in part because the European Union and the United States have lowered their level of engagement, creating in effect a vacuum that Russia and others are merely filling. How is the United States engaging with Bosnia to support reform efforts which focus on making governance in Bosnia more functional and less corrupt?

*Answer.* The United States believes electoral reform is necessary to improve the functionality and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). We are working with BiH political leaders and our European partners on reforms to bring the BiH electoral system into line with rulings by the Bosnian Constitutional Court. In particular, I would like to see a package of reforms consistent with the BiH Constitutional Court's "Ljubici" ruling that allows for formation of the Federation House of

Peoples (FHoP) and proposals to resolve the electoral impasse in Mostar, a city that has not been able to hold elections since 2008. In addition to urging political leaders to find agreement on necessary electoral reforms, we are pressing the government to accelerate reforms that shore up rule of law, enhance government transparency, stamp out corruption, and support free media and investigative journalism to shine greater light on corrupt practices.

You have said that “criticism alone is not a strategy. Criticism bereft of engagement is a recipe for estrangement.” You have also said that strong democracy is the foundation of our security and prosperity.

*Question.* Does the administration have a strategy to advance democracy, including in countries like Hungary and Poland where the separation of powers has been openly challenged by the respective governments?

*Answer.* The Administration’s commitment to democracy is articulated in President Trump’s July 6, 2017 Warsaw address, Secretary Pompeo’s many remarks, and the Department’s own annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, all of which make clear that democracy defines the United States as a nation and a cornerstone value our country shares with our NATO Allies. The United States has repeatedly affirmed the value of separation of powers and urged all countries to sustain and nurture it, in line with their Constitutional standards and international best practices. Our strategy in Central Europe focuses on balancing criticism when needed with engagement in areas of mutual interest. Its premise is that we should treat NATO states, even those with whom we have principled disagreements, as Allies and expect them to behave as Allies. Broadly, its components include: competing for positive influence, as outlined in the National Security Strategy, including through increased “hearts and minds” campaigns; increased support for anti-corruption, civil society, and counter-disinformation; and cooperation on defense, energy, and regional issues, with private (and, when warranted, public) criticism.

*Question.* If so, what is that strategy?

*Answer.* The United States faces a profound, ideological competition for influence in Central Europe and around the world. In the case of close Allies, we have sought to calibrate the balance between engagement and criticism, a balance that has not been particularly successful in the recent past. Constructive engagement and active listening are effective tools of diplomacy we will continue to employ robustly to advance our shared interests and values as well as message our concerns. Our regional strategy focuses on balancing private (and, when warranted, public) criticism when needed with engagement in areas of mutual interest. Its premise is that we should treat NATO states, even those with whom we have principled disagreements, as Allies and expect them to act as Allies. That regional strategy encompasses the competition for positive influence, as outlined in the U.S. National Security Strategy, which includes campaigning for “hearts and minds”; engagement across the whole range of civil society along with greater support for anti-corruption and counter-disinformation; and working together on defense, energy, and regional issues.

*Question.* Do you think the expansion of kleptocracy and weakening of the separation of powers in those two countries undermines our efforts to support democracy and counter corruption in Ukraine?

*Answer.* The United States remains steadfastly committed to the success both of a stable, prosperous, democratic, and free Ukraine, and of the broader Central and Eastern European region. Grappling with corruption is essential to that success region-wide. With U.S. support, Ukraine has strengthened its democracy and adherence to the rule of law, is gradually improving the standard of living for its citizens, and is more capable of protecting itself against Russian aggression. Over the last four years, this support has helped Ukraine implement extensive reforms, including overhauling the banking sector, creating new anti-corruption institutions, and increasing transparency in government procurement. In the last year alone, Ukraine has adopted important reforms in education, health care, pensions, and privatization of state-owned enterprises. While some reforms remain incomplete, most critically to address systemic corruption, overall Ukraine has demonstrated its commitment to making the fundamental changes needed to increase prosperity, security, and rule of law. Ukraine’s future depends on winning its internal struggle to transform itself into a strong and reliable transatlantic partner, and the support of the United States for Ukraine in this effort is unbending. We remain committed to the success of democracy in Hungary, Poland, and the broader Central Europe region as well.

Since your confirmation, you have had the opportunity to travel to Europe on several occasions.

*Question.* Have you met with human rights, civil society and other nongovernmental organizations during your recent official travel?

*Answer.* As Assistant Secretary, I have continued longstanding efforts to ensure the rights of all people are protected, and to promote the values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity. During my recent official travel, as well as in Washington, DC, I have engaged with a broad spectrum of civil society, including human rights activists and religious groups, and the organizations that represent them. I look forward to continuing this engagement.

*Question.* What have been your findings?

*Answer.* On these trips, I have observed that the U.S.-Europe relationship remains strong and is cemented by a deep bond of shared values and interests. Even as we work with European allies on areas of disagreement, there is a strong mutual commitment to finding common ground. I have also observed that the United States lost significant ground over the last several years to Russia and China in key areas of Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus, and Southern Europe. We must undertake serious, sustained efforts to compete for positive influence in these critical regions as the memory of 1989 fades among younger generations.

*Question.* What plans are in place to strengthen support for civil society?

*Answer.* The National Security Strategy states that, “Liberty, free enterprise, equal justice under the law, and the dignity of every human life are central to who we are as a people.” It also makes clear that a commitment to human rights is essential to advance U.S. leadership abroad, and that respect for human rights produces peace, stability and prosperity—making it integral to U.S. national security. Partnering with civil society is critical to advancing freedom and justice, defending national security, fostering economic opportunities for the American people, and asserting U.S. positive influence. Through bilateral and multilateral engagement, public diplomacy, person-to-person contacts, and foreign assistance, the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs continues to support civil society across the region, recognizing the essential role it plays in encouraging governments to be more responsive and accountable. In addition to current programming, we are planning to significantly step up activities as part of a coordinated, multi-agency “hearts and minds” campaign to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 1989 Revolutions.

*Question.* The OSCE will hold its annual human rights meeting in Warsaw in September. Will the United States continue to defend the standards of openness access for civil society that have been the hallmark of the OSCE since its post-Cold War institutionalization?

*Answer.* The United States will continue to champion and defend the participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) and other OSCE events. CSOs play a critical role in these events, especially at HDIM, and inform and enrich the discussions and side events. Civil society’s ideas and insights are crucial to the integrity and advancement of the Helsinki process and the achievement of lasting security. The Department of State agrees that CSO participation is a hallmark of the OSCE, the extent of which distinguished it from other multi-lateral fora. Over the past year, as discussion of CSO participation has continued, the U.S. Mission to the OSCE (USOSCE) has stood firmly with other like-minded participating States in opposing any changes to the current modalities, rules, or procedures that would result in reducing or unduly restricting the participation of CSOs in OSCE events.

*Question.* Last week, I met with the OSCE’s Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Desir and discussed ongoing challenges for the safety of journalists, press freedom, and media pluralism in Central and Eastern Europe. Additionally, the Helsinki Commission held a briefing in May on recent tragic murders of investigative journalists in Slovakia, Malta, and beyond. Challenges to media freedom are increasing, even within the European Union. How is the Trump Administration addressing media freedom concerns with our European partners?

*Answer.* The Department of State, including the U.S. Mission to the OSCE (USOSCE), strongly support freedom of expression, including for members of the media, both on-line and off-line. We engage with our European partners to promote freedom of expression and advocate for the protection of journalists and members of the media. For example, USOSCE speaks out frequently in the Permanent Council, most recently on July 5, urging all OSCE participating States to fulfill their OSCE commitments and related international obligations. USOSCE has addressed a wide variety of freedom of expression issues over the past year. We have underscored the importance of media pluralism and raised cases of journalists and bloggers targeted for repression for exercising their freedom of expression. We also

condemned violence and other crimes against journalists, and emphasized the need for participating States to investigate crimes against them. USOSCE has spoken out specifically on both the killing of Ms. Caruana Galizia in Malta and Mr. Kuckiak and his fiancée Ms. Kusnirova in Slovakia, urging both countries to conduct rapid, transparent investigations, and to bring all perpetrators to justice. At the OSCE, USOSCE is part of the informal Group of Friends on Safety of Journalists.

The United States is the single largest supporter of the OSCE's independent institutions, which includes the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM), politically, rhetorically, and financially. Our extra-budgetary funds support, among other projects, the RFOM's Safety of Journalists Public Awareness Campaign, Media: Towards More Balance and Diversity, and Digital Media Literacy. We frequently reiterate our support for the RFOM's role, broad mandate, and independence.

*Question.* In your meetings with European leaders, what has been their reaction to the recent increase in tariffs? Do they still consider the U.S. a strong ally?

*Answer.* On June 22, the EU imposed its own set of tariffs in retaliation to Section 232 steel and aluminum tariffs, targeting a list of U.S. exports to the EU such as steel, agriculture, textiles, spirits, and motorcycles worth \$3.2 billion. The EU has said it may choose to impose retaliatory tariffs on an additional \$4.0 billion of U.S. goods either in three years, or after a positive finding in the EU's WTO dispute of U.S. tariffs. The United States' goal has been to promote free, fair, and reciprocal trade. These tariffs do not define the Transatlantic relationship. The president has stated that he would like to see a situation where both U.S. and EU tariffs are reduced to zero.

A strong Transatlantic partnership remains central to U.S. foreign and security policy despite our policy differences. We agree far more than we disagree, as evidenced in our close cooperation around the world, including: addressing conflicts in the Middle East, confronting malign state actors, countering terrorism, and improving European security. The United States is committed to working with the EU to narrow the gaps between us and work on issues of common concern.

**OPEN LETTER  
TO PRESIDENTS OF PARLIAMENTS OF EUROPEAN STATES**

11 March 2018

We, the Presidents of the Parliaments of the Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia, Republic of Lithuania, Republic of Poland, and Ukraine, express our strong support for and commitment to the promotion of energy security and diversification of sources, suppliers and routes that are the building blocks of the Energy Union. Likewise, we are deeply concerned about Russia's persistent efforts to use energy interests for political reasons, thus undermining European and Euro-Atlantic unity.

Although formally Nord Stream 2 is presented as a commercial project, it in fact is an instrument of Russia's state policy. Nord Stream 2 is not about diversification of gas supply sources, but rather about deepening of energy dependence of the EU, and especially of Central and Eastern European countries, on Russia and, consequently, maintaining their vulnerability.


Energy security is a key component for a united and prosperous Europe, where competition and free market principles create a basis for success. Therefore, there is a need to invest in energy infrastructure, especially gas interconnectors and additional gas pipelines, which would allow fostering the diversification of natural gas supply.

Nord Stream 2 operation, if the pipeline is eventually built, must, like any other infrastructure project, fully comply with the EU law, especially with the provisions of the Third Energy Package. With this letter we therefore urge for a swift adoption of the EU Gas Directive amendment and its transposition into the national law, so as to establish a unified approach towards the natural gas import infrastructure from third countries to the EU market. It is detrimental to implement a large-scale project, which does not comply with the EU objectives of an open gas market and import diversification. It is even more concerning to see how major EU energy companies, which are being attracted to every major Russian gas infrastructure project, are being used to advocate Russia's interest at the European Parliament and European Commission. Further expansion of the Russian natural gas supply infrastructure may increase this influence, as well as the EU vulnerability, as it may strengthen the dependence on a single supplier and route.

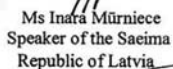
Nord Stream 2 should be viewed in a wider context of today's Russian information and cyber hostilities and military aggression; therefore, we urge the European countries to limit Russia's ability to exert aggressive actions, and to ensure that Nord Stream 2 operation fully complies with the EU law.

We call on all the European countries and the United States for an enhanced and comprehensive dialogue, based on transparency and mutual trust, with a view to ensuring secure, affordable and climate-friendly energy for every citizen.

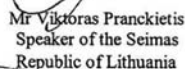
Yours sincerely,



Mr Eiki Nestor  
President of the Riigikogu  
Republic of Estonia



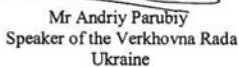
Ms Inara Mūrniece  
Speaker of the Saeima  
Republic of Latvia



Mr Viktoras Pranckietis  
Speaker of the Seimas  
Republic of Lithuania



Mr Marek Kuchciński  
Marshal of the Sejm  
Republic of Poland



Mr Andriy Parubiy  
Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada  
Ukraine