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UNDERSTANDING AND DETERRING RUSSIA: U.S. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

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UNDERSTANDING AND DETERRING RUSSIA: U.S. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, February 10, 2016.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. William M. "Mac" Thornberry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM M. "MAC" THORNBERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. Committee will come to order.

Today the committee meets to hear testimony on understanding and deterring Russia. Events just over the past year, as Russia has consolidated its gains in Ukraine, has intervened in Syria, has continued to take unprecedented provocative actions against NATO's [North Atlantic Treaty Organization's] ships and planes, all point to the importance of this topic and of making sure that we have the capability needed to protect the country, our allies, and our interests.

That is part of the reason that the committee will again have hearings to explore the security environment we face, including threats and the current state of our military, before we hear from the Secretary [of Defense] about whether the administration's budget request answers those challenges.

But I view today not only about Russia. In many ways it does present unique challenges, as it has the only nuclear arsenal, which it continues to modernize, that is comparable to ours; but other countries are also going to school on the tactics Putin is using in Ukraine, Syria, and elsewhere. I think we can expect to see more of these again and again in other places by other actors.

So we need to understand the challenges presented by the only nation that continues to pose an existential threat to the United States, and we need to prepare for the wide spectrum of national security challenges posed by Russia and by others.

Today we are grateful to have three highly qualified witnesses to help explore these matters. But before I introduce them I will yield to Mrs. Davis, of California, who is filling in for Mr. Smith.

STATEMENT OF HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I am happy to be here for Mr. Smith, and we certainly welcome him back just as soon as possible.

I want to thank our witnesses for appearing this morning. Your expertise is a valuable resource to us on the important topic of Russia's strategic motivations, and I look forward to your testimony.

Russian nationalism, as we know, has fueled a foreign policy marked by territorial aggression and expeditionary military activities. They have used enhanced capabilities and hybrid warfare techniques that have been instrumental in these endeavors.

These developments are further compounded by Russia's noncompliance with the Intermediate [Range] Nuclear Forces Treaty and its energetic policy of discrediting the United States, NATO, and the European Union.

So I am very interested, as is the chairman and I know all the members here on the committee, in your thoughts on what may be motivating Russia to be so adversarial and how the United States and its many allies can most effectively respond to the difficult security challenges Russia presents.

And particularly, how might the $3.42 billion which is included in the President's request for the European Reassurance Initiative—how might—which actually almost nearly quadruples the prior budget request—how might that be employed to counter Russian aggression?

Clearly the United States must take a lead role in deterring Russia. I agree with Secretary Carter, who recently said while we do not desire conflict of any kind with Russia, we also cannot blind ourselves to the actions they appear to choose to pursue. We must remain objective and clear-eyed about Russian intent and we must be ready to contend with Russia from a position of strength and in concert with our allies and partners in the international community should it become necessary.

Thank you, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. As I say, we are very grateful to have three highly qualified witnesses to help explore these issues.

I want to welcome Admiral Jim Stavridis, currently the dean at the Fletcher School at Tufts University, but just prior, our commander of NATO and of the European Command; Dr. Evelyn Farkas, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia—also some experience, I understand, over on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and we will try not to hold that too much against you; and Dr. Fiona Hill, director of Center on United States and Europe at the Brookings Institute, and also the author of, "Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin," which a lot of people talk about.

Again, thank you all for being here. Without objection, your full written statement will be made part of the record.

Dr. Hill, we will start with you.

STATEMENT OF DR. FIONA HILL, DIRECTOR, CENTER ON THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE, THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Dr. HILL. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman and Ms. Smith. It is a great honor to appear here in front of the committee, and I am very privileged to be here with such distinguished colleagues.

I will just touch on a few highlights from my written statement, and also offer some supplemental information to that written text.

Mr. Chairman, as you have outlined and, Ms. Smith, as you have also underscored, it is extremely important first of all for us to understand the nature of Russian decisionmaking.

Russia is not the Soviet Union of the Cold War. We no longer have a politburo or a communist party or central planning. Russia is also not the weak military power of the 1990s and 2000.

Power in Russia today is very informal and it is rooted in networks around President Vladimir Putin. There are no significant checks and balances on Putin's presidential power, and so Putin himself is one aspect of the Russian challenge.

However, waiting Putin out is not going to be a long-term strategy for us because even if Putin were to disappear tomorrow, the likelihood is that he would be replaced by someone from within his inner circle. The inner circle of power around Putin is a very tight group of the same age range, and people whose professional and personal relationships date back decades. Everyone around Putin shares the same convictions, so he is not an anomaly.

I do want to touch upon for a few moments, however, about Putin's particular style of leadership.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for mentioning my book. It is always a great delight when somebody does something like that.

But the point of writing this book was to point out and to underscore that Putin is a professional secret service operative. He is very unusual among world leaders at present.

He has been trained, as he puts it, to work with people and work with information. And this means that as president he personalizes all of his interactions, both in Russia domestically and in terms of foreign policy, just as he would have done as a KGB agent, when he targeted, recruited, and dealt with other agents and intelligence targets.

Putin has also been trained to conceal his true identity and intentions at all times. This is what makes him particularly difficult to deal with.

As the Russian head of state, he has a very great tactical advantage. He always keeps his options open so he can adapt to changing circumstances and he can continue to pursue his goals. And he knows that if no one else knows what he wants or how he is going to react, he can stay one step ahead of all of his political opponents, including the United States and NATO.

In terms of his political convictions, however, Putin is a very traditional, conservative Russian politician. And there is a general consensus in Russia right now, deeply rooted in the political leap since the collapse of the Soviet Union, that the current world order, including the European security order, disadvantages Russia.

Russians see their state as one of just a tiny number of world civilizational powers, like China and the United States, and they believe that this means that Russia should have special privileges internationally, especially in Europe. So this is just to underscore that any successor to Putin, no matter who this is, would be just as staunch a defender of what they see as Russian interests as Vladimir Putin is.

I also now want to turn to the nature of the current presidency under Vladimir Putin. Since the wars in both Ukraine and Syria, Putin has transformed his presidency into what we might call a

wartime presidency. There has been a high command, a centralized military, and political command set up inside of Moscow, and all critical security and political issues are fed into a small group of people around Putin there who are the security team, what we might call the hard men of Russian politics.

To be honest, we don't really know what happens within that group, how deliberations take place, how information is passed to Putin, and really who decides on what course of action. But what we do know is that most of the people in this group share the same operative perspective as Putin does. They come from very similar backgrounds and, as I mentioned, they have the same convictions.

None of these hard men of Russian politics, for the purpose of this hearing, we should bear in mind, are actually military men. Even the defense minister, Sergey Shoygu, who used to be the minister of emergencies, doesn't come from the military. The only person in this inner circle who does come from the Russian military is Gennady Gerasimov, the chief of the general staff, but he is a newcomer to the inner circle of Putin's power.

Before today's wars, the turning point in our relationships with Russia was the August 2008 war with Georgia. This was also a turning point for Putin and his security team. It was a decisive moment for Russia in understanding their relationship with the West.

Moscow closely observed the reactions and political responses of the United States and NATO and European powers to the war, and they took the lack of U.S. and NATO military support for Georgia and all of the disagreements about appropriate countermeasures as a sign that they could exploit fissures in the future. They also analyzed the performance of their own military to decide on the course of Russian military reform.

The key lesson of the war in Georgia in 2008 for Russia was that no other European state was willing to engage in a similar military adventure and to take Russia on. Since the Georgia war, the Russian military has become a direct instrument of policy for Putin and his inner circle. They seek to figure out how to deploy it against opponents in foreign policy for tactical effect. This gives Russia a great advantage, and it also makes Moscow think that it can take a lot of risks.

So just to underscore again, Putin and his inner circles think of the Russian military as an operational tool. They experiment with the direct or threat of direct application of military force, including the strategic and tactical nuclear forces, to see what advantage they can gain.

However, I just want to point out before handing over to my colleagues that the Russian military has several shortcomings as an operational tool. Russia's military modernization over the last decade has been beset by planning difficulties. Essentially, the reform to the armed services began in 2008, but it wasn't until 2011 when Russia began its rearmament program and the revitalization of its defense sector.

So when the operations were launched in Crimea and then in Ukraine in 2014, the Russian military was not quite ready for prime time. This is one of the several reasons why the war in the Donbass was launched as a covert operation. And it has also been the case that the war in Ukraine has been seen by the Russian

military as more of a proving ground, as an exercise base for the future.

And since the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine, we have seen the Russian military engaged in a series of large-scale and snap exercises. Indeed, there are exercises going on as we meet today. February is, in fact, the traditional exercise season for Russia because the annual draft comes up next month in March, which means that they will have reduced capacity as the conscript force turns over.

So Putin's challenge currently is to figure out how to maintain the military momentum that Russia gained in Georgia in 2008, and to keep on figuring out how to take the West, the United States, and NATO by surprise, as they have done in Ukraine and Syria.

One of the questions that we have to address today in the hearing is whether Russia may be reaching the limits of its ability to apply the military as a direct operational tool in their future conflicts.

In Ukraine we see an effort to dampen down the conflict. There is discussion right now about the future of negotiations with the Minsk agreement.

Part of this is because the Russian military has found itself squeezed as a result of international sanctions and the economic downturn, and also by the conduct of the campaign itself. The military budget has been squeezed by the reduced prices from energy and the revenues in the budget, and also because the state now has lower capacity for replacing the armaments and material that have been expended in the war in Ukraine.

The Western sanctions hit Russia in 2014 just as the rearmament program was trying to reach its stride. Russia has been denied access to critical foreign technology as well as further revenues.

And the intervention in Syria may be more costly than Russia basically admits at the moment, because the Syrian government is also not paying for the weaponry that it is receiving from the Russian government. So it is not just the cost of Russia's own military expenditures in the war in Syria, but also what it is also expending on behalf of the Syrian government.

So Russia's dilemma is now one of prioritization—where to allocate its budget and where and how to deploy its relatively limited trained manpower. The Russian military is still absorbing the effect of economic decline and the resources that they have.

And for Russia and the Putin team, being at war in the Middle East is actually unfamiliar territory. Russia's goal in Syria is to consolidate Assad's regime to make sure that something stays in place until there is a better arrangement for keeping the Syrian state together.

But intervening in Syria has been a very risky proposition, and to achieve the goal of keeping Assad in place, Putin requires large numbers of other players, not just the United States and European allies, to play along with Moscow at the negotiating table, as well as trying to head off operational setbacks, which will be inevitable on the ground in the Middle East. At this particular point, it is not clear how hard it will be for Russia to keep up the momentum that it has in Syria.

Just to wrap up, with the economic downturn, Putin and his inner circle are under considerable pressure to keep on delivering foreign policy victories. These victories so far have boosted the Russian public's ratings of Putin's political performance.

We have to bear in mind that with this highly centralized nature of Russian power, everything within the current system depends on the maintenance of President Putin's charismatic authority and his record as a leader. If the Russian people lose their faith in Putin as president, then the political system risks becoming destabilized.

Putin's ratings are still very high. They would be very enviable in any context, but they are just a few percentage points short of 90 percent in the most recent polls.

We have to remember that is also because of his record as president, but it is also in large part because of the siege mentality that we have in Russia today. Russians genuinely believe—this is reflected in polls not just at the elite level but at the public level—that we are out to get them in the United States and in the West.

And although the Russian economy and the state budget have taken a beating since 2013, it is the wars which have deflected Russian public attention away from economic and political demands. Putin and his team have been able to blame all of Russia's woes on the United States and on Western actions and sanctions.

Putin has shown he has been willing to pay a high economic and diplomatic price as he seeks to tip regional balances of power in Europe and the Middle East in Moscow's favor, but the question is for how long. Can Putin keep the population mobilized behind his presidency if things start to go badly wrong for the military operation in Syria? You can be sure if we are asking this question then Vladimir Putin and his team also are.

So just to conclude, Putin's overriding strategy and his overriding goal right now is to secure—is security for Russia and his system and to press forward with his interests. We are talking today about deterring Russia, but Putin and his security team are also trying to deter us, the United States and NATO, from intervening in any way militarily against Russia in any of the conflicts in Ukraine or in Syria.

Putin cannot any more afford the resources for the mass army total mobilization approach that the Soviet Union adopted during the Cold War to defend itself. So the whole of Russia's military modernization program is being geared towards a combination of conventional nuclear and nonconventional nonmilitary means, this so-called hybrid means of defense.

Putin has also, as I mentioned at the beginning, tried to instrumentalize the idea of Russia military force to show us that he intends to use it. This also means that he has to show that he will use nuclear weapons under some contingency.

These are the ultimate deterrent, but they are not much use as a deterrent if you don't believe that anyone is prepared to use them. This is why there is so much signaling about nuclear weapons, as I am sure we will hear from Dr. Farkas and Dr. Stavridis.

So the goal for Putin is also to push away the United States and NATO, not to actually exchange in any nuclear or military exchange. This means that it is very tricky for us to both take onboard the nature of Russian threat perceptions and also to devise

for ourselves coherent strategies and policies for dealing with the Russian threat.

Thank you so much for your attention.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Hill can be found in the Appendix on page 49.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Dr. Farkas.

STATEMENT OF DR. EVELYN N. FARKAS, FORMER DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR RUSSIA/UKRAINE/EURASIA

Dr. FARKAS. Thank you very much, Chairman Thornberry, Congresswoman Davis.

It is, indeed, an honor to appear before the sister committee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, where I served as a professional staff member from 2000 to 2008. It is also an extra honor to appear beside my former boss, Admiral Stavridis, whom I hold in the highest esteem; and, of course, one of our foremost experts on Russia, Dr. Fiona Hill.

So thank you very much.

I will get right to the point: Russia poses a geostrategic threat to the United States and our interests. Indeed, last week, as we all know, Secretary Carter listed it first among the threats faced by our country.

It is unfortunate and in the 21st century to have—in this 21st century to have Russia and the United States opposed to one another on fundamentals and most foreign policy issues. But the reality is that the Russian government is pursuing policies that run counter to U.S. national security interests and values.

The Kremlin objectives are clear, and I have about five of them that I will run through quickly: first of all, to retain President Putin's position as the leader of the Russian Federation, preserving the autocratic political system and mafia-style crony economy that together comprise "Putinism"; second, to restore Russia's status as a great power; third, to rewrite the international rules and norms to prevent intervention in states to protect citizens; fourth, to maintain political control of Russia's geographical periphery—and by that I mean Eastern Europe and Central Asia; and, if possible, to break NATO, the European Union, and transatlantic unity.

Now, we have seen what Russia can do with—even with its unfinished military modernization in advancement of these objectives. And since we can expect President Putin to be reelected in 2018 for another 6 years, we can't wish this problem away. We must use all elements of national power—diplomatic, economic, informational, and military—to pressure Russia to reverse course.

The United States must counter and resist Russia's actions through a combination of deterrence, strengthening our allies and partners, and communicating the truth about the Kremlin's actions to the world. For the sake of brevity, I am just going to focus on the military recommendations and we can talk about the other ones—diplomatic, economic, et cetera—in the Q&A, because obviously for this committee the focus is on the military.

We must deter Russia from further military action. It is very important. And I, therefore, enthusiastically applaud the President

and Secretary Carter's decision to more than quadruple down on the European Reassurance Initiative to establish a true deterrent to Russian military action against NATO.

Congress should also urge the Pentagon to provide an aviation brigade to support the armored brigade combat team. And I can talk more about this, again, in the Q&A.

On the non-NATO periphery, Congress should continue to support beefing up security assistance to Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova in particular. They need more training; they need help with defense transparency and accountability. And we should provide all three countries with antitank weapons, which will provide them with the potential to deter the larger, more ready Russian forces.

In Syria we must get our allies engaged on the battlefield and provide equipment and other support to the Syrian opposition. If we do also succeed in finding economic and other leverage—and I mention some of that in the written testimony—this could also mitigate the need for more fighting, but more fighting is unavoidable right now.

The Defense Department should no longer do business with Russia. This means no rockets used by the U.S. defense industry should be Russian, and we should establish a new foreign military assistance fund to help allies and partners throughout Europe and Afghanistan transition from Russian to U.S. military equipment.

We must be united with our allies and partners worldwide and resolute towards Russian bad behavior. We need not enter a new Cold War or an across-the-board standoff with Russia. Where the Kremlin is open to cooperation and there are mutual interests, of course we should work with Moscow.

But we should know that Russia will not work with us unless the Kremlin sees it in their national security interest or we have sufficient leverage to force a change in Putin's approach. We need leverage to succeed in negotiations.

If we take the actions described in my testimony—and as I mentioned, I go into more detail in the written—we will raise the price to Putin for achieving his international objectives. Russia will be forced to reconsider its approach.

Then perhaps the pent-up and misguided human resources of the Russian people can be directed towards a future, and we will have successfully managed what is currently the greatest geostrategic threat to U.S. national security interests.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Farkas can be found in the Appendix on page 69.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Admiral Stavridis, welcome back.

STATEMENT OF ADM JAMES G. STAVRIDIS, USN (RET.), DEAN, THE FLETCHER SCHOOL, TUFTS UNIVERSITY

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Representative Davis. Please also pass my best wishes on to the ranking member.

It is a pleasure to be back in front of the HASC [House Armed Services Committee]. I have testified here many, many times over the years, both as U.S. European Command, NATO commander, and before that as commander of U.S. Southern Command.

But today I am here in my personal capacity. I will kind of draw on some of my research and work as the dean at the Fletcher School at Tufts University, and also some work I am doing at Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory.

I will begin by saying that the top global challenge I see for the United States today is, in fact, the European problem. And that constraint is made of refugees coming in, economic challenges, but a big portion of it is the overhang from Russia.

And I think that for the United States our best pool of partners are going to be the Europeans. And if they are facing this challenge from Russia, as you have heard outlined so well by Dr. Hill and Dr. Farkas, that has significant implications for the United States.

There is good news about NATO. Let's face it, it is 28 nations, 50 percent of the world's GDP [gross domestic product], and a significant defense spending, probably $900 billion in total—$600 billion from the United States, $300 billion from Europe. So there is a lot of capability in NATO today.

But the spending is declining. Our European allies are only spending about 1.4 percent of their GDP, well under the NATO goal of 2 percent. And at the same time, as you have heard outlined particularly by Dr. Farkas but as well by Dr. Hill, we are seeing Russia doubling down on a military approach.

Russian defense spending is going up, even given the constraints of the fall in oil prices and the general global slowdown in the economy. Their defense spending has risen 25 percent in just the last 2 years.

Today they have about a million men and women under arms, most of them conscripts; 2 million reserves; 270 significant warships; thousands of military aircraft. They remain a very significant military power who continues to improve their forces in very specific areas.

So we need to be very cognizant of the challenges there. And when we couple that capability on the part of Russia with demonstrated intent to use it in Georgia, in Moldova, and, of course, most dramatically, in Ukraine, followed by the annexation of Crimea, something that, frankly, I could not have imagined happening when I was the NATO commander just several years ago.

So when you couple capability with demonstrated intent to use it, and it is positioned alongside our greatest pool of allies, you see the significance of this challenge.

A subset of this I think is the Russian cleverness in approach of how they are using military force. Some have called this hybrid warfare. It is a mix of special forces; information warfare; cyber, an area in which Russia is demonstrating extremely accelerated capability; and this element of surprise, building real ambiguity into their maneuvers. Very concerning.

So when we put all of that together with the snap exercises—and as Dr. Hill mentioned, we are going to see this pattern repeated—and most recently—and neither of my colleagues have mentioned this—we see significant studies being done—I will cite one by RAND [Corporation] which just emerged that indicates the Russian ability to sweep into the Baltic capitals in really a matter of days—60 hours is the number that was used. I participated in a recent

war game exploring this and I believe this is an accurate assessment.

So what should we do about it? Well, you are going to have an opportunity, of course, to talk to my successor, General Phil Breedlove, in the coming weeks. I am encouraged by the increase in defense spending to focus on Europe.

As Representative Davis reminded us, this is almost quadrupling. But let's face it, it is from a relatively low baseline.

We have withdrawn brigade combat teams over the last few years. We should strongly consider returning those to Europe. And I think Dr. Farkas has hit the correct mix: Aviation, armor is what is going to be needed.

As I look at the situation overall, I think NATO has the long-range capability, but in the short term we face real challenges from Russia.

So fundamentally, I think we need to continue to maintain a posture of deterrence. We need to use sanctions and continue to strengthen those as we look at Russian behavior.

We need to maintain our own nuclear deterrent. Unfortunately, that is going to be part of this equation.

And I think we need to reassure our allies in Europe, because by reassuring them we can hopefully encourage increases in their own defense spending, which is their responsibility, to put alongside our good work in Russia.

I will close by echoing something Dr. Farkas said, which is we don't need to stumble backwards into a full-blown Cold War. That is in nobody's interest. But I believe we should cooperate where we can in places like Afghanistan, counterpiracy, counternarcotics, counterterrorism, but we must confront where we see the need to do so.

I think today when I look at Russian behavior broadly and globally, to include Syria, where they are supporting a reprehensible regime, I think we do need to confront. And that includes significant deterrence. And the good work of this committee, its support of the Armed Forces of the United States, will enable us to be a strong partner in doing so.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Stavridis can be found in the Appendix on page 78.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

There are a lot of issues one would like to pursue. I am going to try to limit myself to just a couple that focus on our responsibilities and how—what sort of military capability we ought to help build to deal with the situation that the three of you have described.

Later this week our Strategic Forces Subcommittee has a hearing on our own nuclear deterrent.

And, Admiral, you just mentioned the importance of that as one of the elements. Can you, and perhaps others, describe the role of nuclear weapons in Russia's thinking and in how that translates to what we should be focused on?

Because I think a lot of Americans don't realize that Russia continues to modernize its nuclear stockpile; it continues to manufac-

ture new weapons with different characteristics. Meanwhile, we are sitting here trying to keep the 1980s versions working.

So the role of nuclear deterrence in this broader context is what I am trying to understand.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Sir, as you know, today Russia maintains about 1,500 strategic warheads, about 1,000 in reserve, probably 2,000 to 3,000 tactical nuclear weapons. It is a significant stockpile. As you indicate, it is being modernized.

The United States maintains some level to meet that, and that mutual assured destruction philosophy will continue to matter at the strategic level.

What concerns me in Europe, as Russian forces are not as strong as they were during the Warsaw Pact days, you see a potential—and we are reminded of it fairly frequently by President Putin—of the use of nuclear weapons in matching NATO forces. So it is the Russians who have indicated a reminder to us. And here I think we are really looking at intermediate nuclear range missiles as well as the tactical nuclear devices.

So I think, unfortunately, this is a significant resource constraint, but it is necessary to modernize these in order to meet Russian challenges.

I think Dr. Hill probably has some expertise on this, as well.

Dr. FARKAS. Well, if I can just add to that, I agree wholeheartedly with the admiral. Obviously it is important for us to maintain our nuclear deterrence with Russia. They absolutely rely on their strategic nuclear forces to maintain their status, frankly, as a global power.

But, given their conventional weakness relative to us, they also place, unfortunately, too much emphasis on their tactical nuclear weapons. And under President Putin, they have actually refined their military doctrines such that they permit a nuclear first use against a conventional attack.

So in response to a conventional attack against Russia, if the Russian government deems it a threat to the existence of the state, which of course is in the eye of the beholder or the leader—if they deem it a threat to the existence of the state, even if it is a conventional attack, they can use tactical nuclear weapons to respond. And that is a very dangerous development, especially given the fact that they have been making these very loose comments, this loose nuclear rattling—saber-rattling comments coming from the Kremlin, coming from their ambassador in Copenhagen and elsewhere. So I think we are quite worried about that.

And they also have a doctrine whereby they believe that they can deter the United States and other countries from intervening in an ongoing military operation, say against a NATO ally or against some other country, by escalating in order to then, they say, de-escalate. And the de-escalation would mean if they escalate, the opponent—say the United States, we want to come help our allies—we would say, "Oh, this escalatory attack coming from Russia," whether it is cyber, tactical nuclear, you name it—"that is too much for us to respond to. We don't want to escalate." So we de-escalate, in essence, and let the Russians do what they would like to do.

So it is a bit complicated, and I don't—I probably went a little bit into the weeds of the Russian doctrine. But I think it gives you

a sense of how dangerous the situation is right now because, unfortunately, the Russians really are relying on their tactical nuclear weapons to an extent that we find alarming in the United States.

And the only other thing I would mention before I turn it over to Dr. Hill is, of course, we are also watching very closely the INF development, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces and the fact that the Russians have violated that treaty. And as I mention in my written testimony, I believe that the United States needs to be prepared to deploy, unfortunately, intermediate nuclear weapons back to Europe if the Russians do not roll back their program.

Thank you.

Dr. HILL. Just to add to this, this is the area that we should be paying the most attention to when we are trying to figure out the Russian approach. As we have been making clear, they are talking about tactical intermediate nuclear weapons here, which is something quite different from the strategic nuclear arsenal that we have been trying to address through the New START [Strategic Arms Reduction] Treaty, which still seems, actually, to be holding in place.

But it is that whole element of tactical surprise, which is key right now to the military momentum that Putin and the team around him have been trying to build up since the war in Georgia in 2008. The whole point of everything that we have seen has been to show us that the military is not just there for show, it is there for use.

As I said in my oral remarks, it is there to be an instrument of policy. And it is no good if people just think, you know, you might be toying with the idea of using things. People have to believe that you will use them under the certain circumstances.

And this is why all of the contingencies that we have been highlighting here have been put on the table. The team around Putin wants us to think that Russia will, in fact, use tactical and intermediate nuclear weapons.

This is part of the whole violation of the INF Treaty. And we will be coming up to the anniversary of the treaty next year, in fact—the treaty from 1987.

In many respect, Putin and the people around him want us to go back to that mentality of 30 years ago, of believing that the only way to engage with Russia directly is in these military contexts. They want to be taken seriously and to be seen as a credible threat by us and by NATO. And again, credibility depends on making it very clear that this is not an idle threat.

One of the biggest problems that the Russians perceived in their engagements with the United States prior to the war in Georgia in 2008 was that we did not take any of their threats seriously. When they established a red line about the expansion of NATO we didn't believe them.

In fact, in some meetings that some of us were in in the past, we heard senior U.S. officials say things like, "Well, the Russians will shout and they will stomp their feet but they won't do anything," because they haven't in the past. This is in meetings that some of us in previous capacities took part in.

The point was that they did not have the capacity to take military action in the past under Yeltsin and, frankly, under Gorba-

chev in the late period of the Soviet Union, when the state was very much weakened. Putin wants to show that now the Russian military has that capacity.

We didn't get the message in 2008. Now we are getting the message.

So the whole point of this is not to engage in a nuclear exchange, but just to make sure that we know that Russia means business.

So we have got to actually have a different debate with Russia now about deterrence. We have got to make it very clear to people like Putin and those around him, who are not military people—engaged in the past in conventional discussions, if one can call it that, of deterrence; who are not members of the politburo of the old Soviet military who understood how that kind of deterrence works, that this is actually unacceptable and that just even toying with the idea of using tactical nukes in any kind of battlefield scenario will result in the most dire circumstances.

So it is a very different debate that we need to be having with Russia than we have had before.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you all. I think it is a very important issue about the lessons others draw from our actions or inactions that applies in all sorts of places.

At some point I want to explore the hybrid warfare and what that means for own capabilities. In the interest of time, I will yield to the—Mrs. Davis for any questions.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And actually, that is probably an area that I wanted to go into as well, and just having you talk more about Russia's use of hybrid warfare, unconventional, more clever, all the—what you had mentioned earlier. And is it true? I think part of it is to exert influence and go as far as they can without triggering Article 5.

So, then, where are we? And could you speak to that?

And obviously in terms of NATO and in terms of the European Alliance it is difficult to actually draw a line in this context, but take us a step further with it because the game has obviously changed, as you said, that there is a real difference in their capacity now, and yet we don't want to be drawn into something for the sake of being drawn into something to respond to their test. So——

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Let me begin, if I could, with Article 5, since you brought it up. This is the fifth article of the NATO Treaty and it says an attack on one shall be regarded as an attack on all. It is kind of foundational to NATO.

Article 6 of the treaty actually goes on to define an attack. It is a far less well-known article. It is really worth getting out and reading; it is only two sentences long, but it defines an attack as air, sea, and land upon the forces or citizens of a NATO state.

So that would have been really clear as a definition in the 1950s, when the treaty was being constructed, implemented, and developed. Today, with particularly cyber, it becomes ambiguous.

So when is a cyber event a cyberattack? Is it when your accounts are surveilled? Is it when your data is manipulated? Is it when the data is destroyed? Is it when you have a kinetic outcome—in other words a cyberattack that destroys your ability to land aircraft, to move trains? When is a cyberattack occurring?

Russia sees this ambiguity as an element in hybrid warfare, and I think that is a good starting place for NATO is to think about what is an attack in a Article 5, Article 6 context? Because cyber will be big part of hybrid warfare.

A second element will be unmarked soldiers, so-called little green men, typically moving across borders. The war game I just completed with the Center for New American Studies here explored that quite fully, and it is kind of special forces but it includes this element of really taking off your military badges so that in the information campaign alongside it, as a state you can deny that these are your soldiers. You can say, "These are volunteers. These are former Chechen veterans who are on their vacation going into a nation." You build more ambiguity in the little green men.

Alongside the cyber and the little green men comes the information campaign, which I just mentioned. You deny everything. You say, "This is not state activity." We have seen this again and again, particularly in Ukraine in the Donbass region.

So these kind of elements strung together present a real challenge in the NATO context exactly as you bring up, Representative Davis——

Mrs. DAVIS. Yes.

Admiral STAVRIDIS [continuing]. Because it is difficult to make the call that we are under attack. And this potentially could be used against Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.

A final factor I will mention is the presence of Russian-speaking minorities and a Russian doctrine that says: We will defend Russians wherever they are; and, by the way, we will define what a Russian is.

Mrs. DAVIS. Admiral, I just wonder whether you felt that NATO would likely be much more definite about where these tests would be responded to.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. I think prior to Ukraine I think I would have been more concerned. I think today, because of the way the Russians have, if you will, revealed their hand so dramatically in Ukraine and Crimea, I think the sensors are up in NATO. People are really watching this.

And again, in the war game, which had a lot of European colleagues involved, we moved very quickly to respond to this. Dr. Farkas was at that war game as well and might like to address it.

Dr. FARKAS. Thank you very much, Admiral.

And thank you, Congresswoman.

I think the only thing I would add—I absolutely agree that the problem with the unconventional approach is the surprise and the ambiguity of what is an attack. I think the approach that we have taken with our allies, in particular in the NATO context but also with the non-NATO periphery countries, is to try to strengthen their capacity. That is why this ERI [European Reassurance Initiative] money is actually really important because some of that goes to the special operations training that we are doing with Baltic countries, again with Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, all those periphery countries in NATO as well as the ones outside.

If we strengthen their ability to respond, obviously that will lower the likelihood that we will have to, as you said, respond to a Russian attack—an unconventional attack ourselves through

NATO, that local forces can take care of it. And when I say "local forces" I don't actually mean necessarily the military forces, although our SOF [special operations forces] folks are in there working with the military. We also need to look at the local police, the law enforcement authorities, national guard.

So part of the hybrid means that, unfortunately, as you know, it is hard for us because of our authorities. We need to be working closely with our State Department colleagues and mixing funding, if you will, to conduct the training that is required.

So I think strengthening the allies is really important, and then another thing that I mentioned and the admiral mentioned, the information campaign. We have seen now that the State Department is setting up this new cell to address the messaging with regard to the counterterrorism effort that we are conducting with our allies and the need to get information out to counter the radical Islamist ideology. Well, I would argue that we need a similar cell like that to counter the Russian propaganda.

So I will leave it at that and turn it over to Dr. Hill.

Dr. HILL. I will pick up on what Dr. Farkas just said about the State Department cell. And I have to say, I am afraid, that I don't think that that will actually do the business that we need to be done.

I think, as we are all outlining here, that this is a very sophisticated approach on the part of the Russian government, and we have to be very cognizant of how broad-ranging that is. And it again gets back to the very fact that Putin and the team around him—and again, we have to just bear in mind that it is not just Putin, it is a larger group of people—all have the same outlook and perspective as operatives.

This is an unusual group of people that we are dealing with as world leaders and the inner circle. It is very hard to find some counterpart who is similar to this elsewhere.

And then again, they are not military people. It is the coin of the careers has been dealing in a clandestine fashion, and disassembling and dealing with information and misinformation, and, you know, as Putin has always put it, working with people to manipulate situations. So they all think along these lines.

It is not some character flaw. It is what they have been trained to do.

And it is incredibly all-encompassing. When Putin thinks of an operation he doesn't just think about the military aspects of this. As Admiral Stavridis said, it is all aspects of cyber and it is political.

The State Department, frankly, will be run around in circles if that is kind of the focal point of what we do, and we don't have the capacity or the resources for this.

Russia is engaged in the information space in creating a moral equivalency with the United States and with our allies at all different levels. You will find from public opinion polls across Europe as well as in Russia itself that everyone believes that we are engaged in exactly the same activities.

Hybrid warfare is extraordinarily old. The Tsarist regime used to engage in hybrid warfare. All the discussions of the old game between the British Empire and the Russian Empire back in the 19th

century—these were all aspects of hybrid warfare, of clandestine operatives, you know, running around trying to subvert regional leaders from the Indian Empire onwards.

So everyone believes that we have been engaging in this for some time. And in fact, what is different now is that the Russians have said that they are going to engage the United States and its allies in the same kind of tactics that they believe we have been doing.

And I have to say that they firmly believe that we have been engaging in clandestine operations in a continuous fashion since the war in Afghanistan onwards. They don't believe that we stepped down at all at the end of the Cold War in terms of the kinds of operations that we have been doing. And in fact, they took the operations that we have launched in counterterrorism as just an affirmation that we have never really changed our operational perspective either.

And also, with having Edward Snowden sitting in Moscow, it is not just for the propaganda value. They believe very firmly that we are engaged in exactly the same tactics that we are.

Putin's viewpoint is that the United States lies; it spies on everybody; it engages in these kinds of activities. I am a spy; of course I engage in these activities, and I don't lie.

And so the whole point of the information war is to show that Russia and the United States are very similar and to kind of discredit her is also in the environment. So we actually have to counter that on multiple levels. It is an all-encompassing political exercise.

And it also requires other leaders, our allies in the European capitals, media, the think tank world that I belong to, and everyone else to be very cognizant of what we are dealing with. We all have to do our homework, both inside and outside government, in figuring out how to contend with this.

Dr. FARKAS. If I could, Mr. Chairman and Madam Congresswoman, just to counter a little bit on the point about the State Department can't actually compete with Russia. That is true, but I think what I am proposing is a very important component of the overall approach towards Russia, which obviously in the U.S. context has to include private media, public-private ventures, et cetera.

But I think what has been missing—and it was very frustrating for me when I was in the government—was an ability to share information with our allies, with our partners, and with the world writ large, based on our excellent intelligence sources.

We are not very good at declassifying and reclassifying information that is not propaganda, showing pictures of what the Russians are doing. We did it a couple of times, and interestingly, the Open Skies Treaty was actually useful because, unlike satellites, that is unclassified data that is gleaned as a result of aircrafts that take pictures for the purposes of our treaty requirements.

But in any event, I think that we can do more just by getting some information out. That is the minimum that the State Department could do and should do, together with the intelligence community. But it should also be a push, not a pull—not leaders like yourselves or executive branch members saying, "Declassify that," but actually the intelligence community looking with the State De-

partment, "What should we declassify?" not waiting for somebody to tell them to do it.

So that is the only thing I wanted to point out there, that it is important that we share that information.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you all.

We are now going to have to operate under the 5-minute rule to try to get to everybody, and I will yield to the distinguished gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you for being here today.

And I have a particular interest in what you are saying and doing because in September 1990 I visited as a tourist to Moscow. I was so hopeful, and I have studied Russian history and Russian culture. I really appreciate their contributions to the world.

But it was startling in 1990. It was like stepping back into 1917 and it was the end of a failed socialist era of empty stores, empty streets. But I was just so hopeful seeing the pre-1917 architecture. It was just awesome—and then the talented people.

But it has just been—what I was hoping for was a partnership between the people of Russia, Europe, the United States, for the betterment of the Russian people. But sadly, on subsequent visits across the country with my family, we saw the beginning of a free-market society, a modern society. But it has evolved now, sadly, as indicated, into an autocratic political system, a crony capitalist system of some type benefiting the elite.

I am still hopeful for the country and the Russian people, but what challenges we and they have.

With that in mind, I have a question for Dr. Hill and Dr. Farkas.

And actually, Dr. Hill, you substantially already answered the question.

But let me go to Dr. Farkas, from your point of view, which is really interesting.

But as chairman of the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, Russia's ongoing information propaganda operation is of great concern. And I share the interest of the chairman. What do you believe DOD [Department of Defense] should do to better compete in a new sphere of hybrid warfare, and how do we counter Russia's information propaganda operations?

Dr. FARKAS. Thank you very much, Congressman Wilson.

I think I have laid out some of the components already, so with regard to dealing with the hybrid, I think all of the special operations training that is ongoing. And there is also some assistance that is being provided to embassies on the strategic communications front, so helping ministries of defense communicate better within their society what they are doing. And I am specifically thinking about Ukraine, where we have been pretty active, helping our ambassador work with the Ukrainians. So we need to do more of that.

I don't think, first and foremost, though, the strategic communication is the Department of Defense's responsibility, so I really do think that the State Department should take the lead on that and DOD should be in support.

But the special operations forces have a special niche capability with their so-called NIST [National Intelligence Support Team]

teams, these informational teams. They can help embassies work with foreign governments.

The other thing, of course, is just in training them to be able to see when things are happening and changing on the ground. And there is an intel component there, so obviously the Department of Defense's intel capabilities need to be brought to bear on the situation.

So I think those are the main components, aside from the ones that I already mentioned.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Can I just add to that mix—I think that is a good shopping list, but it is also cyber, as I hope I indicated. I think this is an area Russia is really moving rapidly, along with other nations around the world, and I think the ability to compete in that space is something we need to emphasize as well.

Thanks.

Dr. HILL. Let me just add one small point, that there is a very important role that our armed services can still keep playing through professional-level exchanges with Russia. Although we should not be doing any of the things that Dr. Farkas warned us against in terms of some of the weaponry issues and some of the joint ventures that we have engaged in previously, those professional-level contacts are still of extraordinary importance, especially for strategic communications—it is messaging.

Because just as you said at the very beginning, we do not believe that Russia is any kind of implacable foe or enemy. What we have a problem with is the particular conduct and posture of the current Russian government and the way that they want to seek to use the military as a tool in their foreign policy.

We have to make it very clear that there is still a different possibility ahead of us for a different kind of relationship, as we have already said, on many issues where we have mutual interest. And those professional-level contacts are very important in emphasizing that.

There is a great deal of respect for the U.S. armed services among the Russian military, and we should capitalize upon that when we communicate with them.

Mr. WILSON. And I have actually seen the benefit of people-to-people, too. In my community of central South Carolina we have a very thriving assimilating Russian-American population who are—we have many visitors coming from Russia, and hopefully they see the positive society we are.

Thank you. My time is up.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, to the witnesses, for your testimony today.

Admiral Stavridis, in your written statement you mention that Russian submarine activity has risen to a level not seen since the Cold War days. Could you elaborate on that?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Sure. If you look back at the Cold War, we saw, if you will, "The Hunt for Red October." We saw vast armadas of undersea forces playing cat-and-mouse games throughout the Arctic, through the Mediterranean, through the Greenland-Iceland-U.K. gap in particular, as well as peripheral kinds of encounters, both under the ice and at the very bottom of the pole, as well.

So that diminished significantly as we came out of the Cold War. Now I would say we are back up to a level of activity that I would say is probably 70 to 80 percent of what we saw during Cold War times, and that implies more patrols coming closer to the United States, more probing kinds of activities.

As you are well aware, this gets into highly classified information quite rapidly, but I think I will close there and say that a closed-session briefing on this might be of great interest to the members.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you. And just again, in your testimony you talked about, again, the change that is happening in the landscape there in terms of military buildup, and that—I think your term is, "Unfortunately, we are not currently configured to detect and respond to these types of moves in a robust and immediate military fashion."

Again, you talked about ground troops and air assets that need to be boosted. Can you talk a little bit about naval response? Again, on sea power, you know, we spend a lot of time talking about the pivot to Asia-Pacific, and we have had some of those briefings that you mentioned earlier. But I guess could you talk about that configuration——

Admiral STAVRIDIS. I can. In terms of the Russian fleet, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, it is not a huge fleet; it is 270-ish kind of ships. But its submarine force in particular is extremely high-tech and extremely capable and is a real instrument that is being used most aggressively at this point.

If we look at the building programs, what is on the waves and what the Russians communicate to us about what they are going to build, they are going to increase the conventional surface force as well quite significantly.

So we are seeing robust activity, particularly in the subsurface venue. And it is less about the platform and more about the uses to which they are being put, which again are much more aggressive than we have seen really in a decade.

Did you want to add something, Evelyn?

Mr. COURTNEY. We don't have a lot of time here, and I just—so the lay-down that we, you know, have been looking at for the last 10 years in terms of shifting assets to Guam and other parts, I guess that is the question I was sort of—I mean——

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Got you. Sir, I would say the Pacific pivot made some sense 2 to 3 years ago. I think at this point we ought to be reassessing that as a theory, recognizing that the United States is a global power and we have global interests, of course.

But as I look at the strategic landscape of the moment, I would say it is a good time to be reassessing whether we want to shift a significant portion of the fleet into the Pacific.

Mr. COURTNEY. And lastly, the Russians have about 42 icebreakers shored up in the Arctic, and as Mr. Garamendi has been working hard on the Coast Guard Subcommittee, you know, we are definitely struggling to get up to speed. I was wondering if you could just sort of comment on——

Admiral STAVRIDIS. I can.

Mr. COURTNEY [continuing]. On that issue.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. The Russians, as you know, are extremely robust in the Arctic. They have a huge number of icebreakers. We

have a total of one operational icebreaker. China has many more than we do.

This is something that needs to be corrected. I would invite the committee to read into the record the article I just wrote with General Schwartz about a solution for icebreakers. There is no question that the high North is going to be an area in which we need to be much better, and icebreakers have to be part of that.

Mr. COURTNEY [continuing]. Dr. Farkas, I have 40 seconds left. I don't know if you want to jump in on any of these issues.

Dr. FARKAS. I think really just to say that the submarine force is an area that the Russians have emphasized in their modernization, as opposed to the surface fleet. Most of their modernization is very focused.

And the missiles are also something that—the missile capability they have improved. And then, as the admiral mentioned, it is what they could do. So we need to have good situational awareness, and I think, again, the submarine fleet.

The only other thing I would add is that the Russian fleet, of course, is also in the Pacific and our Pacific forces are watching them closely there, as well.

Dr. HILL. And just one point, because China came up, that Russia is not just thinking about the United States as a long-term threat in the Arctic. For Russia, the Arctic and the Asia-Pacific theaters—maritime theaters—are connected, and they are literally connected physically.

And Russia is worried about Chinese, Korean, and other incursions as the ice melts in the Arctic and shipping opens. Because for Russia this is about their commercial fleet, not just about their military posture in the Arctic.

So I think we have to have a very broad-ranging discussion of the Arctic, not just from our own perspective.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Thank you.

Mr. Franks.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here.

Admiral Stavridis, especially grateful to you for your lifelong service to freedom, and appreciate you being here.

With that, I would like to direct my first question to you, and that is, how important do you think it is for U.S. national security concerns to cooperate to—between the U.S. government, the United States Congress, and the Ukrainian National Security and Defense Council? That is sort of a broad question, I know, but——

Admiral STAVRIDIS. It is. I have spoken and thought a great deal about this.

I, for one, am a strong supporter of Ukraine. I think it is an important nation; it is a big nation; and it is at play in terms of either falling into a Russian orbit—that is obviously the desire of President Putin—or fulfilling an opportunity for a transatlantic relationship, a future grounded in the European Union in economics with Europe. It is highly to the interest of the United States that that competition move Ukraine in a direction of the West.

Mr. FRANKS. Yes.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. How can we do that the best? Through the mechanisms as you are describing, through financial support, and,

I would argue, through carefully crafted military support to the Ukrainian military, which I think is not destabilizing but would in fact have a deterrent effect on Russia.

Mr. FRANKS. Yes. Well, couldn't agree with you more.

Let me shift gears in a completely different subject.

I was a little—"discomfited" I suppose is an understatement—at some of the comments of Russian General Slipchenko here some time back and his cooperation with Iran, and their electromagnetic pulse [EMP] ambitions and their, you know, their military doctrine passive defense on how they would be able to resist countries such as ours. And they mentioned electromagnetic pulse there 22 different times.

What is your own understanding of Russia's EMP offensive capability, and what implications does that have for us, both directly and in their cooperation with Iran?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Again, without broaching into classified information, I will confine myself to say Russia has a significant EMP, electromagnetic pulse, capability. It could be devastating in the United States. It is a mechanism wherein a nuclear blast at the right level can knock out an enormous amount of our cyber capability. Some have referred to this as the event that causes the cyber Pearl Harbor.

This is a significant challenge for us. The fact that Russia would even have conversations about that with Iran is very disconcerting because this is the way a rogue nation could use only one or two nuclear weapons to impact dramatically a large society like the United States.

I will close on Russia and Iran by pointing out that today we see the fulfilment of the sale of the S–300 anti-air warfare system, highly prized by the Iranians. I think we, unfortunately, will see nothing but further cooperation between Russia and Iran in a variety of spheres.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, I obviously am glad you are on our side, and I hope your voice is carried far and wide.

If I could shift gears, Dr. Farkas and Dr. Hill, I will point this to both of you, related to how increasing our assistance to European allies will affect Russia's behavior in Syria. You know, there are a lot of folks at this point that have thought, "Well, with Assad being in power there is no real chance of us dealing with anything of consequence there."

But will Putin double down or will he begin to find his resources growing thin? What impact can we still have there, and especially with Russia's obvious support for the Syrian regime?

Dr. HILL. Yes, just quickly on this, because it links into Admiral Stavridis' response to you about Iran. Russia has not intervened in Syria just because of us. Russia sees the order in the Middle East as completely broken down now, the order established since Suez in 1956, and it wants to make sure that it has some say there because it is a whole set of interests, including relationships with Iran, with Egypt, with Israel, and many of the other players that we also have close relationship with.

It also has a lot of tensions with countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and now, of course, with Turkey, as a result of the incident back in last November.

So Russia actually has a very tall order on its hands here with the intervention. It actually needs the United States to help it get out of what could potentially be a quagmire on the military side into some kind of negotiation.

Its starting point is obviously to keep Assad in place in some semblance of the Syrian state, which is what it is pushing us towards right now. But Russia seeks a balance of power in the Middle East that will protect its interests, as well.

So we do actually still have some leverage there as long as we can remember that it is not all about us in the case of Syria.

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank all of you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Moulton.

Mr. MOULTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for your wisdom and your service.

Under the leadership of the chairman I was able to visit Ukraine and Eastern Europe a few months ago and—last year—and I was struck by the enthusiasm that the Eastern European countries shared at having us participate in drills. We had tank drills going on; we were very enthusiastically positioning aircraft; the military talked excitedly about extending our plans to counter a Russian invasion further east with our new NATO allies.

And to be perfectly honest, I was shocked at how little we were doing to counter the Russian hybrid warfare threat. And it reminded me of what it must have been like to see France releasing excited press releases about their reinforcement to the Maginot Line when Germany is building tanks.

And so when you look at the ERI and where we are putting our resources, because we obviously, as we all know, live in a resource-constrained environment, I just find it hard to believe that we are making smart strategic decisions when we are supporting all these tank drills at the necessary expense of expansions in our cyber warfare, and other hybrid warfare, and special operations, and other things like that.

So I was wondering if you could comment on that a bit and speak specifically not just to the need to address hybrid warfare, but at the right balance we need to strike with our resources.

Dr. FARKAS. If I could just quickly on this, I think part of what is important to bear in mind is that the base budget also addresses the hybrid threat. So the special operations community—and I give General Votel a lot of credit because he turned around very quickly and came up with a plan to address Russia.

And I actually suggest that the committee invite him—well, now his successor—to brief you on their plans to address the Russia threat, because they understood very quickly what was going on in the aftermath of Crimea and, I would say, within the Department responded very—relatively rapidly, for the Department. So there is money in their base budget, and in the U.S. European Command they have turned around and they are already doing a lot of training. So they have been doing training in other countries, not just in Ukraine.

In Ukraine, as you noted, they are just starting.

Mr. MOULTON. Right.

Dr. FARKAS. But they actually have a jump ahead. They have already been working in the Baltics and Georgia and other places.

So I think the base budget has some money there.

It is not necessarily a question of money, because what the special operations forces do in terms of building that resiliency internally doesn't cost as much, frankly, as the importance exercises that ERI funds for us to demonstrate to the Russians that we will be ready, that we will respond as a unified alliance if they take military action towards us.

So I think it is hard to compare the dollars because you just need more dollars to do the conventional stuff, whereas the unconventional stuff generally doesn't cost as much.

Mr. MOULTON. Right. But if Russia is beating us on the unconventional side then does it really matter whether we are training three tank battalions or five? Is that really an effective deterrent?

Dr. Hill, perhaps you could comment on that.

Dr. HILL. It is really about the way that we approach this issue. I mean, one of the reasons that we see that Russia has been beating us in this regard is because they have had a very strong sense of purpose and focus.

We have made a lot of mistakes in kind of miscalculating Russia's intent, and that is kind of something that has now come to bite us, frankly, since the war in Georgia. We saw that as a one-off. We were taken by surprise by Crimea.

We didn't foresee what they were going to do in Syria, not because we didn't see them moving material and equipment in Syria; it is because we weren't able to anticipate what they might be doing.

As we have heard, however, that our sensors are up now in NATO and elsewhere. And I think what we have to do overall is posture ourselves in terms of analysis, as well. It is not just an issue of intelligence and collecting intelligence; it is how we think about this issue. So that is going to be a key element.

And I have to say that DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency] has been gutted over the last several years, in terms of its work on Russia, because people have been redeployed from what would seem is not a priority area——

Mr. MOULTON. Right.

Dr. HILL [continuing]. Onto other areas—the war on terrorism and elsewhere, which of course have been important. So we have to basically put resources behind our analysis again.

Mr. MOULTON. So quickly, Dr. Hill and Dr. Farkas, would you agree with Admiral Stavridis' admonishment that we should reexamine the pivot to Asia and to the Pacific?

Dr. HILL. We definitely need a more holistic approach. When Putin gets up every day he thinks about the huge Russian landmass.

He is not the head of a second-rate regional power; he is the head of a multiregional power. And we have to look at Russia in that context and our own global posture, as the admiral said.

Mr. MOULTON. And, Dr. Farkas, would you agree with that?

Dr. FARKAS. I would just say that we need to bear in mind now that Russia is the immediate threat. And so that probably does have some implications for the pivot.

Mr. MOULTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Admiral, I just gotta—what is your answer to Mr. Moulton's question about this conventional versus hybrid? There are some people who believe that ERI will make our allies feel better but it is not going to have any effect at all on Putin.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. I lean toward solutions that are cyber, special forces, unmanned vehicles. I think what is in the cusp between the two is a battlefield capability that is anti-armor, anti-tank.

That kind of lethal, distributed force I think has a role to play that kind of falls in between the two categories. But I think a battalion, armor, heavy tanks I think is unlikely to be the solution there.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Stefanik.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, to the witnesses, for your thoughtful testimony.

You testified earlier that despite the severe economic challenges that Russia faces, they have increased their defense spending by 25 percent in the last 2 years. Meanwhile, the U.S. has had continued discussions about defense sequestration, which unfortunately includes significant reductions in Army end strength.

I want to look forward. As we are approaching a transition of administrations, what policy changes in our defense strategy do you think are needed to adequately counter Russia's recent changes in its national security strategy? I am particularly interested in Army end strength, in cyber, and also—you noted this before—reassessing the so-called pivot to Asia.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. I will start off. I am sure my colleagues have something to add.

You mentioned a couple of things. I am a supporter of the recent Army future commission that has just come out, headed by my former colleague and very good friend, General Carter Ham. I think that is spot on and lays out the numbers, I think, appropriately. In very round numbers, I think an Army that is about a million is what is needed between Active, Reserve, and Guard.

In terms of cyber, I think it is time to add significant capability and, in fact, to examine the question of whether or not the nation needs a cyber force. We have an Army, a Navy, an Air Force, a Coast Guard, a Marine Corps, et cetera. I think it is high time to think about a cyber force—small, a few thousand, but to grow.

The analog would be the Air Force of 100 years ago, which didn't exist. But we gradually came to understand we needed one. I think that is a conversation that we need to be having now.

I do think we will continue to see an emphasis on maritime and air activity globally.

And in terms of the pivot, I want to make sure we are all on the same sheet of music here in that the world is big and global and complicated; there is no simple answer of, gee, we should pivot to Asia or not. We have global responsibilities.

But what we have seen of late in Europe and in the Levant and the near Middle East causes me to think we ought to be reexamining a huge shift of forces to the Pacific.

Thanks.

Ms. STEFANIK. Dr. Farkas.

Dr. FARKAS. Well, I have gotten to where I am today generally by agreeing with Admiral Stavridis, so I agree with everything that he said.

And the only other thing I would point out in addition to my earlier comment about the base budget funding also a lot of these activities, the Deputy Secretary of Defense has this third offset and there is a slice of money that he is requesting also in this budget—in this upcoming—in this new budget request, which addresses critical capabilities that we need to develop so that we can stay ahead of our competitors, Russia and China specifically.

And I would mention in that context that they are looking at—and I probably can't get into it too much more, but at cyber capabilities, cyber teams, and things like that. So there are other elements of the budget that do address the unconventional threat, as well.

Ms. STEFANIK. Dr. Hill.

Dr. HILL. I think what we have to bear in mind, based on all the things that we have been talking about today, that whatever we do, we have to make sure that we have flexibility and adaptability in any of the mechanisms. Part of our problem is we tend to fixate on big budgets and big issues of doctrine, and often it makes it very difficult, then, for us to change course as circumstances change.

I mean, this is the problem of being fixated on something like the pivot to Asia or, frankly, on, you know, thinking solely about the war on terrorism, or thinking of things in terms of old challenges.

Russia may be the current and present threat, and Russia has actually never really changed its posture toward the United States. Instead of dealing with many of the other threats that also face Russia, frankly, the United States is not—let's be frank about it—Russia's main threat over the longer term.

All the transnational threats that we are worried about Russia is, too. So we have to actually move in a direction in which we change that calculus for Russia also, so that they change their minds about thinking of us as a threat. That requires some pretty astute diplomacy, including by the Pentagon, not just by the State Department and our other interactions.

And we have to make sure that we don't get ourselves fixated on just the nature of the threat as it is. So we need as many flexible mechanisms as possible, and we need to really think to ourselves about how we adapt, not pivot one way or the other.

So we have to be very careful that whatever we do, as I think Admiral Stavridis and Dr. Farkas are saying, not to then fixate on Russia, the Middle East, and the Levant as well, so to have a holistic approach and figure out how everything will fit together.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you.

My time is about to expire. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Takai.

Mr. TAKAI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Farkas, you have stated publicly that your support for defensive legal assistance in the Ukraine was not supported within the Department of Defense. How should the committee assess the Department's request to increase resources to deter Russia? Can you

discuss the divergent views with the Department and the administration on U.S. policy towards Russia?

Dr. FARKAS. Thank you, Congressman, for your question.

I think, as I mentioned in my written testimony and in my oral statement, that the countries around Russia's periphery, they have requested lethal defensive equipment, specifically anti-tank weapons, the Javelin system. And thus far, the administration has not seen the need to provide this equipment to those countries, but I believe that it would be an important potential deterrent to Russia. And again, because it is defensive in nature I don't believe that it would cause some kind of escalation dynamic that would be uncontrollable and lead to the United States getting drawn into the conflict in Ukraine.

So I do believe strongly that we should make that system available to those countries.

As far as the discussion about the Russia threat, I think you are hearing a chorus of voices, starting with, as I mentioned earlier, Secretary Carter, talking about the Russia threat, as well as Deputy Secretary Work, who has really rolled up his sleeves and has been actively pushing items in the budget for a while now to address the Russia threat.

So I think you are hearing one strong voice coming out of the Department of the Defense and the administration writ large, but it is not the voice that matters. And in fact, sometimes if you talk too loudly you can—your strategy can backfire. It is more important what we do.

And that is why I talked about across the board we don't need to get into a confrontational dynamic with Russia. And indeed, there are places where we need to talk to Russia. And I don't want to veer too far off your question topic, but on this strategic and some of the more dangerous elements of our relationship we actually have to reengage in the discussion.

Mr. TAKAI. Okay. So, Dr. Farkas again, what lessons has the conflict in Ukraine taught us about our own shortfalls, and how would you—how would providing Ukraine with defensive legal assistance—you mentioned the Javelin—change the playing field on the ground in eastern Ukraine?

Dr. FARKAS. Well I think, Congressman, we covered a lot of the ways that we have learned. You know, we were quite shocked, first of all on the diplomatic front, that the Russian government took the fact that the Ukraine was interested in joining the European Union as such an assault on their foreign policy and that they reacted the way that they did, that they took the opportunity of—well, of the failed arrangement, where the Yanukovych, the president—the former president of Ukraine fled, and then—and they took that opportunity to go in and seize Crimea.

I think the thing that hasn't been mentioned, or maybe not mentioned sufficiently, is intelligence. And again, I think I want to elaborate a little bit on what Dr. Hill said.

I found it shocking in the administration—I mean, it wasn't shocking but it was disappointing. We have actually a lot of very good intelligence on Russia, but we do not have sufficient analysts; we do not have sufficient resources to get that information proc-

essed and get it out to the policymakers fast enough. And so I really believe that we need more analysts on the case.

The other thing that we found was the lack of ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance]. I mean, this is—obviously this committee is dealing with that issue all the time in many different contexts, but we need more ISR for the U.S. European Command.

Every interagency meeting we were in when we talked about what can we do, there was always this discussion of, "Well, what is going on?" And, you know, the satellite capability is one thing, but we really need to have the eyes on all the time. And so that is an area where I do believe we need to make sure that we have sufficient resources.

And, of course, we could provide those resources to the Ukrainians, as well.

Mr. TAKAI. Okay.

Dr. Hill, is it fair to suggest that President Putin expects that the West will turn a blind eye to Russian aggression and continue to cooperate with Russia? And what do our allies and partners in the region need from the United States?

Dr. HILL. I think that President Putin certainly did think that there was a strong possibility that we might turn a blind eye. This was one of his lessons that he took away from Georgia. He took the lack of a robust response to this as a sign that we weren't really serious.

All of the questions that we are talking about today from our own perspective are questions that are being asked in Moscow about their own perspective, in terms of analysis and intelligence and their posture, all against—and against deterring us.

Putin has been seeking to exploit as many fissures as possible between hers and our allies, and this is one area where I have something of a slight disagreement with Dr. Farkas about we have to be very careful when we are discussing support for Ukraine and elsewhere about keeping unity with our European allies. This is really a very key element about changing those expectations that we will get back to business as usual with Russia.

Mr. TAKAI. Okay.

My time is up, Mr. Chair. Thank you. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Gibson.

Mr. GIBSON. Well, thanks, Mr. Chairman, and also the ranking member, for holding this important hearing.

I am encouraged by the testimony today. It matches a lot of the analysis that myself and others have been doing here very recently.

In fact, we are going to be introducing a bill this week that is surrounding the land forces and the need to stop the drawdown.

Admiral, thank you for your comments as far as ensuring that we keep the land forces strong.

Our bill will essentially stop this drawdown, keep the land forces about 1,000,035 for the Army in the total Army, and I think that is really important when you compare it to what the current plan is right now. The administration's intent is to go to 450,000 in the Active Army, 335,000 in the Army National Guard, and then under 200,000 in the Army Reserve, for a total of 977,000.

Admiral, in your comments—and actually, to all the panelists—in your comments earlier I think you are making a strong case for deterrence and, in addition, mention about the armored brigade and the combat aviation brigade. In Europe I think that the current situation warrants that.

But starting with you, Admiral, I would like you to comment on, first of all, if you have any general comments about our efforts. It is bipartisan. We are in double figures now. Sergeant Major Walls, I appreciate his support, and we have the support of chairman, which is very important.

But I am interested to hear your comment even beyond homeland defense and deterrence, the criticality from your experience of the ability to strategically maneuver. And here I am talking about the joint global response force that we hope will send a message, once we fully restore it, in terms of helping us with course of diplomacy, and then how that CONOP [concept of operation] then develops into early-on forces, campaign forces, if necessary command and control, sustainment, consolidation of gains, and effective transition, which we have struggled with over the last 15 years, and how important keeping the land forces strong is to that particular CONOP.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Happy to comment on that. And, you know, I wouldn't be doing my job as a retired admiral if I didn't say the words "Marine Corps" at this point. And I know you——

Mr. GIBSON. Absolutely. And that is in our bill, and——

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Absolutely. And I think I was happy to see their force levels remain strong in this budget that will be submitted to the committee and the Hill.

I think the two need to fit together. And General Ham and I have had a lot of conversations about this, and this is where the ability to use the Marine Corps in and around that construct of the really heavy Army piece I think is critical to your bill. And that would be the piece of advice I would give is that it ought to be very holistic—it sounds like it is—in terms of integrating Marine efforts alongside the maritime and the air that have to go with it.

Mr. GIBSON. Appreciate that. In fact, just for clarification, the United States Marine Corps and Marine Corps Reserve are both contained inside this bill to stop the drawdown.

Fully agree. In fact, my experience being an infantry commander, spent a lot of time with Marines, particularly in northern Iraq as we were on a flank with each other at Nineveh and Anbar Province.

So, and then for the other panelists for comments on this?

Dr. FARKAS. Just very quickly if I could, and then I will turn it over to Dr. Hill, the—on the Marine Corps it is an excellent point that the admiral makes. The Department of Defense has relied heavily on the Black Sea Rotational Force in that area, the periphery area, and the NATO Balkan countries to provide important readiness training and also preparation for the Georgian forces to deploy with us to Afghanistan where, as you know, they are the number two troop contributor. So I do think the Marine Corps is an important component.

And as I mentioned in my written statement, aside from mentioning the aviation brigade, I also think that we really need to

keep an eye on readiness and end strength so that we don't end up having a hollow force because we are stretching the Army too thin.

Dr. HILL. Just one very small point, which picks up on the truncated response to Congressman Takai, as well. It is very important, as Dr. Farkas has said, to keep our allies in mind here, and to also make sure that whatever we are doing is also complemented by our military interactions with them, as well, because part of the deterrent effect will be us working in lockstep, as we have in the past, with our NATO allies and other partners.

And all of this interoperability, maneuverability of the forces overall is extremely important, as I think Admiral Stavridis has been making clear, as well.

Mr. GIBSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

Some have attributed the increase in hybrid warfare across the globe to the inability of the West, specifically the U.S. and Europe, to find a way to integrate Russia and other rising powers, the BRIC nations, for instance—Brazil, India, and China, and Russia—the inability to find a way of integrating those rising powers into the international order. I am thinking—well, with that in mind, the extent to which countries like Russia are using grey zone campaigns to grab more influence and shift the terms of regional orders is not really surprising.

Do you have any suggestions as to how we can provide a more shared sense of ownership and a greater stake in the international order or system so that rising powers will be inclined to shape international politics without resorting to grey zone aggression?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. I think that is a very interesting question, and I think its premise is roughly right, which is to say that part of why there is an increase in grey zone activity or hybrid warfare, or here I would really, Congressman, use the term "asymmetric warfare," is partly—of exclusion from normal mechanisms. It is also, however, attributable to technology.

In other words, tools are available in cyber, in social networks, in information, that allow smaller, less-advantaged groups to engage in these kind of activities. So it is a combination of the two things.

It is interesting you mention the BRICs because I think these are extraordinarily different cases. Brazil is a mega-power which I do not think feels excluded from the international order but suffers from a great deal of internal challenges economically. With Brazil I think the prescription is to engage them fully using economic leverage to pull them into the global system.

India I think represents our best potential partner going forward in this century. I think a U.S.-Indian relationship is one that will be critically important, and here we have to listen, pay more attention, have more exercises, more engagement with our Indian colleagues.

I think we are actually managing the rise of China reasonably well. And you see China engaging in relatively responsible ways in the international order.

It is really Russia that is the outlier here.

And I do want to pick up on your point, which is to say that all the things we have talked about today, which are confrontational with Russia, must include a component of collaboration, of dialogue. We can't afford to stumble backward into a Cold War.

We should cooperate where we can. We should confront where we must. And I think if we use that combination of deterrence, hard power, and soft power tools, that is our best bet at precluding a future of truly open conflict with Russia.

It is a very good question. Thank you.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

Dr. Farkas.

Dr. FARKAS. Thank you for the excellent question, actually.

I mean, I think one answer is, of course, to be more inclusive, perhaps, in the institutional context, so I am thinking of U.N. Security Council, et cetera. These are items that have been up for discussion for a long time, looking at the composition of that council.

But I think otherwise, as the admiral said, it is really Russia that is the problem, and the type of means that they are using in order to assert themselves. So it is not that we oppose Russia having a special role in its periphery or in Europe writ large, or that we think Russia must become a member of every club that we are in rather than counterbalance us politically. It is the means that they are using that is problematic for us.

And so how to get them to not use those means is really the subject of my testimony, whereby what I think we need to do is demonstrate to them that those means won't work. And that is sort of the shortest answer I can give you.

Mr. JOHNSON. All right.

And, Dr. Hill, I wish I could hear from you on that point. But let me ask you this: What sort of relationship do you believe Putin is looking for with the West?

Dr. HILL. Actually, Putin is looking for the relationship with the West that you outlined in really what was an excellent question. He wants to be one of the chairmen of the board. I mean, he wants to be in the same kind of arrangement that Russia thinks that it has on the U.N. Security Council, which is, you know, having basically a say in the global agenda and a right to veto things that it doesn't like.

And the focal point right now has been in Europe and the European security order, but also now in the Middle East, where Russia sees the order breaking down. What we have to be able to do is kind of articulate a broader vision for Russia of seeing that the methods that they are using in Europe and the Middle East will actually be counterproductive for Russia in a much more global perspective.

Russia has key interests in the Asia-Pacific. We have already mentioned the Arctic. And Russia is actually vulnerable in both of those theaters, and it is also vulnerable, frankly, in Central Asia, which is another area of its traditional interest.

So we have to articulate a sense that if Russia wants to be on the board with the rest of us then it has to play by rules that we all generally share, including, frankly, China. We have to engage Russia in different theaters and to show that there is actually an

alternative way of getting of our attention and of being there present when we are discussing new rules of the game.

So this is a real challenge. It is a diplomatic challenge, but I think it also requires a showing from the military perspective that we are talking about today that we mean business and that we will not accept those methods.

And it is also important because the rest of the BRICs are watching. China, India, you know, all the other rising powers are trying to see how we handle this relationship with Russia. So we should think about this crisis as a test not just for Russia, but for how we want to set the tone for future engagements internationally.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Gabbard.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Farkas, you talked about Russia being the most immediate threat to the United States, and I think you and the admiral both touched on the question of whether or not we should be focusing resources on the Asia-Pacific or shifting that back towards the East.

And I am wondering if you can comment on the seeming conflict between the statements that you are making versus those we hear from others within defense, especially with regard to North Korea being our number one threat, especially given the provocations that we have seen from them with the missile tests, the nuclear tests, their increased capabilities, the effect that that is having on the region, South Korea looking to increase its missile defense capability with our help, the changing and growing dynamic in the Asia-Pacific region, and the list goes on and on.

Obviously, being from Hawaii, my home State feels very directly the threat every time North Korea launches a missile test, conducts a nuclear test, recognizing that within their current capabilities we fall significantly within range. So I wonder if you can argue that point on why you are right and those who say that North Korea is our number one threat are wrong.

Dr. FARKAS. Thank you very much for the question. I worked, as I mentioned earlier, for the Senate Armed Services Committee and worked very hard and aggressively for Senator Levin, at the time, on North Korea. And in fact, in 2008 I went to North Korea, went to Yongbyon.

So I agree with you 100 percent, the threat from North Korea is serious and we need to be addressing it. But I don't think that it is at the same level as the threat that we are seeing from Russia right now in terms of the potential dangers we face with Russia.

The capabilities that the Russian Federation has far surpass the capabilities of the North Korean regime, and I think that we have the means to respond, you know—we have the means to respond to both, but I think that to respond to Russia requires a bigger undertaking.

So I hate, though, to rank——

Ms. GABBARD. Yes.

Dr. FARKAS [continuing]. Threats. You know, they are both threats and—but I emphasize the Russian one because it is here

and now, it is in our face. We really need to understand it because there is a real danger that if we don't stand firm against Putin he will take the opportunity to use military force again, as he did in Georgia, as he did in Ukraine, even before that in Moldova, as he did in Syria.

He will be tempted to use it again, and of course, the worst case for us would be if he used it against a NATO ally or, of course, God forbid, against us, although I don't—in both cases I don't think it is probable, but it is still, for the Department of Defense, obviously prudent to worry about the worst-case scenario.

Ms. GABBARD. Yes.

Dr. FARKAS. So I think that is the worst-case scenario, but clearly I don't mean to say that the North Korean threat is not important, and we need to focus on that, as well. We can't pick among—you know, we can't pick, and I think the ranking thing is a little bit overdone——

Ms. GABBARD. Yes.

Dr. FARKAS [continuing]. Because, of course, terrorism is the immediate and urgent.

Ms. GABBARD. No, I agree.

Dr. FARKAS. And for the Europeans, terrorism and immigration. So——

Ms. GABBARD. Yes.

Dr. FARKAS [continuing]. The admiral perhaps would——

Admiral STAVRIDIS. I would only add to that, I have written extensively and have said that North Korea is the most dangerous country in the world, and I think they are in a tactical sense. I think Russia, because of its throw weight and its strategic play, represents a significant strategic challenge for the United States, if that helps how we articulate it.

But I would not in any way understate the risks on the Korean Peninsula in particular.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you.

Thank you both.

Dr. Hill, building a little bit off of that, and also something you said earlier about how the U.S. and Russia are, quote, "on a long-term collision course," in particular as it relates to Syria. I am just wondering if you can expand on that a little bit and why you believe that is the case.

Dr. HILL. In the case of Syria, Russia has very longstanding interests. This is a relationship that dates back to the Soviet era.

The relationship preceded Bashar al-Assad's; it was a relationship that Russia also established with his father. They are very interested in propping up the regime and also keeping the state of Syria together.

This is not a sideshow for Russia. It is actually a domestic foreign policy issue.

Russia has exactly the same concerns as all of the other neighboring states do and European states about the influence of extremism on its domestic politics. Russia has the largest indigenous Muslim population of any European country, and we do think of Russia as a European country; and Moscow has the largest Muslim population in its capital. This is an indigenous Russian population.

The Russian government have recently stated that they are following 2,800 foreign fighters from Russia in Syria. There are foreign fighters from the neighboring countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

So Russia has, you know, all the questions that we have about the future of Syria, and they believe that keeping the Syrian state together with someone like Assad, a strongman at the head, is the best solution for them.

We have been on a collision course because obviously we have not had the same starting point. We have the same end point of wanting to keep some semblance of the Syrian state together, but we did not want to begin with Assad.

So Russia has, as we have been discussing today, decided to use their military as a blunt instrument in foreign policy to force us to start from the same point as Russia has in determining the future of Syria.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you. I agree with your assessment of that and remain concerned about this head-to-head collision path that we are on between the U.S. and Russia, specifically because of that difference and those diametrically opposed objectives in Syria.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. So do you think it is possible for the U.S. and Russia to reach a, quote-unquote, "acceptable agreement" on Syria?

Dr. HILL. I actually do. I think it will take a lot of work, however, because it is—as we have been saying all the way along, this is not a two-way game. It is not between the U.S. and Russia by any stretch of the imagination.

Russia has differences not just with the United States but with Turkey, which it very clearly expressed now on very risky and very dangerous terms. Russia has a difference of opinion with Saudi Arabia, with Qatar and other Gulf States.

And frankly, Russia also has a difference of opinion with Iran. We have to be very careful here to make sure that we are clear that Russia has not jumped into the sectarian divide in the Middle East by any stretch.

Russia's Muslim population are predominantly Sunni, but it also does have a Shia population inside of its own territory and on its periphery. And Russia doesn't want to be part of a religious war; it wants to actually stop these.

Russia wants to see some kind of new balance of power in the Middle East. It doesn't want to see Iran actually get the upper hand over other Middle East players, either.

So in many respects, Russia and the United States are on very much the same page. We want stability; we want a new order in the Middle East. We want to actually protect some of the same regional players.

Russia is just as concerned about the fate of Israel as we are now. It is a very different relationship with Israel than it was during the Cold War for Russia. It is a very important bilateral relationship.

So there are a lot of things that we can talk about here. We just have to get away from the idea that it is just a collision between the two of us over actually a country that we don't have any intrinsic interest in owning.

Russia does not want to own Syria as a protectorate. It wants to eventually get out of Syria, maintaining its base and other interests there, but to see an order emerging around Syria and the Middle East.

So I do think that we can do this. We just have to be clear-headed and do our homework.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. May I add a comment, which is I agree we can get to a diplomatic solution, but it will require us accepting Assad for some period of time, which will be difficult to swallow, given his level of atrocity against his own people. I take some comfort from the fact that in the Balkans we had to cut a similar deal. Milosevic stayed in power, and in the end Milosevic died in a jail cell in The Hague.

But we will get there diplomatically. It will require us to take a hard swallow on Assad.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Mr. Garamendi.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to the three witnesses, thank you for your very balanced assessment of the situation, particularly your desire to share with us what appears to be, in my view, trying to understand Russia, to look at the situation from the Russian perspective so that we have a better ability to decide what we want to do. I very much appreciate that.

There is a whole series of issues. In fact, I would like to pull you aside and share 10 gallons of coffee with you over the next 10 days.

A couple of issues: One, it seems to me the ambiguity that NATO presently has with regard to little green men in the Baltics is troublesome. So if you could speak to that, should we not be clear as to what precisely would be a NATO incursion?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Thank you, sir.

We talked a bit earlier about Article 5 and then the definition of an attack, which is Article 6, and the way warfare has changed and morphed. I think because of what has occurred in Ukraine, NATO is much more on alert, will work much harder to identify through intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance activities.

And I think, frankly, I wouldn't want to speak for the Baltic States, but I am assured they would take a very aggressive posture, and I think they would immediately use lethal force. And I think that would be a salutary effect. So I think NATO has moved in its direction.

I agree we should do this over 10 gallons of vodka.

[Laughter.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, that would terminate conversation for sure.

Any further comments about should we be ambiguous about this or should we be clear as to what a threat really is?

Dr. FARKAS. Yes. The admiral just whispered, "Clear." And I think we, yes, clear. I mean, that is what the—our Baltic allies would like, and that is what we owe to—owe them.

We are, as I mentioned earlier, doing a lot of work with our special operations forces. We need to do more, though, to help law enforcement in the Baltic countries, and also the Balkan countries, Romania and Bulgaria.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I am going to say thank you for that, but it seems to me we need clarity as to what is an incursion, what is an attack. Any ambiguity will lead to, I think, a very difficult situation.

So I got two other things.

You talked about cyber warfare. What agency in the United States government is responsible for a cyberattack on the United States?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. This is a confused situation in our government. I will give you kind of two answers to it and throw in a third.

The Department of Homeland Security is broadly responsible. The National Security Agency, which is part of the Department of Defense, provides the tool sets and, I would argue, will be where this response will occur. And the Department of Defense has a specific set of responsibilities to protect military capabilities, notably our strategic nuclear systems.

So that is just the beginning, and we would probably need 20 gallons of vodka to really get through the cyber structure in the government, but this is an area that I think this committee could profitably spend a great deal of time examining.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I asked the question for a specific reason, which is everybody is responsible and, therefore, nobody has——

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Nobody is accountable as a result.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, we need to deal with this. We are talking about a foreign cyberattack.

I noticed that the budget has a whole lot more money for cybersecurity, which I think they mean how to protect our databases. I think there is something far, far beyond that that we need to address, and that is why would anybody that wants to do harm to the United States spend all their on building a nuclear weapon for an EMP attack when you can simply hire a bunch of teenagers and take down the entire grid system, the electrical grid system in the United States?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. You are right to emphasize the grid. Of all the things that are vulnerable—financial, health, military—the segment that is most vulnerable is our grid system.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thirty-six seconds: Why are we engaging in a new nuclear arms race that will cost us $1 trillion?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. The short answer is, in the 24 seconds, because Russia is expanding their modernization capability with an enormous focus on nuclear weapons and they have a leader who frequently mentions that we should not forget that they have nuclear weapons. I think it is, unfortunately, a necessity for us.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Agreement from the——

Dr. FARKAS. I would agree with that. I mean, we have to deter Russia.

Mr. GARAMENDI. And we need to do that by spending $1 trillion on an entire new system?

Dr. FARKAS. Well, I am not going to argue about the dollar amount, but I do think we need to keep our force modernized so that we can continue to deter Russia. As the admiral said, unfortunately that is the reality.

Dr. HILL. We also need to find a way of pushing back to arms control discussions, particularly as we reach next year and the 30th anniversary of the Gorbachev-Reagan summitry. Perhaps we need, you know, to channel the cooler heads of that period, as well, and——

Mr. GARAMENDI. So there may be another path available to us?

Dr. HILL. There may be. Correct.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thought so. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I am going to prevail upon you all for just a couple more questions hopefully.

Dr. Hill, I gotta ask you about this: A line of argument is that Putin wanted to cooperate with us until the Balkans happened and we bombed, you know, Syria, and we didn't listen to him on a couple other things and then he went off in a completely different direction. Is that true, or has he always been who we see today?

Dr. HILL. I think it is the problem of understanding other people's threat perceptions and the environment in which they operate. I think it was always a very hard sell to persuade someone like Putin and the people around him that, you know, we actually meant well towards Russia.

This is somebody who was trained in a Cold War environment to be deeply suspicious about the United States. I don't think he is actually in any way intrinsically anti-American, but he is always deeply suspicious of threats to Russia.

And the way that he has interpreted and read world events, based on information that is being passed to him and also his own worldview and perspective, is that beginning, frankly, in 2003, with the U.S. invasion of Iraq—it isn't really to do necessarily with the Balkans—that we, the United States, have been in the business of regime change. And based on what he and others saw in the Balkans in the 1990s, that Admiral Stavridis is referring to, that we might eventually get around to him and to Russia.

Back in 1999—and I can say this with good authority because I was actually in Russia during the NATO bombing—across the whole spectrum of the Russian political system people believed that if NATO could bomb Belgrade that meant NATO could bomb Moscow. We might think that is preposterous; that was their threat perception.

And since then, Putin and the people around him have talked themselves into seeing that everything that we do fits into that frame. And it has really been—the pivotal point was the protests in Russia in 2011, 2012, where we laughed this off when Putin claimed that the State Department had been behind the protest, that the protestors were being paid for by U.S. nongovernmental organizations, but he firmly believed it.

Again, he believes that we have continued with active measures since the Cold War, that we have never stepped back.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Dr. HILL. And so the problem has been how to persuade someone who thinks like that that in actual fact this is not the case. So that is the challenge that we have had.

The CHAIRMAN. And he has some sort of—or those people around him have some sort of self-interest to perpetuate this myth. Of

course, one of the things that we have not talked about today is the use of assassination, which has also been in the news here recently.

I would like to broaden out for a just a second and ask each of you to address this.

And actually it is based on an article, Dr. Farkas, you had that Putin is trying to rewrite the international rules because he sees the international order since the end of World War II as being developed by us for us. And so part of what is going on here is not just promoting strategic interests in this or that place, but a fundamental rewrite of the international order so it can be more to their advantage.

Now, we hear the same thing on the Chinese, by the way. But if you would start and just address this briefly, if you could, this attempt not just to, again, protect their interests, but to change the whole ballgame.

Dr. FARKAS. Thank you very much, Congressman—or Mr. Chairman.

Unfortunately, Putin is trying to rewrite the rules, and that is precisely the problem that we have. The means that he uses run counter to the rules.

So in his belief system he believes that minority rights allow him to go in and seize territory, so to take territory in Georgia—you know, he is occupying 20 percent of Georgia right now; to go into Ukraine and take Crimea, and then do the military operations that he is conducting right now in the East.

So in his view, he has the right to intervene in order to protect those Russians, and Dr. Hill mentioned that as well, the ethnic Russians.

He also would like to prevent us from intervening in order to support peaceful transitions or not-so-peaceful transitions from autocratic, despotic rulers to democratic systems. So the Arab Springs, for example—the Arab Spring—I mean, you can take Tunisia, you can name any of them, but he was absolutely opposed to any kind of outside intervention and he perceived them as being on the—in the same model as the Iraq intervention, where we intervened and we got rid of Saddam Hussein.

His view is he wants to intervene in order to protect the dictator, in order to keep the Saddam Hussein or the Bashar al-Assad in power. So it is a different understanding——

The CHAIRMAN. Because that is a way of protecting himself.

Dr. FARKAS. Right. And it is a different understanding of the balance between sovereignty and human and minority rights that we have had since the Second World War.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Can I just add to that, Mr. Chairman, one thing we haven't touched on greatly is domestic political concerns for Mr. Putin. And I don't need to tell a committee of politicians that that matters pretty deeply how you are perceived, where your power base comes from.

And so much of his appeal to the Russian people is tied into this idea of himself as a strong man. If you look at Russian history, they roll the cosmic dice: One time they get Ivan the Terrible, the next they get Peter the Great; one time they get Stalin, then they get a Gorbachev.

The dice have landed definitively on Putin. He will continue to play that strongman card. He has got to win. He has got to be seen as winning and he has to be seen as capable of pulling these levers of power. It is fundamental to who he is domestically as well as all of the geopolitical points we have talked about today.

The CHAIRMAN. And, Dr. Hill, in your comments also—one of you all mentioned earlier, I noted, "deflect public attention." Part of the reason he is more aggressive is to distract people. Again, an argument that is made about China, as well.

So if you could address this change the international order question?

Dr. HILL. Yes. Changing the international order is very much on the agenda for Putin and the team around him in Russia. I mean, I think, you know, as Dr. Farkas has been saying, there has been a very strong consensus in Russia—and I would say it actually has been since 1999 and the NATO bombing of Belgrade—that the order is not working for them and that there needs to be some way of wresting a veto out of the international system, particularly in Europe, for Russia to block things that it does not like.

In terms of the internal political situation in Russia now, Putin is actually in a more precarious position than he might have seemed from the perspective of his ratings. We are talking about 88 to 90 percent in public opinion.

Some of this is real. It is based on Putin's long record as a Russian leader since 2000. I mean, he really has had a lot of signature achievements, especially in the economy and in terms of stability in the political system.

The cosmic dice actually seem to have rolled in a—into a good place, as far as most Russians are concerned, and we should be really well aware of that.

The problem is—and it is one that perhaps other politicians would envy—that there is no political alternative. And that is risky because the only alternative to Putin is Putin-in-the-past. All of his ratings depend on how he performed prior to that opinion poll being taken.

And in the past Putin was actually seen to be lacking at different points. There would be a crisis and his ratings would fall.

If you look at the ratings of the political system of the Russian government and of the performance of the Russian economy and the state outside of Putin's performance, you see a very different picture. Russians are not happy with the way that their country is being governed.

So Putin is the ultimate populist figure right now. He has to at all times appear to be in charge and in control. That is something I guess we are all familiar with in many other settings.

So this is Putin's challenge: He has to show that if the economy is failing that someone else is to blame. It is the United States; it is Western sanctions. And he is putting all of the spotlight onto military victories in Syria and in Ukraine and onto being the big international player.

The period when we are all bemoaning a lack of international leadership, Putin is trying to demonstrate it. It is not in the way that we would like, but it is now very important for his own validation, legitimacy, and ratings at home in Russia.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Let me ask one other thing: Admiral Stavridis, at the end of your written statement you say, "We prevail by outthinking our opponents."

Give us a grade. How are we doing at outthinking our opponents?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. In the case of Russia, B-minus at best.

What I was trying to get at there, Mr. Chairman, was not only the topics we have talked about today, but also using our ability to learn and understand the history, the culture, the language. We need to be capable of reaching across a divide like this, and that requires real intellectual capital—scholars, students, analysts. We have touched on that a bit.

We have volumes of data about Russia but we are not very good at understanding and analyzing it. And oh, by the way, if you really want to understand Russia go easy on the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] reporting; go back to reading Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy, and Lermontov, and Pushkin, and the great Russian writers. They tell us a lot about the situation we face today. That is what I was getting at in that——

Mr. GARAMENDI. Can we bring on the coffee and keep going?

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Charles Hill wrote a book about understanding opponents based on its literature, which is what—but let me just take subset of the question to our responsibilities. Part of what we are trying to do is promote some reforms to help the Department of Defense be more agile in a very complex world. A lot of that is the thinking that goes on within the military.

If you were to put a couple items on our agenda to consider when it comes to improving the intellectual agility of our military, what would you have on that list?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Not speaking specifically to Russia, which I addressed a moment ago—yes, very broadly I would say we need to continue to put an emphasis on graduate education. And I say that with a certain amount of self-servingness, as the dean of a graduate school of international relations, but continuing to put emphasis, as Ike Skelton, who is over your left shoulder right there, built into this committee a sense of how can we educate our future leaders in the military. And that ought to happen at every level.

If you want a practical proposal I would say take a look at the National Defense University and ask the question of why is that not a capstone to which all the service war colleges report and build a structure that definitively puts education on the agenda where Chairman Skelton believed it should be? I think it still is taking some hits if not below the waterline then pretty close to it.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. That is helpful.

And Mr. Garamendi is right. We are going to need more coffee to finish these.

Mr. Aguilar.

Mr. AGUILAR. I don't want to stand in the way of the chairman and the panel having lunch either, so I will be very cautious here.

I did want to pick up on the theme of aggression.

And, Dr. Hill, you just talked about Syria, as well.

At this moment Russian-backed Syrian forces are working to encircle the rebel-held parts of Aleppo. Assad is on the cusp of a major victory and thousands of civilians are fleeing.

There is a serious concern that those in the city will stay and be cut off from food and other types of foreign aid. Because of the Russian aggression and interference, we are on the cusp of another siege in a heavily populated Syrian city.

With Russia playing such a large role in this offensive, what would you recommend be done to counter the crisis, if anything? And do you think—what do you think are the implications of this offensive on our efforts to counter Russia in the future?

Dr. HILL. I think part of our problem is that it is not just a military issue here; it is—there is a certain psychological element to this.

Putin and the people around him have been engaged in similar military operations not just in their periphery, in Georgia and Ukraine, but within their own territory in Chechnya. And if you look back to two wars in Chechnya, beginning in 1994 and the Russian Federation, you can see a very clear focus on basically pursuing a goal no matter what to preserve the state.

And Putin, I think, looks at Assad and sees Assad as being in the same situation that he, Vladimir Putin, was when he came into office in 2000, when the war on Chechnya had erupted again. And Putin was determined, no matter what the consequences were in terms of civilian casualties or the destruction of Chechnya's capital city, Grozny, to prevail.

So Putin is pushing his forces behind Assad to make sure that Assad prevails. So I am afraid the civilian casualties are not really factoring into this in an operational way.

So we have to figure out how to engage with Russia not just in military ways but to change that psychology, to show that in some respects this will have consequences for Russia as well, in the way that it is viewed in the Middle East and in the way that it is viewed more globally. Because Russia now believes that the refugee problem and the civilian crisis are somebody else's problem: They are Turkey's problem; they are Lebanon's problem; they are Jordan's problem; and they are now Europe's problem.

And that is not something that they are going to step away from. If they are exposing that problem, that is not theirs to deal with.

We have to show that civilian casualties actually matter and that the broader psychology of this war will be very detrimental to Russia in the longer term, that they need to rethink the way that they are pursuing this.

Dr. FARKAS. If I could just add to that, as I said in my opening comments, I think, unfortunately, we have to do more militarily to support the Syrian opposition and work with our allies. And Secretary Carter is trying to do that right now, get some more, you know, metal into the game, if you will.

As Dr. Hill mentioned, it is not just a military problem. And ultimately what we need against Russia is leverage.

So if we can get it on the battlefield, great. If we can't get it only through military means, which I think is probably the case, we should look at other measures.

So can we come up with a package of sanctions that we can implement with our Middle Eastern allies and partners against Russia? Because right now we have sanctions where we are sanctioning Russia in the Ukraine context, but perhaps there is something we can do to signal to Russia that what they are doing in Syria, their—the way they are waging the war, the disingenuousness, you know, saying they are going after ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] when they are not, the type of bombs they are using, the civilian casualties, et cetera—that that is unacceptable.

But we need to be looking for leverage, ultimately.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. I would only add that we have a couple unpalatable futures ahead if we are going to solve this diplomatically. One I have mentioned already, which is I think we are going to have to accept Assad for some period of time.

The second one, which we haven't touched on, is a partition of Syria. I think that increasingly that may be part of the solution.

That sounds quite unthinkable, but if you look back on the Balkans 20 years ago you saw Yugoslavia break apart—really 30 years ago—erupt in war 20 years ago, and ultimately those problems were solved by partitioning, by accepting Milosevic for a period of time, and by working with the United States, with NATO, and with Russia collectively. I think there are some lessons there from history looking at the Balkans that may have to be applied.

No one is going to walk away a complete winner from this process.

Mr. AGUILAR. Thank you.

I will yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. McSally.

Ms. MCSALLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks for your testimony.

Admiral Stavridis, it is good to see you again. I have a couple questions for you.

The first is as we talk about, you know, budget-saving and downsizing all the time here, oftentimes a target is headquarter staff. There is discussion of bloated headquarters.

And having worked at a COCOM [combatant command], I see some value in the COCOM staff. And so I just wanted to ask for you to, you know, just share your perspectives on how important it is to have the right size of a staff at the COCOM so that they are not an obvious target, because if we, you know, if we get too small in those areas then there are capabilities that are just not going to happen.

And if you also have a comment on EUCOM [U.S. European Command] separate from AFRICOM [U.S. Africa Command], because I think that is something that gets talked about, you know, having 92 countries in your responsibility versus having that peeled off where you can really focus on the challenges you have all mentioned today. That is just my first question to you.

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Sure. First of all, great to see you, as well, and thanks for your service on our EUCOM staff.

I think that the process of rightsizing our staffs is something that has to go on consistently. There has been an enormous growth in staffs, broadly speaking, over the last 20 years, including the Department of Defense, the NSC [National Security Council] staff,

and, of course, right here on Capitol Hill. It strikes me as we are in a world of rapid-moving information and technology we ought to be able to do some level of consolidation.

Having said that, I believe in the COCOM model, the combatant command model. I think it makes a great deal of sense and it allows us to have the kind of regional specialization that I think is crucial.

Whether or not EUCOM and AFRICOM ought to be remerged, I think at the moment that probably is not a good idea. It is worth examining that.

More profitably, perhaps looking at NORTHCOM [U.S. Northern Command] and SOUTHCOM [U.S. Southern Command], there might be some synergies there that could be addressed. You could also look at TRANSCOM [U.S. Transportation Command] and DLA [Defense Logistics Agency].

So I think there are areas where mergers would make some sense. I wouldn't at this minute advocate one between EUCOM and AFRICOM.

I do think we need to put downward pressure on staffs, but we need to do it in an informed way.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. Thank you.

I know you talked about in your testimony about moving Army forces out of Europe and how that has not been ideal, but we have also moved some air forces out of Europe, as well. You know, 81st Fighter Squadron closed down. First time we didn't have A–10s in Europe in decades. But now we are deploying them back to Europe, which I am guessing is probably more costly for us to do that.

So could you comment about the importance of our air assets there for deterrence and training, as well?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. Sure. And you mentioned the A–10. I think, like a lot of people currently in uniform, I also am an A–10 fan. I think they are a simple, workable answer, and I think in a European context could be extremely important if we really went to the dark end of the spectrum. Certainly they could be useful in many other areas.

I also am a big fan of special forces aircraft in Europe. We are moving, as you know, some of the V–22s in.

At the end of the day, the good news about airplanes is you can fly them and they can move and they can come in. But there is a real power in having them present that allows you to deter and, again, at the dark end of the spectrum, conduct significant operations.

So as I mentioned on land forces, I would also echo we ought to be looking again at cuts in the European theater on the air side.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. Thanks.

And last quick question, again in the budget pressures we are all often focused on making sure we have hard military power, but there is the soft engagement, which I believe is also valuable. And I was a professor at the Marshall Center, as you may know, and so I just, again, as the former SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander Europe], can you just comment on the value of the Marshall Center and how that is important for the European theater and dealing with potential Russian aggression?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. I can. Marshall Center Garmisch is an iconic example of what we talked about a moment ago that Chairman Skelton built into the system, which is education as a tool of national power that goes alongside it. It is where we create soft power; it is how we learn how to use hard power.

Not only the Marshall Center, but really all of these regional centers, which are a pittance in the big scheme of things, I think are extraordinarily valuable to the Department and to the nation.

Ms. MCSALLY. Do you have any ideas—there have been discussions of consolidation of some of those centers. Do you have any perspective on that——

Admiral STAVRIDIS. I think the budget savings are so miniscule that that probably does not make a great deal of sense.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. Thanks.

And I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thanks so much.

The CHAIRMAN. This has been very helpful, and I am very grateful to each of you for sharing your expertise with us today in some very complex, difficult issues that the country faces.

So the hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:11 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

FEBRUARY 10, 2016

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

FEBRUARY 10, 2016

BROOKINGS

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UNDERSTANDING AND DETERRING RUSSIA:
U.S. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

SCENESETTER

DR. FIONA HILL, SENIOR FELLOW,
DIRECTOR, CENTER ON THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2016

The Russian Security Challenge

Russia today poses a greater foreign policy and security challenge to the United States and its Western allies than at any time since the mid-1980s, when it was incarnated as the Soviet Union and the U.S. and the USSR were engaged in a nuclear arms race that seemed set to bring the world to the point of a nuclear conflagration. Russia's military seizure and annexation of Crimea, and its war in Ukraine's Donbas region, have sparked Europe's worst security crisis since the 1990s Yugoslav wars. Russia's military intervention in Syria has upended Western calculations in the Middle East. Russian actions now endanger Euro-Atlantic aspirations for stability across a region stretching from Belarus to the Eastern Mediterranean. Russia's challenge has occurred during a period when the U.S.-led post-Cold War security order has weakened and fragmented, along with the norms that have sustained Western institutions like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). The legitimacy and credibility of these institutions has been undermined in spite of the fact that the enlargement of NATO and the EU, along with the creation of the framework for an institutionalized partnership with Russia through the Charter of Paris, the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the NATO-Russia Founding Act, were all seen to have led to a new era of more cooperative U.S.-Russian relations and the stabilization of Eastern Europe in the 1990s and 2000s.

In an August 2014 speech in Yalta, in Crimea, only a few months after annexing the peninsula, Russian President Vladimir Putin openly rejected the U.S. and Western vision of the post-Cold War order in Europe. He essentially proposed jettisoning it to return to an earlier frame for managing relations that emerged 70 years ago, in the closing phases of the Second World War, during the Potsdam and Yalta conferences—where the big allied powers of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union decided the fate of Europe and agreed to rearrange borders over the heads of the defeated powers and smaller countries. Putin made a pitch for the United States and Russia to come together again, in a "new Yalta," to thrash out adjustments to the current order that would recognize Russia's special status in regions of Europe and Eurasia that once constituted part of the Russian and Soviet empires. Here, Moscow would have a veto over any development that impinged on Russia's sovereignty and interests. In many respects, this would be the same arrangement that Russia has at the United Nations (UN) through its permanent membership of the

UN Security Council. Russia would have the acknowledged right to block steps by other lesser powers that it did not like, such as Georgia's and Ukraine's efforts to associate with NATO and the EU. Russia's decision to go to war with Georgia in August 2008, to seize Crimea in March 2014, and to embark on a covert war in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region have all been forceful assertions of this demand for a veto.

The Role of Vladimir Putin

In looking at Russia and Russia's actions since the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of war in the Donbas region, external observers have spent a great deal of time looking at President Putin and trying to understand his motivations and worldview. There is good reason to do so. Although there is a collective leadership around Putin, and there are people in that collective with different conceptions of what Russian policy at home and abroad should be, Russia's leadership system has been hyper-personalized since Putin's return to the presidency in 2012. Between 2008-2012, during Putin's political tandem with Dmitry Medvedev, when Putin was prime minister and Medvedev was president, the system was much more pluralized. Since the two switched places, the decision-making circle in Moscow has been pared down. With wars on two fronts in Ukraine and Syria, Putin has transformed his current presidency into a wartime presidency.

A centralized military and political command center—the *Stavka*, the high command in Russian—has been created in Moscow. All information on critical security and political issues is fed in to a small group of people around Putin, and key decisions seem to be taken within that group. Although we have some idea of *who* is in the central group, we should assume that the membership of this central group is fluid and may change composition, shrinking and expanding, depending on the issue at hand. The *Stavka* comprises the "hard men" of Russian politics—people like Sergey Ivanov, the Presidential Chief of Staff, and Nikolai Patrushev, the head of the Security Council; and also to varying degrees Sergey Shoigu, the Minister of Defense, Gennady Gerasimov, the Military Chief of Staff, Alexander Bortnikov, head of the Federal Security Service (FSB), and Mikhail Fradkov the head of the foreign intelligence agency, the SVR. From the evidence available in the Russian press, group members seem to be there because of their individual relationships with Vladimir Putin, not just because they represent a specific institution. This makes penetrating the membrane of deliberations inside the *Stavka* exceedingly difficult, even for supposed Russian insiders. We also do not really know *what* happens within the group. How is information passed to Putin? Who deliberates on what with him? How does Putin decide on a course of action?

From the outside, Putin appears as a "unipolar leader." There are no significant checks and balances on Putin's presidential power. As Russian president, he has no larger institutional arrangements or political party beneath or behind him like Soviet-era leaders did with the politburo and the Communist Party. Putin has availed himself of the centrality of the Russian presidency in the Russian constitution to concentrate power around himself. The presidency and the constitution are essentially fused together, with each guaranteeing the other. Other state institutions, from the cabinet of ministers to the Russian Duma (parliament), have been systematically downgraded. The Duma has become little more than a rubber stamp for presidential proposals.

Power—meaning the ability to exert traction inside the system, or to transmit ideas and lobby for benefits or changes in course—is essentially informal in Russia. Broader social connections to Putin and his inner circle create degrees of power. Everyone in the inner circle is part of a tight

group from the same general age cohort, whose relationships with President Putin (and among themselves) extend back decades in St. Petersburg, where Putin grew up, studied, first joined the KGB, and became deputy mayor; in Moscow, where Putin moved in 1996 and began his ascent toward the presidency; and in Dresden, in East Germany, where he was posted by the KGB in the 1980s. The informal networks that intersect with the inner circle make power in Russia very complex and difficult to manage as well as to navigate.

The Russian people appear to have very little direct power or traction in the system given the fact that the Russian Duma and political parties have limited roles. And yet the people do have considerable traction collectively. As in other countries, economic interests—like workers from huge manufacturing companies (especially in the defense sector), railway workers, miners—and those with important skills and functions that the state relies upon—like the intelligence operatives in the security services, or the members of the uniformed military—can bring some weight to the bargaining table. The aggregate opinion of these groups, and the population at large, as expressed in polls and through elections, is the essential element in affirming the legitimacy of the current Russia political system. Putin's popularity—his record as a leader and the public's ratings of his political performance over time—are critical to keep power in balance.

Everything in contemporary Russian politics depends on the maintenance of Putin's charismatic authority. This means that Putin's ability to continue to juggle competing interests, and his own fitness to rule, his health and mental capacities, are key. If things go badly wrong, if too many domestic crises crowd the agenda that Putin cannot solve, if outside events (like plummeting oil prices, or international sanctions, or the outbreak of war) throw up unexpected obstacles and constraints or change the system's operating contexts, if Putin is seen by the population at large to be ineffective or weak, or if he is literally incapacitated in some way, then his ratings will fall. If the Russian people lose their faith in Putin as president then the whole political system risks becoming destabilized.

As a result, the group around Putin in the Kremlin is fixated on messaging the population and branding and rebranding President Putin. So far, they have succeeded in keeping Putin's ratings up (a couple of percentage points short of 90% in the most recent polls) because of the siege mentality that has progressively taken hold of both the elite and the population in Russia. Russian public opinion surveys show a broad-based conviction among Russians that the United States and the West are "out to get them." The prominence of the demand for national security in the context of the Ukraine crisis and the war in Syria has given Putin a clear, but temporary, advantage. It has deflected public attention away from concrete demands for higher living standards that were creeping up in public opinion polls in 2010-2012, as well as for more abstract demands of political rights and freedoms that were a feature of the large political protests in the same period. Although the Russian economy and the state budget have taken a beating since 2013 as a result of low global energy prices and a strong degree of fiscal mismanagement, Putin and his team have been able to blame all of Russia's financial woes on the United States and Western sanctions. Russians, for now, are rallying around their man and their country, and tightening their belts. The key question, of course, is for how long?

Putin and the Kremlin have to turn the temporary advantage into something more permanent if they are to keep the population unified and mobilized behind Putin's presidency. Every major defense and security decision, and every one of Putin's public appearances and pronouncements

(at home and abroad), is filtered through this requirement. Homeland defense and the current political system's defense—are one and the same. Putin's presidential term extends until 2018. Under the present constitution he could serve until 2024. In Moscow as well as outside Russia, everyone is wondering how likely it is that Putin can last that long, what changes he might undertake to stay in power, and what kind of Russia we can expect in these next eight or nine years, and beyond, if the economy continues to decline.

The Power of Personalized Politics

In contemplating these questions, we first need to recognize that with or without Putin, Russia will continue to pose a significant security challenge to the United States and its Western allies. "Waiting Putin out" is not a long-term strategy for dealing with Russia. Even if Putin were to "disappear" tomorrow, he is most likely to be replaced by someone from his inner circle. We should assume that a succession plan is in place in Moscow to maintain the coherence of the current system; and, if this is the case, then Putin's successor is more likely to resemble him in leadership style than any of his immediate predecessors since the mid-1980s—Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin, and also Dmitry Medvedev. Nonetheless, it is extremely important to understand how Putin operates, personally, as a leader. Irrespective of the larger trends in Russia, while he is still in office we need to figure out how to engage with Putin as Russia's president.

At all turns, Putin has shown he is willing to pay a high economic and diplomatic price as he seeks to tip regional balances of power in Europe and the Middle East in Moscow's favor. This has included upsetting the "reset" of relations with the United States, the loss of "modernization partnerships" with Germany and the European Union, the rupture of relations with NATO, and now a major rift with Turkey over Syria. As my colleague Clifford Gaddy and I outline in the second edition of our book, *Mr. Putin Operative in the Kremlin* (Brookings Press, 2015), we in the United States have consistently underestimated Vladimir Putin and his capacity for action. The Coda for this book, summarizing the key findings, is attached in the appendices to this written statement.

Putin has several important features that distinguish him from other world leaders. First, he is a professional secret service operative. One of his main skills is to dissemble—to lie. He is a master at this—at, as he puts it, "working with people" and "working with information." This is not some character flaw. It is part of a skill set that Putin has consciously developed over the course of his career in the intelligence services and which he now uses in his political career. The operative must conceal his true identity and intentions at all times. As the Russian head of state, this gives Putin a great tactical advantage—if no-one knows what he wants or how he is going to react, he can stay one step ahead of his political opponents (domestic and foreign).

Since he came into office, Putin's Kremlin team has worked very hard to increase this tactical advantage by making the Russian President—and thus the Russian decision-making system—as inscrutable and unpredictable as possible. Access to Putin is strictly limited. The Kremlin maintains an almost complete unity of silence and message. When messages seem to be transmitted without approval they are accompanied by equal measure of dis/mis-information. No-one outside the inner circle is supposed to know what is going on. Everyone spends a huge amount of time trying to figure out what Putin thinks. They are thus deflected away from trying to figure out what *they* should actually do in response to his various moves or to get ahead of the situation.

Another aspect of "working with people," is that Putin personalizes all presidential interactions with other Russian officials on domestic issues and with other world leaders on foreign policy—as he would have done as a KGB case officer recruiting, handling, and dealing with an intelligence target or asset. As president, Putin is closely involved in outreach to world leaders—delivering messages directly, cajoling, and coercing where necessary, to push Russia's positions on the full range of issues. Putin's approach is individually tailored to each leader, and combined with other official Russian contacts targeted at top-level elites alongside more routine lower-level exchanges.

Further adapting the approach of the operative, Putin tends to make agreements on the state-to-state level painfully personal. He prefers to make significant foreign policy deals on the basis of leader-to-leader commitments in one-on-one meetings. When there is a diplomatic rupture—as Russia's prior disagreements with Georgia under President Mikheil Saakashvili, and currently with Turkey under President Recip Tayyip Erdogan underscore—Putin publicly refers to individual leaders having broken their behind-the-scenes undertakings. He frequently stresses in commentaries that the problem in the bilateral relationship is tied to the individual leader, and not to the ongoing relations between the states, and peoples—even when punitive sanctions are imposed or military action is taken (as in the case of Georgia in 2008). The punishment is meted out against the leader or leaders, reminding them of their broken commitments, and airing their dirty laundry in public—just as the operative would remind his targets of the consequences of crossing their handler.

An additional distinguishing feature is that Putin is a master at adapting and changing his tactics. We often mistake his tactical shifts as inconsistency or "lack of strategy." But Putin is strategic in the sense that he follows a few firm principles—and is very clear about them in his speeches and public pronouncements. He subordinates everything else to his main goals. He tries to remain flexible and to keep his options open so that he can adapt to changing circumstances. He approaches everything on a case-by-case, almost game-by-game basis. In each instance, he prepares stratagems in advance, and then plays his cards carefully to try to win on a particular issue and move forward onto the next stage of achieving his goals.

With or Without Putin

Vladimir Putin is somewhat unique in his style of leadership and in the methods he uses, but he is by no means an anomaly in his views within Russia—nor is the current personalized nature of Russian governance something out of the ordinary. A small inner circle around a strong leader is a central element in Russian political culture dating back to the tsarist era and extending through the Soviet period. Contrary to what might be the popular belief, given all the focus on Putin, the Russian president is not personally charismatic. His popularity and appeal stem from his style of leadership—his perceived inscrutableness, his calm under stress and duress, his ability to adapt, and his promotion of Russia and its people first.

Putin is not selling anything to Russians, nor is he especially interested in proselytizing abroad. Putin is not a Marxist-Leninist or Bolshevik or Communist like some of his predecessors. His primary focus is on the home front, even if his actions frequently take him far beyond Russia's borders. Like many other contemporary leaders internationally, he is a populist. Ideology, or what passes as ideology in Russia today, is closely tied to Putin's image. Putin and his team have worked hard to manipulate and maintain a set of ideas that bolster and legitimize his policy positions.

Ideology is branding—branding both Putin and Russia. "Putinism" is not especially coherent and is not intended to be. Putin and his political team have retro-fitted a wide range of broadly accepted "Russian ideas" to establish and maintain legitimacy for his presidency. Indeed, Putin's predecessor, Boris Yeltsin tried to do the same thing in the mid-1990s—even setting up a task force to come up with some new ideas during the period of acute ideological collapse after the passing of Communism.

Putin presents himself as defending and securing what Russians care about. Since the war in Ukraine, as Russians, fed a steady stream of Kremlin messaging through the state media, have seen their national security threatened by the crisis, Putin has taken charge of forging a common (albeit artificial) sense of Russianness. In some respects this is a conscious reprise of Soviet leader Josef Stalin's role during the "Great Fatherland War" or World War II, and Putin often refers to Stalin and this period in his speeches. Over time, Putin's presidential image has shifted from an "action figure" fixing things and putting Russia back on its feet in the 2000s, to more of a "patriarch" with the anniversaries of the Second World War, to a president at war, defending his people on multiple fronts with the intervention in Syria. As the president at war, Putin has to ensure unity—no fissures, no divisions, no fragmentation, no schisms (Putin uses all these words constantly in his speeches) can be permitted in society that might facilitate an outside attack. In this regard, President Putin is a traditional conservative Russian politician. His domestic *and* foreign policy agendas are carefully crafted to reflect Russian mores and norms. All of the perspectives Putin presents in his speeches are ingrained in Russian elites and society. *Any successor to Putin will be—and will have to be—as staunch a defender of Russian interests as Putin is.*

There is a general consensus in Russia, deeply rooted in the political elite since the collapse of the USSR, that the current world order, and especially the European political and security order, disadvantage Russia. Putin's August 2014 speech in Yalta, openly rejecting the U.S.-led order, was merely another iteration of points he and others have made dating back over more than a decade. From Moscow's perspective, while European states (including large states like Germany) consider that European integration projects and collective institutions like NATO make them stronger, the same projects and institutions weaken Russia. As the European order is currently configured, if Russia wants to associate with the existing European and transatlantic institutions, then Moscow is expected to give up some of Russia's sovereignty. As Russian president, Putin seeks to enhance the country's sovereignty, not reduce it. He wants to ensure that Moscow has maximum freedom of maneuver, politically, economically, and militarily. This is why Putin and other Russian officials constantly say that Russia should not be part of any formal alliances, as alliances usually come with obligations and constraints.

Russians core beliefs, views, and principles influence Putin's decisions on foreign and defense policy. Russians see their state as one of only a tiny number of "world civilizational powers" with a unique history, culture, and language, like China, and to some degree the United States. Because of its status as a world civilizational power, Russia, in the view of many in the Russian elite, has special privileged interests in Europe, and also internationally. With the other great civilizational world powers like China and the United States, Putin and Russia are prepared to negotiate where interests collide—but always on Russia's terms. With institutions like the EU, NATO, and with lesser powers, Moscow wants everyone to acknowledge that Russia has the right to block steps that it does not like. All of Putin's decisions are geared toward advancing Russians' and Russia's

preferred arrangement. We can be sure that this is also the case when we look at the wars in Ukraine and Syria.

For Putin, the inner circle, and many Russians, the idea that Russia should become "just another European state" or be viewed as a regional power is antithetical to their core beliefs about Russia's status and position in the world. Russians are not unique in this respect—elites in the United Kingdom/England, as the successor state to a formerly great empire, have similar qualms about their position in the European Union, even having become a full member of the EU decades ago. And there is a populist backlash against the EU and a strong resurgence in nationalist sentiment in many other European countries in the wake of the Eurozone economic crisis and in response to the unprecedented surge of refugees into Europe from Syria and other neighboring countries.

The preferred scenario for Russia in Europe, as Putin has repeatedly made clear, would be one without NATO and without any other strategic alliances that are embedded in the European Union's security concepts. Putin has repeatedly described NATO enlargement as driven by the United States and aimed at bring U.S. military bases and forces up to Russian borders to contain Russia. Although this narrative is flawed, much of the Russian elite accept it as ground truth—and many, including Putin, have done so since the NATO bombing of Belgrade in 1999, and especially since the expansion of NATO to Eastern Europe in 2004. Putin has thus consistently pushed for a renegotiation of European security structures to downgrade the conventional military and nuclear role of the United States and NATO, and give Russia military and security parity with European forces.

The war in Ukraine, and Russia's stepped up aviation and maritime military incursions into European air and sea space are all designed to intimidate the United States' European allies and to rupture the integrity of NATO and EU collective defense. These actions are also intended to signal that Russia wants to break *out* of the old system of security—which Putin depicts as encircling Russia—and literally break *in* to a new system that would accommodate Moscow's perspective. Russia prefers flexible and low cost (to Moscow) bilateral security arrangements, with individual countries or with small sets of countries, in key regions along its borders (like its pacts with Armenia, Belarus, Tajikistan, and others). Russia seeks to avoid treaties with mutual responsibilities, or situations where it has to contend and negotiate with a major political bloc of countries. Dealing with smaller sets of European states, broken away from NATO or the EU in various regional theaters like the Arctic, the Baltic, the Black Sea, and the Eastern Mediterranean, would be much easier for Russia to digest strategically, and would give Moscow the clear military advantage in any configuration of opposing forces.

The Long Path Toward a Collision in Syria

Given the Russian fixation with demanding and securing a new security arrangement in Europe, it seems a stretch to explain Putin's decision to intervene in Syria, especially against the backdrop of war in Ukraine, which appears much more important for Russian state interests. But both wars are linked with Russian threat perceptions and views of the United States; and both have their roots in Russia's 2008 war with Georgia. We have been on a collision course with Russia for a very long time, and have failed to acknowledge it until Putin forced us to do so in 2014 when Moscow annexed Crimea.

As Clifford Gaddy and I outline in *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*, since the 2003 U.S. intervention in Iraq, Putin and his security team have convinced themselves that the United States has been seeking pretexts to overthrow regimes inimical to Washington's interests. Russian intelligence services knew that Saddam Hussein was bluffing about having weapons of mass destruction to deter the United States, Iran, and any other potential enemies from contemplating military action against him. They made their views clear to American interlocutors before the U.S. invasion. President Putin and his team did not believe that "faulty intelligence" on the part of U.S. agencies drove the George W. Bush Administration's decision to get rid of Hussein. Instead, they saw a blatant determination on the part of the U.S. President and his team to complete the unfinished business of the first Gulf war. The so-called "color revolutions" in Georgia in 2003 and Ukraine in 2004, combined with the enlargement of NATO into Russia's immediate neighborhood in 2004, simply confirmed this view and darkened their perceptions of the United States even further. The Kremlin regarded these actions as encouraged—if not launched by the CIA and other Western intelligence services—rather than as spontaneous manifestations of popular discontent. Through the prism of his time in the KGB, Putin, in particular, considered U.S. democracy-promotion efforts in the 1990s and 2000s to be continuations of the CIA's so-called "active measures" from the Cold War.

After the "Rose Revolution" in Georgia, Moscow saw Washington's close embrace of Georgia and the new government of Mikheil Saakashvili, and discussions of Georgian membership in NATO, as policies aimed directly against Russia. In February 2007, at the Munich Security Conference, President Putin accused NATO of expanding at Russia's expense and moving its "frontline forces" to Russia's borders. Putin made almost the same remarks after the April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, where both Georgia and Ukraine were promised eventual entry into NATO even though they were not granted a formal Membership Action Plan (MAP). Putin emphasized that any indication of Georgian and Ukrainian membership in the NATO alliance was a red line for Russia, but his threats were repeatedly dismissed in Western capitals. Putin got the opportunity to enforce Moscow's line with a full-scale military invasion of Georgia, when Saakashvili launched his own military operation against Georgia's secessionist republic of South Ossetia.

The August 2008 war in Georgia failed as a clear warning to the United States and NATO of Russian intentions, in part because of the role Saakashvili had played in triggering it. But the war was a decisive turning point in Russia's relations with the West. It demonstrated that Putin was now likely to resort to military force in other circumstances when Moscow deemed that its position was not considered on an issue critical to Russian security. The war was also a significant turning point for the Russian military. Operational setbacks during the conflict were analyzed and assessed and used to guide the further modernization of the armed forces. In addition, Putin and his security team closely observed the reactions and political responses of the U.S., NATO, the EU, UN, and individual European countries during the war. They took the lack of U.S. and NATO military support for Georgia, and all the disagreements about how the conflict had unfolded and what the appropriate Western countermeasures should be, as clear indicators of fissures in the Western alliance that Moscow could exploit in similar future circumstances.

Over the next several years, Putin and Russian leaders repeatedly telegraphed their interpretation of world events as efforts by the United States to "push Russia into a corner," or to remove regimes that were generally friendly to Moscow but not to Washington's liking. When the revolts of the "Arab Spring" erupted in the Middle East and North Africa in 2011, Putin and the "hard men" of

the Russian security establishment were certain that the United States had deliberately set these uprisings in motion. Putin and his inner circle believed that the United States had deliberately created disorder in the Middle East, to bolster its own position and to detract from Washington's waning economic, diplomatic, and military power internationally.

Putin was personally angered by events in Libya and the death of President Muammar Qaddafi at the hands of rebels as Qaddafi tried to flee Tripoli after NATO's intervention in the civil war there. In Putin's view (again expressed openly in his public addresses and in interviews), the United States was now responsible for a long sequence of revolutions close to Russia's borders and in countries with close ties to Moscow. When street protests erupted in Russia itself in 2011-2012, after flawed elections to the Russian parliament and in response to Putin's decision to regain the presidency, Putin laid the blame for these too on Washington, DC. The Kremlin claimed that the United States was trying to stage a color revolution in Russia—the U.S. and its foreign policy had become a threat to the Putin regime for the foreseeable future.

This was the backdrop to Putin's clampdown on opposition political activity at home, and his intent to seize and then annex Crimea after political protests toppled the Ukrainian government in Kiev in 2013-2014. This view also shaped Putin's decision to launch a military operation to prop up the regime of Bashar Assad in Syria in 2015. In Russia's view, the Middle East order that the United States dominated after the 1956 Suez crisis was upended with the "Arab Spring." For Russia, the toppling of the incumbent authoritarian leaders, the strongmen, in Iraq, then Egypt, and then in Libya, and the resulting disorder in all these countries were a call to action. Russia had long-standing interests in the Middle East in general, and Syria in particular, dating back to the tsarist and Soviet eras. These interests, along with a series of political and security arrangements with individual leaders, were imperiled by the "Arab Spring." In Syria, the regime was directly dependent on Bashar Assad and his immediate associates. If Assad was brought down by the Syrian opposition, or was pushed out by the United States, there would be no responsible party to step in and maintain the coherence of the Syrian state. From Moscow's perspective, the collapse of Assad in Syria with no alternative strongman on the scene would create a political and military vacuum and more chaos. Assad would have to stay in place until someone could be identified to keep some semblance of the Syrian state together.

Russian Interests in Syria

From now on, Moscow wants to be an agenda setter and order creator in the Middle East. In the same way that Putin wants Russia to have a veto in Europe, he now seeks one for Russia in the Middle East, where the complete collapse of Syria, and the emergence of alternative regional orders imposed by any of the religiously-based extremist groups, would create disorder at home for Putin. Indeed, Syria is as much a domestic dilemma for Russia as a foreign policy problem. Russia has the largest, *indigenous* Muslim population of any European state. Islam is the older religion in Russian territory—establishing itself in Kazan among the Tatars of the Volga region shortly before Christianity took hold among the Slavic population in the 10th Century. Russia's Muslim groups have a very different heritage, history, and experience from those in the Middle East and the Gulf, although they are predominantly Sunni not Shi'a (neighboring Azerbaijan's Muslim population is traditionally Shi'a rather than Sunni, and Russia also has a sizeable Azeri population). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's strains of Islam have come under pressure from proselytizing Salafi and Wahhabi groups emanating from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, which Putin sees as a serious threat to Russia's cultural and religious integrity. When he ascended

to the Russian presidency in 2000, Putin and his team set out to harness or curb *all* religions at home, including Russian Orthodoxy, to avert ideological competition. To maintain control of Russian politics, Putin and the Kremlin cannot afford the rise of *any* group that fuses religion and politics in opposition to the Russian state and has outside allegiances.

The religious wars in the Middle East pose the same threat to Russia as the rest of Europe and the United States. Thousands of foreign fighters have flocked to Syria from Russia, as well as from neighboring Central Asia and the Caucasus, all attracted by the extreme messages of ISIS and other groups. The numbers are disputed, although the most recent announcement from the Russian government indicated that they were tracking 2,800 Russian citizens currently in Syria. Extremist groups have been active in Russia since the Chechen wars of the 1990s and 2000s. Putin has expended a great deal of political energy, and literal blood and treasure to pacify Chechnya since 2000—including through the creation and installation of another "indigenous" variant of Islam propagated by Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, who swears fealty to Putin personally. Putin has no desire to see any of the new crop of fighters return to radicalize and enflame the domestic situation any further. In this regard, Putin does not discriminate between one terrorist group and another. An extremist is an extremist in his view—especially if they seek to topple governments, overthrow the acknowledged head of the state, and seize territory. The actual nature or underlying theories of their persuasion is a mere nuance, a detail.

As the war in Syria unfolded over the last several years, Putin became increasingly convinced of the need to bolster Assad to stem the tide of state collapse in the Middle East. Putin and his security team have applied lessons from past operational failures (including Moscow's inability to intervene in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s), and have drawn experience from the intervention in Crimea and the covert war in Ukraine, which Putin has often explicitly referred to as a training exercise for the Russian military. As we see now, the Russian military has been engaged in pre-planning and pre-positioning forces, equipment, and materiel for a considerable period—including securing supplies for the Russian airbase in Latakia in addition to the naval facility in Tartus. Russia's goal is to consolidate the Assad regime's position on the ground to make sure that Assad stays in place until some better arrangement is devised through international negotiations, with Moscow in a lead position (as Putin has insisted from the start of the Syrian war).

Strategies for Dealing with Russia

Devising strategies for dealing with Russia in Syria, and more broadly, is by no means easy. Managing the U.S.-Russia relationship will require a good deal of attention inside and outside government, and close coordination with our allies. Putin's overriding goal is security for Russia and his system. We are talking today about deterring Russia, but Putin and his security team firmly believe they are deterring us—the United States and NATO—to protect themselves and Russian interests. Russia's military modernization and posture has been geared toward this end. I have attached in the appendices to this written statement two very thoughtful pieces by my Brookings colleagues, Clifford Gaddy and Michael O'Hanlon, and Steven Pifer, which look at various aspects of Russia military doctrine and strategy, including shifts in Russia's nuclear doctrine.

Putin assumes that the negotiation about Russia's place in the European order, the resolution of the dispute over the geopolitical future of Ukraine, and the current questions about Russia's role in the future of Syria and the Middle East, should all be hashed out directly with the United States.

Putin wants Washington to agree that the U.S. and its allies will first consider how Russia might be negatively affected before they make any decision on security or economic issues where Moscow has a stake or has asserted an interest. We do not accept this premise, but are unsure how to respond. Can Russia be part of our order or not? Is that what we should be working for? Should we, therefore, try to shape Russian behavior in some way so that it can become acceptable as a partner again? Or, should we recognize that Russia, Russia under Putin at least, is an implacable foe and work to constrain Moscow's ability to repeat what it has done in Ukraine and Syria or to take other similar actions? Can we shore up agreement in NATO, the EU, and in transatlantic relationships more broadly to create mechanisms to deal with Russia over the long-term that ensure we can respond to Russian actions and yet be ready to change course if necessary?

Ultimately, in pursuing Russia's goals, Putin is a pragmatist, and we should be too. In figuring out how to deter the United States and NATO, Russia does not have the military or economic resources for the 20th century mass-army, total mobilization approach to defending its interests. As Clifford Gaddy and I outlined in the Coda of our book (in the appendices), Putin has to combine conventional, nuclear, and non-conventional, non-military—so-called "hybrid" methods—to secure an advantage. Putin and his security team aim to intimidate us. They have to demonstrate that Russia has the capacity to act, and is willing to escalate on all fronts to deter the United States and NATO from considering taking *any* military action against Russia—in Ukraine, Syria, or elsewhere.

Nuclear weapons are the ultimate deterrent. Russia's unclassified national security strategy states that Russia will use nuclear weapons only in response to an attack with weapons of mass destruction on Russia or on a Russian ally, or in the event of an attack on Russia with conventional forces in which the existence of the Russian state is at stake. But Moscow has now put the nuclear option on the table for lesser circumstances, and Putin seeks to make us believe that he *will* use nuclear weapons if any of the current conflicts seem likely to draw in the United States or NATO against Russian forces. It is no good for Putin to just suggest that he *might* use nuclear weapons. This is the "escalate to de-escalate" contingency that so many observers are currently concerned about at the non-strategic level (See Steven Pifer's piece in *The National Interest* in the appendices). Putin is clearly drawing up a contingency for deploying nuclear weapons if he feels he needs to—but his goal is to push the United States and Europe away from Russia and out of its neighborhood, not to actually engage in a nuclear exchange. Nonetheless, we are now back in a similar frame to the nuclear war scare of the 1980s, which only ended with the Reagan and Gorbachev summitry that led to the conclusion of the 1987 INF Treaty.

This might suggest that past precedents for dealing with the Soviet Union during the Cold War and re-focusing on arms control will be the key to dealing with Russia today, along with beefing up the U.S. and NATO's military deterrent capability. We certainly need to engage with Moscow to make it clear that considering the limited use of a nuclear weapon is unacceptable under any scenario and could trigger the direst consequences; but Russia is not the Soviet Union of the Cold War with a politburo, the Communist Party, and central planning. Russia is also not the Russia of the 1990s and early 2000s with limited capacity for military action. It is now a very different kind of actor. Given all the factors at work in Russia and the international arena, including the informal nature of power and the role of personalized politics in Moscow, the security response to the Russian challenge will have to encompass the arc of a long game. Strategic patience must accompany the judicious balance of the elements of deterrence, defense, and constraint, along with clear

incentives, and direct engagement with Putin and his inner circle. We will have to do our homework if we are to succeed in identifying workable policy solutions. Engagement with Russia is not likely to be fruitful unless we are very clear on where the United States and its allies stand in terms of principles and values (while recognizing that there are some concessions Russia will never make). Washington will also have to engage in constant communication with its European allies to tackle sources of tension or misunderstanding head on. The United States will have to be willing to compromise on some positions to persuade, not force, its allies to go along with decisions they are not ready for. Moscow is looking for any fissures to exploit to play Washington off against its European and other allies, and its allies against themselves.

In line with this approach, at the Brookings Institution we are engaged in a series of research projects examining the core social, economic, and political stresses contributing to the breakdown of the European security order. We are reviewing the state of the post-Cold War European institutional architecture and its three primary pillars—NATO, the EU, and the OSCE—to determine whether these institutions can still serve to re-engage with Russia at this time of acute tension and conflict. We are also looking at other relationships outside Europe to determine how these might affect Russia's longer-term positions. In addition, we are analyzing the prospects for the Russian economy and for regime stability, including possible changes in the nature of the current regime ranging from reform and renewal to collapse. Forecasts of the Russian economy's performance and its political responses have been notoriously poor, particularly since the Global Financial Crisis of 2008-2009, just as assessments of Russia's capacity for military action have often missed the mark. Most analyses of Russia fail to account for the specific features of Russian behavioral and political responses to internal and external shocks, and the nature of Russian threat perceptions.

In this larger context, the stakes for rigorous, objective, and accurate analysis on all the economic, political, and military aspects of the Russian challenge and the contours of Russia's future are high. Preconceived or agenda-driven studies or policies (based either on wishful thinking about Russia's impending collapse or on exaggerations of its strength) are typically misguided and incorrect. Correctly predicting, for example, what policies Putin will pursue to cope with the current economic crisis—shaped by low oil and gas prices and the effects of Western sanctions—depends, for example, on understanding Russian priorities and preferences. The success criteria for Putin are very different from criteria in the United States and Europe. National security imperatives always have primacy over economic priorities in Russia. This means there is great potential for radical and unexpected transformations of the Russian economy and Russian politics.

As the developments of the last decade have demonstrated since the 2008 war in Georgia, both under- or overestimating Russia's and Putin's personal capabilities can lead to dangerous miscalculations and surprises. If we are not to be continually surprised, we will have to put more resources behind understanding what is happening inside Russia as well as analyzing the complex of Russia's interactions internationally. Russia's intervention in Syria is a stark reminder that Russia is a multi-regional power as much by intent as by geography. Russia's vast landmass and interests extend from Europe and Eurasia to the Middle East, Central and South Asia, to the Asia-Pacific and the Arctic. We will thus need a more holistic approach.

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Maurice Thorez Institute of Foreign Languages, Moscow, Russia
Ten-month intensive Russian language program. British Council, and Rotary Club Fellowships, 1987-1988.

Fiona Hill

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Center for the National Interest, Washington, DC
Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Cambridge, MA
Member, Task force on Russian and U.S. National Interests—April-October 2011

Council on Foreign Relations, New York, NY
Member, Task force on U.S.-Russian Relations—May 2005-March 2006

The Eurasia Foundation, Washington, DC
Advisor to the President—October 2000 to December 2005

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Director, Annual U.S.-Russian Investment Symposium on Financial and Direct Investment Opportunities in Russia—January 1997, 1998, & 1999

Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Cambridge, MA
Chair, Seminar Series on the Caucasus and the Caspian—March 1996 to October 1999

The Hague, The Netherlands
Consultant, The Hague Initiative on Resolution of Conflicts in Russia and the Former Soviet Union—March 1996 & May 1997

United Nations, New York, NY
Consultant, Office of the Special Envoy and Mission to Georgia and Abkhazia—September 1995

Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Cambridge, MA
Coordinator, Trilateral Study on Japanese-Russian-U.S. Relations—March to December 1992

ADVISORY BOARDS AND PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

Member, Board of Trustees, The Eurasia Foundation—2011-present
Member, Council on Foreign Relations—2003-present
President, University of St. Andrews American Foundation—2004-2010
Trustee, American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan—2005-2006
Trustee, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, London, England—2000-2006
Member, Central Eurasia Project Advisory Board, Open Society Institute, New York—2000-2006
Member, Committee on Conflict and Reconstruction in Multiethnic Societies (joint committee between U.S. and Russian Academies of Science), National Research Council, Washington, DC—2001-2006
Member, *Washington ProFile* (online Russian language news service) Board of Directors, Center for Defense Information, Washington DC—2001-2006
Member, *Demokratizatsiya*: Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization Editorial Board, Washington DC—1999-2006
Associate Editor, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, London—2001-2006
Member, Program on New Approaches to Russian Security (PONARS), Washington, DC—1997-2006
Reviewer, *International Security Journal*, Kennedy School of Government—1997-2006

Fiona Hill

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin (New & Expanded Paperback Second Edition) Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press 2015)
"How Vladimir Putin's Worldview Shapes Russian Foreign Policy," in Margot Light & David Cadier (eds.), *Russia's Foreign Policy: Ideas, Domestic Politics and External Relations* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, Palgrave Studies in International Relations, 2015)
"This is What Putin Really Wants," *The National Interest* (online), February 24, 2015
"The American Education of Vladimir Putin," Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy, *The Atlantic*, February 16, 2015
"Putin's Russia Goes Rogue," Fiona Hill and Steven Pifer, *Brookings Big Bets & Black Swans Memorandum*, January 23, 2014
"Putin Scores on Syria: How He Got the Upper Hand—And How He Will Use It," *Foreign Affairs* (online), September 6, 2013
"Putin's Pivot: Why Russia is Looking East," Fiona Hill and Bobo Lo, *Foreign Affairs* (online), July 31, 2013
"The Survivalist in the Kremlin," *Project Syndicate*, July 4, 2013
"The Real Reason Putin Supports Assad," *Foreign Affairs* (online), March 25, 2013
"Putin's Personality Disorder," Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy, *Foreign Policy*, February 15, 2013
"How the 1980s Explain Vladimir Putin," (Book excerpt) Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy, *The Atlantic*, February 14, 2013
"The End of Brand Putin?" (Book excerpt) Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy, *The Globalist*, February 14, 2013
Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin, Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy (Washington DC: Brookings Focus Book, 2013)
"Putin and the Uses of History," Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy, *The National Interest*, January 4, 2012
"How Russia and China See the Egyptian Revolution," *Foreign Policy* (online), February 15, 2011
"Moscow Discovers Soft Power," *Current History* (October 2006)
"Turkey and Russia: Axis of the Excluded?" Fiona Hill and Omer Taspinar, *Survival* (Spring 2006)
"Managing the Russian Dilemma," in *Friends Again? EU-US Relations After the Crisis* (Paris, France: EU Institute for Security Studies Study, Transatlantic Book 2006)
"Beyond Codependency: European Reliance on Russian Energy," *Brookings Center for U.S. and Europe: U.S.-Europe Analysis Series* (July 2005)
"A Spreading Danger: Time for a New Policy Toward Chechnya," Fiona Hill, Anatol Lieven, Thomas de Waal, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Brief*, #35 (March 2005)
"Governing Russia: Putin's Federal Dilemmas," *New Europe Review* (January 2005)
"Siberia: Russia's Economic Heartland and Daunting Dilemma," *Current History* (October 2004)
Energy Empire: Oil, Gas and Russia's Revival, (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, September 2004)
The Siberian Curse. How Communist Planners Left Russia Out in the Cold, Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy, (Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 2003)

February 2016

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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Witness name: Fiona Hill

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

(●) Individual

( ) Representative

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United States House of Representatives
Committee on Armed Services

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Clause 2(g) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and the Rules of the Committee require the disclosure of the following information. A copy of this form should be attached to your written testimony and will be made publicly available in electronic format, as required by House rules.

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2. **Your Name:** Dr. Fiona Hill

3. **Organization or organizations you are representing:**

   I am the Director of the Center on the United States and Europe and a Senior Fellow at The Brookings Institution. However, as noted below, I am presenting testimony representing my personal views. As an independent think tank, the Brookings Institution does not take institutional positions on any issue.

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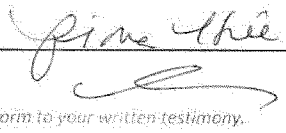
Signature: 

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Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee
on "Understanding and Deterring Russia: U.S. Policies and Strategies"

Statement of Evelyn N. Farkas, Ph.D.
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia/Ukraine/Eurasia
@EvelynNFarkas

February 10, 2016

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, Members of the Committee, Russia poses a geostrategic threat to the United States and our interests. Indeed, last week Secretary Carter ranked it first among the threats faced by our country.

It is unfortunate and almost absurd in the 21st century to have Russia and the United States opposed to one another on fundamentals and most foreign policy issues. But the reality is that the Russian government is pursuing policies that run counter to U.S. national security interests and values.

The Kremlin's objectives are clear: 1) Retain President Putin's position as the leader of the Russian Federation, preserving the autocratic political system and mafia-style crony economy that together comprise "Putinism"; 2) Restore Russia's status as a great power; 3) Rewrite the international rules and norms to prevent intervention in states to protect its citizens; 4) Maintain political control of Russia's geographical periphery; and if possible, 5) Break NATO, the European Union and transatlantic unity.

President Putin's drive to achieve these objectives has raised tension between Russia and the United States. To demonstrate Russia's great power, or "equal among equals" status, Russia has worked not simply to balance U.S. power, but to check it. Divergent policies regarding democracy and sovereignty have become a greater obstacle to cooperative bilateral relations as the Kremlin implements its agenda. The United States advocates for democracies where civil society checks the powers of the state, and supports the rights of citizens to turn out their despots and vote in new leaders. Putin is incensed by Arab springs and European color revolutions; his latest military operation in Syria aims to protect the dictator from the people he has gassed, barrel bombed and forced to flee en masse.

By the time Putin took office again as president in 2012, it was clear due to falling oil prices, and corruption that his earlier bargain with the Russian people – economic improvement in exchange for a free governing hand -- was no longer sustainable. The Kremlin adopted a nationalist, revisionist, anti-American foreign policy. Putin went beyond bemoaning the demise of the Soviet Union, and blaming the West for an epic

Russian humiliation to a public determination to rebuild the Russian sphere of influence. For good measure, he injected an element of a culture war into his policy by attacking the West for its moral turpitude (mainly based on our advancement of equal rights regardless of sexual orientation and identity). He worked actively to counter NATO and EU expansion, favoring competition over cooperation.

To achieve his objectives, Putin ramped up political and economic subversion and intimidation throughout Eurasia, funding anti-Western, pro-Russian and/or fringe NGOs and political parties in its periphery and in NATO countries. His government continued to exert economic pressure through its near monopoly of oil and gas supply and corrupt ties with elites worldwide. The Kremlin increased its use of lies and propaganda to influence ethnic Russian populations and the international community and to confuse policy debates. And Russia again invaded a neighboring country and occupied its territory. The Kremlin continues to use force in its periphery, and now in the Middle East, to hold a veto over sovereign state policies and gain leverage for diplomatic negotiations.

Underpinning Russia's aggressive foreign policy is a modernizing military. Since 2008, when the shortcomings of Russia's military became evident in the aftermath of the invasion of Georgia, the Kremlin embarked in earnest on a plan to reorganize and modernize the Russian armed forces. The modernization effort -- $700 billion over ten years – applies to all the services, but has focused on developing key conventional and asymmetric capabilities.

Meanwhile, military doctrine had evolved -- dangerously. Starting with the 2000 Military Doctrine Russia declared – in a bid to compensate for its conventional weakness relative to the United States and its allies – the right to first use of a nuclear weapon in response to a conventional attack that put the existence of the state at risk. In addition, the Russian armed forces developed a further means to attempt to deter the West using nuclear or asymmetric weapons – the concept of "escalating to de-escalate." The rationale is that by raising the price to the adversary – through a cyberattack or limited use of a nuclear weapon – Russia could force the enemy to capitulate.

We've seen what Russia can do even with its unfinished military modernization in advancement of the Kremlin's objectives. In response, we must use all elements of U.S. national power - diplomatic, economic, informational and military - to pressure Russia to reverse course.

If Russia wins its aims – Ukraine remains ungovernable, territories in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova remain occupied, and Assad remains in power – Putin's Kremlin will be emboldened to use military force again and again to achieve its foreign (and domestic) policy objectives. At stake is no less than the post-World War II world order, which simultaneously enshrined territorial state sovereignty and human and minority rights.

The United States must counter and resist Russia's actions though a combination of deterrence, strengthening our allies and partners and communicating the truth about the Kremlin's actions to the international community.

On the diplomatic front, in Europe we must now double down with the international community to press Russia to withdraw Russian forces from eastern Ukraine and Crimea and restore Ukraine's territorial integrity. This means implementing the Minsk agreements, which grant greater autonomy to the Russian-backed separatist regions of eastern Ukraine in exchange for Russian withdrawal. And, in the Middle East, we must gain economic and military leverage against Asad and Putin before we will succeed in negotiations.

International diplomacy must be coupled with and strengthened by positive and negative economic and military measures. I urge Congress to ratify and support the implementation of the trade agreements negotiated by President Obama – the Transpacific Partnership (TPP) and U.S.-E.U. Free Trade Agreement (TTIP). Congress should also authorize and appropriate greater economic, trade and investment assistance to Ukraine and the other vulnerable Russian neighbors who have opted to seek association with the European Union.

Simultaneously, we must maintain the broad U.S. and European sanctions on Russia related to Ukraine, while continuing narrow sanctions aimed at Russia's defense sector until Russian troops redeploy from Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova (all countries where they are present without the consent of the sovereign governments). We should also consider placing new sanctions on Russia for the humanitarian impact of their military operation in Syria and their failure to act in good faith in the war on ISIS and in the Syrian peace process. Such sanctions should be implemented in concert not only with the EU members already sanctioning Russia, but all European states, including Turkey, and our Middle Eastern allies.

The Defense Department should no longer do any business with Russia. This means that no rockets used by the U.S. defense industry should be Russian -- nor should Russian scientists be involved in our rocket launches. And Congress should authorize and appropriate for a new foreign military assistance fund to help allies and partners throughout Europe and Afghanistan transition from Russian to U.S. military equipment. Finally, we must work with Germany and other allies to meet Europe's natural gas demand in way that gives them leverage against Moscow, not the other way around, and benefits U.S companies and alternative suppliers.

On the military front, we must deter Russia from further military action. I enthusiastically applaud the President and Secretary Carter's decision to more than quadruple-down on the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) to establish a true deterrent to Russian military action against NATO. I urge the members of this committee to authorize the funds requested for ERI for exercises, training, positioning

equipment and rotating troops through the vulnerable Baltic and Balkan countries and Poland, and to work to ensure that future funding for ERI is included in the base budget. In addition, Congress should urge the Pentagon to provide an aviation brigade to support the armored brigade combat team. Finally, as the Army implements the plan for the new brigade Congress should keep an eye on readiness and, if necessary, be willing to reconsider current endstrength limits.

On the non-NATO periphery, Congress should continue to support beefing up security assistance to Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova to defend their territory. The military assistance provided from 2014 to the end of 2015 – over $260 million, well over $40 million and over $30 million in equipment and training to Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, respectively -- has much improved those militaries. Future assistance should expand the current territorial defense training for Ukraine to cover a greater portion of their armed forces and this model should be applied to Georgia and Moldova. We must push for faster NATO implementation of the assistance package Georgia received at the NATO summit last year. Our European partners should work with us on training in territorial defense for Georgia, distinct from the counterterrorism training we provide before Georgians deploy with us – as the second largest troop contributor – to Afghanistan. Not least, we should provide all three countries with anti-tank weapons, so that they can have a chance to deter the larger, more ready Russian forces.

In Syria, we must use all U.S. influence to get our allies engaged on the battlefield and to provide equipment and other support to the Syrian opposition. We are already in a proxy war; let's not lose it and the peace Syria needs so badly by failing to garner necessary leverage against Asad and Putin. If we do also succeed in finding economic and other leverage, this could mitigate the need for more fighting, but it is unavoidable now.

And across the Caucasus and Central Asia we should advance our interest in energy diversity for Europe, counterterrorism cooperation and an open land and air supply route to and from Afghanistan. We must continue to offer those countries an alternative partner to Russia. We must finish our work in Afghanistan so it is never again a haven for terrorism against the United States, but also so Kabul can withstand ill-intentioned outside interference, including from Russia. Finally, if we could devise a snap solution to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, which would freeze Russia out, this master stroke would give Armenia the option to regain its full sovereignty and catch up economically with its neighbors.

On the unconventional front, Congress should continue to support the Special Operations Command and its components' work with NATO and partner countries to help thwart Putin's "little green men." Allied ability to deter, prevent and respond to Russian cyber operations must be improved and we must protect U.S. military assets and edge in space. In the nuclear realm, if Russia cannot be brought into compliance with the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, we and our allies must be prepared,

regrettably, to deploy intermediate forces to NATO territory in Europe to ensure effective nuclear deterrence, as we did in the 1980s.

The United States must also work proactively to put out accurate information on Russian policy and actions and also improve current efforts to counter Russian propaganda. We need a dedicated team like the one being established as the new State Department Global Engagement Center to counter radical Islamic terrorists' messages. Such a Russia-focused team should be supported by an intelligence cell tasked with pushing declassified and reclassified intelligence to share with the public, allies and partners. And our cyber expertise should be applied to exposing Russian so-called "trolls" and generally foiling Russian message campaigns.

We must be strong and united with our allies and partners worldwide and resolute towards Russian bad behavior. But we need not enter a new Cold War or an across-the-board stand off with Russia. Where the Kremlin is open to cooperation and there are mutual interests we should work with Moscow. We should also maintain a dialogue to foster as much transparency as possible – recognizing that the Kremlin manufactures lies with impunity – to reduce the risks of misperception and miscalculation and to be ready for opportunities to cooperate. Specifically, when it comes to the most dangerous aspect of our relationship, nuclear weapons and strategic stability – the combined conventional and nuclear balance between Russia and the United States – we must exchange views and information.

If we take the actions described above in conjunction with our allies and partners worldwide we will raise the price for Putin of achieving his international objectives – controlling the countries on Russia's periphery and rewriting the international rules. Russia will be forced to reconsider its approach. Then, perhaps, the pent-up and misguided human resources of the Russian people can be directed towards a future that is economically, politically and culturally better for all citizens of the Russian Federation and Russians beyond its borders. And we will have successfully managed what is currently the greatest potential geostrategic threat to U.S. national security interests.

Dr. Evelyn N. Farkas

Dr. Evelyn N. Farkas is the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia/Ukraine/Eurasia, responsible for policy towards Russia, the Black Sea, Balkans and Caucasus regions and conventional arms control. Previously she was a senior fellow at the American Security Project, where she focused on stability and special operations, counterproliferation and U.S-Asia policy. Before that she served as Senior Advisor to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe/Commander, U.S. European Command, and as Special Advisor for the Secretary of Defense for the NATO Summit. In 2008-2009, she served as Executive Director of the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism, which published the report World at Risk (Random House, 2008). From April 2001 to April 2008, she served as a Professional Staff Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Her issue areas included foreign and defense policy in Asia Pacific, Western Hemisphere, Special Operations Command (policy and budget oversight), foreign military assistance, peace and stability operations, the military effort to combat terrorism, counternarcotics programs, homeland defense, and export control policy.

From 1997-2001 Farkas was a professor of international relations at the U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College. She served in Bosnia with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 1996-1997, and was an election observer in Afghanistan in 2009. She has published numerous journal articles and opinion pieces and "Fractured States and U.S. Foreign Policy: Iraq, Ethiopia, and Bosnia in the 1990s" (Palgrave/St. Martin's Press, 2003, 2008). She speaks Hungarian and German, has studied French, Spanish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, and Hindi and appears as a commentator on major television networks, including NBC, CNN and Fox. Dr. Farkas obtained her MA and Ph.D. from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and Aspen Institute Socrates Seminar advisory board.

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( ) Representative

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N/A			

House Committee on Armed Services

Full and Prepared Statement for the Record, 2/10/2016

James Stavridis, Admiral, United States Navy (Retired)

Dean, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

Senior Fellow, Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for inviting me here to Washington to talk about these important issues: it is a pleasure to return to the House Armed Services Committee as always. I ask that this statement be entered for the record, as you have always so graciously allowed me. Thank you.

I appear before you today in my personal capacity, but drawing on my 37 years of active service in the US Navy, four years as a NATO Commander, and my current work at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory. The views I express are mine alone.

Of the many global challenges, the one that is at the very top of my list is the security situation in Europe as it relates to Russia under President Vladimir Putin. Russia's direct challenge to the transatlantic partnership through the illegal annexation of territory and unilateral action in Syria threatens the vision we all share of a Europe "whole and free," especially for our NATO allies and other close partners.

First let me briefly lay out the military balance in Europe today.

NATO remains Europe's primary security provider, as it has been for almost seven decades. The good news is that taken as a whole, the 28 nations of NATO produce 52% of the world's GDP and spend nearly $1 Trillion on Defense. Yet, since 2009, NATO's overall funding has fallen by almost 20%. The continuing financial crisis in Europe has made shouldering the burden for defense a challenge for all members of the alliance, but

especially for our friends in Europe. Average European defense funding levels have declined as a percentage of gross domestic product to just 1.43%, well below the 2% goal, with just five of the 28 NATO members meeting the 2% threshold. The financial realities of defense reveal a NATO that is less prepared than it must be. We cannot expect NATO to do more with less, thus we must commit to reversing this disconcerting trend.

Putin's Russia is in many important ways a declining power; but under his aggressive leadership it manifests a confident position in the global scene. Despite Russia's economic slowdown (the result of sanctions and the cut in oil prices), it remains intent on pursuing an assertive foreign policy. The Kremlin has boosted defense spending over 25% since seizing Crimea in 2014 even though Russian GDP is forecast to decrease again in 2016. This dramatic spending increase shows intent to consolidate its current territorial gains and may hint at expansionist military plans for the future.

I know that this committee is well aware of the details of Russia's revisionist attempts to expand into Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine; and with the annexation of Crimea, to redraw borders that improve its strategic position relative to the western order. As you are well aware, this order, founded on the rule of law and democratic values, is fundamental to stability on the European continent.

Russia has used an aggressive blend of special forces, information warfare, cyber warfare, and conventional military activity that some have called "hybrid warfare." As

we have seen, definitively attributing responsibility to the state directing these operations is difficult, while countering this "hybrid warfare" approach is in many ways more difficult than countering a "conventional" approach.

Russia repurposed the Open Skies Treaty to take advantage of our commitment to the rule of law. They have flouted the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with tests of ground-launched cruise missiles to prohibited ranges. Russian submarine activity has risen to a level not seen since Cold War days, while Russian aircraft continue to challenge the sovereign airspace of NATO members. These and other activities, combined with "snap exercises" of questionable intent, form a distinct and unabating aggressive tone that is difficult to ignore. Our allies in the Baltics in particular are deeply worried about Russian intent, and logically enough seek reassurance. A recent RAND study postulated that Russian forces could sweep into Baltic capitals in 60 hours, with little immediate resistance from NATO writ large. This is understandably extremely disconcerting to them given their history and proximity to Russia. A recent CNAS War Game in which I participated clearly demonstrated European concern about this issue, yet a lack of cohesion on the part of some of the allies.

Unfortunately, we are not currently configured to detect and respond to these types moves in a robust and immediate military fashion. General Phil Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe and Commander, European Command, has consistently described how NATO's indicators and warnings have atrophied. Even if we had perfect intelligence, the simple geography of Europe, and in particular the Baltics, makes

responding to a Russian incursion incredibly difficult. Additionally, our decision to remove two Brigade Combat Teams from Europe was weakened a sense on the part of our Allies that we are truly committed to the defense of the Alliance's borders. Wile I am comfortable that over time, NATO has the military capability to defeat Russia and expel Russian forces from Alliance territory, any effort to recapture the Baltic States, for example, would be grisly and would likely involve a drastic escalation, as plainly stated in Russian military doctrine. Worst of all, it would bring into question the use of nuclear weapons, a capability President Putin often reminds the west that Russia possesses and is unafraid to use.

This said, there is hope. This hope can be realized through increased troop levels, commitment to our nuclear deterrent program, and rational diplomatic communication with Moscow. In other words, we must apply smart power, combining both hard military power with a sophisticated campaign of information, collaboration, and Alliance burden sharing.

NATO cannot solely rely on what some have called "virtual presence" in the form of rotational forces from the United States to counter a resurgent Russia. A more credible deterrent to Putin's challenge involves ensuring force commitments that result in actual presence. As a first move, the four-fold budget increase in resources to counter Russian aggression, as part of the Defense Department's budget released last week, is a credible start. The National Commission on the Future of the Army and other studies reiterate that the Army must increase force levels in Europe and maintain a robust overall presence

in the range of a million troops – active, reserve, and guard. The same can be said about invigorating naval and air capacity and presence in the region. These are necessary expenditures. We must also insist that our NATO partners undertake similar increases in defense spending, to make the actual presence durable.

Our NATO forces must accelerate already occurring training and conduct integrated exercises on a regular basis to improve their combat readiness and show strength. While determining what level of combat power and military factors deter Russia is difficult, Russia responds to strength. Increasing US and NATO's physical presence along NATO's eastern flank will change how Putin, and the Kremlin, view our resolve and commitment to our allies.

We also must remain committed to a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent program in Europe. This determined continuation of our nuclear program supports our NATO allies and our strategic national interests.

Having said all of that, this enhanced military activity described above should be accompanied by robust diplomatic communication with the Russian Federation. There is no need to stumble backwards into another Cold War. We must explain the context, reasoning, and purpose for NATO's additional presence in Eastern Europe, and state clearly that NATO will not accept Russian revisionist claims and aggressive actions against NATO member states. We should cooperate with Russia where we can – Afghanistan, counter-terror, counter-narcotics, Piracy – but confront where we must, with

a particular emphasis on the message that the borders of NATO nations are ultimate red lines for the Alliance and the United States of America.

These recommendations will reassure our allies in Europe and around the world, prevent Russian overreach in the Baltic States, and perhaps help to check potential Russian activities in other parts of the world, e.g. Syria, the Arctic. Disengagement and abandonment are not an option for the United States. We must stand strongly with our NATO allies and even more closely work with them to ensure Europe's long-term security.

We must also continue to insist that our NATO Allies meet the 2% spending of their GDP on defense. This is a minimum that the Alliance has collectively pledged to support, but thus far is failing to meet. Over time, the misbalance in the burden sharing between the US and the rest of the Alliance cannot continue. This should be a central US point of concern at the upcoming NATO summit.

In the end, we will prevail by out-thinking our opponents. This requires an expansive approach to Russia that uses a balance of hard and soft power – smart power as some have called it. Such an approach will require education and the building of human capital here in the US, including learning and studying the history, culture, and strategy of Russia. I believe that by constructing the right strategy to deal with Russia, we will help ensure a more stable global system going forward. Hearings like this are an important part of that process, and I conclude by thanking you for permitting me to share my views.

I look forward to your questions

Thank you for your time.

Admiral Jim Stavridis, USN (Ret)
Dean, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University

A Florida native, Jim Stavridis attended the US Naval Academy at Annapolis, and spent over thirty years in the Navy, rising to the rank of 4-star Admiral. Among his many commands were four years as the 16th Supreme Allied Commander at NATO, where he oversaw operations in Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, the Balkans, and piracy off the coast of Africa. He also commanded US Southern Command in Miami, charged with military operations through Latin America for nearly three years. He was the longest serving Combatant Commander in recent US history.

In the course of his career in the Navy, he served as senior military assistant to the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Defense. He led the Navy's premier operational think tank for innovation, Deep Blue, immediately after the 9/11 attacks.

He won the Battenberg Cup for commanding the top ship in the Atlantic Fleet and the Navy League John Paul Jones Award for Inspirational leadership, along more than 50 US and international medals and decorations, including 28 from foreign nations. He also commanded a Destroyer Squadron and a Carrier Strike Group, both in combat.

He earned a PhD from The Fletcher School at Tufts, winning the Gullion prize as outstanding student in his class in 1983, as well as academic honors from the National and Naval War Colleges as a distinguished student. He speaks Spanish and French.

Jim has published six books on leadership, Latin America, ship handling, and innovation, as well as over a hundred articles in leading journals. An active user of social networks, he has thousands of followers on Twitter and friends on Facebook. His TED talk on 21st century security in 2012 has had over 700,000 views. He tweeted the end of combat operations in the Libyan NATO intervention. His memoir of the NATO years, "The Accidental Admiral," was released in October 2014.

Admiral Stavridis is also the Chair of the Board of the US Naval Institute, the professional association of the Nation's sea services: Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine.

Jim is the 12th Dean at The Fletcher School, a post he assumed in the summer of 2013. He is happily married to Laura, and they have two daughters – one working at Google and the other an Ensign in the US Navy.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 114th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants), or contracts or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the current and two previous calendar years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Committee on Armed Services in complying with the House rule. Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number) will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee. Witnesses may list additional grants, contracts, or payments on additional sheets, if necessary.

Witness name: James Stavridis

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

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If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented: _____

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2015

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant

2014

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant

2013

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant

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2015

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment

2014

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment

2013

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

FEBRUARY 10, 2016

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GARAMENDI

Mr. GARAMENDI. In your spoken testimony, you stated that "unfortunately" the United States must modernize its nuclear forces to counter Russia's new emphasis on tactical nuclear weapons, its nuclear "first use" policy, and its doctrine of "escalate to deescalate." Which specific U.S. nuclear weapons systems do you believe must be modernized? What specific roles would each system play in deterring a Russian threat to NATO? To the extent that these roles are currently played by lower-yield U.S. nuclear weapons such as nuclear gravity bombs and nuclear cruise missiles, which could potentially be met with advanced conventional systems, such as hypersonic weapons and advanced, conventional cruise missiles?

Dr. FARKAS. Given the Russian nuclear modernization, their doctrine, verbal saber-rattling and violation of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, the United States must ensure that our nuclear deterrence is robust and effective.

Mr. GARAMENDI. In your spoken testimony, you stated that "unfortunately" the United States must modernize its nuclear forces to counter Russia's new emphasis on tactical nuclear weapons, its nuclear "first use" policy, and its doctrine of "escalate to deescalate." Which specific U.S. nuclear weapons systems do you believe must be modernized? What specific roles would each system play in deterring a Russian threat to NATO? To the extent that these roles are currently played by lower-yield U.S. nuclear weapons such as nuclear gravity bombs and nuclear cruise missiles, which could potentially be met with advanced conventional systems, such as hypersonic weapons and advanced, conventional cruise missiles?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. BORDALLO

Ms. BORDALLO. The Russian deployment last fall of a Borei-class submarine carrying long range nuclear capable ballistic missiles to Vladivostock, and the potential of a second sub arriving this year indicates Russian intentions to increase its presence on and beyond its Pacific Coast. In your opinion, what impact would a corresponding decrease in U.S. Navy ships, as well as unilateral and joint exercises, in the region have on our ability to project power and reassure our allies and partners?

Dr. HILL. The deployment of a Borei-class ballistic missile submarine indicates that Russia intends to continue to operate ballistic missile submarines from its Pacific coast as well as from the Kola Peninsula. This is a long-standing practice of the Russian navy, just as the United States operates ballistic missile submarines in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

The number of U.S. Navy ships as well as the number unilateral exercises and, in particular, joint exercises obviously affect the U.S. ability to project power in the region as well as to reassure U.S. allies and partners in the Western Pacific. But I would consider that a separate issue from the question of the Borei-class submarine deployment.

Ms. BORDALLO. The Russian deployment last fall of a Borei-class submarine carrying long range nuclear capable ballistic missiles to Vladivostock, and the potential of a second sub arriving this year indicates Russian intentions to increase its presence on and beyond its Pacific Coast. In your opinion, what impact would a corresponding decrease in U.S. Navy ships, as well as unilateral and joint exercises, in the region have on our ability to project power and reassure our allies and partners?

Dr. FARKAS. The United States must continue to project power and protect freedom of navigation in Asia-Pacific and maintain our nuclear triad as part of nuclear deterrence. This means that the Navy must be funded ensure the right mix of platforms and capabilities.

Ms. BORDALLO. The Russian deployment last fall of a Borei-class submarine carrying long-range nuclear capable ballistic missiles to Vladivostock, and the potential of a second sub arriving this year indicates Russian intentions to increase its pres-

ence on and beyond its Pacific Coast. In your opinion, what impact would a corresponding decrease in U.S. Navy ships, as well as unilateral and joint exercises, in the region have on our ability to project power and reassure our allies and partners?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

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