

**RUSSIAN VIOLATIONS OF BORDERS,
TREATIES, AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

—————
JUNE 7, 2016
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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

28-077 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2018

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Publishing Office
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RUSSIAN VIOLATIONS OF BORDERS, TREATIES, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2016

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Risch, Rubio, Johnson, Gardner, Perdue, Barrasso, Cardin, Menendez, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, and Markey.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

The CHAIRMAN. The Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We thank our witnesses for being here, and look forward to their testimony.

We are obviously here today to talk about Russia and its role in the world. Together, our countries have conquered the Nazis, prevented the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the 1990s, and worked against terrorists in the years after 9/11. Yet, for most of modern history, Americans and Russians have found themselves at cross-purposes. Throughout the Cold War, we trained to obliterate each other. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, many politicians argued that the difficult days of confrontation were behind us.

Leaders like Gorbachev and Yeltsin worked to place Russia on a path towards democracy and peaceful engagement with the rest of the world. Reagan asked for the walls to be torn down, George W. Bush had Putin come to his home in Texas, and Obama sought to reset the relationship in a way that prioritized communication and cooperation.

Scholars will long argue over exactly when the U.S./Russia relationship again became confrontational, but looking back, the Russia-Georgia war in August of 2008 seems to mark the beginning of a new age. Since that summer, a so-called resurgent Russia has pushed back on the institutions and allies of the West. Russia has invaded Georgia and Ukraine, striking them in ways designed to prevent their integration into the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance. Russia has acted contrary to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the Open Skies Treaty, and the Incidents at Sea Agreement. Russia has altered the human rights landscape within

its own country, decreasing democracy and begging questions about the future of governance, not just in Moscow, but across the Federation. Moreover, Russia has joined the civil war in Syria and begun militarizing the Arctic.

Now when we talk about the U.S./Russia relationship and the ways that we interact globally, the days following the end of the Cold War seem very far away as the relationship has once again grown distrustful and confrontational. As we meet today to talk about the role that Russia has come to play in the last several years, we must address these topics through the lens of realism. It would be easy to simply catalog the events that have brought us to where we are today, but we are charged with a higher responsibility, which is not only to diagnose the problem, but to begin generating prescriptions for where we go next. Discussions about the violations of norms must be paired with conversations about ways of effectively setting boundaries and engaging with Russia in order to make our world more stable and ultimately to serve U.S. national interests. Our countries are too powerful and the interplay between us too important to resign ourselves to the increasing escalation and risk of confrontation.

I look forward to hearing today how we can recognize the new realities of the U.S./Russia relationship and implement a new strategy that puts us on a better trajectory.

And, with that, I will turn to our distinguished ranking member, Senator Cardin.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND**

Senator CARDIN. Well, Chairman Corker, first let me thank you for calling this hearing, and let me concur in all of your comments in your opening statement. I totally agree with the points that you raised and the challenges we have in regards to our relationship with Russia.

Today we meet to discuss Russia's efforts to undermine institutions that have maintained peace and security in Europe since the end of the Cold War. Russia's actions in Georgia in 2008, support for separatist enclaves in Georgia and Moldova, invasion of Ukraine, illegal annexation of Crimea, and the ongoing support for the combined Russian separatist forces in eastern Ukraine have challenged the security of sovereign borders, something that has been a mainstream of relations in Europe since the signing of the Helsinki Accord in 1975. And we have serious concerns about Russia's compliance with seminal arms control treaties. While I understand that Russia complies with treaties like New START, it is in violation of others, like the INF and there are compliance issues with the Open Skies Treaty. I am concerned about these violations and look forward to hearing how we can strengthen our ability to verify and enforce their terms. There are legitimate questions about the value of such accords as Russia wantonly disregards its international commitments. This should not lead us to the conclusion that all arms-control agreements should be ripped up. While not perfect, these agreements afford us some visibility into Russia's intentions.

I also want to underscore the importance of these treaties to our allies, especially Open Skies. As we seek to bolster European unity in the face of Russian aggression, I believe that pulling out of Open Skies would send the wrong message to our friends.

What is often lost in the debate about Russia's negative behavior abroad is how it treats its own people at home. Last year's horrific murder of Boris Nemtsov, just steps from the Kremlin, is the most sobering example of the danger facing the opposition. Today, we are honored to be joined by Vladimir Kara-Murza, a prominent member of the political opposition, who was poisoned in Moscow under suspicious circumstances and spent months in a coma.

Vladimir, thank you for your courage and all that you do for the people of the Russian Federation.

New laws targeting foreign agents in undesirable organizations which label NGOs as traitors of the Russian state have impeded the work of NDI, OSF, and the MacArthur Foundation. Putin has fueled corruption by weakening the rule of law, and his associates know that their fortunes depend on access and allegiance to the regime. And those who make public these corrupt acts are threatened, abused, or even worse. Sergei Magnitsky was one of them, and he paid the ultimate price for his honesty. As everyone here knows, the Magnitsky law targets human rights abusers inside Russia. While 40 people have been sanctioned since 2012, I call on the administration to hold accountable more human rights abusers in the country.

As human rights violations increase, so should our response. In summary, Russia under Putin is a kleptocratic regime intent on undermining democracy at home and abroad. Yes, we will have shared interests with the Russian regime, and we need to pursue them, but we can never forget our principles and turn a blind eye to human rights violations committed by the Putin regime.

Mr. Chairman, again, thank you for convening this hearing. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much.

We do appreciate our witnesses being here. I do not think we have had as many people outside trying to get in the building in quite a while, so it is obviously something people care about.

And we thank The Honorable Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, for being here. We look forward to your testimony. And Dr. Michael Carpenter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia. You all have been here before. You know you can summarize your testimony in about 5 minutes. We have read your written testimony in advance, and we look forward to the questions that follow.

But, if you would start, Tory, that would be great.

STATEMENT OF HON. VICTORIA NULAND, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of this committee, for the opportunity to join you and discuss the challenges posed to international peace and secu-

rity by Russia today and the administration's policy towards Moscow.

As you all know, for more than 20 years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States has sought to build a constructive relationship with Russia and to support that country's greater integration into regional and global institutions and the rules-based international order. Our working assumption in doing this was that a more integrated, democratic, secure, and prosperous Russia would be a safer, more predictable and willing partner for the United States and our allies.

By 2014, however, we had no choice but to reevaluate our assumptions, following Russia's invasion of sovereign Ukrainian territory, first in Crimea and then in eastern Ukraine, which shattered any remaining illusions about this Kremlin's willingness to abide by international law or live by the rules of the institutions that Russia joined at the end of the Cold War.

Our approach to Russia today seeks, first, to deter further aggression through the projection of strength and unity with our allies; second, to build resilience and reduce vulnerability among friends and allies that are facing Russian pressure and coercion; third, to cooperate on core security priorities when our interests and Russia's do align; and, fourth, to sustain ties to the Russian people to preserve the potential for a more constructive relationship in the future. Let me go through these.

First, strength and deterrence. To counter the threat posed by Russian aggression and deter any military moves against NATO territory, over the past 2 years the United States and our NATO allies have maintained a persistent rotational military presence on land, sea, and air all along NATO's eastern edge: the Baltic states, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria. As we look towards the NATO Summit in Warsaw this coming July, allies will institutionalize a more sustained approach to deterrence, including by enhancing forward presence in the East to reduce response times to any aggression. To support this commitment, the President has requested \$3.4 billion to fund the European Reassurance Initiative. With your support, these funds will be used to deploy an additional rotational armored brigade combat team to Central and Eastern Europe, and for pre-positioning of combat equipment as well as additional trainers and exercises in Europe. Dr. Carpenter will talk about this in detail.

To press Moscow to bring an end to the violence in Ukraine and fully implement its commitments under the Minsk Agreements, we have worked with the EU, the G7, and other like-minded nations to impose successive rounds of tough economic sanctions on Russia over the past 2 years, and we are now working intensively with Europe to ensure that EU sanctions are rolled over at the end of this month and to support France and Germany in their lead diplomatic role to push for the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements, including the withdrawal of all Russian forces from Ukraine and the return of Ukraine's sovereign border.

Next, resilience of partners. Even as we defend NATO territory, we are also working to reduce the vulnerabilities and increase the resilience of those countries across Europe that face pressure from Moscow. To help Ukraine, the United States has committed over

\$600 million in security assistance, we have trained 1700 Ukrainian conventional forces and National Guard personnel, we have provided counter-artillery and counter-mortar radars, over 3,000 secure radios, and a number of other pieces of equipment to help Ukrainian troops successfully resist further advances and to save lives.

To continue our work across Europe and Eurasia to strengthen democratic institutions, reform economies, fight corruption, and build the resilience of our partners, we have requested \$787 million in FY17 focusing on our priorities on those countries that are most vulnerable to Russian pressure. Our programs and advisors focus on improving governance, squeezing out graft and fraud, strengthening justice systems, improving election standards, hardening border security and homeland defenses, and building energy independence to make countries more resilient and stronger in the face of pressure. We are also deepening intelligence cooperation across Europe and Eurasia to detect and blunt Russia's covert and overt efforts to manipulate the internal politics of European countries.

Even as we push back against Russian aggression and support neighbors that are under pressure, the United States will continue to look for areas where our interests and Moscow's align. We have worked with Russia, for example, to remove Syria's declared chemical weapons, to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, to contain the nuclear threat emanating from the DPRK, and to negotiate and implement the New START Treaty. As you all know, over the past 8 months, Secretary Kerry has led multilateral efforts to try to resolve the crisis in Syria, establishing the International Syria Support Group and forging a critical agreement on a cessation of hostilities, which has reduced violence even as that agreement is tested every single day. These efforts have all required hardheaded diplomacy with Russia, and we continue to call on the Kremlin to bring its influence to bear on the Assad regime to prevent civilian casualties and to end barrel-bombing and the regime's obstruction of humanitarian aid deliveries to the besieged communities.

Finally, we must continue to engage directly with those Russian individuals, businesses, and organizations who want to work with us, who share our interests and values, and who are working for a better future for their country. Despite Moscow's crackdown on civil society and a free press, our exchange programs and our scientific cooperation remain hugely popular with the Russian people. We will also continue to speak out against laws and policies that impede the work of Russian civil society and contravene the fundamental rights of freedom of expression, assembly, and association in Russia and elsewhere in the region.

The approach that I have just outlined is not without challenges and contradictions. I will not claim that it has yet brought an end to Russian aggression in Ukraine or Moscow's unmitigated support for the Assad regime or its violations of treaties and global norms. However, I am convinced that U.S. and allied unity regarding Russia over the last 2 years has been essential to deterring even worse behavior, to protecting our own security, and to bringing the Kremlin to the table on critical issues, from Ukraine to Iran to Syria.

Thank you very much for your attention. I would turn to Dr. Carpenter.

[Ms. Nuland's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF VICTORIA NULAND

Thank you Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of this committee for the opportunity to join you and discuss the challenges posed to international peace and security by Russia today, and the administration's policy toward Moscow.

As this committee knows, for more than 20 years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, across multiple administrations led by both political parties, the United States sought to build a constructive relationship with Russia, and to support that country's greater integration into regional and global institutions and the rules-based international order. Our working assumption was that a more integrated, democratic, secure, and prosperous Russia would be a safer, more predictable and willing partner for the United States and our Allies in pursuing shared regional and global goals.

We had some success and some challenges with this approach, which I won't recap here.

By 2014, however, we had no choice but to reevaluate our assumptions following Russia's invasion of sovereign Ukrainian territory—first in Crimea, then in eastern Ukraine—which shattered any remaining illusions about this Kremlin's willingness to abide by international law or live by the rules of the institutions that Russia joined at the end of the Cold War.

Our approach to Russia today seeks first to deter further aggression through the projection of strength and unity with our Allies; second, to build resilience and reduce vulnerability among friends and Allies facing Russian pressure and coercion; third, to cooperate on core national security priorities when our interests and Russia's do align; and fourth, to sustain ties to the Russian people and business community to preserve the potential for a more constructive relationship in the future.

STRENGTH AND DETERRENCE

To counter the threat posed by Russia's aggression and deter any military moves against NATO territory, over the past 2 years the United States and our NATO Allies have maintained a persistent, rotational military presence on land, sea, and air all along NATO's eastern edge—in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and the three Baltic States. All 28 Allies have participated, and the U.S. has used the \$985 million in FY 2015 European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) funding that Congress generously appropriated to increase the number of exercises, training sessions, and patrols that we are supporting throughout Europe. This month, over 30,000 U.S., NATO and partner nation troops will exercise together as a part of a series of military training events, including the Polish-led ANAKONDA exercise.

As we look toward the NATO Summit in Warsaw in July, Allies will institutionalize a more sustained approach to deterrence, including by enhancing forward presence in the East to reduce response times to any aggression. To support this commitment, the President has requested \$3.4 billion to fund the European Reassurance Initiative. With your support, these funds will be used to deploy an additional rotational Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) to Central and Eastern Europe; the prepositioning of combat equipment; as well as additional trainings and exercises in Europe.

We also expect significant contributions from all other Allies to improve NATO's readiness, responsiveness, and interoperability. The threats we face today demand that all Allies meet the pledges they made at the last NATO Summit in Wales to reverse the slide in defense budgets, and commit to spending at least two percent of GDP on defense. Seventy percent of Allies are already on track, but all NATO members must do their part.

And, we must make investments that align with future threats. Russia's own investments in hybrid tactics, electronic and cyber capabilities, disinformation, and violations of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty illustrate where we need to respond.

We are also pushing our Allies and partners to prioritize investment in their own homeland and cyber security and encouraging increased information sharing to protect against internal and external threats.

To press Moscow to bring an end to the violence in Ukraine and fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements, we have worked with the EU, the

G7 and other like-minded nations to impose successive rounds of tough, economic sanctions on Russia over the past two years.

These sanctions, combined with low oil prices and Russia's continued structural weaknesses, have imposed significant costs. While Moscow has not yet changed its approach to Ukraine, our readiness to toughen sanctions even further has likely played a role in deterring further Russian efforts to grab Ukrainian territory. We are now working intensively with Europe to ensure EU sanctions are rolled over at the end of this month, and to support France and Germany in their lead diplomatic role to push for full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

RESILIENCE OF PARTNERS

As we defend NATO territory, we are also working to reduce vulnerabilities and increase the resilience of countries across Europe that face pressure from Moscow. This effort is a part of our firm and deep commitment that countries must be able to choose their own futures.

To help Ukraine better monitor and secure its borders, deploy its forces more safely and effectively, and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, the United States has committed over \$600 million in security assistance. We have trained over 1,700 Ukrainian conventional forces and National Guard personnel and 120 Special Operations Forces (SOF). We have provided counter-artillery and counter-mortar radars, over 3000 secure radios, 130 Humvees, over 100 armored civilian SUVs, and thousands of medical kits to help Ukrainian troops successfully resist advances and save lives.

To strengthen democratic institutions, reform economies, fight corruption, and build the resilience of partners, we have requested \$787 million in funding for Europe and Eurasia, including to those countries most vulnerable to Russian pressure, especially Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and the Western Balkans. Our programs and advisors focus on improving governance, squeezing out graft and fraud, strengthening justice systems, improving election standards, hardening border security and homeland defense, and building energy independence. In Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, our assistance is reorienting economies away from excessive dependence on Russia and toward growth-spurring markets in Central and Western Europe. In the Balkans, we have also increased our focus this year on countering violent extremism. And we're deepening intelligence cooperation across Europe and Eurasia to detect and blunt Russia's covert and overt efforts to manipulate internal politics.

Energy diversification also continues to be a key component of our strategy, and we have seen progress on this front across Europe. Ukraine has now broken its dependence on Russian gas, ended costly household energy subsidies, and is making real strides in introducing full market standards across the sector. In the Baltics and Central Europe, critical projects and actions have reduced energy vulnerability, including the opening of Lithuania's and Poland's new LNG terminals, and the construction of electricity grid connections between the Baltic countries and their EU partners.

We appreciate the attention so many members of this committee have paid to these issues, your visits to countries under threat, and your energy security advocacy, including for the completion of projects like the Southern Gas Corridor and against schemes like Nord Stream II that will increase Europe's dependence on single energy sources.

COOPERATION ON SHARED INTERESTS

Even as we push back against Russian aggression and support neighbors under pressure, the United States will continue to look for areas where our interests and Moscow's align, and we can work together to tackle global challenges, including non-proliferation, nuclear and other WMD security, preventing atrocities and humanitarian crises, and combating violent extremism and terrorism.

We have worked with Russia to remove Syria's declared chemical weapons, to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, to contain the nuclear threat emanating from the DPRK, and to negotiate and implement the New START Treaty.

For the past eight months, Secretary Kerry has led multilateral efforts to resolve the crisis in Syria, establishing the International Syria Support Group (ISSG), and forging a critical agreement on a cessation of hostilities, which has reduced violence, even as that agreement is tested daily.

These efforts require hard-headed diplomacy with Russia. While working in the ISSG for a political settlement, we continue to call on the Kremlin to bring its influence to bear on the Assad regime to prevent unnecessary civilian casualties and suffering, and to end barrel bombing and the regime's obstruction of aid deliveries to besieged communities.

ENGAGING WITH RUSSIAN SOCIETY

Finally, we must continue to foster direct engagement with those Russian businesses, organizations, and individuals who want to work with us, who share our interests and values and are working for a better future for their country. Despite Moscow's crackdown on civil society, a free press, exchanges with the West, and political pluralism, our people-to-people exchanges; health, environment and cultural programs; and educational opportunities for Russians remain hugely popular, and continue to promote constructive ties between our countries. And we will continue to speak out against laws and policies that impede the work of Russian civil society and contravene the fundamental rights of freedom of expression, assembly, and association in Russia and elsewhere in the region.

The approach to Russia that I have outlined is not without its challenges and internal contradictions. And I will not claim that it has yet brought an end to Russian aggression in Ukraine, its unmitigated support for Asad in Syria, or its violations of treaties and global norms. However, I am convinced that U.S.-Allied unity has been essential to deterring worse behavior, protecting our own security, and bringing the Kremlin to the table on critical issues from Ukraine, to Iran, and Syria.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of this committee, thank you for your careful attention to the challenges that today's Russia poses. My colleague and friend from the Defense Department, Dr. Michael Carpenter, will give you further detail on DoD's efforts to mitigate the threats we face.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Dr. Carpenter.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL CARPENTER, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, RUSSIA, UKRAINE, AND EURASIA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Dr. CARPENTER. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, I appreciate this opportunity to update you on the Department of Defense's strong and balanced approach to deterring Russian aggression, defending the homeland and our treaty allies, and strengthening the resilience of our allies and partners to Russian coercion and intimidation.

Russia's interventions in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 have demonstrated a blatant disregard for its international commitments, including the most basic principles of the international order, including sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the inviolability of borders.

In Syria, Russia has intervened militarily to prop up a murderous dictator, allying itself with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and Lebanese Hezbollah. Russia's nuclear saber-rattling raises troubling questions about Russian leaders' commitments to strategic stability and to norms against the threat of use of nuclear weapons.

With regards to arms-control commitments, Russia's record has been mixed. It has violated those agreements that pose impediments to its military modernization plans, such as the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty or the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. However, it has honored others, such as the New START Treaty, which limits Russian and U.S. deployed strategic nuclear weapons to historical low levels.

Thanks to a robust military modernization program, Russia seeks to be a qualitative, if not quantitative, peer to the United States across the land, sea, and air and space domains, as well as in cyberspace and across the electromagnetic spectrum.

Our approach to countering Russian coercion and aggression involves coordinating efforts across the force to strengthen our capa-

bilities, posture, investments, and plans. We aim to do this without foreclosing the possibility of working with Russia, when it is in our interest.

The most critical element of this approach is ensuring effective deterrence to support our most vital mission, defense of the homeland, which is reflected in the President's \$583 billion FY 2017 budget request. We are modernizing our nuclear forces. This recapitalization program includes a new long-range strategic bomber, ballistic-missile submarine, an air-launched cruise missile, as well as the Life Extension Program for the B61 gravity bomb.

We are also moving forward the development of new technologies to ensure we maintain a qualitative military edge over potential high-end adversaries. These include new unmanned systems, enhanced ground-based air and missile defenses, new long-range anti-ship weapons, and innovative technologies, like the electromagnetic rail gun, lasers, and new systems for electronic warfare, space, and cyberspace.

We will also continue to strengthen our alliances and partnerships. I thank Congress for its continued support for the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). As Assistant Secretary Nuland has mentioned, since its inception in 2014, ERI has enabled the Department of Defense to strengthen our deterrence and assurance missions in Europe. The President's FY 2017 budget proposes quadrupling funding for ERI to more than \$3.4 billion, which will allow us to increase our force posture in Europe by augmenting two permanently stationed Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) with a third rotational armored BCT as well as a fourth BCT worth of pre-positioned warfighting equipment.

With our non-NATO partners, our goal is to improve their capabilities and capacity to deal with conventional and unconventional threats. In Ukraine, we have provided over \$600 million to enhance security since the start of the crisis. Our support has consisted of training programs to enhance Ukraine's internal defense capabilities, equipment to support the operational needs of its security forces, and advisors to advance the implementation of key defense reforms. So far, we have trained six companies from Ukraine's National Guard and are in the process of training five Land-Forces battalions and one Special Operations battalion. While the scale of our assistance to Ukraine is unique, we are engaged in similar capacity-building efforts with other non-NATO partners, such as Georgia and Moldova.

As Secretary Carter has underscored, the Department's policy towards Russia is predicated on a strategic approach that is both strong and balanced, leaving the door open to Russia to return to compliance with international norms and to constructive engagement with the international community. In the meantime, in concert with our allies and partners, we will continue countering Russian coercion and aggression with a posture that is defensive and proportional. In spite of Russia's actions, we will also continue to advance our strategic vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your questions.

[Dr. Carpenter's prepared statement follows.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL R. CARPENTER

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, I appreciate this opportunity to update you on the Department of Defense's strong and balanced approach to deterring Russian aggression, defending the homeland and our treaty allies, and strengthening the resilience of our allies and partners to Russian coercion and intimidation.

Today's Russia is increasingly revanchist abroad and repressive at home. It has demonstrated a blatant disregard for its international obligations and commitments, both to other countries and to its own citizens. Outside its borders, Russia has acted aggressively in violation of the most basic principles of the global order—sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders—to seek what Kremlin leaders call a “sphere of privileged interests” along Russia's periphery. In Syria, Russia has intervened militarily to prop up a murderous dictator, allying itself with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and Lebanese Hizballah to prolong a bloody conflict that has gone on far too long. Russia's nuclear sabre rattling raises troubling questions about Russian leaders' commitments to strategic stability, their respect for norms against the threat of use of nuclear weapons, and whether they respect the profound caution that nuclear-age leaders have shown with regard to the brandishing of nuclear weapons. This behavior is irresponsible and dangerous. Nuclear threats will neither intimidate NATO nor make Russia a more influential and respected player on the world stage.

With regard to arms control agreements, Russia's record has been mixed: it has violated those agreements that pose impediments to its military modernization plans, such as the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty or the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. However, it has honored others, such as the New START Treaty, which limits Russian and U.S. deployed strategic nuclear weapons to historically low levels.

Across the board, Russia's aggressive actions and flouting of international norms have been enabled by a military modernization campaign that has benefitted from windfall hydrocarbon revenues over the last 15 years, as well as from significant internal restructuring, reform, and technological advances. Russia seeks to be a qualitative, if not quantitative, peer to the United States across the land, sea, air, and space domains, as well as in cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum. Russia is also projecting power in all directions: in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, the Arctic, and the Middle East.

Moscow's military modernization has resulted in the development of new capabilities that must be factored into U.S. plans, strategies, and our own capability development. Moscow's increasing willingness to use its military power for aggressive purposes requires reorienting the Department to counter the challenges posed by a revanchist Russia.

RUSSIA'S DISREGARD FOR INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 and its military intervention in Ukraine beginning in 2014 have not only threatened European security, but also violated the bedrock principles of the international order enshrined in such foundational documents as the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. Russia has likewise shown a brazen disregard for its own political commitments, such as the 2008 ceasefire between Russia and Georgia or the February 2015 Minsk agreement. More than a year since the Minsk agreement was signed, Russia still has not fulfilled the first three commitments listed in that document: ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons from proscribed zones, and unhindered access for OSCE monitors to the entire territory of the Donbas.

Russia's disregard for basic global norms, international legal obligations, and its own political commitments pose a challenge to the future of arms control and confidence building in Europe. In 2007, Moscow unilaterally ceased implementing the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, effectively withdrawing from the only legally-binding conventional arms limitation agreement in Europe. While Russia is currently in compliance with its obligations under the New START Treaty, it is violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) by producing and flight testing a ground launched cruise missile with a range between 500 and 5,500 kilometers.

We also have concerns about Russia's implementation of other agreements, such as the Open Skies Treaty, since Russia has placed restrictions on observation missions over its territory—to include the region of Kaliningrad, which borders two of our NATO Allies—that are not permitted under the treaty.

Finally, Russia has undermined confidence and transparency-building measures by increasing the number of large-scale snap exercises on its territory, which are

exempt from reporting under the Vienna Document on transparency of military activities within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Russia's dangerous and unprofessional intercepts of U.S. aircraft and ships in the Baltic and Black Seas further undermine confidence and efforts to promote risk reduction.

RUSSIA'S MILITARY MODERNIZATION

Russia's ambitious 2010 State Armaments Program aims to replace 70 percent of Russia's military equipment by 2020, prioritizing investments in strategic nuclear forces, aerospace defense weapons, high-precision conventional weapons, and command and control systems. While this modernization effort has been slowed somewhat by Western sanctions and the recent fall in oil prices, this will likely delay but not derail Russia's modernization goals. Russian ground forces have already fielded more than 1,000 new or modernized armored personnel carriers, main battle tanks, and artillery systems, primarily in the Western, Central, and Southern military districts. Additionally, Russia has made significant advances in warfighting technology, especially in the areas of precision guided munitions, missile technology, and submarine warfare. In the Ukraine conflict, we have seen Russia deploy world-class electronic warfare capabilities, and Russia's cyber capabilities remain formidable. Finally, Russia's military modernization effort has also expanded its anti-access and area denial capabilities in an effort to assert control along Russia's periphery in the Baltic and Black Seas, the Arctic, the Asia-Pacific rim, and now in Syria as well.

As its military has modernized, Russia has also devoted considerable resources to developing asymmetric capabilities. As Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov wrote in 2013, "The focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other nonmilitary measures. All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special operations forces."

Nowhere have these asymmetric capabilities been more readily on display than in Ukraine, where Russia has deployed thousands of regular soldiers and established command and control support over tens of thousands of additional separatist forces trained in Russia and equipped by Russia. Russia has honed its abilities to conduct information campaigns. In Ukraine, Russia maintains the fiction that its forces are not present at all, and that the sophisticated air defense systems and thermobaric weapons deployed on the battlefield are fielded by volunteers. Russia's \$300 million per year state-run international TV station, RT, is but one tool at Russia's disposal that is used to promote these myths, in addition to internet trolls, so-called patriotic hackers, and botnets.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S STRONG AND BALANCED APPROACH TO RUSSIA

In order to address the challenges of a revanchist Russia, the Department of Defense pursues a strong and balanced approach to countering Russian coercion and aggression. Our approach involves coordinating efforts across the force to strengthen our capabilities, posture, investments, and plans to respond to the transregional, multi-functional, and multi-domain threats we face from Russia. We aim to do all this without foreclosing the possibility of working with Russia when it is in our interest, for example on counter-proliferation or combatting violent extremism. We seek to ensure that the U.S. homeland and vital U.S. national interests abroad, including the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our NATO and other treaty allies, are secure. We seek to ensure a strong, united, and resolute NATO Alliance that is capable and postured to deter and if necessary defeat Russian aggression. We are also reinvigorating our alliances in East Asia. Finally, we seek to develop resilient partners capable of withstanding Russian pressure and coercion.

The most critical element of this approach is ensuring effective deterrence to support our most vital mission, defense of the homeland, which is reflected in the President's \$583 billion budget request for Fiscal Year 2017. While new technologies have allowed us to strengthen our capabilities dramatically in a number of areas, they have also created potential vulnerabilities that must be addressed. That is why we are taking actions to ensure our critical assets are protected through measures such as hardening and dispersal and by building greater resiliency into our command and control networks. We are also moving forward the development of new technologies to ensure we maintain a qualitative military edge over potential high-end adversaries. These include new unmanned systems, enhanced ground-based air and missile defenses, new long-range anti-ship weapons, and innovation in technologies like

the electromagnetic railgun, lasers, and new systems for electronic warfare, space, and cyberspace.

We are modernizing our nuclear forces because they are beyond their planned service lives or are reaching the point where they can no longer be extended. This recapitalization program includes a new long-range strategic bomber, ballistic-missile submarine, and air-launched cruise missile, as well as the Life Extension Program for the B61 gravity bomb.

We will also continue to strengthen our alliances and partnerships. I thank Congress for its continued support for the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). Since its inception in 2014, ERI has enabled the Department of Defense to strengthen our deterrence and assurance missions in Europe. We have expanded several major exercises, to include TRIDENT JUNCTURE, the largest NATO exercise in over 20 years, with participation from over 30 Allies and partners. We have focused on operational effectiveness within NATO by supporting the Readiness Action Plan, including contributions to the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, and NATO Force Integration Units along the Alliance's eastern flank. We are funding critical U.S. enablers, such as a Division Headquarters Mission Command Element, and enhanced allied and partner capacity and capability through additional training opportunities, such as the inaugural training deployment of F-22s to our European Command. The President's FY 2017 Budget proposes quadrupling funding for the European Reassurance Initiative, to more than \$3.4 billion. This will allow us to increase our force posture in Europe by augmenting two permanently stationed Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) with a third rotational armored BCT and a fourth BCT of prepositioned warfighting equipment.

With our non-NATO partners, our goal is to improve their capabilities and capacity to deal with conventional and unconventional threats. Again, ERI has helped us by funding upgrades to existing host-nation ranges and training sites to increase capacity for use by U.S. and Allied forces and to increase the quality of training events with key partners, such as Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova. Our capacity building efforts with non-NATO partners are exemplified by the security assistance funding that Congress has appropriated for Ukraine, which since the start of the crisis in 2014 has exceeded \$600 million. Our support to Ukraine has consisted of training programs to enhance Ukraine's internal defense capabilities; equipment to support the operational needs of its security forces; and advisors to advance the implementation of key defense reforms. We have trained six companies from Ukraine's National Guard and are currently training its conventional armed forces as well as its Special Operations Forces. Over the coming years, we will continue working with our Ukrainian partners to build more capable and professional forces that can defend against outside aggression. While the scale of our assistance to Ukraine is unique, we are engaged in similar efforts with other non-NATO partners. For example, since Russia's invasion in 2008, Georgia has received over \$481 million in bilateral security assistance funding. Efforts such as these will continue to improve our partners' resilience against foreign pressure and coercion.

It is safe to say that Russia has taken notice of our efforts. However, despite its false accusations that the United States and our NATO Allies are in violation of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, our efforts are wholly defensive and proportionate in nature, and constitute a direct response to Russia's aggressive actions to undermine the security of its neighbors.

CONCLUSION

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, we expect that Russia will continue to modernize its military, seek to expand its influence along on its periphery, and operate in aggressive ways. The Department of Defense will continue to ensure that the U.S. homeland and our vital national interests abroad are protected and that we support countries' rights to make their own security and economic choices, free from outside coercion and intimidation. As Secretary Carter has underscored, United States policy toward Russia is predicated on a strategic approach that is both strong and balanced. In concert with our allies and partners, we will continue countering Russian coercion and aggression with a posture that is defensive and proportional. In spite of Russia's actions, we will also continue to advance our strategic vision of a Europe whole, free and at peace.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

We have votes at 4:00 o'clock. We have two panels. So, I have asked Bertie to put 5 minutes on the clock and ask that everybody

try to stay within that time frame. I am just going to ask one question and move on to Ben.

Secretary Nuland, we met briefly prior to this hearing. There is a narrative out there that the U.S. and NATO pressured Russia by expanding to areas obviously adjacent to their border, and that is what has generated some of the discord, if you will, that exists between our countries. You were involved in those negotiations extensively. Would you give us a brief summary of your view of that narrative?

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Senator.

I completely reject this narrative of grievance that it is somehow our fault. As you know, NATO is a defensive alliance. As we said to Russia at every stage in the expansion of NATO, we are not a threat to Russia in any way. And, as you know, as we—through the various expansions of NATO, we sought also to deepen NATO's own relationship with Russia, first with the creation of the Permanent Joint Council, and then the NATO–Russia Council. I was, as you said, active in those efforts, both in negotiating and as Ambassador to NATO, to try to implement those agreements. I, frankly, think that Russia did not take advantage of the opportunity that NATO put before it for cooperation. We really could have gotten to a place with a different attitude in the Kremlin, where much of the affirmative security that we were seeking in Europe and we were seeking against terrorists and with regard to dangerous Iranian behavior could have been done jointly in that structure, but we could never get there because of old efforts.

Also, in the aught years, we reached out to Russia quite strongly, the U.S. did, to try to work together on missile defense programs, to try to cooperate, and the Kremlin was never willing or able to take us up on those opportunities.

So, I regret very much that we are where we are, but I really do think that we tried very hard, on the U.S. side, across three administrations of both parties, to reach out. And we will continue to try to do that, as I said.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I am going to reserve the rest of my time for interjections and turn to our ranking member.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To defend ourselves from Russia's behavior and aggression, it would be nice to know why they are doing what they are doing. Since 2008, they have used their military in an aggressive way to violate the sovereignty of other countries. So, can you just share with me your thoughts as to what Russia's game is here? Are they trying to get a greater Russia? Are they trying to take on more territory under the umbrella of Russia? Are they trying to recreate the Soviet Union? What is their game plan, here?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Cardin, I would simply say that, as a U.S. official, I do not think it is particularly productive to try to speak for Russia, but I would just highlight some of the things that Russia's President, himself, has said. I would point to his speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, where he very much regretted the loss of control over Soviet space, the loss of control over the—the failure—the end of the Soviet Union, et cetera. So, clearly that

is something on his mind. But, I would defer that question to Russians, frankly.

Senator CARDIN. Let me say it is not safe to be in the political opposition these days in Russia. What is the administration doing to help political pluralism in Russia in regards to those who are opposing the Putin regime?

Ms. NULAND. I assume that is for me, Senator?

Senator CARDIN. Either one.

Ms. NULAND. Yeah.

Senator CARDIN. I am open to a good answer.

Ms. NULAND. Well, obviously we continue to speak out strongly whenever Russia takes moves to further constrain the space for the nongovernmental organizations, to restrict human rights, as I said in my opening, to constrain press freedom. We have worked with Vladimir and others who are seeking a different future for Russia. We have programs both inside Russia and outside Russia to work with those Russian activists who want to work with us to try to strengthen rule of law, to try to strengthen a free press. We have a large number of Russian journalists who have actually fled the—fled Russia now, who are working with us and with others in Europe to try to ensure there is independent Russian-language news going back in to the country. We also work on LGBT rights and other things inside Russia with those who want to work with us.

Senator CARDIN. I will follow up with some questions for the record in regard to this, but let me move to the Arctic for one moment. Climate change is changing the Arctic with the ice melts. Russia has 4,000 miles of Arctic coastline. It is my understanding they have established six new bases in the—north of the Arctic Circle, and they have deployed certain weapon systems there. What are we doing to respond to Russia's militarization of the Arctic?

Dr. CARPENTER. Well, you are absolutely right, Ranking Member Cardin, that Russia has invested significantly in capabilities in the Arctic over the last several years, including trying to create infrastructure in places like Novaya Zemlya and other parts of the Russian Arctic. We seek to preserve the Arctic as a space for cooperation on scientific issues, as we have, in fact, with Russia in the past, working on things like black carbon and the danger that it poses to the Arctic environment, as well as other issues. However, we take very seriously Russia's advancing capabilities in the Arctic, including the possibility that, over time, Russia will be able to create, in the Arctic elements of Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) bubbles, if you will, that will preclude other nations from being able to enjoy their freedom of navigation in parts of the Arctic. And so, we are investing, and the President's FY 2017 budget invests in the types of capabilities that will allow us to augment our force posture in the Arctic and also develop the sorts of capabilities that will help us to ensure freedom of navigation and freedom of flight for our troops in that region.

Senator CARDIN. And I take it we are working with our other Arctic partners to try to minimize the potential, here, of conflict, but it does seem like Russia is investing an awful lot in territorial claims in the Arctic.

Dr. CARPENTER. Well, Senator, we do have a good working relationship with Russia in the Arctic Council, where we try to pre-

serve, as I said, those areas of cooperation that are ongoing, including environmental cooperation. But, also, importantly, our Coast Guard has search-and-rescue agreement with its Russian counterpart that has worked very successfully over the years. So, we seek to preserve these areas of cooperation, but, at the same time, develop our own military capabilities so that we are not caught off guard and so that we are keeping track with the types of investments that Russia is making.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

I am going to be respectful of the Chairman's 5-minute clock, but I am going to be asking other questions for the record, including questions on Russia's aggressiveness in revising history and using its communications to try to change the narrative of reality, and how we are trying to counter that. Propaganda can have a pretty strong impact, and part of our strategies must be to make sure people understand what are the facts. And I would welcome your response for the record in regards to those issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator PERDUE.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, with the debt crisis we have got and the popularity of your hearings, I think we might start charging tickets here. [Laughter.]

Senator PERDUE. In all seriousness, though, I really thank you for this, and I hope we will have many more hearings like this about Russia and China. I think the rise of these traditional rivals are really concerning to people back home.

I would like to talk, Dr. Carpenter, first about Russia, and I have got a second followup on the hybrid warfare. But, I want to talk about Georgia for a minute, because I think—I want to know what lessons we think we have learned after 8 years. The Russians have had a history of creating these frozen conflicts, where, without a peace treaty, everything seems to be going in the normal, and yet I know next year, in one of their regions, I think it is Shevali actually, they are rumored to be having a referendum about joining Russia again. So, I mean, this is a pressure that Russia keeps putting on there, and I am very concerned. James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, testified that the nation of Georgia, despite all its progress on Western integration, domestic reforms, is at increasing risk from Russian aggression and pressure. I visited Serbia last year and met the Georgian Defense Minister, Tina Khidasheli, and heard her concerns about the ongoing pressure and so forth in Georgia. What lessons have we learned, in terms of standing up—I know that the Georgia National—I mean U.S.—has—National Guard—has just had a forward deployment there. I would like to get some feedback on that. And also, what are we doing now, from a DOD standpoint, to put pressure on Russia, relative to Georgia? And what have we learned there, relative to Crimea and the Ukraine?

Dr. CARPENTER. Well, thank you, Senator. And I completely agree with your assessment that Russia is continuing to place pressure on Georgia through a variety of different means. Russia cur-

rently occupies about 20 percent of Georgian territory in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but—

Senator PERDUE. But, a third of the population, right?

Dr. CARPENTER [continuing]. It is a significant portion of the population, and those administrative boundary lines that Russia maintains continue to shift, especially in the South Ossetia region, claiming ever more pieces, increments of Georgian territory. Russia is also putting pressure on Georgia in a variety of other ways, and including the proclaimed desire by the de facto leader of South Ossetia to have a referendum on integration with Russia.

Our goal, since the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008, has been to build Georgia's resilience and reduce its vulnerabilities to Russian coercion. So, we have spent about \$480 million on security assistance in Georgia since the crisis. Just recently, 2 weeks ago, I was in Tbilisi to participate in the Noble Partner exercise that we conducted with Georgia, where we had about 650 U.S. troops alongside about 500 Georgian troops and about 150 U.K. troops, where we had airborne jumps into Georgia, and we had Abrams tanks as well as Bradley infantry fighting vehicles on the ground, helping them to develop their self-defense capabilities.

Over the course of the last 10 years, Georgia has contributed mightily to our NATO efforts overseas, including especially in Afghanistan, where, up until recently, they have been the second-largest troop contributor, after the United States, with 850 troops. And, in fact, they have suffered about 31 casualties, if I am not mistaken, about 282 wounded. So, they have had major sacrifices there. And a lot of our training program over the course of the last decade has been focused on preparing Georgian troops for these overseas deployments, including Iraq and then, later, Afghanistan. Now we are starting to position ourselves to devote more attention to training up Georgia's troops for their self-defense capabilities.

Senator PERDUE. Do we have permanent troops on the ground in Georgia?

Dr. CARPENTER. We do not plan to have permanent troops on the ground, but we do plan to increase the tempo of our exercises and training with Georgia.

Senator PERDUE. What lessons have we learned, relative to Georgia, as it relates to Crimea and the Ukraine?

Ms. NULAND. Well, Senator, I think the first one is the one that Dr. Carpenter highlighted, which is that we, in our security partnership with Georgia, spent a lot of the last decade helping Georgian forces prepare for expeditionary deployments to Afghanistan, et cetera, and probably not enough focus on strengthening Georgia's own homeland security, which is what we are now trying to correct, and not just in U.S./Georgia relations, but also in NATO/Georgia relations.

The other lesson is the abiding one, which has significant applicability for Ukraine, which is that the best antidote to Russian pressure is a successful increasingly European democratic Georgia or Ukraine, and to take maximum advantage of the association agreements that both of these countries have with Europe. So, that is why all of the programs that we manage from the State Department are designed to squeeze out corruption, improve justice system, et cetera.

Senator PERDUE. Well, with due respect—and I have all the respect in the world for you, Assistant Secretary. I have watched you—and I am sorry, I am over time—but, I hate to—I walk away—I have been over there quite a bit, and I walk away with a feeling that, when we deal with Russia and Ukraine, we deal with Russia and Georgia—and I do not mean to belittle this, but it sounds like it is their fault. It is Ukraine, it is Crimea, it is Georgia's fault. Because they are not quite as Western as we want them to be, therefore we have not been able to do everything we need to do to help them. I know the—I know we have got corruption issues in Ukraine. I know we have got westernization issues in Georgia. But, we have got an invasion that occurred, and sovereign territory being possessed, in violation of the 1972 agreement with Russia. And yet, we are talking about all this other stuff at the same level of the invasion issue. So, I am sorry to take issue with that, but I really think that they are two different—

Ms. NULAND. No question. We cannot blame the victim. I agree completely, Senator. We have to strengthen these countries so that they can resist economically, politically, in security terms.

Senator PERDUE. Sorry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Assistant Secretary Nuland, I had an opportunity to meet with Vitaly Churkin, the Russian Ambassador to the United Nations, earlier this year. And you referenced the difficult balance we try to strike between cooperating with the Russians on a number of important areas, some of our bilateral treaties containing Iran's aggressive nuclear weapons program and other areas where clearly we have strongly discordant interests and where we are working to strengthen our allies, whether in the Baltics or Ukraine or NATO, in the face of Russian aggression. I came away from a meeting with Ambassador Churkin convinced that they will do everything they can to protect Iran and their ballistic missile launches from action by the Security Council. Am I wrong? What leverage do we have to sustain Russian engagement in a concerted effort to put pressure on Iran to stop some of its activities outside the JCPOA that really are destructive to Iran's intentions or expressed desire to re-join the community of nations?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I think you are not wrong in your assessment that Russia has only joined us in joint work against a nuclear threat from Iran. Having worked with Russia over many decades to try to encourage them to understand that that nuclear threat was a threat to Russia, too, I would say that that is the number-one trajectory we have to work with regard to the missile threat now, that Russia should not be so secure in its confidence that it could not be on the other end of said missiles, and therefore, it has an interest in limiting or stopping Iran's missile program. That is where we have to work, and we are continuing to try.

Senator COONS. I would be interested, Dr. Carpenter, as well, in hearing whether, in your view, the European Reassurance Initiative is genuinely working and whether our allies in the Baltics are confident in our commitment to their security, and what else you think we, here in the Congress, can and should be doing to provide

support across a whole range of areas of engagement. As the Senator mentioned, there are these frozen conflicts in Georgia and Moldova, and now, for at least the time being, in the Ukraine. It is my hope—and you have both worked very hard on this—that our EU allies will be advancing and continuing sanctions and continuing to engage with us. What more can and should we do to strengthen our Baltic allies?

Dr. CARPENTER. Well, thank you for that question, Senator. I think the ERI is working well. And I think when we begin to implement the 2017 requested portions of ERI, we will be dramatically increasing our force posture on the eastern flank of the alliance, which will have a significant deterrent impact on Russia. It will also, at the same time, assure our allies that we have force posture, that we have genuine high-quality, high-end warfighting equipment in place as necessary in the event of a crisis.

I think the other piece to this that we cannot neglect is working with our NATO allies to ensure that those allies also have skin in the game. And so, as we talk about augmenting NATO's presence in these countries, a lot of what we are doing under ERI is bilaterally with each of these allies in the east. But, as we talk about NATO's footprint, I think we will be in a better place to have other allies with skin in the game, as I said, and with additional assets that they can bring to bear, which they uniquely possess because of their proximity to some of these countries, that will greatly aid in deterring Russia in case it thinks about potential aggressive action in any one of these countries.

Senator COONS. And, Assistant Secretary Nuland, my last question. As we look forward to the NATO Summit, have we done everything we need to, to brace up and shore up and fully engage our NATO allies to provide that deterrent impact so that we then have a chance at meaningful diplomacy? And how do you assess Putin's willingness to engage in rational diplomacy around the Ukraine conflict?

Ms. NULAND. Two big questions. Just to add to what Dr. Carpenter has said, on the Baltic states, two pieces, here. As I said in the opening, we, over the past 2 years, have had sort of an ad hoc approach to put a patchwork together of land, sea, and air presence in the Baltic. What you will see at the Warsaw Summit is a sustained approach so that these allies can be confident that they will have regular, persistent support, and to make that much more routine and normal, to create joint headquarters in all of these countries, and to ensure we can get there.

The other piece on the Baltics that I think deserves highlighting is that we have worked on the spectrum of their resilience, so not just hard military, but also border security, integrated communications across domestic agencies, et cetera. We have had our Homeland Security folks out there, and we have really made pretty good progress. But, we need other allies to be as vigorous and rigorous in their support, and we are working on that as we head towards Warsaw.

With regard to Russia's readiness, willingness to negotiate with regard to Ukraine, there is an agreement on the table, as you know, the Minsk Agreements, which call, first, for a full cease-fire, access for the OSCE across eastern Ukraine, then a political pack-

age of decentralization for the people of Donbas, and then the withdrawal of weapons. So, the French and Germans have taken the lead in trying to see that implemented. We have, in the last month and a half, greatly increased the role the U.S. is playing in parallel, working with both Kiev and Moscow. I think our concern is, whereas we are making some progress now on the political package for the Donbas, we have not made the kind of progress that we need to see on the security piece, and we are going to have to do a lot more to push Russia and the separatists to end the violence to allow the OSCE fully in.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

And, Mr. Kara-Murza, thank you for your willingness to testify here today, as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Nuland, good to see you again.

I wanted to talk about the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Russia has been violating the INF Treaty for quite some time. It was finally made official in public in 2014. In response to questioning on the matter, the administration said they are exploring their, quote, “economic countermeasures in response to the violation.” You know, in the President’s speech back in April of 2009 in Prague, he committed to ridding the world of nuclear weapons. He said that, in order for a nonproliferation regime to work, he said violations must be punished, and then he said, “Words must mean something.” President Obama, “Words must mean something.” This administration has now said, for years, that they are considering economic sanctions against Russia for its violation of the INF Treaty. Is Russia still in violation of that treaty? And when is the administration finally going to get around to punishing this violation of the treaty?

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Senator Barrasso—Dr. Barrasso, as I like to call you.

As you have said, we have found Russia in violation over the last 2 years. We are engaged in discussions, negotiations with Russia to try to bring them back into compliance. We are also working with allies to bring pressure to bear on Russia with regard to the violations. We are also working intensively—and this is part of our package for the Warsaw Summit—to ensure that NATO’s own deterrent, including its nuclear deterrent, is updated and strong. We are—and this is about all I can say at this point, in an open hearing—we are reviewing and working on a full range of options—a full range of options—to make sure that Russia cannot gain any significant military advantage from any system that they might develop outside of the treaty. And we are also investing in U.S. technologies that are designed to deter and defeat any Russian provocations. But, I think going further than that, we would have to be in another setting.

Senator BARRASSO. Yeah, but just in terms—in that line of thought with what we could do, you know, the Open Skies Treaty, according to the State Department reports on arms-control compliance. Russia is failing to meet its obligations on the Open Skies Treaty. It is restricting access to some of its territories. It has shown a repeated pattern of violating its arms-control obligations,

including, as we have just talked about, the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces. So, it is now asking the Open Skies Consultative Commission for permission to use more powerful collection capabilities on flights over the United States. You know, it—to me, it says that U.S. should not be approving such a request for these upcoming—these—those requested sensors. At least make it contingent upon Russia first coming into full compliance with the Open Skies Treaty and the INF Treaty. And I would just be interested in your thoughts on that.

Ms. NULAND. Well, you are not wrong that Russia has been restricting some overflights. There is a list of places—Kaliningrad, low altitude over Moscow, et cetera—where they have been restricting Open Skies flights. They had been restricting Open Skies flights over Chechnya in the last couple of weeks. They have reopened that territory, in part due to the pressure we have been able to bring to bear from other Open Skies Treaty partners, particularly the Europeans, who highly value this. I think you know that the first round of Russian requests for higher-definition cameras were within the constraints of the treaty. And so, from that perspective, were we to unilaterally restrict those flights, we could just expect they would do the same to us, and that would make us less capable, ourselves.

With regard to their more recent requests for really potent visuals, we are still reviewing that internally. I do not know if Dr. Carpenter has anything to add on that. We can certainly brief you in a closed setting on that, as well.

Senator BARRASSO. Okay.

Doctor?

Dr. CARPENTER. Well, I would just add that—to answer your question, Senator, that, yes, Russia is in violation of its INF Treaty requirements not to produce, deploy, or flight-test a ground-launched cruise missile with a range between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. We are looking at this more broadly in the context of Russia's aggressive behavior. And so, we are taking a number of steps in that broader context, to include expanding and modifying air-defense systems, together with our allies. We are also looking at investments, together with our allies and partners, in advanced capabilities that will allow us to defend against complex cruise-missile threats.

On the Open Skies issue, I would just associate myself with everything that Assistant Secretary Nuland has said. The treaty process already provides a way forward for certification of the electro-optical camera that is now being used as wet film goes out of business, essentially. And so, our ability to use this same sensor down the road is impacted by the decisions that we take today.

Senator BARRASSO. Yes, that is the followup, in terms of security risks, and, Secretary Nuland, you said you wanted to take additional security risks for our country on this, are there additional security risks and vulnerabilities if, in fact, these new types of sensors are allowed on Open Skies aircrafts, for us?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I am comfortable with the decisions that we have already made. We are reviewing exactly this set of issues as we look at the next set of requests from Russia.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, for some context to my question, let me summarize the current events, as I see it.

As Russia's September 18th primary—parliamentary election draws closer, the Kremlin is preparing the groundwork for another victory of Putin's United Russia Party. The current Duma, itself a product of a fraudulent 2011 election, has rubber-stamped a slate of new laws targeting the electoral process from impeding, campaigning, and observation to authorizing police forces to open fire on protesters. The state-sponsored ballot-stuffing that sparked those Moscow protests in 2011 has now evolved. The Kremlin and the Duma are, instead, barring opposition from registering now. Pro-government vigilantes have set up attacks on opposition. Putin, himself, is repeatedly implicated in political assassinations and assassination attempts, as with Boris Nemtsov, shot outside the Kremlin—dead outside of the Kremlin, or Mr. Kara-Murza, who is a witness here, who was poisoned near to death. The flames of nationalism are burning as bright as Putin's imperial adventure, seem to be part of a campaign to make Russia great again.

Whether in Ukraine, where, with the exception of congressional sanctions that I and others have offered and passed through this committee and the Congress passed in 2014, the administration has done relatively little to hold Russia accountable in meaningful material ways, or in Syria, where we have been maneuvered into having to coordinate with Russian forces who neither share common interests nor pursue common goals while hundreds of thousands have died and millions have been displaced, or at the U.N., where they resist sanctions on Iran for missile violations, in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, which they supporting, or their violation of the INF Treaty for which 2 years we have had discussions, but no consequences.

I worry that the message that Putin must be taking from our responses is that his limit-testing aggression and opportunism is the right approach, particularly when there are relatively negligible consequences, at the end of the day, for all of the things that I have listed, among others. And this is certainly a dry run for the presidential 2018 presidential elections in Russia, where we would certainly expect Putin to continue to take advantage of the opportunities that he sees, whether that is the arbitrary violation of international borders, treaties, human rights compacts, or whatever he decides that suits his personal interests at the time.

I am trying to get a grasp of—we pushed the Ukrainians really hard to meet their four pillars, which you testify here very hard, but, on the security side of the Minsk Agreement, we are failing dramatically, but we keep pushing the Ukrainians. We do not even talk about Crimea anymore. That is, I guess, gone. We have this violation of the INF Treaty, yet there are no consequences 2 years later, despite whatever engagement and conversations are to bring them back. Why are we not more aggressively engaging in tools of diplomacy that can help us, hopefully, have Russia understand that there are consequences? Why are we not using the OSCE, which

has—clearly, they are a signatory to, and have clear violations. Why are we not looking at more visa denials? Why are we not looking at more frozen accounts? Why are we not looking at more Magnitsky listings? I do not get it. Because if everything—if what you are doing—and I heard your testimony, and I read it before I came, and I wanted to listen to it again—is still leaving you in the place that we are at, why is it that we do not seem to step up towards the challenge that we have?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I would not take issue with anything that you have said here with regard to the constraining of space inside of Russia and ramp-up to the elections and Russian external behavior. I would take issue with whether Russia is paying a price for this. We talked about the economic sanctions that this committee has supported over the last 2 years. I think Russia has paid a steep price, not simply through sanctions, but also through its over-dependence on oil. We now have Russians—you know, 13.4 percent of Russians living below the poverty line. We have a GDP contraction of 3.7 percent in Russia in 2015 alone.

Senator MENENDEZ. But, let me—I have 18 seconds. Why not—answer my core question—why not more visa denials, why not more Magnitsky listings, why not more refusal to U.S. banks, as you—we will hear a witness who says, “Do not let his ill-gotten gains of his cronies end up in the United States”—why are we not pursuing all of those OSCE—why are we not doing that?

Ms. NULAND. Well, we are working on all of those things. As you know, every year we add names to the Magnitsky list. The Magnitsky legislation is relatively constraining. It has to go to that particular case. But, we have denied a number of visas in the context of Ukraine sanctions, in the context of Syria sanctions, and we are continuing to look at what more we can and should do.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, both of you, for being here today.

And I want to follow up on what Senator Menendez just talked about, and that is consequences of bad behavior. This past week, a number of us had the opportunity to visit southeast Asia, where we visited with ministers from Singapore, government leaders in Myanmar, to new leadership in Taiwan, participated in the Shangri-La dialogue, where we visited with leaders from around the world who participated in that defense dialogue, including our own Secretary of Defense, Ashton Carter. But, when meeting with foreign governments, when meeting with leaders, they talk about U.S. leadership, and they talk about the positions that we are trying to secure, positions that we are fighting for, like the South China Seas. And when we are asking them to take a tough line, perhaps on something like the South China Sea, they see our lack of consequences in other circumstances and question whether or not they should take a hardline position against a powerful nation or a situation such as their neighbor, China. And so, we cannot look at things in isolation as how we are responding to Russia, how—because it affects what is happening and what is on people’s minds in Asia—in southeast Asia, excuse me—in Singapore. It is—people around the globe are looking at our lack of response and lack of consequence to—and deciding whether or not the U.S. is

somebody that they should hitch their wagon to, so to speak, or not. And I think that is the great challenge.

And so, whether it is Crimea, Ukraine, INF, Syria, Georgia, they do not see the consequences. And when we ask them to take a tough position, they do not see the reason why they should, because they know the United States is not going to follow through. And that is hurting our leadership around the globe. And it is hurting our ability to rally our allies to our side and to create the kind of rules-based order that we need to in order to counter the behavior of China, the behavior of Russia.

And so, I guess, a couple of questions. In your testimony, you state that, quote, “We have worked with Russia to remove Syria’s declared chemical weapons, to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, to contain the nuclear threat emanating from the DPRK, North Korea, and to negotiate and implement the New START Treaty.” Obviously, I think you would agree that the nuclear threat in North Korea has not been contained. Is that correct?

Ms. NULAND. It has not.

Senator GARDNER. And so, what is it that we are actually getting Russia to accomplish? Are they following through with the implementation of United Nations Resolution 2270, the sanctions bill against North Korea?

Ms. NULAND. As you know, in the context of these—this latest round of sanctions, we had difficult conversations with Russia, but we were able to get Russia to join a deeper regime against North Korea than we have had in the past. We will—you know, and they had particular interests that they wanted managed there. But we did better than some expected because of the pressure from the Asian allies.

Senator GARDNER. Are they completely implementing 2270?

Ms. NULAND. I, frankly, do not have the details. My understanding is that, in the broad strokes, they are. Whether they are, in detail, I would have to do more work.

Senator GARDNER. And what is their position on THAAD in South Korea?

Dr. Carpenter, if that is more appropriate, to you.

Dr. CARPENTER. Russia has traditionally opposed the advanced air-defense capabilities that we provide to allies, both in Europe as well as in East Asia.

Senator GARDNER. And what is their position—let us just say, you know, if they are teaming up with China on THAAD and our efforts to contain the nuclear threat from North Korea, what are they doing in other areas? Are they teaming up with China on the freedom of navigation operations, as well, and opposing our efforts to provide rules-based governance according to international law?

Dr. CARPENTER. Senator, I do not see them teaming up with China on freedom of navigation, although clearly the Chinese and other great powers are watching to see what Russia is able to get away with—

Senator GARDNER. But Russia has not supported our operations in the South China Sea, have they?

Dr. CARPENTER. Has Russia supported our—

Senator GARDNER. Correct.

Dr. CARPENTER. No.

Senator GARDNER. Okay. So, they are taking the same position as China, then, on freedom of navigation operations.

Dr. CARPENTER. Senator, I would characterize it as they have not taken a vocal position, one way or the other. They have largely remained in the background on this.

Senator GARDNER. Dr. Carpenter, while I am with you, I guess I would just follow up, and we can have that conversation, as well, in terms of what we are doing to push Russia to implement 2270 and to agree to a true commitment to a nuclear-free peninsula.

I want to talk about a report that came out several months ago. And I am sure you are familiar with it. This is the RAND report. Looking at an article here that says, "Russian invasion could overrun NATO in 60 hours." This article was published in February of 2016. That is about the time of the report. I am sure you are familiar with this report. Has this assessment changed, in your mind, since this report was first published?

Dr. CARPENTER. Senator, I would say that Russia clearly possesses a time-distance advantage, if it were to decide to be an aggressor in the Baltic states, and that that poses certain limitations that we would have to overcome, in terms of our ability to defend our NATO allies. We are making the investments through ERI and otherwise precisely to have forces pre-positioned, along with warfighting equipment so that we are better able to deter Russian aggression in the first place.

Senator GARDNER. But, I mean, has this assessment, in your mind, changed substantially or substantively since this report came out in February?

Dr. CARPENTER. Senator, we have done a number of our own internal exercises and reviewed our plans, and we have looked very carefully at the geography of the Baltic Basin and precisely that advantage that Russia possesses, and we are taking steps to try to mitigate.

Senator GARDNER. What you are saying is, basically, nothing has changed since this report, substantively. And are you saying that your reports agree with the assessment of the RAND report?

Dr. CARPENTER. Senator, I would say that, by the end of 2017, when we implement all of the ERI funding that is coming online, that we will be much better poised to address the challenges, and much better poised to deter Russian aggression in that region than we are now. I do not know that we have made significant—

Senator GARDNER. So, the end of 2017 until we are better poised to deter the Russian threat.

Dr. CARPENTER [continuing]. Well, Senator, we are pre-positioning equipment on a sort of ongoing basis. I do not know that we are significantly more advanced now than when the RAND report came out, but I am confident, by the end of 2017, when we have an additional Armored Brigade Combat Team worth of force posture on the eastern flank of the alliance, that we will be.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for being here and for your ongoing efforts.

Part of Russia's campaign in eastern Europe, in the Baltics and Ukraine, has been to produce disinformation. They are spending a lot of money on RT television, in lots of other ways, to get their message out into parts of eastern Europe. Can you talk a little bit more about what we are doing to respond to that propaganda? I do not know which one of you wants to address that.

Ms. NULAND. Thanks, Senator.

Well, as you know, this has been a line of effort that been—we have been working on very hard with members of the Congress and the Senate since 2014. The total appropriation now—State Department, USAID, BBG, Broadcast Board of Governors—on the U.S. side is about \$100 million to counter Russian propaganda. That money, as you know, goes for a number of things, from clean, honest, Russian-language programming that BBG is now putting out every day, the expansion of Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, VOA, to about \$88 million that we use in State Department and AID money to support civil society, independent media, journalist training, including outside Russia for those Russian journalists who have fled. We are also doing quite a bit to bolster programming inside Russia, to the extent that we can. But, this pales in comparison to the 400 million, at least, that Russia is spending, and, frankly, to the levels that we spent during the Cold War on these kinds of things, which were over a billion dollars a year in the days of old USIA.

Senator SHAHEEN. And can you talk a little bit about the substance of what we are doing and who we are engaging in working with us on the content? Is it journalists who—or reporters who have fled Russia, who are helping us look at what kind of messages we are using? Are there others who are engaged in that effort with us?

Ms. NULAND. I will be 30,000 feet, if you will allow me, to protect those who participate in these programs, many of whom depend on that protection.

Senator SHAHEEN. Right.

Ms. NULAND. But, we conduct training programs at various locations in Europe for journalists who have either fled or who have come out to get training and are planning to go back in. We support a number of Russian-language news organizations in the Baltic states and in other periphery countries that are designed either to address Russian-speaking populations in those home countries and counter Russian propaganda or to beam back in. We obviously support Russian-language programming in Ukraine, which has some impact also in Russia, as well. And then this good portion that goes to BBG and VOA programming, which is U.S. Government free news content. We also do quite a bit to pull together efforts of the EU, U.K., Baltic states, central Europeans, through consultation, through sharing of programming, et cetera.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

You raised Ukraine, and obviously there have been a number of questions around what is happening in Ukraine and Russia's failure to comply with Minsk II. And there was a period where there were some countries in Europe that did not seem to appreciate the extent to which this was a failure on Russia's part, and viewed it more as a failure of Ukraine. I wonder if you can talk about where

we are with respect to how the EU is viewing Minsk II at this point and what more we can do to put pressure on Russia to comply.

Ms. NULAND. As I said in my opening, Senator, I think we are cautiously optimistic that the EU countries will again roll over sanctions at the end of June because they see what we see, namely that Minsk is far from being implemented on—in any of its components. We have intensified our own diplomacy after the President's meeting in Hanover with President Hollande and Chancellor Merkel to support what those countries are doing to try to get Minsk fully complied with. They are pushing on two fronts, both to negotiate a fair political decentralization deal for Donbas, which does not cross over the line of creating a cat's paw or a permanent enclave of Russia in Ukraine. At the same time, we are trying to get the commitments that Russia and Donbas made to the OSCE for full access, pullback of weapons implemented. As I said at one point, it is this security package that is not being implemented well. We have had a sharp spike in attacks over the last 6 weeks, in particular, and we have had a conscious blinding of the OSCE, disabling of cameras, shutdown by separatists of two OSCE UAVs. So, in both our own advocacy at every level, the President, the Secretaries, my work with the—President Putin's advisor on this work, we are calling this out. So, we are working on it very hard. I think the point is for Ukraine to fulfill its obligations, and then we test whether Russia was ever serious about these agreements.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

My time is up.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Nuland, let me read you a quote, here, from the same individual. It is the general—General Philip Breedlove. He said, “Russia has chosen to be an adversary and poses a long-term existential threat to the United States and to our European allies and partners.” Goes on to say, “Russia does not just want to change”—or “challenge the agreed rules of the international order, it wants to rewrite them.” Is that your assessment of the state of Russia today under Vladimir Putin, as far as their role in the international scene?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I do not have a problem with that characterization at all.

Senator RUBIO. So, then let me ask about Ukraine. It—Roman Sohn, who is a Ukraine activist. He wrote about Minsk II. He said—he called it a farce, and here is his quote, “While Russia does nothing to implement the agreement, the U.S. and the EU are forcing Minsk II down the throat of Kiev and that Putin knows that it is much easier for the West to put pressure on Ukraine to accept bad terms than it is to forge a consensus on keeping the pressure, including sanctions, on Russia,” end quote.

I seem to share those views, given the fact that it appears that Russia is perfectly comfortable with what they view as a frozen conflict in the region. Obviously, some of what they are doing in Syria is distracting attention. We do not talk about Ukraine around here nearly as much as we once did. Everyone is focused on the

role they are playing in Syria. And I think part of the calculation Putin had was exactly that. But, it is, in fact, a frozen situation.

And I walked in late, when Senator Menendez was asking about this. But, why is he wrong when he characterizes it as a farce? Why is he wrong when he characterizes it as a situation where no one is pressuring Russia to comply, but they know that the West and our European partners are pressuring Kiev, especially the Germans, to comply?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I think the largest piece of leverage that we have on Russia is the sustainment over 2 years of deep and comprehensive sanctions across the U.S. and the EU countries, Japan, Canada, et cetera. So, again, this is why we are advocating, because Minsk has not been implemented, that sanctions have to be rolled over again. We are continuing to press, as I said to—in response to Senator Shaheen’s point, that Ukraine cannot be asked to vote on the political decentralization pieces of Minsk until the prior actions that are demanded in Minsk—real cease-fire, real access throughout Donbas for OSCE, cantonment of heavy weapons—has been implemented. So, that is the frame that we are using. That is the frame that Germany and France are using. I think Ukraine does itself a service by being ready with text on an election law, being ready with special status to implement when those agreed conditions are met. But, Russia has not, either itself or with its clients in Donbas, gotten the security conditions met.

Senator RUBIO. So, when you talk about rollover, you mean the extension of the existing framework. Why not increase sanctions? These are now violations of an agreement that they reached, and they have not complied with. And I—I mean, am I right in guessing—or in stating that your argument is going to be that we can—we do not want to go any further than our partners in Europe are willing to go, and they are not willing to do additional sanctions?

Ms. NULAND. Well, Senator, I would say, I was quite gratified when the G7 nations that met in Japan just a couple of weeks ago made clear that we are ready to increase sanctions if we need to. The United States, as you know, not only maintains the sanctions, but does regular maintenance to them to ensure that they cannot be circumvented. We have done that on two occasions, and we are prepared to do it again.

Senator RUBIO. It is—could an argument be met that this pain threshold is something Putin has—willing to accept? It clearly has not impacted his behavior. Or do you argue that the sanctions have impacted his behavior?

Ms. NULAND. Well, all I can tell you is, we have deterred further land grabs in Ukraine, and that was a real risk when we first started with sanctions, that they would try to run all the way to Kiev and to Kharkiv. I will tell you that Russians are openly talking now about the pain of sanctions, including when we work with them on the Minsk thing. So, they know what it is going to take to get these sanctions rolled back, and it is their choice whether they want to do what is necessary.

Senator RUBIO. And what about Crimea? How come we no longer hear Crimea mentioned? Is it a de facto, now, matter of fact? Is it something we have just accepted as reality, or does that continue

to be a part of our conversations, that Crimea should be returned, rightfully?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I mentioned Crimea here in my opening. Secretary mentions it every time he speaks publicly in Russia. We will maintain the Crimea sanctions, which are significant, both U.S. and EU, until Crimea is returned rightfully to Ukraine.

Senator RUBIO. When they took over Crimea, there was a sense, and I thought that it would be a boondoggle for the Russian Government, that it would cost them a bunch of money to maintain that area. Has it, in fact, turned out—other than the geostrategic advantage, do we have any sense as to how many resources they are having to put in to uphold and maintain this now as part of their national territory?

Ms. NULAND. It is our estimate that Russia is spending billions of rubles trying to maintain its foothold in Crimea. I think the most concerning factor, though, is that they are further militarizing Crimea.

Dr. Carpenter might want to speak to that.

Dr. CARPENTER. Well, I would just say that, absolutely, that Russia is militarizing Crimea. They have put in very sophisticated A2/AD capabilities there since the start of the conflict.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, very good.

Senator Murphy.

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

Welcome, to both of you. Thank you for taking so much time with us.

I know that there was some conversation with Senator Perdue over the U.S./Georgia bilateral relationship, but I wanted to explore that relationship in the context of the upcoming NATO Summit. We are hopeful that we will continue on track to offer membership to Montenegro. I think they are ready, and it is an important signal that NATO still has an open-door policy for those that are ready, and that, in general, transatlantic institutions are still open for business, despite the aggressive tactics of Moscow. But, the Georgians are likely going to leave Warsaw disappointed, and the question remains whether there is any future for Georgia inside NATO while there is still a contest over these territories.

What we know is that Putin's ambition, I do not think—what I believe is that Putin's ambition is not to militarily own Ukraine. He wants to continue clouded title over a portion of that country so that eventually there becomes such economic and political tumult that a government is reinstalled in Kiev that is much more friendly to Moscow's interests. And so, it is in our interests to make it clear to the Russians that, to the extent that they are successful in Ukraine or other places in the future of creating clouded title over portions of territory, that it does not prevent those countries from being eligible to join transatlantic institutions.

So, I am happy that both of you are involved in this book of business, so talk to me about what the future of Georgia's potential NATO membership is. I am someone who supports at least a Membership Action Plan for Georgia, but—and is concerned that, without the settlement of these territorial questions, Georgia will forever be disappointed, walking away from NATO Summit after NATO Summit.

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I think we expect, at the Warsaw Summit, that the alliance will reiterate the message that we have had to Georgia since 2008 regarding our expectations of membership. One of the things that we are seeking to do as an alliance for Georgia is reorient NATO/Georgia relations, U.S./Georgia relations away—in security terms—away from simply preparing them to deploy with us in Afghanistan or in Kosovo, and much more towards a focus on their homeland security needs, their national defense resilience, et cetera. So, we are working on that.

The best antidote to Russian pressure is a successful, prosperous, democratic Georgia. That is why we work so hard with them on justice reform, on rule of law, on strong institutions, on market access. We are also encouraging Georgia in its relationship with the European Union as it implements the trade benefits of that, to reach out to the Abhaas, et cetera, and make it possible for them, through Tbilisi, to have the benefits of the trade relationship with Europe so that someday those parts of Georgia may see stronger benefit from Tbilisi than anything that is being offered by any external neighbor.

But, you are absolutely right that it is essential for us to continue to be strong supporters of Georgia's aspiration.

Senator MURPHY. Let me actually ask a different question of you, Dr. Carpenter, and you can answer this one, as well, if you would like. We have been obsessive in this place about military assistance for the Ukrainians. There have been many members of the Senate who have been disappointed at the level of military assistance we have provided. But, it is not a coincidence that the Ukrainians have become much more effective at rebutting Russian advances. And it is not a coincidence that this has happened during a time in which, notwithstanding a question over the future of Javelin missiles, we have been transferring pretty important technology and important expertise and training resources to the Ukrainians. There is a success story to tell here about the integration of the Department of Defense here and the Ukrainian military, which is part of the story, as to why the—well, insufficient, the lines have been able to largely hold over a longer period of time. Can you just talk to us a little bit about the success of the partnerships that we have had with the Ukrainian military?

Dr. CARPENTER. Yes, absolutely. Thank you, Senator.

So, we have launched, with Ukraine, a substantial training and equipping program. There is also an advisory component to this that is focused on defense reforms, which was actually a fairly substantial effort. But, the training and equipping alone is hundreds of millions of dollars. For this year, it is \$335 million. Last year, we were focused on the National Guard, which is within the Ministry of Interior. We trained six companies. Now we are training Ukraine's Conventional Armed Forces as well as its Special Operations Forces. All told, by the time the—this training package is completed, we will have trained close to 3,000 Ukrainian troops.

And the results on the battlefield have been significant. A lot of the training process involves taking soldiers who have fought in the Donbas, forming new units. We train them primarily in Yavoriv, in western Ukraine. And we train them in realistic conditions. We run them through basic skills, where they learn marks-

manship and how to emplace artillery, up through more advanced techniques, and then send them as coherent units out to the Donbas, where they are able to defend their territory.

And one of the best examples, as you referenced, Senator, of Ukraine being able to hold the line came a year ago in June, when the separatists launched a massive assault on the town of Marinka, and Ukrainians actually had the capability to detect surveillance by the Russian-separatist combined teams, and push back, resulting in significant casualties on the other side.

And so, I think our training and equipping program is very successful. We would like to be able to continue it, thanks to support from Congress for this effort through USAI. And we are very proud of the work that our folks are doing from the 173rd as well as from the California National Guard to run this program.

With regards to your earlier question about Georgia, part of what we are trying to do now in Georgia is to replicate some of the success that we have had with Ukraine and to implement a training program that is not just focused on expeditionary operations that Georgians perform in Afghanistan, which are primarily counter-insurgency-focused, to training and equipping that is more focused on territorial defense, because that is something that clearly Georgia needs, as does Ukraine, after years of hollowed-out military and mismanagement.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Absolutely.

Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am going to ask you three questions, and I will submit these questions for the record for the second panel, because I cannot stay to hear their answers to them. But, first, in your professional opinion, what would the likely effect on Russian behavior be if the United States dramatically reduced or withdrew its support from NATO?

Ms. NULAND. As a former Ambassador to NATO, I would say, Senator, that that would be a strategic mistake for the United States.

Senator Kaine. Dr. Carpenter?

Dr. CARPENTER. Senator, I could think of no greater gift to Russia, and no greater strategic vulnerability for the United States and the Euro-Atlantic area, than that course of action.

Senator Kaine. Second question. On the eve of the Warsaw Summit in early July, how concerned are our European NATO allies about a potential change in the U.S. level of support for NATO?

Ms. NULAND. You know, obviously, allies are watching the debate here in the United States with a lot of interest, as they always do. In our conversations, I think they find it very difficult to imagine that the United States would break a 70-year treaty commitment which has served us so well.

Senator Kaine. Dr. Carpenter?

Dr. CARPENTER. Senator, I will say that, in my conversations and travels with my counterparts, I have heard significant concern, but I think a lot of our partners believe that we will remain committed

members of NATO, in fact, and play a leadership role in the alliance.

Senator KAINÉ. Third. In your professional opinion, is NATO obsolete?

Ms. NULAND. NATO is needed now more than ever.

Dr. CARPENTER. Senator, I could not agree more.

Senator KAINÉ. I do not have any other questions.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. I have no idea under—in what context those questions were asked, but—[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Just to follow up—and I do very much appreciate you asking those questions—I know that we have had Madeleine Albright here. We certainly have had people of various persuasions before this committee. Obviously, the NATO alliance is very important to us, and very important to Europe, as we hope TTIP will be over time. As a result, we hope economically tie our two sides of the ocean more closely together.

On the other hand, what is it that we can do to actually leverage our NATO allies? We are, let's face it, a global entity. Seventy percent of NATO defense resources are spent by the United States, 30 percent by other members. I realize that we have other responsibilities around the world outside of NATO, but what leverage points do we have over those who are, for lack of a better word, being laggards? What can we do to pressure those who are not fulfilling their 2-percent level of commitment? All of us, on both sides of the aisle, talk with our counterparts at Munich and other places, but we continue to be the primary provider of security services. We appreciate so much what they have done to help us, especially in Afghanistan, which was a very unusual circumstance. We appreciate their commitment, but we still only have four countries that are honoring the monetary portion of the treaty.

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I would say that culmination of the Kremlin and ISIL have motivated allies in a way that we have not seen for many years. As we head towards—as you remember, at the Wales Summit, we got commitments from allies to reverse defense spending slide. Seventy percent of allies are meeting those commitments, and I think we will be able to say, at Warsaw, that most allies are now increasing their defense budgets, and that, within a few years, we will have—we will be in double digits on the number of allies who are at 2 percent. But, we all have to continue to advocate and push, and we have to create structures in NATO, as we are trying to do as we head towards Warsaw, where the burden-sharing is built in as the U.S. is more evident in some countries, others are more evident in other countries, as we did with Afghanistan.

So, we are going to continue to work on that, but we very much value the advocacy that you all do when you are in Europe in—on a bipartisan basis. It is very important for Europe to know that burden-sharing is expected by all Americans.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Dr. Carpenter, do you wish to add to that?

Dr. CARPENTER. I would just say, Chairman, that right now we have got five allies, including the United States, that are at 2 percent. I would add a couple of things. One, there is an additional

pledge of 20 percent of defense spending spent on capital investments and equipment, which is very important to sustain the capabilities of the alliance, going forward. So, it is important to accentuate that, as well. I think we need to talk to allies about this each and every day.

But, the other point I wanted to make is, having just come from a trip to the Western Balkans, where I met with some of our allies there, they also do provide troops to some of the NATO missions that we run in Afghanistan and other places. And so, it is important to remember that, in addition to their defense spending, that a lot of our allies are also contributing troops to the fight.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

You all have been outstanding witnesses. People have gained a lot from your knowledge and your willingness to be here.

The record will close on Thursday at the end of the day. If you would please respond to questions in a timely manner.

Thank you for your service to our country and for being here to help us.

And, with that, we will move to the second panel.

Thank you both very much. [Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. We thank our second panel for being here. I think you'll see that sometimes after our first panel, there is an exodus. Yet, we often find that our second panel, in many cases, is more interesting and more enlightening. I am not saying that is necessarily the case today, but we thank you both for being here.

Today, we have Mr. David Satter, a Senior Fellow from the Hudson Institute. Thank you for coming to share your wisdom with us. Additionally, we have Mr. Vladimir Kara-Murza, and we thank you so much for being here as well. I know you were at an earlier hearing we had this year, and all of us wanted to have you back. We thank you for making the effort to be here.

So, with that, Mr. Satter, if you would begin, with about 5 minutes, we would appreciate it. We will move to Mr. Kara-Murza.

**STATEMENT OF DAVID SATTER, SENIOR FELLOW,
HUDSON INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Mr. SATTER. Thank you, Senator. I am very glad to be here and very anxious to talk about U.S./Russian relations, not only from the point of view of policies, treaties, and bilateral arrangements, but also a very important question which informs all of the latter, which is the spirit of Russia.

Oftentimes, we make policy on the assumption that the spirit of Russia is actually very little different from the spirit of the United States. This is one of the reasons why we often are surprised by Russian behavior. If we take it for granted that the leaders of a country are dedicated to the national interest and the welfare of the population of the country, we find it hard to understand a country in which the leadership is totally indifferent to the welfare of the population. If we take it for granted that the human individual is an end in himself, we find it hard to deal with a country in which individuals are raw material for the realization of the political goals of the political leaders. And many of those goals are very bizarre indeed.

For this reason, there is always a danger that we will mistake Russian actions. One of the most important things to bear in mind about Russia is that war is an instrument of internal policy. The first Chechen war was launched in order for there to be a short victorious war that would boost the rating of, at that point, President Yeltsin, who was suffering because of the aftereffects of privatization and the impoverishment of the population. The war proved out—proved to be neither short nor victorious.

The second Chechen war was undertaken in order to guarantee the succession to Yeltsin. And this is one of the most important episodes of Russian history, also one about which Americans are very much in the dark. A terrorist act took place. It was used to justify a new war in Chechnya. Yeltsin, who was—Putin, rather, who was very little known, became the Prime Minister, took charge of that war, and, on the strength of the successful prosecution of that war, was elected President.

Later, the bombs that were placed began to appear very suspicious. A fifth bomb was found in the city of Ryazan, outside of Moscow, and the persons who put it in the basement of that building turned out to be not Chechen terrorists, but actually agents of the FSB. The—war broke out again, as a result of the events in Ukraine, where a self-organizing anticriminal revolution demonstrated to the Russian people potentially how it might be possible to resist the kleptocratic authorities who were in charge in their own country. A massive, in effect, diversionary effort was made to distract Russians from the true lessons of Euromaidan. And when the resistance of the Ukrainians proved greater than the Russians expected, a new diversionary operation was launched in Syria to distract the Russian population from what was going on in Ukraine.

Under these circumstances, one of the most important things that the United States can do is it reinforce the deterrence to using war in this manner, and also to make renewed efforts to reach the Russian people about the true activities and motivations of their authorities so that they are not just unwitting instruments in the hands of their leaders, but are in a position, finally, to make their leaders answer to them. This is the intellectual challenge that faces American policy, and over and above, and complementary to, the challenge of strengthening the purely practical aspects of deterrence on which, in fact, European stability and world stability depend.

[Mr. Satter's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID SATTER

The leaders of post-Soviet Russia, a supposedly democratic country, have used wars to achieve internal political objectives. The first Chechen war was "a small victorious war" that was calculated to raise the popularity of President Yeltsin which suffered because of the lawless process of privatization and resulting impoverishment of the Russian people. The second Chechen war was intended to save those who had pillaged the country and assure Putin's elevation to power. In perhaps the greatest political provocation since the burning of the Reichstag, four apartment buildings in Buinaksk, Moscow, and Volgograd were blown up in 1999 and the attack was blamed on Chechen terrorists. In fact, there is overwhelming evidence that the bombings were carried out not by Chechens but by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB). This evidence includes but is not limited to the fact that FSB agents were arrested after placing a bomb in a fifth building in the city of Ryazan south-

east of Moscow and Gennady Seleznev, the speaker of the State Duma, announced the bombing in Volgograd September 16, 1999 three days before it occurred.

The bombings were used as a pretext for a new war in Chechnya and success in fighting this war brought Putin to power. In other words, there is overwhelming evidence that Putin rules as a result of an act of terror against his own people.

The war in Ukraine was also undertaken to distract the Russian people. In this case, it was intended to blind them to the real lesson of Maidan revolt—the possibility of a people to spontaneously and freely organize against a kleptocratic regime. The war in Syria, in turn, was undertaken in order to distract attention from the lack of success in Ukraine. The ambitious plans to carve out a “New Russia” from sovereign Ukrainian territory were at least temporarily frozen in the face of Western sanctions and stiff Ukrainian military resistance.

Calls by presidential candidates for a “grand bargain” with Russia which, in fact, only repeat the premise of the “reset policy” are therefore naive and misguided. The only bargain that the U.S. can obtain are on terms that no President concerned to honor American principles could accept—the right of Russia to suppress its people and attack its neighbors. If such terms were accepted, the Russian leaders would immediately escalate their demands.

The following are some of the areas in which Russian actions represent a danger to the U.S., its neighbors or civilized principles:

UKRAINE

Russia is guilty of aggression against Ukraine, having deliberately started a war on an invented pretext in order to destabilize the Ukrainian Government and discredit the Ukrainian anti-criminal Maidan revolution. The war in Ukraine is sometimes referred to as a “hybrid war.” But this term is incorrect. What is taking place is a real war with full Russian participation but under conditions in which Russia’s role is hidden. A better term for what is going on is “concealed war.” Russia is seeking to achieve success with the help of pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine who, along with Russian volunteers and regular Russian forces are fighting the Ukrainian Army. But the operation is a full scale invasion and was organized by Russia from the start.

In light of the possible destabilizing consequences of Russia’s aggression for international security, the situation requires a greater commitment on the part of the U.S. to the defense of Ukraine. The Minsk-2 agreement in which a Russian cease fire was purchased with the help of a commitment to allow Russia to change the nature of Ukrainian statehood cannot be the base of a resolution of the conflict. According to the latest UN figures, more than 9,000 persons have been killed in a war that has no purpose except to reinforce the Putin regime’s hold on power. Arming Ukraine with defensive lethal weapons to be used on their sovereign territory and the toughening of the sanctions regime can help to raise the cost of aggression and restore the international order.

THE BALTICS

Russia is no match for NATO or the U.S. in an all-out war but it could provoke a localized conflict in the Baltics where it has strategic superiority and then threaten to use nuclear weapons, presenting NATO with a choice of escalation or backing down. This is perhaps the greatest strategic threat to the U.S. at the present time because a failure to defend one of the Baltic NATO members would destroy the effectiveness of NATO as a whole.

The Russians are clearly ready to take risks. On April 14, a Russian SU-27 fighter jet flew dangerously close to a U.S. RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft over the Baltic Sea. It came to within 50 feet of the plane and conducted a barrel roll starting from the left side of the aircraft, going over the aircraft and ending up to the right of the aircraft. This incident came two days after a simulated Russian aerial assault against the guided missile destroyer U.S.S. Donald Cook in the Baltic Sea. One of the jets came to within 30 feet of the warship. This was the most reckless flyover of a U.S. ship by a Russian jet since the Cold War. Neither of these incidents could have occurred by accident.

The air incidents are a message that the Russians want the U.S. out of the Baltic region. They have been accompanied by Russian prevention of U.S. and allied flights over the heavily militarized Kaliningrad region that are allowed under the Open Skies Treaty, the latest of a number of violations of that treaty.

Russian intimidation, however, does not need to succeed. The Russian leaders are not ideological. The effort that they have invested in amassing personal fortunes attests to this. They will not risk their hold on power on behalf of a conflict they know

they will lose. The proper response to Russian tactics is therefore a commensurate strengthening of NATO's Baltic defenses.

INDISCRIMINATE VIOLENCE

The Russian authorities act with a complete disregard for human life. This is of concern to the U.S. not only on humanitarian grounds but also because Russian violence can claim the lives of Americans and can have consequences for Americans.

In Syria, the Russian bombing is indiscriminate. According to the Violations Documentation Center, which seeks to document the attacks by all sides, the civilian death toll from Russian strikes by mid-March was over 2,000. In January alone, according to the Syria Network for Human Rights, another monitoring organization, Russian air strikes killed 679 civilians, including 94 children and 73 women. This exceeded the number of civilians killed by the Syrian Army, which is also guilty of indiscriminate bombing. For purposes of comparison, the total number of civilians killed by ISIS in January was 98, the number killed by the al-Qaeda affiliated al-Nusra front was 42.

Russian forces have intentionally bombed civilian areas to spread fear and clear areas where government ground troops were preparing to advance. This is consistent with Soviet military doctrine, employed by both sides in the Ukrainian war and an important factor in the death toll in that conflict. The bombing of civilian targets in Syria, including bakeries and hospitals, also increases the flow of refugees towards Turkey and Europe, exacerbating internal tensions in those regions and creating pressure to accept a resolution of the Syrian crisis on Russian terms.

Americans were among the victims when on July 17, 2014 Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was shot down over Eastern Ukraine killing all 298 persons on board. The Dutch Safety Board confirmed that MH17 was destroyed by a missile fired from a Russian made BUK anti-aircraft battery. The Putin regime, in complete disregard for the safety of innocent international air travelers, had transferred missiles capable of shooting down planes flying at over 30,000 feet to a quickly assembled army fighting in an area traversed by one of the busiest commercial air corridors in the world.

There was an American victim, Sandy Booker of Oklahoma, in the 2002 Moscow theater siege in which the Russian authorities flooded a theater with lethal gas. In all cases, the Russian leaders need to be put on notice that the indiscriminate killing of hostages in "anti-terrorist" operations will not be tolerated and the deaths of any Americans will lead to serious sanctions.

The Putin regime is not a normal government but a regime that is at war furiously with its own people. The Putin regime claims an approval rating of 85 to 87 per cent but they have found it necessary to create a 400,000 member national guard for suppressing domestic disturbances and have passed a new law making it legal for FSB agents to fire without warning into a crowd.

In fact, the Russian leaders fear their own people and have no compunction against using violence against them. As a result of the sanctions and the fall in the price of oil, Russia last year lost 1.5 per cent of its gross national product. The existing sanctions have made it difficult for Russian banks and enterprises, both state and private to refinance their debts and have cut off Western technology to the gas and oil industry. If this state of affairs continues, the consequences for the economic development of the country will be catastrophic.

In light of the dangers that the present Russian regime represents, it is important for the U.S. to understand the importance of psychological deterrence. Restraining the behavior of the Putin regime requires creating the impression in both word and deed that violations will meet with a serious response. One little explored way of doing this is with truthful information. The Russian authorities have benefited from the 17 year refusal of U.S. officials to raise the many unanswered questions about the 1999 Russian apartment bombings that brought Putin to power and also the delicacy with which the U.S. has discussed the obvious signs of official involvement in the murders of such opposition figures as journalist Anna Politkovskaya, Duma deputies Yuri Shchekochikhin and Sergei Yushenkov and opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, among others. The U.S. should weigh the example of the court in the United Kingdom which found that Putin "probably" approved the murder of Alexander Litvinenko, the former FSB officer poisoned with radioactive polonium in London in 2006 and seek to emulate it.

The "reset" policy toward Russia, now largely discredited, could have been avoided if U.S. officials had considered the significance of the murders of Politkovskaya and Litvinenko only two years earlier.

The willingness to insist on the truth about the Russian regime's crimes will not in and of itself deter Russian aggressivity including the regime's repression of its

own people. But insofar as deterrence is also a matter of psychology, it will reinforce steps at the policy level to convince the Russian leaders that it is simply not in their interest to act in defiance of civilized rules.

The Russian leaders need to be convinced that the U.S. is fully aware of their true character. This will encourage restraint and discourage miscalculation. It will also act in Russia's long term interest, encouraging changes that will make it possible for Russia one day to take its deserved place in the world of Western nations.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for that.
Mr. Kara-Murza.

STATEMENT OF VLADIMIR KARA-MURZA, NATIONAL COORDINATOR, OPEN RUSSIA MOVEMENT, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. KARA-MURZA. Thank you very much, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, Senator Risch, Senator Shaheen. Thank you for holding this important and timely hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Markey stepped in, as well. I know he is hard to see.

Mr. KARA-MURZA. Oh. Senator Markey, thank you so much for being here. And thank you for the opportunity to testify and to appear before you today.

Twenty-five years ago, at a conference held, of all places, in Moscow, member states of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe established as a principle that issues relating to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and I quote, "are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating states and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the state concerned," end of quote.

Through its membership of both the OSCE and the Council of Europe, the Russian Federation has undertaken clear and binding commitments with respect to election standards, the freedom of expression, the freedom of assembly, and other important aspects of human rights. And all these principles are also enshrined in the Russian Constitution.

In its 16 years, nearly a full generation in power, Vladimir Putin's regime has turned these commitments and these principles into a dead letter. Today, elections in our country serve as a mere ritual for ordaining the incumbents, with any meaningful opposition, in most cases, simply disqualified from the ballot, and with voting marred by intimidation and fraud.

After March 2000, so more than 16 years, not a single national election in Russia has been assessed as free and fair by OSCE and Council of Europe observers. And, according to independent estimates, up to 14 million votes were stolen in favor of the ruling party in the most recent parliamentary election, in 2011, which was followed by the largest street demonstrations under Vladimir Putin's rule, as more than 100,000 people went to the streets of Moscow to protest against fraud.

And preparations for this September's parliamentary vote are certainly not promising, with new restrictions imposed on both campaigning and observation, and with the establishment of a new National Guard that will be allowed to use force and shoot without warning in the event of mass demonstrations after the election.

For more than a decade now, the Russian parliament has been devoid of genuine opposition, not a place for discussion in the un-

forgettable words of its own Speaker. The same applies to most media outlets.

After taking over or shutting down independent television networks in the early years of Mr. Putin's rule, the Kremlin now controls all the national airwaves, which it uses to rail against the outside world, primarily the West, including the United States and Ukraine, as well as Mr. Putin's political opponents at home who are denounced as traitors, foreign agents, and enemies of Russia.

The few surviving pockets of media independents are under severe pressure as we saw again recently with the editorial purges of the RBC Media Group following its coverage of the Panama Papers.

The police, the prosecuting authorities, and the courts are used by the Kremlin as tools for suppressing and punishing dissent. According to Memorial, Russia's most respected human rights organization, there are currently 87 political prisoners in our country, a number which is already comparable with the late Soviet era. These prisoners include leftist politicians, Sergei Udaltsov; the brother of anticorruption campaigner Alexei Navalny, Leg Navalny; opposition activist Ildar Dadin, who was jailed under a new law that targets individual street protests; and Alexei Pichugin, the remaining hostage of the Yukos case. And they also include prisoners of the infamous Bologna case who were jailed merely for the fact that they came out on the streets to protest against Mr. Putin's inauguration in May of 2012.

But, those who oppose Vladimir Putin's regime risk not only their well-being and their freedom, they also risk their lives. On the 27th of February of last year, Boris Nemtsov, former Deputy Prime Minister and the leader of Russia's pro-democracy opposition, was killed by five bullets in the back as he walked home over the Bolshoi Moskvoretsky Bridge, just 200 yards from the Kremlin wall. A year on, the investigation into his murder is stalling. Although they have apprehended the alleged perpetrators, investigators have been unable to pursue the organizers and the masterminds. In fact, according to media reports, attempts to track the higher-ups were personally vetoed by General Alexander Bastrykin, the head of Russia's investigative committee. And, despite the obvious links between the murder suspects and Kremlin-appointed Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, he has not been even formally questioned in the case.

I can also speak to the dangers that face opposition activists in Russia from personal experience. Exactly 1 year ago in Moscow, I fell into a coma as a result of severe poisoning that led to multiple organ failure that was certainly intended to kill. In fact, doctors told my wife, who is here today, that they estimated the chance of survival at around 5 percent. So, I am very fortunate and certainly very happy to be here today and to be speaking and to be testifying before you.

Our friends in the West often ask how they can be helpful to the cause of human rights and democracy in Russia. And the answer to this is very simple. Please stay true to your values. We are not asking for your support. It is our task to fight for democracy and the rule of law in our country. The only thing we ask from Western leaders is that they stop supporting Mr. Putin by treating him as

a respectable and worthy partner and by allowing Mr. Putin's cronies to use Western countries as havens for their looted wealth.

The United States has been a pioneer in putting a stop to this. Nearly 4 years ago, this Congress passed the Sergei Magnitsky Act, a groundbreaking law that, for the first time ever, introduced personal accountability for human rights abuse and corruption by prohibiting those who violate the rights of Russian citizens and who pillage the resources of Russian citizens from traveling to the U.S. and using the U.S. financial system.

And I would like to use this opportunity to thank you, Senator Cardin, for your leadership and your unyielding commitment on this issue.

Testifying before this committee—in fact, in this very room; I was here with him on that day—in June 2013, Boris Nemtsov called the Magnitsky Act, and I quote, “the most pro-Russian law in the history of any foreign parliament,” end of quote. It is my sincere hope that this law is implemented to its full extent without regard for rank or influence, and that these crooks and these abusers get a clear message that they will not be welcome here. And that will be the best possible way to support the cause of human rights in Russia.

Thank you very much once again for the opportunity to testify. [Mr. Kara-Murza's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF VLADIMIR V. KARA-MURZA

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, esteemed members of the committee, thank you for holding this important and timely hearing, and for the opportunity to testify before you.

Twenty-five years ago, at a conference held, of all places, in Moscow, member states of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe established as a principle that issues relating to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law “are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.”¹ Through its membership of both the OSCE and the Council of Europe, the Russian Federation has undertaken binding commitments with respect to election standards, the freedom of expression, and other important aspects of human rights. All of these principles are enshrined in the Russian Constitution.

In its sixteen years—nearly a generation—in power, Vladimir Putin's regime has turned these commitments into a dead letter.

Today, elections in our country serve as a mere ritual to ordain the incumbents, with any meaningful opposition, in most cases, disqualified from the ballot, and with voting marred by intimidation and fraud. After March 2000, not a single nationwide election in Russia has been assessed by OSCE and Council of Europe observers as free and fair. According to independent estimates, up to fourteen million votes were stolen in favor of the ruling party in the most recent parliamentary election in 2011, which was followed by the largest street demonstrations under Mr. Putin's rule, when more than 100,000 people went to the streets of Moscow to protest fraud.² Preparations for this September's parliamentary vote are not promising, with new restrictions imposed on both campaigning and observation, and with the establishment of a new National Guard that will be allowed to use force and shoot without warning in the event of mass demonstrations.

For more than a decade, the Russian parliament has been devoid of genuine opposition—“not a place for discussion,” in the unforgettable words of its own speaker. The same applies to most media outlets. After taking over or shutting down independent television networks in the early years of Mr. Putin's rule, the Kremlin now controls all nationwide airwaves, which it uses to rail against the outside world—including the West and Ukraine—and against Mr. Putin's political opponents at home, who are denounced as “traitors” and “enemies of Russia.” The few surviving

¹ 1991 CSCE/OSCE Moscow Document.

² “Russia's Dubious Vote,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 28, 2011.

pockets of media independence are under severe pressure, as witnessed by the recent editorial purges at the RBC media group following its coverage of the “Panama Papers.”

The police, the prosecuting authorities, and the courts are used by the Kremlin as tools for suppressing and punishing dissent. According to Memorial, Russia’s most respected human rights organization, there are currently eighty-seven political prisoners in our country—a number comparable with the late Soviet era.³ These prisoners include leftist politician Sergei Udaltsov; the brother of anticorruption campaigner Alexei Navalny, Oleg Navalny; opposition activist Ildar Dadin, jailed under a new law that targets individual street protests; and Alexei Pichugin, the remaining hostage of the “Yukos case.”

But those who oppose Mr. Putin’s regime risk not only their wellbeing and their freedom. They also risk their lives.

On February 27, 2015, Boris Nemtsov, former deputy prime minister and leader of Russia’s pro-democracy opposition, was killed by five bullets in the back as he walked home over the Bolshoi Moskvoretsky Bridge, two-hundred yards from the Kremlin wall. More than a year on, the investigation into his murder is stalling. Although they have apprehended the alleged perpetrators, investigators have been unable to pursue organizers and masterminds. According to media reports, attempts to track the higher-ups were vetoed by Gen. Alexander Bastrykin, the head of Russia’s Investigative Committee.⁴ And, despite the obvious links between the murder suspects and Kremlin-appointed Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, he has not been even formally questioned in the case.

I can speak to the dangers that face opposition activists in Russia from personal experience. Exactly one year ago, in Moscow, I fell into a coma as a result of severe poisoning that caused multiple organ failure and that was certainly intended to kill. Doctors told my wife that they estimated the chance of survival at around five percent. I am very fortunate indeed to be speaking with you today.

Our friends in the West often ask how they can help the cause of human rights in Russia. The answer is simple: please stay true to your values. We are not asking for support—it is our task to fight for democracy and the rule of law in our country. The only thing we ask from Western leaders is that they stop supporting Mr. Putin by treating him as a respectable partner and by allowing his cronies to use Western countries as havens for their looted wealth. The U.S. has been a pioneer in the efforts to put a stop to this. Nearly four years ago, Congress passed the Magnitsky Act, a groundbreaking law that, for the first time, introduced personal accountability for human rights abuse and corruption by prohibiting those who violate the rights and pillage the resources of Russian citizens from traveling to the U.S. and using its financial system. Testifying before this committee in June 2013, Boris Nemtsov called the Magnitsky Act “the most pro-Russian law in the history of any foreign parliament.”⁵ It is my hope that this law is implemented to its full extent, without regard for rank or influence, and that the crooks and abusers get a clear message that they will not be welcome here.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you both for your testimony. I certainly appreciate the deep commitment you have and the personal experiences you’ve shared.

We have a vote. I am going to turn over to Senator Cardin for questions. I think what I will do is go vote so that we can flip it and you can do the same.

I want to thank you, though. I appreciate your mention of the Magnitsky Act. And I want to thank Senator Cardin for his tremendous leadership, for years, on human rights issues, but particularly in causing this to become law.

Thank you very much.

Senator CARDIN [presiding]. Let me, first, thank the Chairman for his incredible support in regards to this committee focusing on human rights issues. And let me thank you, Mr. Kara-Murza, for

³ List of people recognized as political prisoners by the Memorial Human Rights Center (in Russian) <http://memohrc.org/pzk-list>

⁴“RBC Investigation: Where the Nemtsov Case Has Led” (in Russian), RBC, January 20, 2016.

⁵Testimony by Hon. Boris Nemtsov, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, hearing held June 13, 2013.

being here. I know that it was a long trip from Russia to come and visit. And we thank that your wife is here, and we are thankful that you are healthy. We know the personal risks that you have taken.

Let me just update you, first, on the Sergei Magnitsky global efforts that we are making so that the legislation that we passed aimed towards Russian can be used to help all countries protect the rights of their citizens. And you are absolutely right, the Moscow document in 1990 made it very clear that the commitments to basic human rights are not an internal matter for a country, but are legitimate interests of all the members of the OSCE. So, the Sergei Magnitsky enforces that by saying that, if Russia does not take action against the abusers, we are not going to give them the benefits of our country. And it is—as I indicated in my opening statement, we have applied that numerous times in the United States against Russians who have violated human—basic human rights and have not been held accountable by their government. And we believe it can be further used.

Today, on the floor of the United States Senate, by a unanimous consent, all 100 Senators once again, second time, confirmed that the Magnitsky law should be global. So, we anticipate, by the end of this Congress, that we will, in fact, have a global Magnitsky law so that we can take the—our experience from Russia and use it in other countries. As you know, Russia's influence is also in other countries, so we—be helpful.

I want to drill down a little bit on your comments about personal safety. It is so important to put faces on issues. We saw that with Sergei Magnitsky. It allowed us to pass a bill. Otherwise, when you talk about 50 people being in prison, it sort of rolls off the international news stories pretty quickly, but, when you put a face to it and recognize what an individual has gone through—and your personal presence here today makes a huge difference, and I thank you for doing that.

The elections are September. What type of opportunities do you believe opposition forces will have in Russia, both directly participating in the elections and then expressing their views in regards to the parliamentary elections? Will there be an opportunity for opposition participation?

And you indicated that the protests after the 2011 was pretty embarrassing to Russia. What do you anticipate will be done if the Russian public believes these elections are not fair and want to express themselves? How will the government respond?

Mr. KARA-MURZA. Thank you very much, Senator Cardin, for the question. And thank you also for your efforts on the global Magnitsky Act. I completely associate myself with what you said. And we know that human rights are universal, and the protection of human rights is universal. And so, I think the responsibility for violating human rights should be universal, too.

On your question about the elections, as I mentioned in the opening statement, we have not had a free and fair national election in Russia in more than 16 years, if we take the gold standard of OSCE election observation and Council of Europe election observation. And, of course, we have no reason to believe that the upcoming parliamentary election on September the 18th will be free and

fair. In fact, we are seeing the preparations already: new restrictions imposed on election observers, new restrictions imposed on journalists who cover the elections, new restrictions imposed on the campaign itself, this new National Guard that is clearly being prepared by the Kremlin in the event of a repeat of the mass protests we saw on Bologna and other places in December 2011 and early 2012.

And there is always this ongoing debate within the opposition whether we should even participate in the rigged and unfair elections. And I believe that, yes, we should. And my colleagues believe that, yes, we should, because we can use even this flawed and manipulated and rigged electoral process in order to help get our message across, get through that wall of propaganda and lies that has been built up by the regime, and also, I think, very importantly, to help this young generation of pro-democracy and civil-society activists in our country to go through that process and gain the political experience that they will need in the future. Because the day will come when Russia will have a free and fair election, and we have to start preparing for that, I think, now.

And so, the Open Russia Movement, which I have the honor of representing, will be supporting candidates in individual single-member districts for the state duma, across the country. It is a wide geography from St. Petersburg to Irkutsk. And I am now going around the country in different regions and taking part on the campaign events in meetings with voters. I was just in St. Petersburg a few days ago, and Irkutsk a couple of weeks ago. And, you know, I am seeing how effective and how necessary, how important that is.

And I think it is also important to mention that we have this opportunity to participate in this election this year, thanks to Boris Nemtsov, because 2 and a half years ago, in 2013, he won the legislative seat in the region of Yaroslava. And, according to Russian law, a party that is represented in at least one of the regional legislatures in Russia does not need to collect signatures in order to have access to the ballot. And the Putin regime usually uses the signatures as a filter to get unwanted candidates off the ballot, to disqualify them. So, because we have that opportunity, the People's Freedom Party, which was founded and led by Boris Nemtsov, has this opportunity.

We will be on the ballot—our candidates will be on the ballot this September. And I think it is also—it will be very important for our partners in the OSCE, including the United States, to pay attention to what will be going on, to pay attention to a potential fraud, to send a robust monitoring mission, as much as possible. And I know there will be an OSCE parliamentary assembly session coming up in July, I believe, in Tbilisi. It will be very important, I think, to raise that issue, that there should be robust observation of the Russian parliamentary election this September. And if there are cases of fraud, they should be publicized, they should be talked about, they should be paid attention to, because I think the only thing this regime is afraid of is public reaction in Russia. We saw how afraid they were during the mass protests in the winter of 2011–2012. And I think we should—the whole world should be watching closely as this September election approaches, especially,

as we have both mentioned today, election status and human rights are not an internal affair.

Senator CARDIN. Yeah.

Congressman Smith and Senator Wicker will be leading a delegation to Tbilisi in July. I will make sure that the Russian election is part of our priorities for those discussions. And yes, we will participate within the OSCE on the monitoring, and we will make sure that we report accurately what happens in Russia.

We are concerned, though, that—knowing what happened in the previous election, that there could be some personal safety issues associated with participation in this election. Do you have that concern?

Mr. KARA-MURZA. Well, as you know, I have had some reason to worry about personal safety. And I know many of my colleagues also obviously face this risk on a daily basis. But, I think, you know, those of us who are, you know, activists, leaders, public faces of the democratic opposition in Russia, you know, we have known for a long time that it is a dangerous location to be in opposition to Mr. Putin's regime. But, you know, we have accepted that. We think, you know, frankly, that our country has no future under this regime, that it is—this regime is driving our country into a dead-end, and, if we want to fight for our country's future, we have to accept those risks. And I think there is nothing better this regime would like us to do than to give up and run away. And I do not think—

Senator CARDIN. Yeah.

Mr. KARA-MURZA [continuing]. We should be giving them that pleasure.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Satter, you raise a very almost frightening point, that Russia uses war for its domestic agenda more than it—and not necessarily the importance of the battle itself, but the political significance or the—how it distracts from other issues. Do you anticipate that we might see more military action by Russia to further its overall objectives, not so much the specific area where the military operations take place, but to further their domestic support for their broader goals?

Mr. SATTER. That is the key determinant. And that is the most important thing for the United States to keep in mind in anticipating possible Russian aggression, that what will motivate it—the Russian authorities is not the desire to rebuild the Soviet empire. They are actually, I think, indifferent to that. What—they go to war to strengthen the hold on power of a small kleptocratic group which monopolizes the instruments of power and property in the country. If they feel threatened, and they understand that the best way to consolidate their hold on power is to find a pretext for military aggression, they will look for it. And that is why the—deterrence is so important. But, not only deterrence in military terms, but psychological deterrence, something which is very much neglected by the United States, because we are—we, with great difficulty, understand the cultural context in Russia, in the psychological context, what is really going on there. And all of the good-will that we show—I was struck, in fact, by a statement of Secretary Kerry recently in which he said, about Minister Lavrov, that, "He lied to me to my face." And I was taken aback by that

remark, because I was surprised that Kerry expected anything different. This is the indispensable background to policy decisions, an awareness of the people with whom you are having—with whom you are dealing. And this, I think, is what is missing. This is what has to be reinforced. This can also be an important element in deterrence.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for that answer.

We are going to stay in brief recess til the Chairman returns so that I can vote on the amendment that is pending on the floor of the Senate.

So, the committee will stay in brief recess. [Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Gentlemen, it looks like you are having a nice conversation. Would you like to share any of that with me?

Mr. KARA-MURZA. Please forgive—[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. No, no, no. I actually would like to just leave it open. I know you had 5 minutes for comments and I very much appreciate your reference to the Magnitsky Act. I wonder if there is anything else, from a personal standpoint, you would like to share with us while you are here. You heard the first two witnesses, from a professional standpoint. I know there were a number of questions from committee members about things that we could be doing that we are not doing. Do you have any observations relative to additional pressure on Russia or relative to what is happening internally?

I know you did not ask for help. I heard that in your testimony. And I know you said “remain true to our values,” but, are there other things we could be involved in on top of that?

Mr. KARA-MURZA. Thank you, Chairman Corker. Thank you for the question. And also, thank you for your leadership on the global Magnitsky Act, which has recently been marked up by the committee, and also for the Senate Resolution number 78, which is—was dedicated to the memory of Boris Nemtsov, and which, as one of its points, tasked the U.S. Government with raising this question of the investigation and the progress, or the lack thereof, in the investigation every time they meet with the Russian Government counterparts. And that is very important. And thank you for this.

And on your question, I think, first of all, it is very important to distinguish—and sometimes, you know, even informed commentators make this mistake; they use a shorthand by saying “Russia,” when what they actually mean is the Putin regime and the Kremlin and the behavior of the Putin regime. And obviously, for me, as a Russian citizen, that is a pretty important difference. And I think these things should not be confused with each other. And the current regime, of course, is not the product of a democratic election; it is not the product of the free will of the Russian people. And I think it is important to bear this in mind.

And on the question of what could be done, I think, frankly, a more robust and more active implementation of the Magnitsky Act is the single most important thing that I would mention in this regard. Of course, this act targets not just those implicated in the Magnitsky case itself, but Section 4(b) of this act widens its scope to other gross human rights abuses. And, you know, there has

been—I think, if I am not mistaken, there have been 39 people added to the U.S. Magnitsky list since the law came into force, but most of them have been low- or mid-level human rights abusers. And, of course, they should be on the list, too, but, as I mentioned in the opening statement, I think it is very important not to have any glass ceilings, in terms of rank and influence.

The CHAIRMAN. From your perspective, why do you think mostly low-level individuals have been targeted?

Mr. KARA-MURZA. Well, it is probably not for me to comment on the—you know, on the motivations behind the U.S. administration's actions. Again, I am not an American; I am a foreigner. And I do understand—

The CHAIRMAN. I'm only asking from your perspective.

Mr. KARA-MURZA [continuing]. I do understand that there are rigid criteria built into the law itself, so there have to be—there has to be clear evidence. But, I think there, frankly, is clear evidence about very high-profile and high-ranking human rights abusers within the current Kremlin regime. And there have been media reports here in the U.S. that, for instance, Ramzan Kadyrov, whom I mentioned, and General Bastrykin, the head of the investigative committee, have both been put on the classified part of the Magnitsky Act. And, frankly, I think, in my personal view, the most important aspect of this act is the public naming and shaming of human rights abusers. I see no reason why these individuals should not be placed on the open list.

In early 2014, when Mr. Nemtsov came here for the last time, he had several meetings here on the Hill with members of leadership of both parties in both houses, and he suggested several names of high-profile human-rights abusers in the Putin regime that could be added to the list. One of those was General Bastrykin. Another was Mr. Churov, the now former head of the Central Election Commission who was responsible for covering up the mass fraud in the 2011 and 2012 electoral cycle, and earlier as well. And I think—I believe there were 13 names that Mr. Nemtsov suggested be put on the list. And so far, not a single one has been put on the list.

A year ago, former Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov and I came here and also had several meetings here on the Hill, and we suggested that the names of Kremlin propaganda officials, who call themselves journalists, but who are not, they are state officials involved in, effectively, state-sponsored incitement against those who oppose Mr. Putin's regime—and we suggested that, in particular, those who are engaged in incitement against Boris Nemtsov, who called him a traitor, who called him a foreign agent, who called him an enemy of Russia, who said that he is financed by the U.S., who said that he would have broken Nazi troops had he been in Moscow in 1941, and so on and so forth—and I am not making this up; these are direct quotes—that these people who are responsible for incitement should also be put on the sanction list. Well, so far, not one of those has been put on the sanctions list.

So, I really think that the most effective way, and, frankly, the most principled, the most honorable way to deal with those human rights abusers is to place them on that sanctions list, because the unique thing, and the groundbreaking thing about the Magnitsky

Act, was that it was not sanctioning a country. These—they are not sanctions against Russia. They are not even sanctions against the Russian Government.

The CHAIRMAN. Right.

Mr. KARA-MURZA. These are sanctions against specific individuals personally involved in human rights abuse and personally involved in corruption. And I think this is the way it should be done.

The CHAIRMAN. In your observation, when somebody is placed on the list, is it truly a significant punishment to be sanctioned in that manner?

Mr. KARA-MURZA. Thank you. This is a very important question. And we can talk about many similarities that exist between the Soviet regime and what we have in our country today. We have political prisoners, we have media censorship, we have the lack of free and fair elections, and so on and so forth. But, for all these similarities, there is also one very important difference, and that is that members of the Soviet Politburo did not hold their bank accounts in the West, they did not send their kids to study in the West, they did not buy real estate and yachts in the West. Leaders of the current regime and Kremlin-connected oligarchs do that. And I think there is a double standard, and this hypocrisy has to stop. And we certainly know from experience that, when high-ranking human rights abusers are placed on the sanction list, it has a very strong effect. And I can give you just one example.

In 2007, when there was this whole controversy about the relocation of a Soviet war memorial in Tallinn, in Estonia, members of the Nashi, which was a pro-Kremlin youth group, engaged in a harassment campaign against the then Estonian Ambassador to Moscow, Marina Kaljurand. She is currently the Estonian Foreign Minister. They were following her everywhere, trying to sabotage her press conferences, throwing things at her, and shouting abuse, and so on and so forth. And so, the Estonian Government decided to impose visa sanctions on Mr. Yakimenko, who was then the serving minister in Mr. Putin's government, Minister for Youth. And he was the de facto leader of this group. So, he was placed on a visa ban list. And, because Estonia is a member of the Schengen Agreement, this visa ban had a Schengen-wide force, so he could not travel to any Schengen country, which is most of the European Union.

So, for 9 years that have passed since then, Mr. Yakimenko has been desperately trying to get himself off that list, off the visa black list. And, for all those 9 years, for all the other transgressions and all the other human rights abuses that are happening in our country, there has not been a single case of harassment against a foreign diplomat stationed in Moscow. And I think this is all you need to know about the effect and the effectiveness of these types of personal targeted measures against those human rights abusers.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Satter, do you want to add anything?

Mr. SATTER. Well, I think that the future of Russia depends—I have been involved with Russia for many years, and have thought a great deal about it. I think the first priority—the danger of participating in elections, which the regime controls, although I am not opposed to it, is that it gives legitimacy to the regime and actually, under controlled circumstances, gives the impression to the

population that what is taking place is a real democratic process. This is the same dilemma that people face—for example, I faced it one time when I was receiving invitations to appear on Russian television, that I did not want to take part in a performance that, in fact, was not honest and was—did not conform to normal ethical rules. I think—but, to—but, the—there is some value in taking part in these elections, as long as those who do so do not nurture illusions that this can change the regime. It cannot. That is a process that is controlled by the regime. The regime will be changed in other ways.

Most important, in my view, requirement for Russia's future is something—a Russian equivalent of the South African Commission on Truth and Reconciliation. The 25 years of post-communist history are not well understood. And, unfortunately, the abuses began not with Putin—Putin is the handpicked successor of Boris Yeltsin—they began with Yeltsin. And the crimes began with Yeltsin. They began it with the massacre at the Ostankino television tower in 1993, and the shelling of the Russian parliament. The carpet-bombing of Grozny in 1995, in which the—it is estimated 20,000 people were killed, all of them—almost all of them civilians. Now it appears that the 1996 elections in which Yeltsin was, quote/unquote, “reelected” were falsified. And, most important of all, the circumstances under which Putin became the new Russian President—he became the President in the aftermath of the bombing of four apartment buildings in Russia that terrified the entire country, galvanized support for a new and even more bloody war in Chechnya, and created the conditions for Putin, who had a 2-percent approval rating in the country, to become the national savior and the country's new President. When he took over as President, he brought with him his KGB–FSB entourage, and they proceeded to eliminate what was left of the freedoms that had been tolerated under Yeltsin.

The precondition for Putin's coming to power was the criminalization of Russia under Yeltsin, because only a provocation like the apartment bombings could save such a kleptocratic regime as the one that was put in place by Yeltsin under conditions of formal democracy. This group that is now in power will do anything to hold onto power, but one of the most important instruments at their disposal is the ability to confuse the population about the population—about the people's true interests and their true history.

So, the first requirement for Russia's resurrection, in my view, is to clarify all of the historical episodes—the apartment bombings, the Nordost Theater siege, the Beslan school massacre in 2004 in which children and parents in a gymnasium who were held hostage by Chechen terrorists were attacked by Russian troops with flame-throwers and grenade launchers, and burned alive, and, of course, the war—the wars in Georgia and Ukraine.

Only on the basis of a true—truthful understanding of the country's history will it be possible to change the psychological state of the country, making it realistic to create a genuinely law-based system. And once that psychological and ethical basis exists, it is important for Russia to have what it lost in 1918, when the Bolsheviks dispersed the constituent assembly, a new constituent assembly, in order to create a real Constitution, not the Constitution

that was created in the wake of the destruction of the Russian Parliament in 1993 in order to suit the power requirements of Yeltsin.

Under those circumstances, and with the understanding that those parts of the Russian Federation, including the Caucasus that wish to detach themselves and have an independent national existence, be given the right to do so, the conditions will then exist for Russia to transform itself into a democratic country.

It must be pointed out that, as a result of 25 years of post-communist history, Russia has acquired an educated, sophisticated, worldly middle class for which this type of regime is absolutely inappropriate. And that process is going to continue as globalization continues and as people take advantage of the exposure to free information, which was denied them under the Soviet regime.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we thank you both for being here.

We will have a number of questions coming from people who were not able to be here for the second panel. We will try to have all those in by the close of business on Thursday. If you all could, please respond fairly quickly to those, though we do know you do not have as many staff as the previous two witnesses.

We thank you for the light you have shed here today, for your personal experiences, and for your help. We look forward to having you back again in the near future.

With that, the committee is adjourned.

Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:35 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR CARDIN

Question 1. Venerable NGO Golos,¹ which has monitored every Russia election since the fall of the Soviet Union, has come under increased pressure from the Putin regime and may have to close its doors before September's parliamentary elections.

- ◆ What is the State Department's position on the Putin regime's targeting of Golos and what diplomatic tools can we bring to bear to pressure the Putin regime to stop its harassment of the organization?

Answer. We continue to be deeply concerned about increasing restrictions on the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly in Russia. By restricting the work of Golos and other civil society organizations in Russia, the so-called "foreign agent law" law encroaches on the right of every Russian to freedom of association. Civic organizations such as Golos, AGORA, and Memorial are essential elements of societies that respect the rule of law and accountable government. The Russian people deserve a government that values, rather than undermines, the contributions of civil society.

Recent harassment and fines directed toward Golos are particularly troubling as Russia prepares for parliamentary elections in September. A government effort to shutter one of Russia's most important election watchdogs raises questions about the government's commitment to free and fair elections. The Department will continue to raise these concerns at the highest level with Russian government interlocutors and in our public statements. In the OSCE and other multilateral fora we will also continue to call publicly on the Russian Government to uphold the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, in keeping with Russia's international obligations and the rights enshrined in Russia's own constitution.

¹"Golos" is the Russian word for "voice."

Question 2. The New York Times reported last week on the abusive online harassment by pro-Russian forces of a Finnish reporter whose work focused on the prevalence of Russian media trolls. According to the New York Times, these trolls bombard websites and social media with fake news and commentary denouncing Russia's critics and Western institutions. This is just one example of Putin's use of soft power that seeks to discredit and divide the West.

We have put considerable effort into confronting ISIS on the internet, but I am concerned that we do not have a coordinated strategy to address Russian propaganda. What is the administration's strategy to address this onslaught of Russian propaganda, funding of far right parties in Europe, and other tools of soft power that take aim at the West?

Answer. The State Department is leading a coordinated effort to support the free flow of information, build the capacity of independent local media, and refute disinformation, particularly in countries where Russian-language television content is dominated by Kremlin-backed broadcasts.

The Department employs a combination of short-term messaging strategies and long-term programs to build resilience and the capacity to recognize and reject Russian Government disinformation. We have formed a cadre of Russian-speaking officers to engage with the media and by employing a Russian-language, policy-oriented Twitter handle, and developed exchanges to encourage independent media voices, including workshops on digital skills and investigative journalism. These efforts are focused on three distinct audiences: Western Europeans, Russian-speaking populations writ large, and Russians themselves.

In Western Europe, we work to underscore allied unity and bolster resolve to work together on global challenges that include Russia's revanchist policies. We also offer journalists from Western Europe to Central Asia opportunities to have a first-hand view of the realities on the ground in countries, like Ukraine, where the Kremlin often distorts the facts.

For Russian-speaking audiences in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, we offer information and programming alternatives while bolstering the capacity of civil society and independent journalists to identify and dispel disinformation. Inside Russia, we work with media—both traditional and social—to maintain a dialogue with the public through programs that accurately describe U.S. society and our values. The U.S. Embassy in Moscow facilitates multiple people-to-people exchange programs, including Fulbright Scholarships, International Visitors Leadership Program, the Peer-to-Peer Program; hosts approximately 70 high-level speakers per year; and maintains close working contacts with a network of more than 75,000 alumni of U.S.-funded exchange programs.

The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Public Diplomacy chairs an Interagency Strategic Communications working group to coordinate messaging between EUCOM, NATO, State, OSCE, and others. The DAS also chairs the Ukraine/Russia Public Engagement Working Group within the Department, which meets weekly to develop media and engagement strategies to highlight the country's successes.

The Department hosts a Russian language communications platform, which connects 150 plus officers across the world for rapid information sharing, analysis, and pushback. The Bureau of Public Affairs manages the @USAPoRusski Twitter handle, which has attracted 8,700 plus followers in less than a year.

Finally, as part of a broader effort to counter Russian pressure, and in parallel with our public diplomacy work, in FY 2017, the Department is requesting approximately \$121 million in bilateral ESF assistance funding to support civil society and independent media in the Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia regions, in addition to the funding that is centrally managed by the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) and USAID.

Question 3. The Putin regime's corrupt practices, including its violations of property rights and silencing of NGO's monitoring corruption, fuels economic and political instability inside Russia and influences its actions abroad.

- ◆ Do you support efforts to use U.S. tools, like indictments in U.S. courts, to pursue corrupt figures in Russia?

Answer. Secretary Kerry reaffirmed the administration's commitment to combating corruption at the Anti-Corruption Summit in London in May. Corruption drives political instability, erodes trust between citizens and government, cripples basic functions of the state like security and justice, fuels violent extremism, and stifles economic prosperity and human rights. The administration has deepened its commitment to increasing fiscal transparency and fighting corruption, including through initiatives such as the International Anti-Corruption Coordination Center (IACCC). The United States has also committed to co-hosting with the United King-

dom the first meeting of the Global Asset Recovery Forum in 2017 in Washington, DC. The U.S. also remains committed to collaborating with the international community to fight against corruption.

We have routinely voiced our concerns about corruption with the Russian Government, and remain concerned about corruption in Russia at all levels of the government. We strongly urge the government of Russia to support efforts, including by civil society and non-governmental actors, to promote increased transparency and to counter corruption.

Question 4. The Magnitsky Act, in addition to sanctioning those who were complicit in Sergei's murder, sanctions those who commit gross human rights violations inside Russia.

- ◆ Given the deteriorating human rights situation inside Russia, how will the administration use this authority to sanction more human rights violators under the Act?

Answer. Over six years after Sergei Magnitsky's death, we remain disturbed by the impunity for this and other violent crimes against activists, journalists, and the political opposition, as well as the growing atmosphere of intimidation for those who work to uncover corruption or human rights violations in the Russian Federation.

The Department of State continues to fight impunity for human rights violations in Russia through implementation of the Magnitsky Act. On February 1, in concert with the Treasury Department, we added five new names to the list of persons sanctioned under this act, bringing the total number of publicly listed names to 39. This is a significant list that will continue to promote accountability for Russian officials for their role in the Magnitsky case or for gross violations of human rights.

Work on this list is ongoing, but we cannot comment on specific potential future designations. Placing a name on this list is a serious undertaking that requires a determination that a person meets one or more of the criteria for inclusion on the list, and that determination must be supported by credible information. The law sets a high bar for conduct that would qualify an individual for listing under the gross violation of human rights prong and consequently we look very carefully at information we receive and assess whether it would support a determination that an individual fits the criteria for designation. Where there is insufficient credible information, we are unable to list individuals.

Question 5. Russia's implementation of its arms control agreements presents a mixed picture. On one hand, the United States and Russia continue to successfully implement the New Start Treaty and other arms control agreements. However, Russia is in clear violation of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and there are compliance concerns with the Open Skies Treaty. What diplomatic steps have we taken to address our concerns about Russian compliance with these treaties and what mechanisms exist to bring the Russians into compliance?

Answer. Our priority is for Russia to be fully compliant with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty to ensure the continued viability of both treaties, which have long contributed to security and stability in Europe and remain in the interests of the United States and our allies.

Regarding Russia's violation of the INF Treaty, we have sought to isolate Russia diplomatically and persuade Russia to return to compliance. Senior administration officials have raised U.S. concerns over Russia's violation of the INF Treaty dozens of times with Russian officials. In consultation with Allies, we are reviewing a range of appropriate options should Russia persist in its violation and we will not allow Russia to gain a significant military advantage through its INF violation.

We continue to have concerns about conduct by Russia that raises questions about its adherence to obligations under the Open Skies Treaty—namely, the denial or restriction of flights over parts of its territory, including Kaliningrad, central Moscow, and near its border with Georgia, and inadequate air traffic control facilitation for Open Skies flights. We are working closely with our Allies on an approach to address these issues with Russia. These issues also continue to be raised with Russia, bilaterally and through the Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC).

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR ISAKSON

Question 1. Are there concerns that Russia will not meet its treaty obligations by February 2018?

Answer. We remain confident that the Russian Federation is committed, as is the United States, to meeting the New START Treaty's central limits by the end of the seven-year reduction period in February 5, 2018.

Question 2. Should Russia fail to meet its treaty obligations—as it has with the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, what will the repercussions be?

Answer. We remain confident that the Russian Federation is committed, as is the United States, to meeting the New START Treaty's central limits by February 5, 2018. If they are not met, any repercussions would be for the next Presidential administration to decide.

Question 3. Have there been any repercussions for its failure to comply with the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty?

Answer. We have conveyed to Russian officials that we expect the Russian Federation to cease any further development, testing, production, and deployment of the missile system that is noncompliant with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and to eliminate the existing missiles and launchers in a verifiable manner. We have consulted our European and Asian allies every step of the way and are maintaining cohesion with them. While this treaty violation is only one element of Russia's overall bellicose attitude to its international obligations, it is an element that contributes to Russia's isolation.

We continue to pursue the diplomatic resolution of U.S. concerns with Russia, as the INF Treaty benefits the security of the United States, our allies, and Russia, and contributes to stability in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. The priority of the United States is to return Russia to compliance to ensure the continued viability of the Treaty, and we continue to engage the Russian Government to resolve our concerns.

The administration is committed to ensuring that Russia gains no military advantage from its violation of the INF Treaty. Russia's violation of the Treaty, and its policies that challenge the European security order, are not going unanswered. The administration has determined that we need to consider Russian actions with regard to the INF Treaty in the context of its overall aggressive and bellicose behavior that flouts international legal norms and destabilizes the European security order.

Question 4. As you may know, President Putin made comments in April stating that the administration's plan to end the MOX program will deviate from our obligations under the Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement (PDMA). Indeed, Putin skipped this year's Nuclear Security Summit citing the cancelling of the MOX program as the reason.

◆ Are his comments valid?

◆ From the State Department's perspective, does this complicate our efforts to get Russia's compliance on key arms control treaties—including New START?

Answer. We regret Russia's decision not to participate in the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit. We hope that Russia still shares the view that securing nuclear materials and combating nuclear terrorism are priorities well worth the personal attention of world leaders. The Summit was a unique opportunity to spur more aggressive action toward success on these important security priorities.

The Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement (PMDA), which the United States and the Russian Federation signed in 2000 and which entered into force in 2011, provides a path for the Parties to consult and agree on disposition methods that do not involve irradiation in nuclear reactors. The PMDA does not set binding timelines. The United States has not violated this agreement and any suggestions to the contrary are inaccurate. We remain fully committed to meeting our obligations under the agreement. In addition, Mr. Putin's suggestion at the time that the United States seeks to retain a "breakout capability" for additional weapons production is simply false.

As stated in the most recent Annual Report on the Implementation of the New START Treaty, which was provided to Congress in January 2016, the United States certified, based on information available as of December 31, 2015, that the Russian Federation was in compliance with the terms of the New START Treaty. We do not consider President Putin's comments regarding the Mixed Oxide Fuel (MOX) program have any impact on New START implementation.

Question 5. Has the United States allowed some areas of noncompliance to slide in order to gain Russia's support in other foreign policy objectives, i.e. Iran?

Answer. No. The United States takes matters of treaty compliance very seriously. We are not afraid to raise our concerns with our treaty partners or publicly.

Question 6. Russia has failed to recognize the sovereignty of many of its neighbors, which destabilizes the region. Beyond our engagement with NATO partners, can you discuss U.S. efforts to counter Russia's increasing presence and influence in places like Georgia, Armenia, and Syria?

Answer. *Georgia:* Despite Russia's warnings to Georgia, the United States continues to support Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration aspirations. The United States provided more than \$75 million in foreign assistance to Georgia in FY 15 to promote democratic, economic, judicial, and other reforms, and to assist the country in achieving its goal of integration with Euro-Atlantic institutions. U.S. foreign military financing for Georgia seeks to enhance ties to NATO by increasing the interoperability of its armed forces with NATO, strengthening its institutional capacity to train, field, and care for its forces, and modernizing Georgia's defense institutions.

The United States also provides assistance to improve access to independent information in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and to promote national unity throughout Georgia. We continue to press Russia to give the EU Monitoring Mission access to both sides of the Administrative Border Lines. We also participate in the Geneva International Discussions and work with our partners at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and reach a lasting settlement to the conflict.

Armenia: The United States provided approximately \$27 million in FY 2014 and more than \$16 million in FY 2015 in foreign assistance to Armenia in support of reforms that are key to Armenia's democratic development and European integration. Despite Armenia's decision to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) on December 4, 2014, the United States will continue to support Armenia's links to Europe, as well as support its efforts to increase its energy security and economic prosperity. The United States remains engaged in diplomatic efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict peacefully and to reopen Armenia's borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey. We maintain positive and constructive military-to-military cooperation, including by supporting Armenia's contributions to international peacekeeping operations, helping to professionalize its forces, and inviting select military officer to train in the United States through our security assistance programs.

Syria: The United States will continue our campaign to degrade and defeat Da'esh and support a moderate opposition that is essential for a political solution to the Syrian crisis. We have pressured Russia to use its influence to compel the Assad regime to stop its attacks against innocent civilians during the cessation of hostilities and to agree to a political transition through talks in Geneva with the United Nations. We have also repeatedly conveyed our concerns to Russian officials that its intervention in Syria has exacerbated, and will continue to exacerbate, the sectarian divide and the humanitarian crisis, unless a political solution can be reached. We are holding Russia to its commitments, including in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2254, which lays out the steps for a Syrian-led political transition, and which Russia supported in the Security Council.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR BOXER

Question 1. How is the United States working with media organizations and civil society in Russia to support democracy, free speech and the rule of law in Russia? How is the United States encouraging political openness in Russia?

Answer. Despite the closing space for civil society, Russian organizations and individuals continue to express a desire to engage with the United States. As long as this continues to be the case, the United States will support opportunities for peer-to-peer, educational, cultural, and other regional programs that create opportunities to exchange views and best practices. It is also our position that free media and free speech are the best way to fight propaganda. We will continue to support a number of programs in the region that help build the capacity of independent media, and provide legal and physical defense of journalists and activists suffering from government repression and retaliation.

We will continue to raise our concerns about the human rights situation in Russia at the highest levels, both in public and in private. We will continue to speak out against laws and practices that serve to impede the work of civil society and contravene the fundamental rights of freedom of expression, assembly, and association.

We spoke out following the tragic murder of Boris Nemtsov, when the laws on foreign agents and undesirable organizations were passed, when the offices of human rights groups have been raided, and when the Russian Government failed to condemn the threats that Chechen strongman Ramzan Kadyrov made against journalists and members of the political opposition. We are heartened that there continue to be human rights defenders, journalists, and activists willing to continue their work in Russia, often at great personal risk, and we stand ready to support them. On March 29, Secretary Kerry presented the Department's International Woman of Courage Award to Zhanna Nemtsova, Boris Nemtsov's daughter, for her courageous activism in her father's memory.

As Russia prepares for parliamentary elections in September, we will continue to call on the Russian Government to foster an environment in which dissent is tolerated and those who express dissenting views are protected, in keeping with the rights enshrined in Russia's own constitution.

We also will continue to fight impunity for human rights abuses in Russia through implementation of the Magnitsky Act. On February 1, in concert with the Treasury Department, we added five new names to the list of persons sanctioned under this act, bringing the total number of publicly listed names to 39. This is a significant list that will continue to hold Russian officials accountable for their role in the Magnitsky case or other gross violations of human rights.

Question 2. What efforts is the United States making to protect the rights of LGBTQ individuals in Russia?

Answer. The promotion and protection of the human rights of LGBTI persons is an essential part of the United States' foreign policy. Our efforts are guided by President Obama's December 2011 Presidential Memorandum on International Initiatives to Advance the Human Rights of LGBT Persons, which directs federal departments and agencies to combat the criminalization of LGBT status or conduct abroad; protect vulnerable LGBT refugees or asylum seekers; enhance assistance to protect human rights and advance nondiscrimination for LGBT persons; and help ensure swift and meaningful responses to human rights abuses of LGBT persons abroad.

We have spoken out consistently against anti-LGBTI legislation in Russia, where a law banning the distribution of so-called "LGBTI propaganda" to minors, which effectively limits the rights of LGBTI citizens and their allies to free expression and assembly. We are also concerned that this law appears to have emboldened extremist elements to commit attacks on LGBTI citizens. Our Ambassador in Moscow and other State Department officials have regularly raised U.S. concerns with Russian officials. Embassy Moscow also remains in close contact with the LGBTI community in Russia and includes LGBTI activists in roundtables, exchanges, and other initiatives. In addition to our public statements, we repeatedly have also raised restrictive legislation and hate crimes in Russia against LGBT individuals in OSCE and other multilateral meetings.

Question 3. Russia's continued support for the Asad regime has countered the efforts of the United States and our coalition partners in Syria and the region. While Russia has played a role in the negotiations to end the conflict in Syria, Russia's military intervention has bolstered the position of Syrian President Bashar al-Asad in peace negotiations.

The administration has asserted that Asad's eventual removal from power will be critical to any long-term solution to the Syrian civil war.

- ◆ Given Russia's interests in preserving the Asad regime, are the Russians undertaking actions to help facilitate Asad's eventual departure?
- ◆ How is Russia working with the Syrian Government to allow for humanitarian relief to areas under the Syrian regime's control?

Answer. We continue to press Russia to work towards a genuine Syrian-led political transition in Syria and to persuade Russia to encourage Asad's departure. Russia voted in favor of UN Security Council Resolution 2254, which calls for a Syrian-led political transition that establishes credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance and a process leading to a new constitution. Russia's military and political actions, however, have supported Asad and tightened his grip on power. Our diplomatic engagement is intended to persuade all parties that there is no military solution to this conflict and that we must use the cessation of hostilities to allow hu-

manitarian access to populations in need and to provide space for the political process to develop.

We continue to press the Russians to use their influence with the regime to allow full access for humanitarian aid on the basis of assessments made by the UN, not the regime. Since the Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) went into effect, Russia has been helpful in convincing Asad to allow the passage of some humanitarian aid convoys. Since the beginning of 2016, the UN—in coordination with the ICRC and Syrian Arab Red Crescent—has reached over 820,000 civilians in besieged, hard-to-reach, and other priority locations. One recent positive development concerns Daraya, where on June 9 convoys brought food assistance to the town, which had not received humanitarian assistance since 2012. Despite these successes, far too many communities in Syria remain in need and Russia needs to do more to honor its commitments to use its influence with the regime to address these humanitarian emergencies.

ANSWERS TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
TO VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR PERDUE

Question 1. As you know, in its 2016 Arms Control Compliance Report, the State Department found that for the third year in a row, Russia stands in violation of the INF treaty because it continues to develop, possess, produce, and test ground-launched cruise missiles (GCLMs) and launchers with medium-range capabilities. As State's report tells us, the Department has "as was the case in previous years ... raised concerns" with Russia on repeated occasions to resolve this issue. It appears that our efforts to raise our concerns with Russia aren't working, and they repeatedly deny that they are in violation with the INF Treaty.

- ◆ What more can be done to pressure Russia to return to compliance with the INF Treaty?
- ◆ What are the implications for U.S. security interests of a continued failure by the Russians to be in compliance with INF?

Answer. We have sought to isolate Russia diplomatically and persuade Russia to return to compliance. Senior administration officials have raised U.S. concerns over Russia's violation of the INF Treaty dozens of times with Russian officials. We continue to engage Allies and encourage them to tell Russia the importance that they place on the INF Treaty for European security.

We and NATO believe that the INF Treaty is integral to European security. In consultation with Allies, we are reviewing a range of appropriate options should Russia persist in its violation. We will not allow Russia to gain a significant military advantage through its INF violation. Russia's violation of the INF Treaty has been factored into our response to Russia's overall aggressive behavior.

Question 2. We've seen incident after incident in which Russian aircraft are performing dangerous and irresponsible maneuvers near American aircraft and naval vessels. This is in direct violation of the 1972 agreement (on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas), in which Article IV states that, "commanders of aircraft of parties shall use the greatest caution and prudence in approaching aircraft and ships of the other party operating on and over the high seas, and ... shall not permit simulated attacks by the simulated use of weapons against aircraft and ships, or performance of various acrobatics over ships."

- ◆ What diplomatic efforts is the State Department pursuing, if any, to deter this Russian military aggression?
- ◆ Does State coordinate with DoD on any efforts to deter this aggression? If so, can you speak to what is being done at the DoD to discourage this continued aggressive military behavior from Russia? Are the Russians aware of the fact that they're violating this 1972 agreement with us? Do they care?
- The Departments of State and Defense routinely coordinate on strong responses to Russia's unsafe and unprofessional behavior. For instance, we have vigorously protested the actions of Russian aircraft over the Baltic Sea on April 11-12, April 14, and April 29 to the Government of the Russian Federation. I, as well as Ambassador Tefft and the U.S. Embassy Moscow staff, formally protested these incidents at senior levels with the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Russian Security Council. In addition, Secretary Kerry raised this issue directly with Foreign Minister Lavrov. In Washington, the Department of Defense has repeatedly protested the Russian actions to the Russian Ambassador. On April 20, the United States and several of our

NATO Allies protested these incidents during a NATO-Russia Council meeting. On each occasion, we have stressed the risk that such behavior could result in loss of life, and we called for Russia's aircraft to observe international standards and professional safety practices.

- Bilateral discussions under the 1972 Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas (INCSEA) were held in Moscow on June 8. I refer you to the Department of Defense for details, but we understand the topic of unsafe Russian flights was discussed in detail and the two sides also considered measures to mitigate the risks of accidents occurring.

In public remarks and in Russian interactions with us about the incidents, Russian officials have claimed that they are flying at safe distances, have inaccurately characterized certain aspects of the incidents, and have repeatedly asserted that their actions are a response to our operations in areas they deem politically sensitive.

Question 3. What efforts are being made to encourage a Russian withdrawal from Georgia?

Answer. The United States strongly supports Georgia's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We participate in the Geneva International Discussions, the forum that addresses the ongoing security and humanitarian consequences of the conflict in Georgia. In Geneva, our primary objective is to draw attention to Russia's violation of the August 2008 ceasefire agreement through its continuing occupation of Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. We strongly object to Russia's policy of "borderization," through which Russia and the de facto authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia harden the Administrative Boundary Lines separating the occupied territories from the rest of Georgia. We continue to push Russia to end its military occupation of the territories and reverse its recognition of their purported independence, permit unfettered international access to the territories, and facilitate freedom of movement across the Administrative Boundary Lines for all citizens of Georgia.

Question 4. How can we prevent Ukraine from becoming a similar frozen conflict?

Answer. The best opportunity to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine is to seek the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. We continue to work with our Normandy partners to support their efforts to accelerate Minsk implementation.

At the same time, we must maintain transatlantic unity on sanctions, which must remain in place until Moscow fully implements its Minsk commitments.

Question 5. What are the lessons learned from Georgia that could be applied to Ukraine—both in dealing with Russian aggression, but also in institution building and countering corruption and propaganda?

Answer. We believe that the Minsk agreements are the best and only way to achieve peace in eastern Ukraine. Since the start of the crisis in Ukraine, the United States, EU, G-7, and other nations have worked in close cooperation to develop sanctions that increase pressure on Russia and support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The pressure of sanctions and the framework of the Minsk agreements provide an opportunity to confront Russian aggression.

We have been very clear with Moscow that sanctions will remain in place until Russia fully implements its commitments under the Minsk agreements and returns control of Crimea to Ukraine. We are prepared to increase costs on Russia if it takes new aggressive actions in Ukraine.

As in Georgia, the United States will implement long-term assistance programming in Ukraine to build democratic institutions, promote economic development, combat corruption, and strengthen Euro-Atlantic integration. U.S. assistance in anti-corruption and security has been critical in aiding both Ukraine and Georgia in confronting Russian aggression. In Ukraine, we have committed over \$600 million in training and equipment since the start of the crisis to help Ukraine's forces monitor and secure Ukraine's borders, operate more safely and effectively, and defend their country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our security assistance has saved lives while helping to build Ukraine's long-term defense capacity.

The Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement achieved one of our most visible successes in U.S. assistance programming in fostering the establishment and rollout of patrol police in every major Ukrainian city. This programming is similar to that implemented in Georgia. The patrol police have become a symbol of a new Ukraine—a force of highly-trained professionals (including over 20 percent women) whose mandate is to protect and serve the public. In a recent nationwide poll, the police have gone from the least trusted institution in Ukraine to the third most trusted, after the Army and the Church.

Question 6. This February, James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) testified that the nation of Georgia, despite all its progress on western integration and domestic reforms, is at increasing risk from Russian aggression and pressure. The DNI reported that, in part, Russia is capitalizing on increasing frustration in Georgia about the slow pace of western integration. Russia is taking advantage of the space created due to the seeming ambivalence on Georgia's NATO membership and upcoming parliamentary elections in October.

- ◆ Can you inform us about the administration's current efforts to support Georgia's western integration? For example, what more can be done to bring Georgia into NATO and demonstrate a strong U.S. political and security commitment to Georgia?
- ◆ Are we engaging with our EU allies to help support Georgia's integration into the European Union?

Answer. The U.S. Government stands by the commitment Allies made in Bucharest that Georgia will become a member of NATO, and we continue to provide tangible support to move Georgia towards membership. Our bilateral security assistance, which totaled approximately \$60 million in FY 2015, enhances Georgia's NATO interoperability, enabling Georgia to deploy with NATO and EU missions and further its integration with western security institutions. U.S. support for Georgia within a NATO context includes contributing to a NATO Trust Fund to clear landmines and explosive remnants of war in Georgia and significant contributions to the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP). The SNGP was first approved in 2014, and new projects will be considered at this year's NATO Summit, such as increased exercises with NATO and support in areas like strategic communications and cyber defense. One American serves as Deputy on the Core Team charged with implementing the SNGP and another heads the NATO Liaison Office in Tbilisi. In addition, the United States lobbied and helped secure a visit by Allied Permanent Representatives to Georgia later this year. At the last Summit, we also supported designating Georgia as one of NATO's Enhanced Opportunity Partners (EOPs). Now that Georgia has this status, they are included in Alliance activities and political discussions as often as is practicable. Only five other nations hold this status.

To speed Georgia's integration with the EU, U.S. technical assistance helps Georgia achieve the reforms necessary to implement its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the EU as part of the Association Agreement it signed in 2014. Priorities include accelerating integration with EU energy markets and increasing generation of hydropower and other alternative energy sources, as well as promoting sustainable economic growth in the areas of agriculture, small and medium enterprises, and workforce development. The United States strongly supports visa-free travel for Georgian citizens within the Schengen travel zone and has encouraged our European partners to grant political approval now that Georgia has met all the technical requirements for visa liberalization.

For FY 2016, the United States plans to provide approximately \$80.6 million in assistance to support Georgia's reforms and Euro-Atlantic trajectory—this represents approximately a \$5 million or seven percent increase above FY 2015 levels. Roughly half of the FY 2016 allocation will be allocated to security assistance, 28 percent to democracy programs, 22 percent to economic growth programs, and the remaining two percent to education programs.

Question 7. How do you assess the stability of the European coalition, as a whole, on the Russia sanctions issue?

Answer. EU sanctions rollovers require unanimity among all 28 EU Member States. To date the EU has maintained strong solidarity on Russia sanctions. We have robust and continual engagement with EU Member States on the need to maintain sanctions on Russia until Moscow fully implements its Minsk commitments. Our separate Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns the peninsula to Ukraine.

Question 8. Could EU sanctions be rolled back in the next year or two?

Answer. We have been clear that we believe sanctions must remain in place until Moscow fully implements its Minsk commitments. President Obama and other senior administration officials have been clear with President Putin and European leaders on this issue.

In terms of when they are rolled back, the answer depends on Russia's behavior. In March 2015, the European Council explicitly agreed that the duration of sectoral sanctions is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. The Council maintained this linkage when it extended sectoral sanctions in December 2015.

Question 9. What would that mean for European security? How might it affect US-EU relations?

Answer. We believe the combined weight of U.S. and EU sanctions against Russia has prevented further Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine and raised the costs of Moscow's occupation of Crimea. We continue to work to maintain our transatlantic solidarity on this issue so that Russia may be incentivized to implement its Minsk commitments and end its occupation of Crimea.

It is clear that Russia is trying, without success, to break EU solidarity, while failing to fully implement its commitments under Minsk. Despite Russia's efforts, U.S.-EU solidarity on sanctions will remain strong.

Question 10. We are seeing less of a conventional show of force from Russia, but an intensification of so-called hybrid warfare. Russia is using a dangerous combination of cyberattacks, propaganda, and little green men to destabilize and otherwise subvert Ukraine. Last December, Russia was behind a cyberattack on Ukraine's power grid that caused widespread outages, a fact confirmed by Obama administration officials last month.

◆ How do you think Russia might use cyber warfare going forward to destabilize Ukraine?

Answer. With regard to the December 2015 attack on Ukraine's power grid, the United States has not made any judgements on attribution, but we view malicious cyber activity that targets critical infrastructure particularly seriously, as it potentially places the public at risk of harm.

The Director for National Intelligence has recently assessed that Russian cyber operations are likely to support several strategic objectives: intelligence gathering to support Russian decision making in the Ukraine and Syrian crises, influence operations to support military and political objectives, and continuing preparation of the cyber environment for future contingencies.

Ukraine has been an excellent partner in identifying cyber events and sharing information about tactics, techniques, and procedures. We look forward to continuing to work with Ukraine to build its resilience in the area of cyber defense.

Question 11. To what extent is the return of Crimea to Ukraine a part of the discussion among leaders in the U.S. and Europe?

Answer. Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of sovereign Ukrainian territory, Crimea, disrupts 70 years of international order and has drawn the condemnation of free, democratic societies around the globe. The United States does not and will not recognize Russia's attempted annexation. Ending Russia's ongoing occupation of Crimea remains a central part of our Ukraine policy.

In response to Russia's occupation of Crimea, the United States, in coordination with our European partners, instituted sanctions against Russia in December 2014. The sanctions prohibit U.S. citizens from engaging in most economic activities with the territory of occupied Crimea and allow Treasury, in consultation with State, to designate any entity that operates there. These sanctions will remain in place as long as Russia continues to occupy Crimea and we are committed to a long-term non-recognition policy, backed with the force of sanctions.

Since Russia's attempted annexation, the human rights situation in Crimea has deteriorated dramatically, with mounting repression and harassment of individuals from minority communities, in particular of Crimean Tatars, those of non-Russian Orthodox Christian faiths, and those who oppose Russia's occupation. De facto authorities have systematically denied individuals their fundamental freedoms of speech, assembly, and association. Local residents have been detained, interrogated, and, in many cases, subjected to forced disappearance. NGOs and independent media have been driven out of the peninsula. Russian occupation authorities have also banned the Mejlis, the legislative body of the Crimean Tatars.

The Department of State has consistently raised the human rights situation under Russian occupation at multilateral fora, in press statements, and at the podium to shine a light on ongoing abuses and mobilize the international community to condemn the occupation and continue to impose costs on Russia. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power has raised the human rights situation regularly in her remarks in the Security Council and in public events. Also, U.S. Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Dan Baer has raised by name the cases of hostages and persons unjustly detained by Russia in many statements in the OSCE Permanent Council. The United States will continue to raise the situation in Crimea until Russia ends its occupation of sovereign this piece of Ukrainian territory.

