

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

**Hearing on “U.S. Military Posture and National Security Challenges in Europe”**

**Wednesday, March 18, 2026**

**House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike Rogers (R-AL) opening remarks**

As Prepared For Delivery:

Today, we continue our posture hearings with EUCOM.

We meet at a critical moment.

Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine continues.

The U.S. military is actively degrading Iran’s military capabilities and preventing the regime from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

And the Department remains laser-focused on defending the homeland and deterring China.

Managing these threats simultaneously will require a stronger NATO.

Fortunately, thanks to the leadership of President Trump, our Allies are beginning to step up.

And their commitment to spend 5 percent of GDP on defense by 2035 shows they are serious about assuming greater responsibility for their own defense.

But Europe’s rearmament will take time.

Fixing manpower shortages and restoring readiness will take time.

Building out the transatlantic defense industrial base will take time.

And developing or purchasing capabilities that today only the United States can provide will take time.

Yet, despite this reality, some within the Department are advocating for a premature and unwise reduction of U.S. forces in Europe and from NATO defense plans.

More troubling still, those same voices have not provided a credible roadmap for how such a transition would occur.

Nor have they defined what “critical but more limited” U.S. support actually means.

That is not a strategy for a stronger, more credible NATO.

It is a risk we should not take.

That is why last year’s NDAA mandates consultation with Congress before making any significant reduction in U.S. forces in Europe.

Because the overwhelming bipartisan and bicameral assessment is that a premature drawdown would create a dangerous deterrence gap and invite further Russian aggression.

In particular, as Europe rearms, the two rotational U.S. armored brigades in Poland remain a cornerstone of NATO’s conventional defense.

President Trump has been clear about the importance of maintaining that presence, even suggesting the United States could further bolster our posture there.

He’s right that those brigades must remain in place.

And I believe it is past time that we seriously consider permanently stationing them in Poland as well.

Moreover, those in the Department advocating for a premature reduction of U.S. forces in Europe are also ignoring that our posture there is about much more than defending Europe.

It helps defend the homeland forward.

And it gives the President more options to project combat power into other theaters, including CENTCOM, AFRICOM, and the Arctic.

Operations like MIDNIGHT HAMMER, and now EPIC FURY, make that clear.

Both are enabled by our presence in Europe and by the access, basing, and overflight permissions provided by our allies.

Just look at Romania.

Romania is allowing the United States to use two of its bases to support operations in the Middle East.

Think about that.

Even after we withdrew a U.S. brigade last year, Romania continues to open its facilities to American forces.

And they are not just providing access.

Romania has invested well over \$2 billion to improve those bases and runways for American use.

This is exactly the kind of ally we should be deepening our engagement with, not prematurely stepping away from.

We also should not prematurely step away from Ukraine.

It is in the U.S. interest that a strong, well-armed, and independent Ukraine emerges from this war.

In fact, its innovative and battle-hardened forces are already degrading the threat Russia's military poses to Europe's conventional defense.

Kyiv is also demonstrating that this partnership is not a one-way street.

Ukrainian counter-drone teams and technology are now helping protect U.S. forces and partners in the Middle East from Iranian attacks.

Russia, meanwhile, is doing the exact opposite.

It is helping Iran refine its drone tactics and reportedly providing targeting intelligence to strike American troops.

It's clear Putin is not our friend.

He is an adversary.

The temporary easing of Russian energy sanctions must indeed be temporary, as Secretary Bessent has pledged.

And if Putin continues to refuse to negotiate with President Trump in good faith, pressure on the Russian dictator must increase, including through the additional sanctions now being considered in Congress.

History has taught us this lesson again and again.

Vladimir Putin interprets a lack of American resolve as an opportunity.

We should not give him one—neither in Ukraine, nor in NATO.

**RECORD VERSION**

**STATEMENT BY**

**HONORABLE DANIEL ZIMMERMAN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR FOR  
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

**BEFORE THE**

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**SECOND SESSION, 119TH CONGRESS**

**ON EUCOM POSTURE**

**MARCH 18, 2026**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on our defense policy in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) area of responsibility in my capacity as Assistant Secretary of War for International Security Affairs. It is my honor to appear alongside USEUCOM Commander, General Alexis Grynkewich.

In today's testimony, I will highlight how our approach to Europe nests within the recently released National Defense Strategy, particularly in the areas of homeland defense, burden sharing with our European allies and partners, and super-charging the defense industrial base.

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## **Our Approach to Europe**

In line with the National Security Strategy, the Department's National Defense Strategy calls for a courageous realignment of our resources and priorities in line with the interests of everyday citizens of the United States of America – an “America First” approach. The world that shaped our habits, assumptions, and force posture in Europe post-Cold War no longer exists. The National Defense Strategy is based on a clear-eyed, flexible realism – a pragmatic approach focused on peace through strength that we have been advancing since President Trump took office last January, in four succinct lines of effort. First, we will defend the U.S. Homeland in line with our national interest. Second, we will deter China in the Indo-Pacific; third, we must increase burden-sharing with our allies and partners. Finally, to achieve all of this, we must supercharge the U.S. defense industrial base, which will operationalize that burden-sharing and help field combat-credible capabilities on both sides of the Atlantic. My testimony will focus on our commonsense approach in Europe across the first, third, and fourth NDS lines of effort.

Relevant to today's hearing, the National Defense Strategy recognizes the threats that Russia poses to the U.S. Homeland and, most acutely, to eastern Europe. Under Secretary of War for Policy, Elbridge Colby, underscored to NATO Defense Ministers on February 12, 2026, that we must be prepared for the possibility of potential opponents across theaters to act simultaneously. We do not consider this inevitable, but as a Department, we must plan for the worst-case scenario, and ensure our allies and partners are planning for this as well. Operation EPIC FURY in Iran has underscored the importance of prudent planning across adjacent theaters, and only reinforces the need for a reformed NATO, a defensive military alliance focused on the European continent, what Under Secretary Colby has called “NATO 3.0.”

This requires being honest and clear with our allies and partners that they must do more, rapidly, not as a favor to us, but for their own interests. These realities compel us to think clearly, soberly, and realistically about how we defend ourselves—and how we do so together sustainably, sensibly, and credibly.

The core strategic reality is this: while the United States remains committed to NATO – via our extended nuclear deterrent and other, critical, but more limited, operational support – Europe must step up to assume primary responsibility for its own conventional defense.

We have worked hard to communicate this necessity to our allies. We have and we will continue to engage in an open, forthright dialogue as befits allies.

To underscore a simple but essential point: the Department remains committed to NATO and our common defense. We hold this commitment with the conviction that fundamental to having a strong alliance is that all members do their part. Experience teaches us that alliances are strongest when responsibilities are appropriately shared among allies to reflect comparative advantages in underlying capabilities and interests. This is not an abandonment of NATO, nor a strategy of isolation. Rather, we are looking to our allies and partners to stand on equal footing in true partnership, rather than enabling dependence. We fundamentally believe this is in both their interest and ours – because when a burden-sharing balance among allies becomes misaligned or spread too thin, the alliance will weaken, not from ill will, but from structural strain.

### **Defend the U.S. Homeland—Mitigating Threats from the USEUCOM Area of Responsibility**

The United States must and will prioritize those theaters and challenges with the greatest consequence for American interests and where only American power can play a decisive role—most notably, in the Western Hemisphere as we defend the U.S. Homeland. By leveraging our respective strengths and specializing in areas we are best positioned to act, our alliances will be more balanced, effective, and resilient.

#### *Arctic Security & Greenland*

The Department is addressing the President’s top priority of defense of the homeland. In the past year, the President approved a change to move Greenland from the USEUCOM area of responsibility to U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), in recognition of the importance of Greenland to U.S. homeland defense. Greenland is strategically significant for the security and defense of the U.S. Homeland and interests in the Arctic region. However, there remains tremendous equity for USEUCOM around Greenland and the broader Arctic region. Greenland constitutes one border of the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom, or GIUK, Gap, which is a strategic corridor for Russia’s naval operations between the Arctic and North Atlantic. As we work to ensure guaranteed U.S. military and commercial access to Greenland, the Department fully supports the diplomatic trilateral talks led by Vice President Vance and Secretary Rubio with Greenland and Denmark. Separately, General Grynkewich, in his Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) capacity, recently initiated an enhanced Vigilance Activity (eVA) Arctic Sentry to enhance broader Arctic security efforts and align NATO and select allied national activities in the Arctic.

#### *Russia*

Russia still retains deep reservoirs of military and industrial power, and the national resolve required to sustain a protracted war, as the ongoing war in Ukraine shows. Moreover, Russia possesses the world’s largest nuclear arsenal and continues to modify and diversify its nuclear

forces and equipment. Russia invests in undersea, space, and cyber capabilities that it could employ against the U.S. Homeland, or which could be used in a coercive manner short of nuclear confrontation. The Department assesses that Russia will remain a persistent but manageable threat to NATO's eastern front for the foreseeable future. Conventional, nuclear and cyber capabilities and threats are understood through our defense intelligence and national intelligence enterprises, which are in turn enabled by the use of FISA Section 702, an invaluable source of intelligence collection.

The threat is real, complex, and growing. Adversaries are actively developing and fielding a new generation of advanced weapons. We face a spectrum of dangers, from sophisticated ballistic and hypersonic missiles to advanced cruise missiles to other aerial systems, that put the U.S. Homeland at risk, which underscores the President's push for a Golden Dome for America to protect the American people from such threats.

Given these realities, the National Defense Strategy notes we will ensure U.S. forces are prepared to defend against these threats to the U.S. Homeland, while also making clear that our European allies and partners will take primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe against a potential Russian threat. European NATO dwarfs Russia in economic scale, population, and potential military power. However, we cannot take our deterrence posture for granted; allies must move urgently to meet NATO defense spending commitments and capability targets.

The Department is open to fostering mil-mil dialogues with the Russian Federation, including in support of State Department-led talks in the wake of New START's expiration and the high-level mil-mil dialogue announced last month by General Grynkewich. In any case, our goal will remain ensuring that America's interests are upheld and defended, especially as we consider the future of nuclear arms control. Additionally, the United States remains interested in strategic stability and maintaining channels for military deconfliction and de-escalation with Russia, which have for decades reduced the chances of miscalculation between our militaries.

### **Increase Burden-Sharing**

America's alliances have an essential role to play, and our strategy is one of focused, realistic, interests-based engagement. As such, a burden-sharing approach with NATO allies and non-NATO partners is essential, especially to address persistent threats to our allies and partners but are less severe for the United States.

#### *NATO*

The Department is committed to NATO. We believe that the best way to meet that commitment is an approach that validates and returns to NATO's founding purpose.

NATO was established to provide strong, credible, and equitable defense of the North Atlantic area. Since its founding, the alliance has adapted to meet the security challenges it faced. NATO 1.0, from 1949 through 1989, was focused on deterring an attack on NATO territory and was fully ready to fight and win if deterrence failed. This era was defined by a hard-nosed, realistic,

clear-eyed approach to deterrence and defense in which all allies were expected to pull their weight. This model deterred the USSR in part by persuading the Soviet Union that military action was not a viable strategy.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and dismantlement of the USSR and Iron Curtain, NATO transformed into “NATO 2.0”. This version of the Alliance was typified by a shift of effort and focus away from Europe's defense toward "out of area" operations and substantial disarmament on the continent, as well as a change in frame from the hard-nosed, flexible realism of the Cold War "NATO 1.0" to much more of a liberal internationalist mindset of the "rules-based international order." It is clear, however, that this approach of "NATO 2.0" is no longer fit for purpose, neither for the United States nor our allies. The times are changing, and we must adapt – in terms of how we think about the world and the Alliance's role in it and how we posture to meet it in practical terms.

The Department is calling for NATO 3.0: something closer to NATO 1.0 than the approach of the last thirty-five years. We want the Alliance refocused on its original purpose as a defensive military alliance focused on the European continent. “NATO 3.0” will require much greater effort by our allies to step up and assume primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe. To President Trump's great credit and to the great credit of the allies, the alliance took historic, momentous steps to chart a new course in line with this needed shift, most notably committing to 5% defense spending, with 3.5% on core defense – the new global standard for our allies around the world. We are beginning to see a promising start in meeting 5% spending, and reforming procurement and readiness systems that have long been neglected. The past year was a year to reframe and reorient – the turning of the tide has happened. We must now, in collaboration with our allies, deliver balanced, credible, and durable results.

We will continue to provide critical capabilities that underpin NATO's deterrence. We will continue to train, exercise, and plan alongside our allies. We are committed to Article 5. Yet we believe Europe can and must do more. Increasingly, Europe believes this too. We will all be stronger and safer as a result.

Last year, I briefed both professional staff members and members from the House and Senate Armed Services Committees on the Department's decision to redeploy a brigade combat team (BCT) stationed in Romania. Following consultations with General Grynkewich and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary Hegseth opted not to backfill this BCT, which had been forward deployed to Europe since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. I want to highlight this decision was rooted in the progress our European NATO allies have made to improve their military capabilities and take on greater responsibility for their defense. Since 2022, our allies have taken on increased responsibility on NATO's eastern flank, including through the NATO Forward Land Forces battlegroups stationed in these countries. These increased capabilities enabled the United States to graduate its BCT, not as a disengagement from Europe, but as a demonstration of allied progress.

Ultimately, this progress and Europe's resources must result in ready forces and capabilities, so the United States is seeking allied progress on the issue of military readiness. Readiness is a culture, involving personnel, doctrine, training, logistics, budgeting, and several other things –

and we will be encouraging a holistic look at readiness within allied militaries, to ensure forces are effectively ready to fight and defend European NATO. Given Europe's wealth, industrial capacity and technological advances, and proximity to Russia, it stands to reason that Europe can and must field the preponderance of the conventional forces required to deter and, if necessary, defeat, aggression against Europe. In doing so, our allies can ensure NATO's ability to provide for the effective defense of the continent, even in a scenario of simultaneous contingencies worldwide.

As we work with NATO to accelerate the transition to a Europe-led NATO, we have pledged to be as transparent as possible in our approach, working through NATO processes wherever possible to meet the Secretary's commitment to "no surprises" to the allies. Through the use of these processes, we will continue to make clear our expectation that allies must do more, focusing on real war-fighting requirements.

In these ways, this approach will allow us – working closely with our allies – to ensure that NATO remains strong, relevant, sustainable, and positioned to succeed for decades to come.

### *"Model Allies"*

Following The Hague NATO summit last year, some of our allies and partners have stepped up in a special way to meet the moment and set the example for others. These model allies are spending at levels that resource and prioritize their national defense and the defense of Europe. Poland, for example, is a preeminent example of a model ally, spending 4.5% for 2025 and has pledged 5% for 2026. Others are increasingly stepping up. Germany, at our request but also in its own interest, has accelerated investments in its defense industrial base to become the powerhouse that drives Europe toward meeting its Article 3 obligations. Finland, after NATO accession in 2023, continually hones its capabilities through development of its air defenses and investment in whole of society military capabilities, representing a significant contribution to the alliance. These model allies are partners, not dependents, and the Department will prioritize cooperation, engagement, arms sales, defense industry collaboration, and intelligence sharing with those countries who share our sense of urgency to step up on defense.

We recognize threat perceptions can differ across the alliance depending on history, geography, and politics – we will work with countries where they are and encourage our allies and partners to focus on where their resolve is. Nevertheless, we will urge our allies toward progress on meeting spending commitments, delivering on NATO Capability Targets, enhancing their readiness, and increasing commitments to NATO missions and the NATO force model from all our allies – east and west, north and south, and new and old.

### *Ukraine*

Turning to Ukraine, President Trump has stated, the war in Ukraine must come to an end. It is in the interest of the United States, Europe, and Ukraine to secure a lasting and durable peace. A durable, sustainable peace in Ukraine can only be achieved and maintained through strength: a strong Europe, and a strong Ukraine. As Ukraine defends its territory, it is important that allies act with urgency to provide the necessary resources for Ukraine's defense. While negotiations

play out, the National Defense Strategy plainly underscores the need for Europe to take the lead in supporting Ukraine's defense, as well as the role it would have to sustain a future peace deal through reconstruction.

Credible deterrence and defense measures are essential prerequisites for any enduring settlement, but equally critical is ensuring that Ukraine's Armed Forces are sufficiently capable to serve as the foundation of deterrence. To that end, on July 14, 2025, President Trump and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte publicly announced the United States would continue to provide critical materiel to Ukraine funded with financial contributions from NATO allies. This has culminated into the Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) initiative. The PURL initiative has become one of the alliance's most effective mechanisms for coordinating support and aligning allies behind a common understanding of validated Ukrainian battlefield requirements. Over 20 European nations have pledged more than \$4.3 billion to this effort, and the United States will continue to encourage our allies and partners to sustain their contributions to the PURL initiative to meet Ukraine's validated battlefield requirements. The PURL initiative is enhancing Ukraine's defense capabilities, supporting peace efforts, and enabling Europe to take the lead in its own defense.

On negotiations, the Department continues to be regularly engaged with the U.S. negotiating team as it seeks to secure peace in Ukraine. Though negotiations are ongoing, the United States and Coalition of the Willing (CoTW) have made substantial progress on both security protocols and a post-conflict deterrence framework, including ceasefire monitoring.

At the same time, the Department is paying attention to lessons learned from the battlefield and delivering those insights to U.S. warfighters. This is especially true regarding the role of drones, along with the expertise and cutting-edge technology to deploy them. Beyond technology, the Department is changing its own ecosystem by incorporating adaptable, modular, and rapid-improvement processes to stay relevant in future fights in other theaters.

#### *Other Non-NATO Partners*

We also recognize that keeping our European allies laser-focused on strengthening our deterrence through burden-sharing means mitigating any new or resurgent conflicts on the continent that could distract from our core NATO 3.0 priority. Toward that end, we remain engaged, with European allies and partners increasingly in the lead, in preventing any resurgence of conflict in the Western Balkans.

Last year, President Trump facilitated a historic agreement to cease hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan, creating new opportunities to collaborate with our two partners in the Caucasus. Our priority remains focused on resolving the conflict, finalizing the peace process, and ensuring that enduring peace is maintained between the two nations.

We are collaborating with both nations to expand cooperation with their respective State Partners—the Kansas and Oklahoma National Guards. Our efforts include modernizing our partners' armed forces through foreign military sales and enhancing their exercise programs to improve interoperability with U.S. Armed Forces.

## **Supercharging the Defense Industrial Base on Both Sides of the Atlantic**

Expanding transatlantic defense industrial capacity is the most important step NATO allies can take to operationalize the 5% defense spending commitment and invest in real, combat-credible forces and capabilities. We need to get the defense industrial base healthy on both sides of the Atlantic.

Per our National Defense Strategy, the Department will partner broadly to restore our industrial capacity and reinvigorate our nation's ingenuity, because our fighting force's readiness, lethality, and military options depend on it. This effort is a "call to industrial arms," and putting American industry on a wartime footing, a national mobilization rivaling those that powered America—and our allies—to victory in the World Wars and the Cold War.

We issue the same call to our European allies and partners to make a parallel effort. This will require a commonsense, non-exclusionary approach to defense industrial base expansion that focuses on building capacity, aggregating demand to sustain that additional capacity, expanding multinational procurement, utilizing NATO standardization agreements, and addressing supply chain vulnerabilities.

We recognize this approach should allow Europeans the flexibility to invest in their industries and build comparative advantages, while still enabling U.S. firms to compete. Protectionist measures that exclude U.S. industry and isolate our respective industrial bases only serve to deprive the alliance from meeting its goals without delay. The need for rapidly increased defense industrial production is too acute for us to toy with exclusions.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Department of War is clear-eyed about the threats associated with the USEUCOM AOR and, as always, will address them from a peace-through-strength position that prioritizes the interests and security of American citizens. We are committed to NATO and seek to strengthen it even further – in a way that is balanced, credible, sustainable, and positions the alliance to succeed for the long term. I am honored to be working with this committee, General Grynkewich and his team at U.S. European Command, and our valued allies and partners on this inspired vision from the President.

Thank you.

**UNCLASSIFIED**

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

GENERAL ALEXUS G. GRYNKEWICH, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND

BEFORE THE

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SECOND SESSION, 119<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

POSTURE HEARING

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## INTRODUCTION

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished members of the House Armed Services Committee, it is a tremendous honor to testify before you as the 20<sup>th</sup> Commander of United States European Command (USEUCOM). USEUCOM has contributed to Euro-Atlantic collective security, peace, and prosperity since its inception in 1952. USEUCOM's area of responsibility (AOR) spans 53 sovereign nations and city states, 24 territories, three oceans and 11 seas, and includes 30 of 32 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Allies. The entire Joint Force is represented across USEUCOM's six service components (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Special Operations, and Space Force) and one cyber element. There are tens of thousands of U.S. Service Members—permanent and rotational—and Government Civilians representing American interests across Europe.

Key to USEUCOM's success is aligning our operations, activities, and investments (OAI) to harness Europe's unique strategic advantages—its geographic location, collective military capabilities, and economic capacity—to protect vital U.S. interests and increase burden sharing so that our Allies can assume primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe. USEUCOM can ensure the region remains a platform for U.S. Homeland defense and Joint Force power projection, and that NATO remains a combat-credible, force-multiplying Alliance capable of sustaining deterrence and defeating aggression against Allies in Europe and North America.

## THE EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The Department of War's (DoW) 2026 National Defense Strategy (NDS) emphasizes that the United States faces “one of the most dangerous strategic environments in our Nation's history.” China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and others are increasing their collaboration and cooperation as their interests align against the United States and our Allies. Together, they seek to undermine our advantages and challenge our vital interests at home and abroad. This opportunistic alignment presents a challenge to U.S. and Allied priorities around the world.

### *Challenges*

China constitutes the United States' most significant global competitor, capable of challenging—and in some cases threatening—U.S. security, freedom, and prosperity around the world. In the European theater, China is leveraging its economic and diplomatic relationships to expand its influence and reach. Chinese companies have made significant investments in European critical infrastructure, including seaports, information technology, electric-power generation, and public transportation. China's prominent access and influence within Europe presents Beijing with points of leverage it could exploit at the expense of the United States and our Allies. Additionally, Chinese commercial activity and scientific interest in the Arctic continues to grow. For example, Chinese commercial shipping along the Northern Sea Route experienced sustained growth in 2025, with 14 container voyages traversing the Arctic to Europe. China's scientific expeditions and research efforts across the Arctic also provide opportunities to collect data on weather and ice conditions, seabed geology, ocean currents, and navigational feasibility. Indeed, China's regional engagement is not for peaceful purposes; it is intended to gain a military advantage. The steady growth of China's commercial and research operations in the Arctic demonstrates Beijing's commitment to normalize its stake in Arctic governance, develop dual-use military capabilities, and gain greater operational familiarity with extreme-cold weather conditions, presenting greater risk to U.S. and Allied interests throughout the region. Moreover, China's military cooperation with Russia deepened in 2025, with the two countries conducting their "Joint Sea" combined naval exercise in the Sea of Japan as well as a joint air patrol over the East China Sea and the Western Pacific.

Meanwhile, Russia is an enduring regional challenger, capable of threatening the Homeland as well as U.S. and Allied interests across Europe. For example, Russia continues to hold the largest nuclear weapons stockpile in the world. Russia also maintains increasingly lethal air and maritime capabilities.

The Russia-Ukraine War illustrates Moscow's historical willingness to use military force, at significant human and financial cost, to accomplish its geopolitical objectives. These include ambitions to expand its territorial control and broaden its influence—particularly in the east European region, but globally to a lesser extent. Russia's partnerships with China, Iran, and North Korea have emboldened

Moscow's war effort against Ukraine, sustaining it with financial assistance, materiel support, and technological cooperation. China has become a critical economic partner for Russia and has helped Moscow circumvent Western sanctions and export controls. Iran has produced and shared missiles and drones—and the underlying technology—with the Russian military. North Korea has committed over 12,000 troops, in addition to munitions and materiel, to the Russian war effort.

As the United States endeavors to broker a cessation of hostilities and mutual agreement between Russia and Ukraine, stabilizing European relations with Moscow will remain a challenge, as many of our European Allies regard Russia as an existential threat. In accordance with U.S. policy guidance in the 2025 National Security Strategy (NSS), USEUCOM is working alongside our interagency partners to “reestablish conditions of strategic stability across the Eurasian landmass, and to mitigate the risk of conflict between Russia and European [Allies and partners].”

Beyond state-based military threats, the expansion of illicit drug trafficking and migration, the evolving presence of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), and the persistent threat of violent extremist organizations (VEOs) challenge the security and stability of Europe. USEUCOM is working closely with the interagency, our NATO Allies, and European partners to counter the illicit flow of drugs and money between Europe and the Western Hemisphere. USEUCOM's activities, such as support to law enforcement, amplify the DoW's efforts to combat illicit trafficking in the Western Hemisphere. China, Russia, and others directly benefit from the dangerous effects these activities and actors have on regional stability and security. Disrupting this illicit trade weakens transnational terrorist and criminal organizations who threaten U.S. national interests and American lives daily. USEUCOM stands ready to support those Allies who wish to take a leading role countering transnational terrorist and criminal organizations operating in the Mediterranean Sea.

The United States cannot bear the burden of meeting these threats alone. Recognizing this challenging security environment, our NATO Allies agree that modernizing Europe's warfighting capabilities and capacity is necessary as the Joint Force addresses other global priorities. To that end, NATO Allies have already taken important steps to increase defense spending and generate the strategic

readiness required for them to assume primary responsibility for Europe's conventional deterrence and defense.

### *Regions*

USEUCOM's northern flank—spanning from the Arctic, across the North Atlantic, through the Greenland, Iceland, United Kingdom, and Norway (GIUKN) Gap, and to the Scandinavian High North—encompasses key geography central to U.S. security and economic interests. Specifically, the Arctic is emerging as an increasingly viable air and maritime approach to North America and Europe, attracting increased interest and activity from Russia and China. As new shipping routes emerge, and new resources are discovered, the Arctic only grows in strategic importance. The potential for destabilizing activities in the region, such as commercial sabotage, threatens all domains, requiring coordinated, multi-domain responses. The extreme environment, limited infrastructure, and vast geography present challenges that complicate domain awareness, movement, logistical support, and survival. Further, the GIUKN Gap is a strategic chokepoint that is the primary geographic area and best opportunity to reliably locate and track advanced Russian nuclear-powered submarines (SSN) and guided missile submarines (SSGN) before they can maneuver within cruise-missile range of the eastern seaboard of the United States. Our northern flank Allies, for their part, are enhancing their Arctic and extreme-cold weather capabilities through coordinated defense initiatives, increased investments in military infrastructure, and regular joint exercises. Additionally, the Alliance is launching enhanced Vigilance Activity (eVA) Arctic Sentry to align NATO operations with the national activities of select Allies in the Arctic.

Along NATO's eastern flank, Russia's geographic proximity and advantageous lines of communication enable Moscow to rapidly mass significant ground forces along NATO's border at a time and place of its choosing. This poses strategic dilemmas to the Alliance's ability to effectively mobilize forces for a synchronized, forward-positioned denial defense in the event of a contingency. With the recent accession of Finland and Sweden into the Alliance, NATO welcomed two Nordic nations with a long and proud history of self-defense. While this adds 830 miles of NATO border with Russia—creating time, space, and geographical implications for the theater—Finland and Sweden strengthen Europe's

conventional military capabilities along the eastern flank and enhance Allied presence in the Arctic. NATO Allies across the Baltics, as well as Poland and Romania, are building up their denial capabilities and munitions stockpiles, including low-cost autonomous and unmanned capabilities, to strengthen the Alliance's forward posture and counter Russia's geographic advantages. For example, with a \$1.1 billion purchase of 250 Abrams Main Battle Tanks through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) system, Poland is demonstrating its commitment to fielding capabilities required to deter and defend Allied territory.

The European depth nations—such as Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands—represent a critical hub for the European defense industrial base (DIB) as well as logistics and sustainment networks. The Euro-Atlantic DIB plays an essential role in ensuring NATO's highly capable militaries can generate and sustain Europe's conventional defense, providing the requisite capabilities to defeat aggression. Thus, European Allies must be able to protect critical infrastructure, power projection platforms, prepositioned stocks, and lines of communication from disruption or attack.

USEUCOM's southern flank spans a wide area—from Portugal and Spain in the west, through Italy and the Balkans along the Adriatic Sea, all the way to Greece and Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The region presents unique challenges to the Alliance, such as avenues of approach into Europe for TCOs and VEOs. Consequently, illicit trafficking and illegal migrant flows across the southern flank disrupt regional stability and security. The Mediterranean Sea also includes sea lines of communication crucial for global trade and military logistics. The region plays a key role in the Joint Force's ability to project power globally, including the Middle East and Africa. In the Balkans, persistent ethnic tensions, political instability, and competing external influences create a complicated security environment. The NATO Kosovo Force, or KFOR, mission remains the primary security guarantor in the Western Balkans as a trusted agent with all parties.

## USEUCOM'S STRATEGIC APPROACH

The DoW's strategic priorities, as outlined in the 2026 NDS, are clear. First, the U.S. Joint Force prioritizes the defense of the Homeland above all while preserving American interests in the Western Hemisphere. Second, the Department prioritizes deterring China in the Indo-Pacific through strength, not confrontation. Next, the United States emphasizes the importance of burden sharing with Allies and partners as they play the leading role in providing for their own defense, while the Joint Force continues to provide limited but critical support. Lastly, DoW leadership intends to supercharge the U.S. DIB by energizing industry partners, creating clear demand signals to incentivize commercial production, both from traditional and nontraditional vendors.

To support the Department's objectives, USEUCOM has prioritized three mission areas: 1) Protect the U.S. Homeland; 2) Project U.S. Combat Power; and 3) Position the Alliance to Deter and Defend.

### *Protect the U.S. Homeland*

As Secretary of War Hegseth outlined in his initial Message to the Force, the United States "will reestablish deterrence by defending our Homeland" across domains. To that end, every U.S. Combatant Command (CCMD) is charged to defend the Homeland and American citizens abroad. Leveraging Europe's geographic advantages, USEUCOM's AOR includes strategic approaches to the Homeland which the Command defends across all domains. This includes the prevention of Russian SSNs and SSGNs from getting within cruise-missile range of the Homeland undetected, as well as the interdiction of Russian long-range aircraft threatening the Homeland during crisis or conflict. Ready and capable early-warning systems, bolstered by shared intelligence from our Allies, provides USEUCOM the ability to execute coordinated responses against multi-domain threats to the Homeland.

Guarding the strategic approaches to North America in the maritime domain through the GIUKN Gap and in the air domain over the High North is a core duty of USEUCOM. USEUCOM and NATO facilities, forces, and intelligence structures are the primary means of detecting and tracking Russian SSN and SSGN deployments. Our Allies, who also share a vital interest in defending the GIUKN gap, often

provide amplifying capabilities, such as P-8 overflights that help maintain all-domain awareness of Russian surface and subsurface activity. Further, USEUCOM coordinates with U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), and U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) to conduct air interdiction of threats to the U.S. Homeland.

We also cannot lose sight of VEOs and TCOs that operate through and within the European theater, threatening U.S. interests in Europe and the U.S. Homeland. USEUCOM is working alongside our interagency partners through a whole-of-government approach to neutralize VEO and TCO threats to the U.S. Homeland. Through these partnerships, we also help our European Allies and partners develop their own capabilities to detect, monitor, and counter these threats to U.S. and Allied security.

***Project U.S. Combat Power***

USEUCOM plays an essential role supporting the Joint Force's global operations. USEUCOM's proven ability to project power in and beyond the region enables the United States to protect national interests, respond to crises, and preserve the President's options. U.S. posture across the European theater allows the Joint Force to take advantage of Europe's unique, strategic geography. This forward position allows USEUCOM to support other CCMDs with critical logistics, ready forces, and lethal capabilities at the time and place of need. For example, in early 2025, USEUCOM forces in the eastern Mediterranean Sea supported U.S. Central Command's ballistic missile defense operations by defending Israel against threats from Iran and terrorist groups.

Key posture locations in Europe preserve the President's military options in crisis and enable the rapid deployment and sustainment of combat-credible forces, as USEUCOM demonstrated during Israel and Iran's 12-Day War in June 2025. Specifically, Operation MIDNIGHT HAMMER and the recent seizure of the sanctioned "Bella 1" oil tanker illustrate how USEUCOM's unique geographic position and theater advantages contribute to global operations. USEUCOM's ability to project power is underwritten by the strength of U.S. relationships and our access, basing, and overflight agreements with European Allies and partners, allowing U.S. forces to transit to and through Europe from key strategic locations across the globe on short notice. Maintaining USEUCOM's ability to project combat power ensures the

Joint Force can always achieve its priority missions, even as it stands ready to act decisively against other threats, at the President's direction.

***Position the Alliance to Deter and Defend***

USEUCOM continues to position our European Allies to deter and defend against aggression by increasing burden sharing so that our Allies may assume primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe. As the Commander of USEUCOM (CDRUSEUCOM), I also hold the role of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) within NATO, entrusting me with the authority and responsibility to lead the combined militaries of 32 Allied nations in peacetime, crisis, and conflict. These authorities enable me to leverage the collective power of the Alliance to manage and mitigate military risk on behalf of both NATO and the United States. They also enable me to facilitate and accelerate burden sharing among Allies in my SACEUR capacity, leveraging my deep understanding of U.S. policy objectives, approaches, and strategic guidance as CDRUSEUCOM. Importantly, USEUCOM also provides extended nuclear deterrence to backstop the Alliance while enabling Europe's conventional defense with limited but critical capabilities in theater to safeguard U.S. interests.

**Increasing Allied Burden Sharing**

Throughout its history, NATO has successfully adapted to its strategic environment. During the Cold War, NATO stood as a bulwark against the Soviet Union's communist expansion in Europe. After the Cold War, NATO took the lead managing crises in the Balkans. Just twelve hours after the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, NATO invoked Article 5 for the first and only time in its history. Our Allies not only committed aircraft to help secure American skies but also went to war by our side in Afghanistan and Iraq for over two decades. With the threat now at *their* doorstep, our NATO Allies are once again committed to meet the moment. This requires military might, equitable burden sharing, and combined-joint interoperability.

As key actors increase cooperation and collaboration around the world to undermine U.S. and Allied interests, our European Allies have agreed to strengthen their warfighting capabilities and capacity. Catalyzing credible deterrence and defense requires members of the Alliance to meet their Article 3

obligations and be willing and able to uphold their Article 5 commitments. USEUCOM will position the Alliance to deter and defend by implementing a burden-sharing strategy that maximizes the Allies' contribution to Europe's defense and ensures NATO Allies assume primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe.

Within the Alliance, we are empowering our European Allies to take on greater leadership within NATO's command structure. Notably, the United Kingdom and Italy have agreed to assume command of NATO's Joint Force Command (JFC) Norfolk and JFC Naples, respectively. This transition will occur in the coming years in accordance with NATO's established processes. By transferring select leadership roles within the Alliance, our NATO Allies will be better positioned to command and control (C2) Europe's conventional defense.

#### Allied Defense Spending

Thanks to U.S. leadership, NATO Allies pledged to invest 5% of their gross domestic product on defense—including 3.5% on hard military spending and 1.5% on dual-use societal resilience—making history at The Hague Summit in June 2025. While additional investment will help the Allies modernize and reach their NATO capability targets, money is just one part of the equation. Our Allies have begun addressing manpower gaps and materiel shortfalls, but modernized capabilities require greater production capacity and timely delivery from the entirety of the Euro-Atlantic DIB. USEUCOM continues to work with DoW leadership to identify complementary production and sustainment opportunities with European Allies and partners that address Euro-Atlantic DIB shortfalls.

#### Modernizing Conventional Capabilities

In 2021, NATO published its cornerstone strategic concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area (DDA), ushering in a new era for the Alliance focused on collective defense and modernization. Now, NATO Allies are using their increased defense spending to develop new capabilities, grow capacity, and enhance force readiness. The Alliance also established campaigning and contingency plans for the first time in decades, which include peacetime vigilance activities and policing missions. NATO's three regional defense plans in the event of a contingency are at the crux of its

strategic concept for DDA. Collectively, these plans identify operational military force requirements for Europe's conventional defense, making them an essential tool for driving Allied capability investments. In other words, NATO's defense plans define the Alliance's warfighting requirements, which drive Allied investments that spur modernization.

#### U.S. Foreign Military Sales

According to the 2025 NSS, bolstering "Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe through commercial ties, weapons sales, political collaboration, and cultural and educational exchanges" is a priority for the United States. Accordingly, European Allies and partners continue to signal high demand for U.S.-manufactured defense articles and services. Since Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, for example, our European Allies and partners have spent nearly \$150 billion to purchase U.S. defense articles and services through the FMS system. Today, USEUCOM's total FMS portfolio is valued at over \$300 billion. Under the recently announced America First Arms Transfer Strategy (AFATS), European Allies and partners will have streamlined access to the capabilities required to bear primary responsibility for conventional deterrence and defense.

#### Theater Nuclear Deterrence

NATO has been a nuclear Alliance for 75 years. During this time, USEUCOM has provided an essential component of the U.S. nuclear umbrella which guarantees our Allies' security. As one of two CCMDs with the responsibility to maintain and, if directed by the President, employ nuclear weapons in defense of the United States and our Allies, USEUCOM maintains a credible, forward-deployed theater nuclear deterrence posture. As outlined in NATO's strategic concept, the Alliance's nuclear forces, "particularly those of the United States, are the supreme guarantee of the security of the Alliance." In addition to supporting Alliance nuclear operations, USEUCOM coordinates with USSTRATCOM in support of global strategic operations and extended nuclear deterrence, as necessary.

#### Support to Europe's Conventional Defense

Dual-hatted as CDRUSEUCOM and SACEUR, I can leverage critical U.S. and Allied enabling capabilities in support of a European-led conventional defense of Europe. Providing limited but critical

U.S. conventional capabilities and enablers to support the Alliance's collective defense strengthens NATO's warfighting capacity to interoperate at scale, providing the Joint Force greater flexibility to focus the majority of its combat power on other global priorities.

## **USEUCOM POSTURED ACROSS EUROPE**

USEUCOM's selfless Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines, Guardians, Special Operators, Coast Guardsmen, and Government Civilians personify the warrior ethos and proudly represent the United States of America on foreign soil. They stand ready to defend the Homeland and protect American interests across the Euro-Atlantic region. USEUCOM's ready forces also enable the Command to strengthen Allied capability and capacity through combined exercises and training, build collective warfighting readiness, and position our Allies to take the lead for Europe's conventional defense. Therefore, USEUCOM and its Service Components require sufficient and sustainable resources and capabilities—balanced against the Department's global priorities—to operate at scale to protect the Homeland, project U.S. combat power, and increase Allied and partner burden sharing.

In the land domain, U.S. Army Europe and Africa (USAREUR-AF) is driving land force transformation in Europe to meet strategic objectives, positioning our European Allies to take the leading role in land-domain capabilities to deter aggression and maintain regional stability. For example, combined exercises with our NATO Allies, such as DEFENDER EUROPE 2025, focus not only on theater-level force employment but also on demonstrating lethality and interoperability with Allies and partners for large-scale combat operations. Through these exercises, USEUCOM can verify and certify the readiness of Allied units supporting NATO plans and operations. Additionally, USAREUR-AF is taking the lead on positioning our eastern flank Allies to operationalize all-domain deterrence through a data-enabled forward posture that harnesses lessons learned from Ukraine. Those efforts are anchored by NATO's Forward Land Forces (FLF) Battlegroups and host-nation defense forces with limited but critical U.S. support. In doing so, USAREUR-AF is increasing the combat credibility of the FLF as well as accelerating experimentation initiatives with a focus on ground-robotic capabilities at echelon.

In the air domain, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Africa (USAFE-AF) delivered major operational, strategic, and modernization gains in 2025. USAFE-AF took charge of force protection efforts during the 12-Day War, integrating theater-wide protection activities, and provided essential enabling support to Operation MIDNIGHT HAMMER—posturing assets and a total force package of 125 aircraft to enable a B-2 stealth strike package on an 18-hour mission while synchronizing multi-theater war plans. Across the theater, infrastructure investments improved War Reserve Material storage capacity and readiness, strengthening U.S. global power projection. Additionally, USAFE-AF advanced nuclear deterrence by executing a significant overhaul of nuclear facilities, modernizing and enhancing nuclear capabilities on the European continent. Nuclear readiness was further strengthened through numerous complex, joint nuclear-weapons movements spanning multiple CCMDs and Allied nations, and NATO's premier nuclear-deterrence exercise, STEADFAST NOON. To bolster NATO interoperability and readiness, USAFE-AF facilitated the delivery and integration of F-16 aircraft to Slovakia and Bulgaria for eastern flank air policing and supported the Polish Air Force in publishing its first Air Force Strategy aligned to NATO collective defense requirements and key U.S. systems, such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

In the maritime domain, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (USNAVEUR-AF) defends maritime approaches to the Homeland and key lines of communication, projects power across the Atlantic and beyond, and supports a critical leg of our nuclear triad. In the High North, carrier strike group operations routinized U.S. presence, signaled a demand for increased Allied burden sharing, and demonstrated freedom of navigation in Arctic waters. In the Baltic Sea, BALTOPS 25—a 20-day exercise including more than 40 ships, 25 aircraft, and about 9,000 personnel from 16 NATO Allies—provided an opportunity for USNAVEUR-AF to integrate with Allies, demonstrating warfighting capability, layered defense, and the strength of our regional partnerships. In the Mediterranean, our maritime forces operated alongside our NATO Allies during Exercise NEPTUNE STRIKE 2025 to demonstrate long-range strike and anti-submarine warfare capabilities. To C2 these maritime capabilities, USEUCOM continues to work alongside DoW leadership to identify long-term C2 options pending the scheduled

decommissioning of the USS *Mount Whitney* command ship in FY 2030. Further, the Command looks forward to the arrival of a sixth Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer as well as an ocean surveillance ship, both of which will enable USEUCOM to secure key terrain in the maritime domain.

The Command's maritime capabilities complement U.S. Marine Forces Europe and Africa (USMARFOREUR/AF), whose presence in the High North, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, and Mediterranean enable sea control from the shore. MARFOREUR/AF participated in several combined exercises focused on enhancing the amphibious and naval-infantry capabilities of European Allied forces, particularly in the Baltic and Nordic regions. For example, exercises like BALTOPS 2026—designed to strengthen deterrence and interoperability in the Baltic Sea—highlight our Allies' eagerness to work with our forces to grow their own littoral defense capabilities. During EXERCISE KRAKEN, U.S. and Swedish forces successfully integrated new technologies into maritime operations. This exercise was a valuable opportunity to refine our combined tactics and procedures. The exercise demonstrated the effectiveness of combined U.S. and Swedish maritime operations, while highlighting areas for improvement in communications interoperability and night-operations capabilities. MARFOREUR/AF also enhanced the Command's ability to respond to crises through exercises and planning activities focused on non-combatant evacuation operations and other contingency scenarios.

In the space domain, U.S. Space Forces Europe and Africa (USSPACEFOREUR-AF) provides critical support to U.S. and NATO operations by improving Allied interoperability and readiness and integrating commercial space technologies to enhance situational awareness. Over the last year, USSPACEFOREUR-AF provided space electromagnetic warfare support during Operation MIDNIGHT HAMMER and the 12-day Israel-Iran War in June 2025, protecting friendly forces and improving the survivability of presidentially directed strikes. USSPACEFOREUR-AF also expanded situational awareness by operationalizing rapid collection and dissemination of commercial imagery, providing unclassified, shareable reporting on issues such as electromagnetic spectrum interference, illegal shadow-fleet activity, and adversary military operations and force posture in Eastern Europe. In partnership with the U.S. Space Development Agency, USSPACEFOREUR-AF successfully demonstrated enhanced

resilient, low-latency satellite communications crucial to Joint All-Domain Command and Control, or JADC2. The successful demonstration was a key step toward the Army and Navy's adoption of the Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture (PWSA). Finally, the effort established a landmark partnership with Norway to integrate PWSA into NATO terrestrial networks—advancing Allied interoperability and combined C2. In the cyber domain, USEUCOM—enabled by the Cyber Operations–Integrated Planning Element (CO-IPE) and in coordination with U.S. Cyber Command—strengthens collective cyber defense across Europe through bilateral and multilateral frameworks. These efforts improve Allied capability and capacity to detect, defend against, and respond to malicious cyber activity, while enhancing C2, interoperability, and readiness through a robust exercise and engagement program. By building durable internal defenses and expanding partner contributions to combined operations, USEUCOM reinforces deterrence, preserves freedom of action in theater, and bolsters the collective defense posture of NATO and key partners.

In terms of special operations, U.S. Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) counters hybrid threats to U.S. and Allied interests, enhances NATO interoperability, and drives innovative solutions to special operations requirements. SOCEUR disrupts hybrid threats, destabilization efforts, and special reconnaissance activities through expanded information and intelligence sharing and operational synchronization with our European Allies and partners. Through joint exercises and other burden-sharing initiatives, SOCEUR strengthens special operations capabilities and interoperability among NATO Allies. For example, exercise ADAMANT SERPENT 2025 brought together 400 special operations troops from the United States, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark to rehearse rapid deployment and unified operations in arctic and sub-arctic environments. These exercises, along with other capability-development efforts, position Allies to increase their special operations contributions to NATO. Further, SOCEUR's Theater Edge Innovation Lab conducts iterative-technology innovation, operational assessments, training, and tactical-exploitation support to address DoW special operations requirements in support of the U.S. defense innovation ecosystem.

## USEUCOM STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Across USEUCOM's priority mission areas, the Command is pursuing and implementing several initiatives to maximize the Joint Force and NATO's collective strength to achieve national objectives.

### *Strategy Alignment Implementation*

First, USEUCOM is adapting its plans and OAI in alignment with the NSS and DoW strategic guidance. For example, our defense plans ensure we can defend the Homeland, support the Joint Force as it balances global resource requirements, and continue to provide limited but critical conventional support to NATO. As NATO updates its own defense plans, USEUCOM will identify opportunities to proportionately tailor U.S. force contributions as Allied warfighting capabilities and capacity increase. To support the Department's priority lines of effort, USEUCOM updated its resourcing and targeting priorities for theater intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms and sensors. USEUCOM will continue to adjust these efforts in line with global Joint Force requirements and will leverage Allied capabilities to support Alliance-wide, all-domain awareness.

### *USEUCOM's Efforts to Increase Allied Burden Sharing*

In alignment with the NSS and DoW's strategic guidance to increase Allied and partner burden sharing, the Command is prudently and expeditiously transferring primary responsibility for Europe's conventional defense to our European Allies by helping them increase their warfighting readiness, capability, and capacity. Indeed, the first step to burden sharing is burden shifting. Therefore, USEUCOM will prioritize actions that shift NATO's security architecture from a U.S.-centric model to a European-centric model, fostering Allied ownership of defense efforts. A European-led conventional defense requires our NATO Allies to reach several milestones—strategic aimpoints—in the years ahead. Resources will be directed toward those areas that have the greatest impact on NATO's collective defense posture.

To achieve these objectives, USEUCOM will, in close collaboration with Allies, identify capability gaps, prioritize targeted assistance and cooperation, enhance Allied interoperability and readiness, and enable the deliberate transition of deterrence roles and missions to European Allies. To that

end, and in accordance with U.S. policy, USEUCOM is implementing a deliberate, sustainable, and effective burden-sharing strategy that is both conditions-informed and time-bound. Progress toward burden-sharing goals must be measurable and transparent. USEUCOM will support Alliance processes that establish clear metrics for reporting progress, contributions, and accountability.

For our Allies to assume primary responsibility for Europe's conventional defense, helping them achieve their NATO Capability Targets is paramount. USEUCOM is focusing on these targets to accelerate this approach and strengthen our Allies' warfighting capabilities, especially as our NATO Allies reach their 5% defense spending pledges. Greater European investment in a responsive and resilient Euro-Atlantic DIB will improve Allied capability development and force planning in support of NATO's Regional Plans, thereby increasing burden sharing.

USEUCOM forces are immersed in a dynamic training environment designed to enhance readiness and increase lethality. The Command trains, exercises, and leads alongside Allies to generate Alliance readiness for combined, joint operations. As such, USEUCOM is right sizing our exercise program to place NATO's theater-wide C2, force structure, and interoperability at the forefront of our focus. USEUCOM's combined exercises with NATO provide the Joint Force and our Allies tools to integrate new technology and refine tactics, techniques, and procedures. Exercises like NATO's STEADFAST DEFENDER 2024—with 90,000 troops, 50 ships, 80 aircraft, and 1,100 combat vehicles—are critical to rehearsing maneuver warfare and C2 at scale, demonstrating Allied resolve and commitment to reestablishing deterrence on the European continent. Looking ahead, STEADFAST DEFENDER 2027 will provide an opportunity for our Allies to evaluate their progress towards increased warfighting capability and capacity. USEUCOM will work alongside Allies to also ensure standardization of ammunition, fuel, and communication systems to optimize coalition warfighting. USEUCOM also enjoys a mutually supportive relationship with the National Guard Bureau, which provides low-cost exchanges with 30 European nations through its long-standing State Partnership Program (SPP). The SPP strengthens military-to-military relationships, builds Ally and partner defense capacity, and provides

unique training opportunities for National Guardsmen, increasing their warfighting readiness and lethality.

USEUCOM will also prioritize existing Allied burden-sharing constructs, such as NATO's FLF Battlegroups, eVAs, and air policing to enable the Allies' conventional defense of Europe with limited but critical U.S. support. Under the FLF concept, for example, NATO has identified eight "framework nations" to bolster defense in eight eastern flank "host nations." Each framework nation will station a standing, battalion-sized battlegroup capable of expanding to a brigade on order, in its respective host nation. Finland is the ninth host nation, set to welcome Sweden as its framework nation in 2026. These visiting framework nations provide the core combat power for each battlegroup. Importantly, the North Atlantic Council has already agreed to the FLF concept as a burden-sharing framework. Other ongoing burden-sharing operations include eVA Baltic Sentry and eVA Eastern Sentry, in addition to the recently announced eVA Arctic Sentry. In the maritime domain, eVA Baltic Sentry counters Russian malign activity, such as undersea cable cutting, in the Baltic Sea. In the air domain, eVA Eastern Sentry deploys aircraft in response to Russian incursions of Allied airspace.

USEUCOM also leverages its military-to-military relationships to identify opportunities to share costs with our NATO Allies. Several eastern flank NATO Allies have offered to increase cost sharing as part of our larger burden-sharing efforts to support the Alliance. Allies have demonstrated willingness to bear the costs of U.S. force presence, providing a projected \$4.5 billion for military infrastructure. As such, training and exercises often occur in locations funded by Allies. For example, through an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, Poland has contributed approximately \$300 million to date to build facilities at Zagan-Swietoszow Training Areas, in addition to other facilities that support U.S. power projection and sustainment. NATO Allies are also increasing contributions to the NATO Security Infrastructure Program fund to ensure the Alliance has a ready pool of resources for collective defense.

### *USEUCOM's Support to Ukraine*

The President's objectives for the war in Ukraine are clear: stop the bloodshed, achieve a ceasefire, and settle the conflict. To that end, USEUCOM is supporting the U.S.-brokered peace process

with military planning for peace monitoring to inform diplomatic negotiations. Additionally, USEUCOM coordinates and executes U.S. security assistance to Ukraine alongside our NATO Allies. For example, to safeguard vulnerable population centers and critical infrastructure across Ukraine as negotiations unfold, President Trump directed the transfer of additional interceptors for previously donated air defense platforms, including PATRIOT and NASAM systems. Meanwhile, through the Critical Ukraine Requirements List and Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List, commonly referred to as the CURL/PURL initiative, vital support to Ukraine is sourced from the United States and paid for by our Allies and partners. In 2025, NATO Allies pledged more than \$4 billion in military equipment and munitions for Ukraine through the PURL initiative. Overall, European Allies and partners have committed more than €300 billion in financial, humanitarian, and military assistance to Ukraine since February 2022, €200 billion of which has already been allocated.

#### ***USEUCOM's Innovation Efforts***

USEUCOM must harness the power of innovation, learning from the modern battlefield and adapting our processes, technologies, and approaches. The European theater is a living laboratory USEUCOM can use to experiment and battle test new equipment, new tactics, and new approaches alongside our Allies and partners. Exercise and training programs provide opportunities for rapid innovation, which is essential for the Joint Force and NATO to evolve to meet the demands of warfare, both today and in the future.

The war in Ukraine has served as a test bed for new technologies, improving our understanding of the modern battlefield. In a dynamic environment that pushes the boundaries of warfare beyond traditional capability development cycles, the conflict highlights the requirement for military innovation and adaptation at speed. The lessons learned in Ukraine span all domains, including areas such as layered air defenses, logistics, and electronic warfare. Areas such as UAS development and counter-UAS warfare are becoming ubiquitous across multiple domains in every theater with implications on future force design. For example, using combat-informed data harvested from Ukraine, U.S. and Allied forces are developing concepts that will improve multinational integration and the battlefield incorporation of

autonomous systems across domains. These adaptations and innovations are shaping U.S. and NATO training events and exercises while also informing future force design across the Alliance and Joint Force.

Furthermore, the DoW innovation ecosystem is supporting and learning from the ongoing conflict through direct partnership with USEUCOM. The Office of the Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment and the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), for example, successfully prototyped next-generation, long-range one-way attack platforms in Ukraine with both U.S. and Ukrainian firms. Additionally, the DIU is simultaneously fielding Ukrainian-inspired first-person view drones to USEUCOM units for training. Conversely, DoW initiatives, such as the Drone Dominance Program, are leveraging the best practices of Ukrainian drone manufacturers to scale small UAS domestic production. Our partnerships with the broader innovation ecosystem create a symbiotic relationship where the United States and our industrial base benefits from our support to Ukraine.

USEUCOM continues to incorporate emerging technologies into our own processes and activities. As the DoW fields new Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled tools, the Command is using them to enhance our own innovation efforts to improve efficiency and agility. USEUCOM is using an AI-enabled approach to design exercise plans and develop training concepts, thereby reducing costs and personnel demands. For example, JACKAL STONE 27 will incorporate AI-enabled tools as part of a command post exercise to stress test USEUCOM's crisis response capabilities in the European theater.

Beyond innovating for the battlefield, USEUCOM is also modernizing its headquarters operations through AI-enabled tools that accelerate analysis and decision-making, in line with the Department's vision to out-think, out-decide, and out-pace adversaries through rapid planning, operations, intelligence, logistics, and other workflows. The Command is leveraging AI-enabled tools to more rapidly and efficiently analyze open-source information, improving our situational awareness of the security environment. USEUCOM will continue working with the Department, interagency stakeholders, and Allies and partners to develop new tools and identify new applications to foster innovation.

## CONCLUSION

It is a privilege to serve alongside the men and women of USEUCOM as they continue working with DoW leadership, interagency stakeholders, NATO Allies, and European partners to achieve our national objectives in Europe. The Command will continue to work to maximize the Joint Force's operational flexibility and readiness by accelerating Alliance modernization and driving warfighting innovation. In doing so, USEUCOM can ensure the region remains a platform for U.S. Homeland defense and Joint Force power projection, and that NATO remains a combat-credible, force-multiplying Alliance capable of sustaining deterrence and defeating aggression against Allies in Europe and North America. USEUCOM is prepared to deter and defeat threats to U.S. vital interests in and from Europe, uphold our Article 5 obligations to the Alliance, and fulfill the President's commitment to *Peace through Strength*.