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NATO AT 70: AN INDISPENSABLE ALLIANCE

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NATO AT 70: AN INDISPENSABLE ALLIANCE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2019

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Washington, DC

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m., in Room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Eliot Engel (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Mr. ENGEL. The hearing will come to order. Let me first of all welcome our witnesses and members of the public and the press. Without objection, all members may have 5 days to submit statements, questions, and extraneous materials for the record, subject to the length limitation in the rules.

Today's hearing takes place just a few weeks from the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization known as NATO. There are many pressing issues facing NATO today, but for us to really assess where the alliance stands in the year 2019, we need to take a step back and look at the history of this great political and military relationship.

The first half of the 20th century was marked by periods of widespread suffering, instability, and fear. And at the start of both World Wars, the United States stayed out of the fray, grateful that the Atlantic Ocean kept us far away from the terrors in Europe and the rest of the world. By putting our heads in the sand and trying to stay away from the conflicts, those wars grew into direct threats to our own economy, security, and very way of life. Not to mention the immense suffering that happened while we waited on the sidelines, including the unprecedented horror of the Holocaust.

So after World War II, American leaders understood that it was in our strategic interest, and also our moral obligation, to band together with countries that shared our commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. We joined with European democracies to form NATO, an organization built on the principle that we are stronger when we stand together.

Now, 70 years later, NATO is widely recognized as the most successful political-military alliance in history. Its achievements include facing down Soviet communism and winning the cold war, advancing freedom and democracy in Europe, stopping genocide and bringing peace to the Balkans, and fighting the international threat of terrorism. And in the United States, across the decades, our transatlantic partnership has consistently won overwhelming bipartisan support.

But a few years ago things started to change. Since before he even came into office, President Trump has taken opportunities to denigrate our allies and undermine NATO in his personal dealings with European leaders, his policy proposals, and rhetoric. I wit-

nessed that personally when I attended the Munich Security Conference last month and heard from leader after European leader that America's word and security guarantee underpinning the transatlantic alliance is now being questioned, while President Trump often depicts the NATO partnership as some kind of one-way street where the United States bears inordinate cost with little benefit, and that is just not true.

Our European partners have contributed immensely to our shared missions and they have come to America's defense when we were most in need. After September 11th, 2001, our allies stood with us. The only time, I might say, in NATO's history that Article 5, the principle that an attack on one is an attack on all, has been invoked. And in recent years, Europeans, Canadian, and American troops have fought bravely together side by side to defend the national security of all allies.

One of President Trump's most frequent criticisms is that allies habitually free-ride and that allies hosting American military forces do not pay the United States enough money. Earlier this week, we learned about his latest proposal to address this concern, the so-called cost plus 50 plan. In this system, allies would pay the full cost of stationing American troops on their territory plus an outlandish additional 50 percent.

This whole scheme reveals just how little the President seems to understand about how our alliances advance our own strategic interests. When we base troops in a NATO country, we are not just providing that nation with free security. Our presence strengthens the alliance's position in Europe and extends America's strategic reach. And our alliances, especially NATO, directly benefit the United States by enhancing our military power, global influence, economic might, and diplomatic leverage.

That is not to say I expect our allies to not provide any financial contribution at all. NATO countries have already agreed to pay 2 percent of their GDP on defense by the year 2024. And I agree with President Trump when he said that they should fulfill that obligation. We should hold them to that obligation.

But the conversation should be more than only financial burden sharing. Instead, we need to see the big picture of how our allies contribute to our collective goals. But the President's constant denigration of our allies presents a real threat to our foreign policy and national security objectives and, frankly, it is just baffling. President Trump is much more critical of our European allies, societies that share our commitment to core values, than he is of brutal dictators such as North Korea's Kim Jong-un or Russia's Vladimir Putin, and that is why it is so important that we in Congress take a leadership role on this front.

I am pleased that in this body, support for our European allies and partners continues to be bipartisan. You can see that in a resolution that the ranking member and I are introducing that would reaffirm the House's support for America's alliances and partnerships around the world. Simply put, NATO is one of our most precious geopolitical assets and should stay that way. It is important that we stand together to send this message because the NATO alliance is needed now as much as ever before.

We are seeing a rise in authoritarianism, continued threats from international terrorism and extremism, and aggressive attempts by Putin to invade Russia's neighbors and attack democratic elections throughout the world. It is by working with our NATO allies, standing side by side that we can successfully face these challenges head on.

So it is critical that we have a full understanding of the current state of the alliance. We need to explore the role that NATO plays in America's foreign policy and discuss ways we can improve the organization, including efforts to make sure our allies follow through on all their obligations.

I am eager to hear from our witnesses about these issues, but first I will recognize our ranking member, Mr. McCaul of Texas, for his opening remarks.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization or NATO was created on April the 4th, 1949. This was an historic moment. At that time, the international community was still recovering from the most devastating conflict the world has ever seen. Born out of the chaos of World War II, my father's war, NATO was formed to protect European democracies against Soviet totalitarianism and prevent a Third World war. Seventy years later, the greatest military alliance ever created has proven that the free peoples of the world are the strongest when we stand together.

From that confrontation with communism during the cold war to the defeat of Milosevic in Kosovo to the battlefields of Afghanistan, American soldiers and those of our NATO allies have fought and bled together. In fact, the only time that Article 5, as the chairman said, has ever been invoked was after 9/11 terror attacks.

This collective defense agreement and acknowledgment that an attack on one is an attack on all is a cornerstone of the alliance and we must keep it that way. NATO has enhanced our military capability, increased our intelligence collection, and created a bulwark against international terror. It is critical to our national security and solidifies our friendships with member States.

NATO continues to grow as countries in Europe meet important objectives. And as I was pleased to see that North Macedonia will be joining the alliance as its newest member. However, friends must also be honest with each other. Some of our allies have not been living up to the decision at the Wales Summit in 2014 to spend 2 percent of their GDP on national defense.

Thankfully, under pressure from the administration, member countries have begun to spend more. NATO's Secretary General recently announced that by the end of next year an additional $100 billion will be contributed by our European partners. This is bad news for Vladimir Putin, but good news for the future of NATO's common defense.

And over the next 70 years we will be challenged again and again. We have already seen a resurgent Russia attack its neighbors from cyber attacks in Eastern Europe to military conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine. It is clear that Putin wants to reclaim the superpower status of the Soviet Union. We can meet our challenges if they are confronted with unity and strength. Division and weakness will only tear us apart.

Each of today's witnesses have served our country well and I know all of you personally. You have developed an expertise on foreign policy and national security affairs. I look forward to having a thoughtful and bipartisan discussion and hearing on their thoughts on how to maintain a strong and effective NATO. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. McCaul.

It is now my pleasure to introduce our witnesses. Michele Flournoy is co-founder and managing partner of WestExec Advisors and a former co-founder and CEO of the Center for New American Security. She previously served as the under secretary of defense for policy and co-led on President Obama's transition team at the Department of Defense.

Ambassador Douglas Lute is a senior fellow with the Project on Europe and the Transatlantic Relationship at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University. He was formerly the United States' permanent representative to the North Atlantic Council, NATO's standing political body. He also previously served as deputy director of operations for United States European Command.

Derek Chollet is the executive vice president of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. He was formerly assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs where he managed U.S. defense policy toward Europe and NATO, the Middle East, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere. Previously, he was special assistant to the President and senior director for strategic planning on the National Security Council's staff.

Finally, Ian Brzezinski is a resident senior fellow with Transatlantic Security Initiative in the Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security at the Atlantic Council. He was previously the deputy assistant secretary of defense for Europe and NATO policy. He also served as the senior professional staff member on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations—we will not hold that against you, Mr. Brzezinski—implementing legislative initiatives and strategic strategies concerning U.S. interests in Europe, Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

We are grateful to all of your service and your time this morning. You can see it is a very prominent panel that we have. Our witnesses' testimony will be included in the record of this hearing, and I would like to now recognize our witnesses for 5 minutes each.

Let's start with Ms. Flournoy.

STATEMENT OF MICHELE FLOURNOY, CO-FOUNDER AND MANAGING PARTNER, WESTEXEC ADVISORS

Ms. FLOURNOY. Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, distinguished members of the committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify this morning about the importance of NATO and our alliances more broadly for U.S. national security.

At the end of World War II, the United States had a remarkable foresight to establish a set of alliances in Europe and Asia as a means of protecting and advancing U.S. interests and also as pillars of a new rules-based international order. These alliances have underwritten 70 years of unprecedented prosperity, economic growth, security, and stability. They are without precedent in his-

tory and they are of great strategic value to the United States and the American people.

Our NATO alliance as well as our bilateral alliances in Asia provides the United States with enormous strategic advantages. Our allies are our most reliable partners in confronting a host of shared challenges from proliferation to climate change, challenges that no single nation no matter how powerful can address alone.

Our allies tend to be our closest trading partners. Look at the U.S. and Europe with more than a trillion dollars in trade every year. Our allies contribute to U.S. national security as our closest military partners, going into harm's way shoulder to shoulder with American troops, providing essential basing and support to military operations overseas, enhancing the familiarity of U.S. forces with their overseas theaters of operation, and cementing military to military relationships that are the human foundation for interoperability and effectiveness in coalition operations. Perhaps most importantly, these allies help us underwrite deterrence, prevent conflict, and address persistent threats like terrorism.

Our allies can also be incredibly powerful partners in advancing our shared values, our commitment to democracy and human rights. Our transatlantic alliance is particularly valuable. Over its 70-year history NATO has provided a number of strategic benefits to the U.S. that are, frankly, too often forgotten in today's political discourse. Thanks to NATO we were able to contain the Soviet Union, prevent the spread of communism, deter a potentially nuclear confrontation, and ultimately win the cold war.

Thanks to NATO, when the Berlin Wall fell we were able to create a Europe whole, free, and at peace. Thanks to NATO, we were able to conduct military operations that helped end the war in Bosnia and enforce a negotiated peace. Thanks to NATO, America was not alone in fighting al-Qaida in Afghanistan and globally. NATO, as was noted, invoked Article 5 for the first time in its history on our behalf after 9/11.

Our NATO allies sent and sustained a rotational force of some 40,000 troops in Afghanistan fighting alongside us. They took a lead in providing stability and security in the north and saved the U.S. an estimated $49 billion in the process. They have contributed 2.3 billion to the support of the Afghan National Army. They are still with us today with 17,000 troops in resolute support providing training and support to the Afghan forces now leading the fight. Most importantly, we should never forget that more than 1,000 non-U.S. NATO troops lost their lives in Afghanistan, making the ultimate sacrifice.

Today, our NATO allies remain among our most critical partners in dealing with 21st century challenges. Many of our NATO allies are our closest partners fighting terrorism globally. Think France in the Maghreb or the U.K. in Iraq and Syria. In Iraq, NATO has provided 350 trainers, AWACS aircraft for surveillance, and so forth.

The European allies have also been among our closest partners in combating nuclear proliferation. After Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the invasion of Eastern Ukraine, it was our European allies who stood up and helped us impose the harshest sanctions against Russia in history and they have borne the brunt

of the cost. More than 90 percent of the costs of those sanctions have been borne by Europeans, including the loss of hundreds of thousands of export-related jobs across Europe.

NATO has also stepped up to strengthen deterrence vis-a-vis Russia particularly in the Baltics, Poland, and the front line States with the enhanced former presence involving 4,500 NATO troops and initiatives to enhance NATO readiness. They have stepped up to prepare for cyber attacks, other shared missions like counter piracy, humanitarian relief, and so forth.

So my point is, there are many other factors besides just measuring defense spending to assess that we have to weigh in assessing the value of these alliances. We should implore our NATO allies to spend more on defense, but that should not be the only metric of our burden sharing especially given their shared sacrifice. That would be disrespectful, shortsighted, and wrong. I think given our allies' track record of invaluable contributions, the President's persistent disparagement of NATO and our partners there, our allies there, constitutes foreign policy malpractice and undermines our U.S. interests. Most disturbingly, the continued bad-mouthing of our NATO allies has created uncertainty in the mind of our closest partners, has opened up a serious debate in Europe about whether the U.S. remains a credible partner and a reliable leader.

So after 70 years of shared sacrifice and success, I think it is appalling that we are in this position today. We should be honoring and celebrating that 70 years of success. We must take stock of the many ways in which our allies have contributed to our security. Now is not a time to disparage or abandon or nickel-and-dime NATO. It is a time to double down on our shared, and make the shared investments that are necessary to deal with an era of strategic competition. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Flournoy follows:]



WESTEXEC ADVISORS

March 13, 2019

"NATO at 70: An Indispensable Alliance"
Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee
The Honorable Michèle Flournoy, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, WestExec Advisors

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Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today about the importance of NATO, and our alliances more broadly, to U.S. national security.

At the end of World War II, the United States had the remarkable foresight to build a set of alliances in Europe and Asia as a means of protecting and advancing U.S. national interests and as pillars of a new rules-based international order designed to prevent another world war, safeguard democracy, and promote prosperity. These alliances have underwritten 70 years of unprecedented economic development, prosperity, security, and stability. This system of alliances, which we too often take for granted today, is without precedent in human history and has proven to be of great strategic value to the United States and the American people.

Our NATO alliance – as well as our bilateral alliances in Asia with countries like Australia, Japan and South Korea – provide the United States with enormous advantages:

- Our allies are our most reliable partners in confronting shared challenges – from WMD proliferation to climate change – global challenges that no single nation, no matter how powerful, can address alone.
- Our allies tend to be our closest trading partners: The United States and the European Union (EU) have the largest bilateral trading relationship in the world, totaling more than $1 trillion in goods and services per year.
- Our allies contribute to U.S. national security as our closest military partners, going into harm's way, shoulder to shoulder with American troops, providing essential basing and support to our military operations overseas, enhancing the familiarity of U.S. forces with overseas theaters of operation, and cementing military-to-military relationships that are the human basis for interoperability and effectiveness in coalition operations.
- Perhaps most importantly, these allies help underwrite deterrence, prevent conflict, and address persistent threats like terrorism.

- Our allies can also be incredibly powerful partners in advancing our shared values, from supporting democracy to protecting human rights.

Our transatlantic alliance, embodied for nearly 70 years in NATO, is particularly valuable. Over its long history, NATO has provided a number of strategic benefits to the United States that are too often forgotten or overlooked in today's political discourse:

- Thanks to NATO, we were able to contain the Soviet Union, prevent the spread of communism, deter a potentially nuclear confrontation, and ultimately win the Cold War.
- Thanks to NATO, after the Berlin Wall fell, we were able to create a Europe whole, free, and at peace.
- Thanks to NATO, we were able to conduct military operations that set the conditions to end war in Bosnia and brought the Serbs to the negotiating table. NATO then provided the Stabilization Force to secure Bosnia-Herzegovina's reconstruction. Five years later, NATO ended the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo and provided a peacekeeping force there.
- Thanks to NATO, America was not alone in fighting Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. NATO invoked the Article V collective defense clause for the first time in its history after 9/11, when our European allies pledged their support for us after the worst terrorist attacks on American soil.
- Our NATO allies sent and sustained a rotational force of some 40,000 troops to fight alongside us in Afghanistan, and they took the lead in providing security and stability in the north, saving the U.S. an estimated $49 billion.
- They have also contributed $2.3 billion to the NATO Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund to date and have pledged to support the Afghan military through 2024.
- NATO remains at our side today with 17,000 troops in the Resolute Support mission providing support and training to the Afghan forces now leading the fight.
- Most importantly, we should never forget that more than 1,000 non-US NATO troops lost their lives in Afghanistan, making the ultimate sacrifice.

Today, our NATO allies remain among our most critical partners in dealing with the array of 21st century threats we now face:

- Many of our NATO allies are our closest partners in fighting terrorism globally. For example, France is leading the fight against jihadists in the Magreb, where it has deployed 4,500 troops. In Syria, the United Kingdom (UK) has participated in US-led airstrikes and offered 2.7 billion pounds in humanitarian assistance since 2012.
- In Iraq, NATO has provided 350 trainers and NATO Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACs) have flown more than 1,000 hours in support of the Counter-ISIL campaign since 2015. This year, NATO will set up a new non-combat mission to advise

the Iraqi government on post-conflict governance, including several hundred trainers, advisors, and staff.

- Our European allies are also among our closest partners in combating the spread of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The UK, France and the EU were critical partners in concluding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which sharply curtailed Iran's nuclear program.
- After Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its invasion of Eastern Ukraine, it was our European allies who stood united with us in imposing the harshest economic sanctions Russia has ever experienced. And they have borne the brunt of the costs of this policy. The total loss of exports to sanctioning western countries is estimated to be over $44 billion, of which 90% fell to EU countries, not to mention the loss of hundreds of thousands of export-related jobs across Europe.
- Our NATO allies have also stepped up to strengthen deterrence in order to prevent Russian aggression in the Baltics, Poland and other frontline states.
    - NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence consists of four multinational battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, including 4,500 troops.
- In addition, NATO has bolstered the readiness of its forces via:
    - The Very High Ready Joint Task Force (VJTF), including 13,000 personnel.
    - The Enhanced NATO Response Force (eNRF), including 40,000 personnel.
    - NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUS), including eight new command centers (Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia). These support the rapid deployment of 20,000 forces, including 5,000 ground troops.
    - The "Four 30s" Readiness Initiative, which seeks to have 30 heavy or medium maneuver battalions, 30 battleships, 30 air squadrons available within 30 days notice.
- As cyberattacks have become more frequent and more severe, NATO has established a new NATO Cyber Operations Center which has three core functions: (a) situational awareness, (b) centralized planning for cyberspace, and (c) coordination for concerns about cyberspace operations.
- This is in addition to two other key entities:
    - NATO Computer Incident Response Capabilities (NCIRC): A staff of 200 that provides round-the-clock cyber defense and maintains a rapid reaction team that can be sent to member states, and
    - Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence: (CCD CoE): A policy institute that organizes large-cyber exercises and gives allies the opportunity to test their systems.
- NATO allies continue to make substantial contributions to a host of other shared missions, from conducting joint counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean, to providing humanitarian relief after natural and manmade disasters.

All of this is to say that there are many factors to weigh in assessing the value of these alliances and the fairness of our burden sharing arrangements. The Trump administration has been right to implore our European allies to spend more on defense, particularly at a time of intensifying strategic competition – the Bush and Obama administrations did so as well.

The good news is that our allies are stepping up and spending more:

- In 2017, non-US NATO members spent $300 billion on defense, an increase of $28 billion since 2014.
- They have also promised to spend an extra $100 billion on defense by 2020.
- Half of NATO members plan to meet the 2% GDP-defense spending benchmark by 2024.

The bad news, however, is that using the 2% of GDP goal as the *only* measure of burden sharing ignores their other critical contributions and, most importantly (and unforgivably), their shared sacrifice. This is disrespectful, short-sighted, and wrong.

Given our allies' track record of invaluable contributions to U.S. national security over the years, President Trump's persistent disparagement of the NATO alliance constitutes foreign policy malpractice and undermines U.S. interests.

Most disturbingly, Trump's continued bad-mouthing of our NATO allies – and the question mark he has drawn over whether the United States would come to Europe's defense in a crisis – has opened up a serious debate in Europe about whether the U.S. remains a credible leader and a reliable partner. If the U.S. is no longer willing to lead NATO, if it no longer values its allies, what should Europe do to chart its own course? After 70 years of shared sacrifice and success, it is appalling that the last two years could put this historic alliance in jeopardy.

As NATO's 70th anniversary approaches, it is worth honoring and celebrating the most powerful alliance in human history. The United States must take stock of the many ways in which our allies have contributed to our security. Now is not a time to disparage, abandon, or nickel-and-dime NATO. As we face an increasingly complex set of security challenges and a period of intensifying competition with a revisionist Russia and a rising China, now is the time to double down and make the shared investments necessary to adapt and strengthen this invaluable alliance for the future.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Ms. Flournoy.
Mr. Chollet.

STATEMENT OF DEREK CHOLLET, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND SENIOR ADVISOR FOR SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY, THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CHOLLET. Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. This year marks a pivotal moment for NATO commemorating landmark anniversaries in the alliance's history, yet also confronting fundamental questions about its future. For an alliance forged in the rubble of the Second World War, NATO stands today as the most successful security partnership in history.

I believe a strong NATO remains essential to advancing U.S. national security interests. It is an indispensable force multiplier for American power. If NATO did not exist today we would be racing to invent it. Yet, at a time of significant turbulence at home and abroad, many are asking about whether the U.S. still believes in NATO. They watch our debates or read our Twitter feeds and wonder how committed the U.S. remains. That is why Congress is essential to affirming and bolstering U.S. leadership in NATO.

Now taking stock of the alliance today, one could easily depict things only in dire terms, focusing on discord and disagreement. Yet, the alliance is also exhibiting renewed energy. This can be measured in at least four ways.

First, in the area of territorial defense, where member States are stepping up deployments, adapting to evolving threats, and spending more on their militaries; second, in the alliance's commitment to some of its basic principles such as the open-door policy bringing new members into the organization; third, this renewed energy can be measured by public opinion where support for NATO remains very high throughout Europe and particularly in the United States; and fourth, it can be seen in NATO's enduring commitment to common security especially in places like Afghanistan.

For these reasons, NATO continues to show that it is a unique asset to the United States. However, NATO faces no shortage of challenges. These include threats from rival powers, especially Russia's efforts to test, divide, and weaken the alliance as well as China's rising military threat which is getting greater attention among our European partners. These include such challenges as cyber threats and hybrid warfare, enduring challenges along NATO's southern flank where State failure, violent extremism, and refugee flows pose the primary threats.

And finally there are internal tensions that undermine alliance unity. This last challenge is perhaps the most worrying. NATO faces a growing crisis within its ranks. NATO is about much more than armaments and military capabilities. It is an alliance rooted in common values. The preamble of the 1949 Washington Treaty stipulates that the alliance was founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Yet, democratic backsliding and nationalist politics are on the rise in too many places. This makes it harder to maintain allied unity. It raises questions about common commitment to NATO's future. Across European

capitals and here in Washington too many are wondering whether the U.S. would fulfill its commitment to collective defense.

For this reason, Congress has an especially urgent and important role to play in maintaining U.S. leadership in NATO. Continued support for funding of the U.S. military and diplomatic efforts in Europe will remain essential. So will the continued willingness of so many Members of Congress to travel to NATO headquarters and other European capitals to show support for the alliance and press for its continued reforms. And your legislative efforts such as the recent passage of the bipartisan NATO Support Act are indispensable.

We must rekindle the spirit that helped energize U.S. leadership in NATO in the first place and also recall that sustaining this leadership over decades has never been easy. We would be wise to remember history's lessons. Allow me to conclude on one of them. Exactly 68 years ago, a similar debate about NATO gripped Washington and specifically the U.S. Congress. Back then, the many major political figures doubted the wisdom of NATO claiming that deploying American troops to Europe was not in the Nation's best interests. It fell to General Dwight Eisenhower a year before he became President to come out of retirement and galvanize American support to send troops to Europe. In February 1951, Eisenhower came here to Capitol Hill to make his case. Speaking before both houses of Congress he passionately argued for what he called the enlightened self-interest of American leadership in NATO. Congress embraced Ike's call to action.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul, members of the committee, at a moment when we hear echoes of the same doubts about NATO's value to U.S. national interests, we would be well served to recall Eisenhower's wisdom. And as we approach NATO's 70th anniversary this spring, we must again look to Congress to embrace this mission as it did seven decades ago. Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Chollet follows:]

Prepared Statement for the Record

"NATO at 70: An Indispensable Alliance"

Derek Chollet
Executive Vice President, The German Marshall Fund of the United States

Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
March 13, 2019

Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, members of the committee – I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. This year marks a pivotal moment for NATO – commemorating landmark anniversaries in the Alliance's history, yet also confronting fundamental questions about its future.

This week in Prague, past and present leaders gathered to celebrate the two-decade anniversary of NATO's first round of enlargement, which extended membership to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Next month in Washington, NATO foreign ministers will meet on the occasion of the organization's 70th Anniversary. For an alliance forged in the rubble of the Second World War to thwart Communist aggression, NATO stands today as the most successful security partnership in history. It has transformed in ways far beyond what its founders could have dreamed. While I believe a strong NATO remains essential to advancing U.S. national security interests – and is an indispensable force-multiplier for American power – we must be clear-eyed about the challenges ahead.

Debates about NATO's purpose are nothing new. In fact, such questions stretch back to its founding. During the Cold War, the questions focused on how to stand up to the Soviet threat, the role of nuclear weapons, and how to best establish deterrence. When the Cold War ended thirty years ago, there were questions about how the Alliance would address crises in places like the Balkans and take on new missions out of area; some argued that with the Soviet threat dissolved, NATO should disappear with it. Then, after the September 11 attacks, NATO adapted to a new fight against terrorism, especially in Afghanistan. For the past five years, since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the explosion of the ISIL crisis in 2014, NATO has worked to handle the twin challenges of resurging geopolitical competition and persistent global instability.

Yet this moment is uncertain for another reason: at a time of significant turbulence at home and abroad, many are asking about whether the U.S. still believes in NATO. They watch our debates – or read our Twitter feeds – and wonder how committed the U.S. remains. It is precisely at this time that Congress has an urgent and important role to play in affirming and bolstering U.S. leadership in NATO.

A Modern Alliance

As NATO's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, observed recently, the current moment presents a paradox. One could easily depict things only in dire terms, focusing on discord and disagreement. Yet the Alliance is also exhibiting renewed energy. This can be measured in four ways: first, in the area of territorial defense, where Member States are stepping-up force deployments, adapting to evolving threats, and spending more on their militaries. Second, it can be seen in the Alliance's commitment to some of its basic principles, such as the Open Door Policy. Third, it can be measured by public opinion, where support for the Alliance remains high in the United States. And fourth, it can be seen in the Alliance's enduring commitment to common security in places like Afghanistan.

First, NATO is bolstering deterrence and defense capabilities, doing more together than it has in years. Following the Cold War, force deployments to Europe dwindled. However, as Russia started to pose a renewed threat, Allies realized the need to bolster the defense of Europe. Force deployment – and the budgets to support it – became a new priority. In 2013, the last American tank left Europe as part of the post-Cold War withdrawal. Yet today, as just one example, there is an Armored Brigade Combat Team – comprised of 3,500 personnel and 87 tanks – deployed in Poland.

In the latter half of the Obama Administration, the U.S. increased its force deployments and spending related to European security; efforts which have expanded in the last two years. I applaud the Administration's FY2019 request for the European Defense Initiative – which at $6.6 billion, nearly doubles the FY2017 spending level.[1] This important initiative is a primary source of funding for the European Command and works to enhance our deterrence and defense posture. In turn, this further assures NATO Allies and partners that America will stand behind its security commitments, while also improving the capability and readiness of U.S. forces.[2]

Non-U.S. members of NATO are also stepping up their commitment to Transatlantic Security. This is most visible when considering the deliverables from the past three NATO summits – which have steadily improved the Alliance's capacity to defend territory and mobilize its forces in response to a crisis.

At the Wales Summit in 2014, Member States stood-up the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force ("VJTF"). This rapidly deployable, multinational force spearheads the Alliance's "Reaction Force." And in a sign of our Allies commitment to burden sharing, European nations have and will continue to rotate as the "lead nation" for this brigade-sized force.

At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, Alliance members launched the Enhanced Forward Presence ("EFP"), which builds on the immediate reassurance steps the Alliance took in

[1] "The U.S., NATO, and the Defense of Europe: Shaping the Right Ministerial Force Goals," Anthony H. Cordesman, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, June 27, 2018
[2] "European Deterrence Initiative," *Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)*, February 2018

the wake of the Ukraine crisis and bolsters defense and deterrence in NATO's vulnerable flanks.[3] Non-U.S. Member States are taking an important lead in this initiative – commanding and organizing three of the EFP's four multinational battalion-sized battlegroups, which are based in Estonia (led by the United Kingdom), Latvia (led by Canada), Lithuania (led by Germany), and Poland (led by the U.S.)

At the most recent 2018 Brussels Summit, NATO instituted the "Four Thirties" initiative, which aims to have 30 mechanized battalions, 30 air squadrons, and 30 combat vessels prepared for use within 30 days' notice or less. This initiative, which was a U.S.-led effort, brings a much needed "Follow-on-Force" capability to augment the rapid reaction forces stood-up during the 2014 and 2016 summits.

Last July's Brussels Summit also brought other achievements. Member States committed to increasing military mobility across Europe and made several important changes to its command structure to address the shifting threat environment – standing up the Joint Force Support and Enabling Command in Germany and the Joint Force Norfolk Command, which will coordinate military movements in Europe and protect lines of communications across the Atlantic (respectively) in the a crisis.[4] Moreover, NATO maintains a steady pace of major military exercises – for example, last year's Trident Juncture, hosted by Norway, was the largest since the end of the Cold War.

While these achievements are important, popular debates on NATO often fixate on the goal for all Member States to spend 2% of total GDP on defense. This priority is not unique to the current Administration. In fact, Acting-Secretary Shanahan is the 6th consecutive Secretary of Defense to prod NATO allies to spend more on their defense – thus far, we can claim modest progress.

In 2014, only three NATO Member States spent more than 2% of their total GDP on defense. In 2018, that number rose to nine countries.[5] By 2024, NATO reports that a majority of Member States have plans in place to meet the "2%" spending goal. Even countries who will not hit the mark by then have significantly increased in their defense spending.

Yet we need to be clear: the 2% goal alone is not a recipe for NATO success. It is also imperative that these defense dollars are invested wisely – with at least 20% of new defense spending going towards major equipment, including related Research and Development. In turn, these investments will ensure that increased spending will boost critical military capabilities – such as Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance, NATO Airborne Warning & Control System, and cyber defense – that directly contribute to Transatlantic defense. And it is important that NATO countries invest in the other tools of national power that remain vital to the organization's mission, such diplomacy and development.

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[3] "NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence," *NATO,* February 2019
[4] "Brussels Summit Declaration," *NATO*, August 30, 2018
[5] "NATO Members Drive Fastest Increase in Global Defence Spending for a Decade, Jane's by IHS Markit Reveals," *The Associated Press*, December 18, 2018

Second, it is good news the Alliance continues to live-up to its commitment to Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty – known as the Open Door Policy. In 2017, Montenegro became the organization's 29th Member State. And with the naming dispute with Greece resolved, NATO nations have signed onto an accession protocol for North Macedonia – paving its way to become the 30th member as early as December.

Third, it is notable and positive that despite all the turbulence in discussions about NATO – and a lot of loose talk about whether Alliance partners have taken advantage of the U.S. – American public support remains resilient. In 2017, Gallup reported that 80% of Americans support NATO, a figure that stood at 64% in 1995.[6] In another recent survey, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs found that 75% of Americans support maintaining or increasing the nation's commitment to NATO.[7]

Finally, eighteen years after Member States invoked the NATO Charter's Article V clause of mutual self-defense to support the U.S. NATO allies remain a vital component of common security efforts in Afghanistan. Non-U.S. allies and partners contribute nearly half of the 17,000 troops deployed as a part of the Resolute Support Mission. Every day, these forces increase the effectiveness and accountability of Afghanistan's security forces and institutions.[8] These forces run programs that increase fighting capabilities, confront corruption, provide mission support through operations planning, budget development, logistical sustainment, and civilian oversight. In a further positive sign of NATO's shared commitment to the mission in Afghanistan, Member States recently extended funding to Afghanistan's National Defense and Security forces through 2024.

From increased defense capabilities to the Open Door to Afghanistan, NATO continues to show that it is a unique asset to the United States. None of this was inevitable. Over four years ago, in Wales, NATO leaders met at a moment of great uncertainty. Just months after Russia's war against Ukraine started and as the Islamic State crisis exploded, there were many concerns about the ability of the United States and Europe to face these twin challenges. From that perspective, the collective response must be considered a success: Putin has been stymied, and the Islamic State's "caliphate" is nearly routed.[9]

Hard Work Remains

Yet NATO faces no shortage of challenges. I will focus on several: first, threats from rival powers; second, emerging threats like cyber and hybrid warfare; third, enduring challenges along NATO's southern flank; and fourth, internal tensions that undermine Alliance unity.

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[6] "Most Americans Support NATO Alliance," *Gallup,* February 17, 2017
[7] "America Engaged: American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy," Dina Emltz, Ivo Daalder, Karl Friedhoff, Craig Kafura, and Lily Wojtowicz, *The Chicago Council on Global Affairs*, October 2, 2018
[8] "Resolute Support Mission: Key Facts and Figures," *NATO*, December 2018
[9] See Derek Chollet, "Why isn't Trump bragging about his NATO successes," *The Washington Post,* July 4, 2018

First, as a defensive alliance, NATO is tested every day – particularly from Russia. Moscow makes no secret of its disdain for NATO, and one of Vladimir Putin's core goals is to divide and weaken the Alliance. And recent history provides an abundance of examples. Starting with the occupation of Georgia in 2008, Russia's revanchist behavior increased in scope and size. In Ukraine, it has continued to illegally occupy Crimea since 2014. In Moldova, Russia threatens territorial integrity and sovereignty by supporting the breakaway region of Transnistria. In the skies above the Baltic Sea, NATO fighter jets regularly scramble – 110 times in 2016 alone – to confront aggressive and reckless Russian incursions of airspace.[10] In Latvia, Russia's military interrupted the nation's mobile communications network as a part of the annual Zapad exercises. Beyond these territorial threats, Russia continues to exert its influence over NATO allies and partners through election meddling and disinformation campaigns that exploit societal and political cleavages.

NATO Allies are also discussing ways they should respond to the growing military competition with China. It remains unclear how NATO should address the rising Chinese military threat, yet it is a positive sign that European partners acknowledge its priority.

Which brings us to a second set of challenges: those posed by emerging threats such as cyber and hybrid warfare. The Alliance made some modest progress in these areas. For example, NATO established the Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence in Estonia – which bolsters cyber defense by facilitating cooperation and information sharing. Furthermore, the Alliance is standing up a cyber military command center to directly confront cyber-attacks – to be opened in 2023. Despite these positive developments, emerging threats pose unique challenges, and NATO leaders concede that more needs to be done.

Third, NATO needs to maintain its focus on challenges on its southern flank. Instability endures along the Mediterranean, in the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond. In these areas, state failure, violent extremism, and refugee flows pose the primary threats to Member States. NATO is stepping up its efforts to respond to these challenges. Following up on its participation in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, NATO deployed AWACS to support the anti-ISIS mission in 2018. NATO is training the Iraqi security forces in areas such as C-IED, civil-military planning, maintaining armored vehicles, and providing medical services. And at the 2018 Brussels Summit, NATO leaders endorsed a "Package on the South," which will strengthen the Alliance's deterrence and defense posture in the Middle East and North Africa, and improve the organization's ability to manage and respond to crises and security threats emanating from the region.[11]

The fourth challenge is perhaps the most worrying: NATO is facing a growing crisis within its ranks. NATO is about much more than armaments and military capabilities; it

[10] "NATO: Russian Aircraft Intercepted 110 Times Above Baltic in 2016," Damien Sharkov, *Newsweek*, January 4, 2017

[11] "Brussels Summit Key Decisions: 11 – 12 July 2018," *NATO*, November 2018

is an Alliance rooted in common values. The preamble of the Washington Treaty stipulates that members states are "determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law."[12]

Yet democratic backsliding and nationalist politics are on the rise in too many places. This makes it harder to maintain allied unity, and raises questions about common commitment to NATO's future. These ills are seen throughout the Transatlantic space, including, I regret to say, in the United States.

Across European capitals, and in Washington itself, people are wondering whether the United States would fulfill its Article V commitment to collective defense. It did not go unnoticed that in his recent letter of resignation, former Secretary of Defense Mattis singled out his disagreements with the President's view of alliances generally, and NATO specifically, as a key reason for his departure.

For this reason, Congress has an especially urgent and important role to play in maintaining U.S. leadership in NATO. Continued support for funding of the U.S. military efforts in Europe will remain essential. So will the continued willingness of so many Members of Congress to travel to NATO Headquarters and other European capitals to show support for the Alliance and press for its continued reforms. And your legislative efforts are indispensable, whether it is your continued support for funding of U.S. efforts in NATO, or the recent passage of the bipartisan "NATO Support Act."

Remembering the Past to Imagine the Future

We must recapture the spirit that helped energize U.S. leadership in NATO in the first place – and also recall that sustaining this leadership has never been easy. We would be wise to remember history's lessons.

Almost exactly 68 years ago, a similar debate about European security gripped Washington, and specifically the U.S. Congress.[13] In early 1951, some political leaders claimed that deploying American troops to Europe to support NATO was not in the nation's best interest.

The nascent alliance was still taking shape, and it fell to General Dwight Eisenhower to create a military command structure, prod European nations to rebuild their militaries, and galvanize American support to send troops to Europe. The question of whether the United States should assume the lead in NATO and deploy significant forces proved politically explosive. Many leading members of Congress and major political figures remained skeptical.

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[12] "The North Atlantic Treaty," *NATO*, April 4, 1949

[13] The following paragraphs draw on Derek Chollet, "Republicans threatened NATO once before. Dwight Eisenhower stopped them.," *The Washington Post,* February 4, 2019

With Eisenhower's unique credibility and stature, it was his task to push back against this formidable wave of opposition, and in February 1951 he came to Capitol Hill to make his case. Speaking before both chambers of Congress, Eisenhower passionately argued for what he called the "enlightened self-interest" of American leadership in NATO.

Eisenhower was not blind to the war-weariness of the American public or the skepticism about overseas commitments. He stressed that this was not the United States' problem alone. The Europeans needed to step up as well, so the United States was not "merely an Atlas to carry the load on its shoulder." Yet Eisenhower believed the U.S. had arrived at its "decade of decision" and had a unique role to play. As he argued before Congress, Eisenhower asked "what nation is more capable, more ready, of providing this leadership than the United States"?[14]

This episode came at a pivotal moment for the Alliance. If Eisenhower had faltered and other political forces prevailed, it is hard to see how NATO, then so new and fragile, would have sustained enough U.S. political support to survive.

Back then, Dwight Eisenhower won the argument. Today, we must wage the battle anew, with some echoing the exact arguments used against NATO. As we approach NATO's 70th anniversary this spring, we must again look to Congress to embrace this mission as it did seven decades ago.

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[14] "Text of Eisenhower's Speech to Senate and House of Representatives," Dwight D. Eisenhower, *New York Times*, February 2, 1951

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chollet.
Mr. Lute.

STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS LUTE, SENIOR FELLOW, PROJECT ON EUROPE AND THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP, BELFER CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Mr. LUTE. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for bringing us together today to discuss the NATO alliance, a cornerstone of American national security policy for the last 70 years but a cornerstone that I think we all too often take for granted.

The topic of today's session is NATO at 70: An Indispensable Alliance. Coincidentally, just last month, Harvard University's Belfer Center published a report that I co-authored with Ambassador Nicholas Burns and the title of our report was "NATO at 70: An Alliance in Crisis." So as NATO approaches its 70th anniversary in just a few days both descriptions strike me as accurate. NATO is both indispensable and in crisis.

Our report outlines ten major challenges facing the alliance. These challenges are diverse, complex, and happening simultaneously. That is why we conclude that the alliance is in crisis. The report identifies four challenges from within the alliance, and others have already mentioned some of these: reviving American leadership of the alliance; restoring European defense strength that is defense spending; upholding NATO's democratic values; and streamlining NATO decisionmaking. Another four challenges come from beyond NATO's borders: containing Putin's Russia, ending the Afghan war, refocusing NATO's partnerships, and maintaining an open door to future members. Finally, the last two of the ten challenges are challenges that loom on the horizon; winning the technology battle in the digital age and competing with China.

I would like to highlight just a couple points out of this report, and request that the full report be entered into the record. First, NATO's single greatest challenge today is, for the first time in NATO's history, the absence of strong, committed U.S. Presidential leadership. Every previous President since 1949, both Democrats and Republicans, has understood the value of NATO. Most fundamentally, allies today are unsure of this President's commitment to the Article 5 collective defense commitment. This shakes the core of the alliance. Here, the U.S. Congress can play a role to reassure allies and check and balance the President, as the House did in January this year by approving the NATO Support Act. More specifically, on a bipartisan basis Congress should reaffirm regularly the U.S. commitment to NATO, should continue to fund the European defense initiative, and should pass legislation requiring congressional approval should the President attempt to alter our treaty commitments or to leave the alliance altogether. Approval of the NATO treaty in 1949 required two-thirds majority in the Senate. The same should be required to leave the alliance.

Second, Europeans must contribute more to their defense. Mr. Chairman, you mentioned this in your opening comments. I was the U.S. Ambassador to NATO in 2014 when allies committed to the 2-percent pledge. It is an appropriate and necessary metric.

Today, only seven allies reach that level of defense spending. This administration is right to hold allies to the pledge.

At the same time, however, 2 percent was never intended to be the only meaningful measure of an ally's contribution, so NATO should broaden its metrics. Most important, spending on capabilities to counter hybrid tactics including cyber attacks, disinformation campaigns, and interference in our democratic processes should be taken into account as these may represent NATO's greatest vulnerability.

Third, a challenge on the horizon, NATO needs to pay more attention to China's increasing influence in Europe, and I will leave that for now. But as it, in my view, in the coming decades NATO's importance will only grow because of the U.S. competition with China.

And, finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to point out a false narrative that ignores the values and erodes the cohesion of NATO. This false narrative claims that NATO is an anachronism, outdated and obsolete, that our allies are ripping us off taking advantage of our generosity. This is simply not true. The truth is that U.S. created NATO and has maintained the alliance for 70 years because NATO is in America's vital national security interest. America benefits economically, politically, and militarily from the alliance.

NATO and our other treaty allies are the single greatest geostrategic advantage we hold over any peer competitor. Russia and China have nothing to compare. In short, NATO is indispensable. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lute follows:]

Ambassador (Retired) Douglas E. Lute
Senior Fellow, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs
Harvard Kennedy School

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

"NATO at 70: An Indispensible Alliance"

March 13, 2019

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for bringing us together to discuss the NATO alliance, a cornerstone of American national security for the past 70 years that we too often take for granted.

The topic of today's session is "NATO at 70: An Indispensible Alliance." Just last month Harvard University's Belfer Center published a report I co-authored with Ambassador Nicholas Burns entitled "NATO at 70: An Alliance in Crisis." As NATO approaches its 70th anniversary in a few weeks, both descriptions are true: NATO is both indispensible and in crisis.

Our report outlines 10 major challenges facing the Alliance. These challenges are diverse, complex and simultaneous – that's why we conclude the Alliance is in crisis. Four challenges come from within NATO:

- Reviving American leadership of the Alliance
- Restoring European defense strength
- Upholding NATO's democratic values
- Streamlining NATO decision-making

Another four challenges come from beyond NATO's borders:

- Containing Putin's Russia
- Ending the Afghan war
- Refocusing NATO's partnerships
- Maintaining an open door to future members

Finally, two additional challenges loom on the horizon:

- Winning the technology battle in the digital age
- Competing with China

I would like to highlight a few points from the report and request that the full report be entered into the record. (https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/nato-seventy-alliance-crisis)

First, NATO's single greatest challenge is -- for the first time in NATO's history -- the absence of strong, committed US presidential leadership. Every previous president since 1949, both Democrats and Republicans, has understood the value of NATO. Most fundamentally, Allies today are unsure of our president's commitment to the Article 5 collective defense commitment. This shakes the core of the Alliance. Here the United States Congress can play a role to reassure allies and check and balance the president, as the House did in January this year by approving the NATO Support Act. More specifically, on a bipartisan basis, Congress should reaffirm regularly the U.S. commitment to NATO, continue to fund the European Defense Initiative, and pass legislation requiring Congressional approval should the president attempt to alter our treaty commitments or to leave the alliance altogether. Approval of the NATO treaty in 1949 required two-thirds majority in the Senate; the same should be required to leave the Alliance.

Second, Europeans must contribute more to their own defense. I was the US ambassador to NATO in 2014 when allies committed to the 2% pledge – it is an appropriate and necessary metric. Today only five allies reach that level of defense spending. This Administration is right to hold allies to the pledge. At the same time, however, 2% was never intended to be the only meaningful measure of an ally's contribution, so NATO should broaden its metrics. Most important, spending on capabilities to counter "hybrid tactics" like cyber attacks, disinformation campaigns and interference in our democratic processes should be taken into account, as these represent NATO's greatest vulnerability.

Third, a challenge on the horizon: NATO needs to pay attention to China's increasing influence in Europe. China's commercial investments in Europe today, especially in transportation and communications infrastructure, will lead to political influence tomorrow. The US-Chinese competition will define coming decades. The United States will be best positioned for that competition with a strong NATO alliance, 29 (soon 30) democracies that are nearly 50% of the world's GDP.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to point out a false narrative that ignores the value and erodes the cohesion of NATO. This false narrative claims that NATO is an anachronism, outdated and obsolete; that our allies are ripping us off, taking advantage of our generosity; that past presidents have been naïve and overly generous. This is simply not true. The truth is that the United States created NATO and has maintained the alliance for 70 years because NATO is in America's vital national security interest. America benefits economically, politically and militarily from the Alliance. NATO and our other treaty allies are the single greatest geo-strategic advantage we hold over any potential peer competitor. Russia and China have nothing to compare. This simple truth is why NATO is worth leading, worth sustaining, and worth improving as it faces a daunting array of challenges. In short, NATO is indispensible.

Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Lute.
Mr. Brzezinski.

STATEMENT OF IAN BRZEZINSKI, RESIDENT SENIOR FELLOW, TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY INITIATIVE, ATLANTIC COUNCIL

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, distinguished members of the committee, as we approach NATO's 70th anniversary thank you for conducting this hearing and allowing me to participate in this stock-taking of the alliance.

NATO is an invaluable alliance. The transatlantic security architecture it provides has transformed former adversaries into allies and deterred outside aggression; European allies that are secure and at peace are inherently better able to work with the United States addressing challenges beyond Europe. NATO has been a powerful force multiplier for the United States. Time and time again, European, Canadian, and U.S. military personnel have served and sacrificed shoulder to shoulder on battlefields in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the world.

The alliance provides the United States with the ability to leverage unmatched political, economic, and military power. NATO's actions benefit from the political legitimacy unique to this community of democracies. Its economic power, a combined total of some $40 trillion in GDP, dwarfs that of any rival. No other military alliance can feel the force as capable as NATO.

These assets only become more important in today's increasingly challenging security environment. That environment features, one, the return of great power competition featuring Russia's revanchist ambitions and China's growing assertiveness; second, a disturbing erosion of the rules-based order that has been the foundation of peace, freedom, and prosperity around the globe; third, a growing collision between liberal democracy and authoritarian nationalism.

Another significant dynamic is what some call the fourth industrial revolution. It features the advent of hypersonic weapons, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and other technologies. These capabilities portend to radically redefine the requirements of military stability and security. These are reasons why NATO has only become more important.

But as we look forward, NATO's agenda must include the following five priorities: First, the alliance must accelerate its efforts to increase its preparedness for high-intensity conflict. After the cold war, NATO's force posture shifted toward peacekeeping and counterinsurgency. These were the demands generated by operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Today, Russia's military aggressions and sustained military buildup have reanimated the need to prepare for high-intensity warfare, the likes of which we have not had to face since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This is a matter of real concern.

It is notable—it is deeply concerning that the commander of the United States European Command last week testified that he is not yet, quote, "comfortable with the deterrent posture we have in Europe". He warned that, quote, "a theater not sufficiently set for full spectrum contingency operations poses increased risk for our ability to compete, deter aggression, and prevail in conflict, if necessary", end quote.

This reality underscores a second NATO priority. Canada and our European allies must invest more to increase their military capability and readiness for these kinds of contingencies. Their investments must address key NATO shortfalls including air and missile defense, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance and long-range fires, among others. Time is long overdue for these allies to carry their share of the security burden.

Third, NATO must reinforce, must further reinforce its flanks in North Central Europe, the Black Sea Region, and the Arctic. These are foci of Russia's military buildup, provocations, and aggression. In North Central Europe the challenge is acute. The alliance has four Enhanced Forward Presence battalions stationed in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. They are positioned against divisions of Russian ground forces backed by sophisticated aircraft, air defense, helicopters, ships, and missiles.

Fourth, the alliance must more substantially embrace and support the membership aspirations of the Ukraine and Georgia. NATO enlargement is one of the great success stories of post-cold war Europe. It expanded the zone of peace and stability in that region and strengthened the alliance's military capability. But the alliance needs to provide Ukraine and Georgia a clear path to membership, recognizing it will take them time to meet the alliance's political and military requirements.

There is a clear lesson from Moscow's invasions of Ukraine and Georgia. NATO's hesitancy regarding membership aspirations of these two nations has only animated Vladimir Putin's sense of opportunity to reassert Moscow's control over what has been allowed to become a destabilizing gray zone in Europe's strategic landscape.

Finally, the alliance needs to actively consider the role it will play in the West's relationship with China. I agree with Doug. While China is not an immediate threat, military threat to Europe, its actions against the rule-based international order affects Europe as it does America. NATO can play a constructive, if not significant role in the West's strategy to shaping a more cooperative relationship with Beijing.

As the United States confronts the challenges of the 21st century, there is no instrument more essential, indeed, more indispensable than NATO. The political influence, economic power, and military might available through this community of democracies cannot be sustained in the absence of a robust U.S. military commitment to the alliance. That is the price of leadership and it is one whose returns have been consistently advantageous to the United States. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Brzezinski follows:]

Prepared Statement
By
Ian J. Brzezinski
Resident Senior Fellow, Brent Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, Atlantic Council
Before
Committee on Foreign Affairs, United States House of Representatives

Hearing on "NATO at 70: An Indispensable Alliance"
13 March 2019

Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for conducting this hearing and sharing the opportunity to highlight the value of the NATO Alliance.

As we approach the Alliance's 70th anniversary on April 4th, we should also note that this is a year of other significant transatlantic anniversaries. This November will mark thirty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War. Yesterday, was the 20th anniversary of the accession of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary to NATO and on March 29th we will cross the 15th anniversary of accession of seven other central European democracies into the Alliance – the "big bang" round of NATO enlargement. These are important milestones in the effort to build a transatlantic community featuring a Europe that is "whole, free and at peace" – and they underscore the success of NATO.

Thus, it is an opportune time to take stock of the Alliance and its pivotal role in transatlantic security, the challenges before this unique community of democracies, and what needs to be done to strengthen the Alliance and adapt it to current and anticipated realities.

NATO provides a transatlantic security architecture that has sustained peace among its members on a continent that over the last two centuries was ravaged by some six major wars, including two world wars. Through sustained US leadership, the Alliance's consensus based decision making process, and its joint commands, exercises and operations, NATO has helped transform former adversaries into partners and deterred outside aggression. European democracies that are secure and at peace are inherently better able to work with the United States in addressing challenges within and beyond the North Atlantic arena.

The Alliance has been a powerful force multiplier for the United States. It generates among our allies -- and a growing number of NATO partners -- militaries that are interoperable with the US armed forces and that have earned the confidence of our military commanders. Time and time again European, Canadian and US soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines have served and sacrificed shoulder to shoulder on battlefields often far from Europe, in places like Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world.

Above all, the Alliance provides the United States the ability to leverage unmatched political, economic and military power. NATO's actions benefit from the political legitimacy

unique to this transatlantic community of democracies. The economic power of this community – a combined total of over $39 trillion in GDP -- dwarfs that of any rival. The Alliance's military capability remains unsurpassed. No other military alliance can field a force as integrated and as capable as NATO.

NATO's value to the United States has only increased in today's increasingly complex and dynamic security environment. This committee has repeatedly documented the return of great power competition driven by Russia's revanchist ambitions and China's growing assertiveness. Moscow's invasions of Ukraine and Georgia, its military provocations, assassinations, interference in foreign elections and abandonment of international arms control treaties are but one set of examples of how the rules based order that has been a driver of peace, freedom and prosperity around the globe is under threat.

The collision between liberal democracy and authoritarian nationalism is another profound feature of today's security environment. The latter's emergence among NATO's own member states has indigenous causes, but it is also being fueled significantly by both Moscow and Beijing, in large part to weaken and sow division within the West.

And, the world today is on the cusp of what some call the fourth industrial revolution featuring the advent of hypersonic weapons, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and other technologies that promise to transform the battlefield and redefine the requirements of military stability and security.

When navigating these challenges to protect US values and interests, NATO's military capacity as well as the political and economic power offered by this community of democracies only becomes more essential.

Despite its advantages, NATO and its member states must still adapt in order for this Alliance to remain effective in the new and evolving security environment. Toward this end, NATO must address the following five challenges:

First, the Alliance must accelerate its efforts to increase preparedness for high-intensity conflict. Following the end of the Cold War, the Alliance's force posture shifted toward the requirements of peacekeeping and counter-insurgency. These were demands generated by operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Today, Russia's military aggressions and provocations and sustained military build-up, particularly in its Western Military district, underscore the renewed need to defend against high intensity warfare contingencies, the likes of which we have not had to face since end the Cold War.

The Alliance's readiness for such contingencies is a matter of real concern. It is notable that General Curtis Scaparrotti, the Commander of United States European Command, testified last week that he is not yet "comfortable with the deterrent posture that we have in Europe" and warned that "a theater not sufficiently set for full-spectrum contingency operations poses increased risk to our ability to compete, deter aggression, and prevail in conflict if necessary."

Addressing this challenge is the responsibility of all NATO allies. **This is the second challenge before NATO. Our European Allies and Canada must invest more to increase the capability and readiness of their armed forces.** Their investments must address key NATO shortfalls, including air and missile defense, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), and long-range fires, among others. Europe must build the infrastructure necessary to facilitate the rapid movement of heavy forces to NATO's frontiers in times of crisis and conflict.

It is true that our Allies are finally making tangible progress toward meeting their longstanding commitment to spend an equivalent of 2% GDP on defense. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg recently stated that since 2017, our European Allies and Canada have increased their defense spending by $41 billion and that figure is on track to increase to $100 billion by 2020. That is real progress and it must continue.

The 2% benchmark and the concurrent commitment by NATO allies to direct 20% of defense spending into military procurement provides a simple, politically useful metric to prod more equitable burdensharing. However, its effectiveness can and should be reinforced in two ways. First, NATO should reanimate the inspections it used during the Cold War to assess the readiness, deployability and sustainability of committed Allied military units. Such inspections should be executed by one the Alliance's two strategic commands, NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe and Allied Command Transformation. Data from such inspections should be reported to NATO Defense ministers and, where possible, incorporated into the annual public reports the NATO Secretary General publishes on Allied defense spending.

Third, NATO needs to reinforce its increasingly vulnerable flanks in North Central Europe, the Black Sea region and the Arctic where military stability has been undermined by Russia's military build-up, provocations, and aggression. In North Central Europe, the challenge is acute where the Alliance's four Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) battalions stationed in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are juxtaposed against divisions of Russian airborne, mechanized infantry, artillery, and tank units and the sophisticated aircraft, air defense, helicopters, ships, and missiles that support them.

If these NATO battalions are to be a truly effective deterrent against an aggressor of this magnitude, they must be able to survive for at least a limited amount of time amidst an aggressive attack. They must have sufficient lethality to impose costs on the adversary, and the Alliance must have a demonstrable capacity to reinforce them in real time. To become truly credible, NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence must be a central focus of the Alliance's readiness initiatives and the investment priorities of NATO member states.

Fourth, the Alliance must more substantially embrace and support the membership aspirations of Ukraine and Georgia. NATO enlargement has been one of the great success stories of post-Cold War Europe. The extension of NATO membership to Central European democracies reinforced peace and security in Europe and strengthened the Alliance's military

capability. The newest members of the Alliance have been among Europe's most stalwart transatlanticists and most willing to contribute to US-led operations, including those beyond Europe.

The recent accession of Montenegro and the impending accession of Macedonia to NATO are important steps toward completing the vision of an undivided Europe, but the Alliance needs to also provide Ukraine and Georgia a clear path to NATO membership, recognizing it will take them time to meet the political and military requirements.

Toward this end, these two nations should be more deeply incorporated into the maritime, air, and ground force initiatives the United States and NATO is developing for the Black Sea region. Their territories would be useful to anti-submarine, air-defense, surveillance, and other operations needed to counter Russia's efforts to leverage its occupation of Crimea into an anti-access/area-denial bastion spanning that sea. And, NATO Allies should expand the lethal security assistance provided to Georgia and Ukraine to include anti-aircraft systems, anti-ship missiles and other capabilities that would enhance their capacities for self-defense.

One clear lesson from Moscow's invasions of Ukraine and Georgia is that the ambiguity of these two countries' relationships with the Alliance only whetted the appetite of Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, and animated his sense of opportunity to reassert Moscow's hegemony over what has been allowed to become a de facto and destabilizing grey zone in Europe's strategic landscape.

Finally, the Alliance needs to actively consider the role it will play in the West's relationship with China. While China is not an immediate military threat to Europe, its actions against the rule based international order affects Europe as it does America. The Alliance should expand and deepen its network of partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region that now include, among others, Japan, Korea, and Australia. As the transatlantic community's military arm, NATO can play a constructive, if not significant role, in the West's broader diplomatic, economic and military strategy to counter China's provocative actions and to shape a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with Beijing.

As the United States confronts the complex and dynamic challenges of the 21st century, there is no instrument more essential -- and indispensable -- than NATO. The political influence, economic power, and military might available through this community of democracies cannot be sustained in the absence of a robust US military commitment to the Alliance. That is the price of leadership, and it is one whose returns have been consistently advantageous to the United States.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Brzezinski.

Let me ask this question and let me have, starting with Ms. Flournoy, let me have each of you answer this.

NATO has been called the most successful political-military alliance in history. Yet, as we have all mentioned, some critics have claimed that NATO is obsolete or that the U.S. shares too large of a burden within the alliance. The architects of the alliance—Truman, Acheson, Marshall, and Eisenhower—would be incredulous to learn that their creation, NATO and the lasting Atlantic partnership, is now in question.

Let me ask each of you, in your previous positions, would you have been able to execute our foreign policy and national security objectives without the support and contributions from our allies in NATO?

Ms. Flournoy, let's start with you.

Ms. FLOURNOY. No. The short answer is no. NATO was a critical partner in enabling us to surge forces in Afghanistan. They were a critical partner in bolstering deterrence in Europe in the face of a more assertive and aggressive Russia. And NATO members individually have been critical partners in other operations like counterterrorism the world over.

So NATO, in my experience, remained absolutely critical. It is the first place we would turn to for partners to accomplish shared objectives.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Chollet.

Mr. CHOLLET. Mr. Chairman, I completely agree with that. In my capacity at the Pentagon serving for the Secretary of Defense, three times a year we would travel to NATO headquarters in Brussels to meet with his minister of defense counterparts. Secretary of State has their own meetings with their counterparts. And this became a way for us to coordinate, to plan, and to talk about crisis response and also issues over the horizon.

NATO was absolutely our partner of first resort and much of what we have been able to accomplish in Europe and elsewhere is unimaginable without having such a strong, enduring alliance.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Lute.

Mr. LUTE. Mr. Chairman, I can only agree. I would argue further that as Ms. Flournoy mentioned in her opening comments, if we did not have NATO today when we confronted the kind of challenges that the panel has outlined, we would actually be racing to discover NATO and to invent NATO. So it is, in fact, indispensable.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Brzezinski.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I concur with my colleagues. We would not have been able to execute what we have done in Afghanistan and Iraq and the Balkans without our NATO allies. Sitting in the Pentagon, I saw firsthand how absolutely invaluable it is to have other countries whose militaries are not only fully interoperable, but have deep personal relationships among their commanders, among their NCOs. That is the reason why when we have a contingency that requires multinational support we turn to our NATO allies first. NATO is indispensable to U.S.

security and too often to U.S. military operations beyond our border.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Mr. Brzezinski, let me just stay with you and expand on something that you mentioned. I could not agree with you more when you spoke about NATO enlargement. I think NATO, frankly, missed the boat back in 2008 when they did not expand to include Ukraine and Georgia. I think that gave Putin the idea that he could do whatever he wanted and that we would not stand up to him, including all his things in Crimea [and all his other belligerent actions.]

So I do not know if you wanted to expand on that. I just wanted to say that I agree with your comments.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Thank you, sir. You know, when we look at the Black Sea Region, that is a zone of increasing confrontation with Russia. I do agree with you that if we had provided Ukraine and Georgia a more robust commitment to their transatlantic aspirations it is less likely that Putin would have made his move against Georgia and it is even less likely they would have made its move against Ukraine.

Putin thrives on weakness and he exploits hesitancy and uncertainty. And unfortunately the West's posture toward these two countries has created a de facto gray zone in European security and that just whets the appetite of someone like Putin. He sees an opportunity or senses there is a lack of commitment to support another country along its border in the former Soviet space. He sees that as an opportunity to reanimate the hegemony that Moscow exerted during the cold war. That is what he is about and unfortunately that is the position that we have put these countries in.

And it is sad, because these countries seek NATO membership and more often than not they have actually sent troops to support our operations in the Balkans and in Afghanistan. I remember the dramatic footage of a Georgian platoon fighting in Afghanistan defending our embassy and doing a really good job of it. They need more support than we are providing them.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Ms. Flournoy, let me ask you this. What would be the consequences of pulling our troops home or reducing the size of the U.S. presence in Europe? How would it impact our ability to project power globally and could an ad hoc coalition take the place of our NATO basing and alliance network? If not, why not?

Ms. FLOURNOY. As we saw during the surge in Afghanistan and our combat mission there, our basing in Europe was absolutely critical as a hub for our rotational forces going in and out of that conflict. In addition, the fact that we had been in Europe working with our allies in exercises and training and constantly working on interoperability, we experienced the benefits of that when we had to deploy together whether it was in the Balkans or Afghanistan or elsewhere. So that basing has been a critical hub.

Now that there is a returned threat to Europe itself with Russia's behavior that those bases become absolutely critical as a both a symbol of the U.S. commitment and resolve to defend Europe and our interests there, but also, a caution, a blinking yellow light to Vladimir Putin to say, if you come into NATO, cross NATO's bor-

ders, you are immediately declaring war not only with Europe but with the United States.

So I think it is very important to maintain and strengthen—there are things I would do to strengthen that infrastructure in Europe, but I think it is very important to maintain it as a starting point.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

A few of you have mentioned China as a country that we need to be looking at very carefully for its aggressiveness and what it might do in the future. I am wondering if any of you would, Mr. Chollet or Mr. Lute, would you want to comment on that?

Mr. CHOLLET. Well, I can take a first crack. I think China is something that NATO members need to begin to engage more seriously. I think there is more talk in Europe about looking at China as a security threat. Of course there has been a lot of news recently about disputes between the United States and some European partners on China's investment particularly in the technology space within Europe, but we are seeing China invest in infrastructure in Europe, ports, critical technologies, engaging more in the high north, and China engaging much more with Russia.

Last year, there was a very large exercise in the Far East called Vostok–18 that involved hundreds of thousands of Russian troops, thousands of Chinese troops, and this is something that got a lot of attention by our military commanders in Europe and in Asia. It is evidence of greater cooperation between Russia and China, cooperation that our intelligence community has testified publicly before Congress as something they are watching.

So although there are many aspects to the China challenge and the security piece is just one, I think this is something that I see NATO engaging much more deeply in, in the coming five to 10 years and I think that there is a willingness in Europe to do so.

Mr. LUTE. Mr. Chairman, I am not so concerned about China's military impact on Europe, but I am concerned about, as Derek Chollet mentioned, China's increasing commercial influence. It is buying its way into transportation infrastructure, IT communications infrastructure and so forth. We have seen early signs that those commercial investments are leading to political influence. They expect a political return on their commercial investment.

And even more I think strategically important over the next two to three decades, it is clear that the U.S.-Chinese competition will be at the forefront of world politics. And we should ask ourselves as Americans, do we wish to compete with China alone or would we favor an arrangement where we have 29 like-minded allies on our side as we enter into this geostrategic competition that is going to define the rest of our lives? I would clearly prefer to go in with a NATO team.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

I am going to go to Mr. Smith of New Jersey.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, let me say unequivocally, I believe the value of NATO is absolute or as near absolute as it gets to mitigate war, to deter, and when there is a problem to act decisively as a team to thwart any potential adversary. I do not think it is at risk. I think there is a lot of hyperbole about NATO's continuance being

thrown about. I do not think it is at risk at all. I have been in Congress for 39 years. There is bipartisan support for it. There is White House support for it. So I think there is a lot of hyperbole about that issue.

I led a delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We had a bilateral with the Germans with members of the Bundestag as well as other people in their defense establishment there last July, and I came away profoundly disturbed by their unwillingness and inability to meet that 2 percent GDP target. As a matter of fact, it is at 1.24 percent now and their excuse is—and I would appreciate perhaps Mr. Lute or others who might want to speak to this where—well, their population just will not go along with that kind of defense increase.

It is OK for the U.S. to do it. I am glad we do. But to step up and say they cannot do this politically I thought was as weak as it gets, if you could speak to that.

Second, to Michele Flournoy, during the 2012 Presidential election you appeared in a political commercial in reaction to Mitt Romney's statement "that Russia was our No. 1 geopolitical foe." You stated in the commercial that it is really a curious statement given that the cold war has been over for some time, indicating that Russia was not the threat that Mr. Romney had suggested and that he was stuck in the past.

In your testimony before us today, however, you term Russia "revisionist," and cite Moscow's continued aggression in the region. I was in Tbilisi a week after they invaded South Ossetia. Anyone who had any thoughts that Putin was somehow matriculating from dictatorship to democratic leader—I will sell you the Brooklyn Bridge if you believe that.

And they might have even gone further if there was not at least some strong statements coming out of the administration at that point, but I was wondering if you could tell us which of those statements should the committee believe today.

Third, let me ask with regards to INSTEX, many of us are very concerned about the roundabout efforts that are being made by many, including Germany, France, and the U.K., to undermine our ability to sanction, whether it be Global Magnitsky or whether it be our efforts against Tehran. When you find some other way of circumventing what the U.S. is doing with often very strong support of the Congress, I think it undermines our ability to promote Iranian regime sanctions that in my opinion are very justified as well as again the Global Magnitsky Act.

Mr. Lute, if you could maybe start on that first, what about Germany? I mean 1.24 percent is weak and it is, in my opinion, indefensible.

Mr. LUTE. Congressman, I can only agree with you. Germany was present at the Wales Summit. Germany agreed as all allies did on the 2-percent pledge and Germany is underperforming at 1.24 percent. It is the largest, strongest economy in the alliance next to ours. It is a political ally that aspires to European and maybe even global leadership, and leadership comes with a price.

And this is simply a matter of German political leaders coming together and forming a coalition as their system requires and building political support for this. Political support does not fall

from trees. It has to be built as the Congress obviously knows. So I can only agree with you. There is no excuse.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes, Congressman. So I did make that statement and it was at a time when we were actually having some success in cooperation with Russia. This is before Putin sort of increased his more aggressive behavior. We were negotiating New START arms control. We were policing up nuclear materials, and cleaning out proliferation risks. We had Russian agreement to allow us to transit Russian territory and their near abroad——

Mr. SMITH. I understand. But——

Ms. FLOURNOY. So I am just saying it was a moment in time. I think now looking back, knowing what we know now and how Putin has behaved and where Russia has gone with its aggression, I think that I would revise that statement or I would not have made that statement.

Mr. SMITH. I appreciate it.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I would have thought that now, you know, Romney had a certain degree of foresight that I think was not apparent at the time.

Mr. SMITH. OK. And Romney was not alone in that. Many of us strongly objected to those kinds——

Ms. FLOURNOY. Right, but I think we can all agree that Russia is——

Mr. SMITH. Matter of fact, I am glad Secretary Albright said it as well——

Ms. FLOURNOY [continuing]. Very much a threat today.

Mr. SMITH [continuing]. That we underestimated Russia.

And that last question, if anybody can speak to it, circumventing our sanctions regimes with and working actively against us and there are members of NATO doing it with INSTEX.

Mr. CHOLLET. Well, it—yes, on the Russia or on Iran and the JCPOA, obviously that has not been a NATO issue although NATO members are very much party to this dispute. And of course this issue has been incredibly divisive between the U.S. and Europe and will remain divisive. Europe is indeed trying to find a way to maintain the integrity of the JCPOA with this new mechanism. I have my doubts, frankly, whether this new mechanism is going to get anywhere. They just launched it, whether it will prove successful or not.

Nevertheless, whether that exists or not there will still remain a profound disagreement with our U.S. and European partners on the JCPOA and how to handle the threat from Iran's nuclear program. That is not a subject—the JCPOA specifically is not a subject that NATO talks much about within the councils of Brussels. However, the threat from Iran is something that NATO talks about around the table in Brussels and thinks quite a bit about from a military planning perspective.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank all of the witnesses.

You know, NATO has undoubtedly been one of the most successful alliances in history promoting peace, security, democracy since

its inception. And at the signing of the original Washington treaty 70 years ago, President Truman remarked that NATO would, and I quote, "would create a shield against aggression and fear of aggression, a bulwark which will permit us to get on with the real business of achieving a fuller and happier life for all of our citizens." To me those words are truer now than ever before. And prior to this administration, it would have been unimaginable to question the value of our NATO alliance and pass resolutions prohibiting the President from pulling out of this strategic partnership of which he has threatened to do and yet that is exactly where we are here, why, where we are today.

And when I was recently in attendance at the Munich Security Conference, I was deeply concerned that at that time not just a few weeks ago, that the President went on to Twitter to threaten the release of 800 captured ISIS fighters on the streets of Europe. Just think about that for a second. Today, we are here in agreement on the importance of NATO, a point that I think our President disregards.

And the only thing I will say also in regards to Germany, I understand that they need to step up. But they are not talking about building a wall, they are letting millions of refugees in and spending money on that. Not building a wall to separate themselves, but accepting many individuals and trying to make sure that there is better integration into the European—and they do not get credit for that.

And just think about that cost to the German people and what the Chancellor is subjecting herself to by just doing that. And those things should be taken into consideration at all times, I think, and we do not talk about that enough where we are building a wall and separating people and dividing people and not supporting our NATO.

So let me ask Ms. Flournoy that how has President Trump's questioning of the value of our NATO allies affected our ability to effectively push back against Russia's aggression?

And I agree with you because I too was fooled. I started, that is the reason why I was a supporter of PNTR right before Putin came back. I thought that we were moving in a post-cold war and Putin came back and we are where we are. But how effectively did we push back against Russia's aggression, and address other security challenges that is now confronted in Europe.

Ms. FLOURNOY. So for all the strength of our military to military cooperation with our allies, I think the statements coming from the President questioning not only our allies' contributions but the U.S. commitment to NATO and the value of the alliance, I think that has frankly played right into Vladimir Putin's hands. If you look at Russia's objectives, Putin is trying to reassert Russia as a great power. He is trying to recreate a sphere of influence.

And he is going to try to undermine democracy as a model of government. There is nothing that makes him happier than to see division inside the alliance, to try to so division and weaken the transatlantic relationship, and so this is playing right into Putin's hands.

He is—this is far more effective than the disinformation campaigns that he has been launching that the meddling in our elec-

tions and European elections has resulted in. So I think we—I am very worried that at the strategic level the lack of U.S. clear commitment and resolve and consistency and leadership in the alliance is frankly strengthening Putin's hand and undermining our own.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you.

Mr. Chollet, let me ask you, because NATO has an open-door policy and we now look that maybe North Macedonia, a new ally and part of the NATO. Now what would you say to those who argue against NATO's enlargement, and are there any real concerns that newer, smaller members of NATO could drag us into a conflict, and can you elaborate on why enlargement has benefited NATO?

Mr. CHOLLET. Well, as my fellow panelists have said, NATO enlargement, in my view, is one of the great success stories of the NATO alliance. It was just yesterday that we celebrated the 20th anniversary of NATO's first round of post-cold war enlargement letting in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

Something that the United States—it is important to remember a process U.S. drove and brought these countries into the alliance working with our partners. I think, first, having more capable partners serves the U.S. interest and the process of getting into NATO just does not happen overnight. This is a long, rigorous process that requires many, many political and military reforms from member States.

So I think it is very, very important that to achieve our goals of having more capable partners and ensuring that we have a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace, that we keep this door open. That is why I think we should celebrate the fact that North Macedonia appears on the cusp of entering the alliance later this year.

And I want to concur with my colleague, Mr. Brzezinski, that it is very important for the alliance to clarify a pathway for it, for those allies that has already said 1 day we will be in the alliance and that is Georgia and Ukraine, and I think it is time to try to take the next step in our articulating more concretely how that will happen.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. McCaul.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, Russia has been in violation of the INF Treaty for many years. Putin has indicated his intent to build new and more sophisticated missiles to threaten our allies. I agreed with the President's decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty and I commend our NATO allies for supporting that decision unanimously.

Mr. Brzezinski and I guess Mr. Chollet, what can NATO do now to prevent this and deter this Russia missile development program?

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Thank you, sir. You know, the Russians have been in violation of INF Treaty for some at least 10 years. And when you have one party of a treaty not abiding by it, its utility diminishes and maybe even becomes counterproductive if you are not willing to directly address that digression, that violation.

Mr. MCCAUL. OK.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. I think the administration made the smart move in pulling out or announcing its intent to withdraw from the INF Treaty. I think it has wisely signaled to the Russians that if they are ready and demonstrate that they will destroy the existing in-

ventory of intermediate range missiles they have built—and I think it is about a brigade's worth—that we will go back. I think that is the right thing to do.

The goal is to now figure out how we can avoid another destabilizing arms race, so to speak, an arms race with two sides building nuclear-capable, intermediate range missiles ground launched. That is what the INF pulled off the table, so to speak.

Looking forward, I think the following things: One, it would be useful for—if the Russians will not take up the administration's offer, we might consider proposing to the Russians an agreement in which we would agree that we will not deploy nuclear-capable, ground launch, intermediate range missiles. We could complement that maybe with limits on the number of missiles each side can have, and of course this would have to include also very, very robust inspection regimes. We could consider joint renunciation of not—renunciation of deploying nuclear INF range missiles.

Our response also has to figure out what would we do as the Russians move forward with these deployments, and there are conventional responses we can take into account, the deployment of more robust air and missile defense systems.

If there is one thing that it lacking in the administration's response, I think it is as follows: They have not publicly stated what are the implications of this violation. They have just said basically they are in violation and so therefore we are going to get out of it.

To me, but it is clear this can be potentially extremely destabilizing and the administration should be articulating in how is it destabilizing, what are the military implications of this. I am wondering if they tasked the alliance or NATO's military commander to do an assessment of what happens if the Russians deploy a hundred, 200, 500 of these systems. What are the implications for the alliance's posture? What should be the response? Such an assessment and such a public articulation of such an assessment would do a lot to help garner a more public and international support for the administration's position.

Mr. MCCAUL. In the remaining time I have I want the other three to comment. Turkey has become a precarious ally in many ways. Their rejection of the Patriot missiles and now willingness to buy the Russian S–400 missile system is a challenge for NATO members, and the NATO Supreme Allied Commander said that if they went ahead with this purchase that the United States should not follow through with selling them F–35s.

Could Michele and Mr. Chollet and Mr. Lute, could you comment on that?

Mr. CHOLLET. Congressman, I completely agree with your assessment of the concern of Turkey's purchase of the Russian air defense system. This has been something that going back to the Obama Administration has been made clear to Turkish counterparts the mistake this would be both in terms of what we believe is their cooperation within NATO and the fact that there would be real consequences beyond NATO, as you mentioned the F–35, for example, and so one would hope that the Turks change their minds on this.

I am doubtful, having had conversations with some Turkish officials recently that they are going to do so. They feel quite defiant

about it. I think this would be a mistake. It would weaken alliance unity. This is one of those issues that is an irritant in alliance debates.

And Turkey is a front line partner. I mean Turkey has been, we should not forget, been living with a hot war on its border for quite some time. And so there many ways NATO has come to Turkey's support as it has dealt with the ramifications of the Syria crisis. But——

Mr. MCCAUL. My time is—if I could just get a quick response from Ms. Flournoy and Mr. Lute. And I apologize.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I was not fully supportive of General Scaparrotti's testimony in terms of it from a technical and, you know, intelligence risk perspective. It is impossible if they go ahead with the deployment of this for hundreds and integrate that into their systems, it will mean, it will create very real constraints on what we are able to do with them in terms of any kind of advanced defense cooperation or future, provision of future systems including the F–35.

And so I think this is a real problem, and what Turkey needs to understand is that they are making not just tactical choices, systems choices, but strategic choices and this will limit their ability to cooperate effectively within the alliance.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Lute.

Mr. LUTE. I agree this is a tactical bad choice on behalf of Turkey. But the broader, more strategic issue is Turkey's significant slippage from the democratic values of the alliance. There is no ally among the 29 who has slipped further and faster from the founding core values of the alliance and has moved toward authoritarianism. So that is the big strategic issue.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to get back to the earlier remarks about China. You know, 2 weeks ago I was in Munich and in Brussels talking to political and security leaders as well as NATO leaders, and came away with the strong feeling that in the longer term that China could be our greatest challenge right now. If we were going to look back 25 years from now if things stay the same, that is where I think we might be showing we have the greatest concern.

So I would just like to go further with this. There is so much Chinese activity investments. They just purchased a robotics company in Germany. They are working with Hungary with proposed rail lines through Serbia. Bulgaria, they are doing investments in ports, all with strings attached. And we are hearing in North Africa some of the buyers' remorse from some of the countries that have been dealing with China, but in Europe this is a real threat.

So what can our NATO members do to insulate members from this? What can the U.S. do? I know I am involved in alternatives in terms of energy investment, alternatives in Europe to provide more options and to help our exporting now that we are in there, but what kind of things can we do to insulate ourselves and to deal with what I think is the greatest long-range threat that we have through China and these investments?

Ms. FLOURNOY. If I may, sir, I think it is an excellent question. I do think the strategic competition with China will be kind of the pacing issue for our national security going forward. Europe is sort of a back door to get in to get Western technology for China. If they cannot—if they are thwarted in their intellectual property theft from us, they will try to get it through our European allies.

They are making infrastructure investments. The case of the port in Italy is just the most recent example. Not because of some economic driver, but because they are trying to get political influence, they are trying to gain leverage. And ultimately they are also, with their companies like Huawei and others, trying to put in networks an infrastructure that could be used by the State for intelligence and espionage purposes in the future if it came to that. So we have to be very clear-eyed. I think we want to intensify our discussions with each of our NATO partners in Europe and the EU. We want to encourage them to put in place CFIUS-like regulation, meaning they need to be very careful to review foreign investment in their countries from a national security perspective and be very clear-eyed. We need to be doing better in sharing intelligence about, what we see China doing.

But to Doug's point earlier, Ambassador Lute's point, we are missing an opportunity. The best way for the U.S. to compete with China is, first of all, to invest at home in our domestic drivers of competence, but also to band together with our European allies and our Asian allies. Together we are 60 percent of the world's GDP. If we were taking China on not in a bilateral tariff tit-for-tat kind of dispute, but banding together with the EU, Japan, Korea, all of our allies in Asia, we would have so much more leverage to force China into to address some of the unfair practices that it has had on trade over the years.

Mr. KEATING. I could not agree with you more. I think we are talking just the opposite approach. Tariffs are divisive and if we ever move on the automobile tariffs it will be more divisive. It is a lose-lose proposition.

But we share the same values with our European Union allies and it is those values that are in competition right now with China and why not deal from a position of strength and move forward for free trade agreements there and then really be in a strength position to deal with China? So I could not agree more.

Just one quick question, you know, the elections are coming in Europe and we are seeing, you know, I think democracies more a threat with autocratic leaders and autocratic. How is that backslide a concern and what can we do with the NATO countries and our European allies to try and help in that regard?

Mr. CHOLLET. Congressman, I can take a crack at that. It is a big concern. The democratic backsliding we are seeing in many countries in the alliance is something that is becoming increasingly divisive within the alliance and making it harder to maintain alliance unity. There is not just disputes between the U.S. and European partners, there are disputes within Europe over the direction of politics on the continent.

That is why I think it is important to remember NATO's core, which is the values. It is a military alliance, but it is about much, much more than capabilities. And I think that is why it is so im-

portant for NATO to remain strong, for the U.S. to uphold those values and remain committed to its leadership in the alliance. A lot of these issues have nothing to do with NATO, but NATO as that core of the transatlantic partnership will be an absolutely indispensable tool in helping us address some of the democratic backsliding in the European Union.

Mr. KEATING. Well, thank you. I would just say it has everything to do with it too, if you look at it from that perspective. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. And thank you very much, Chairman Engel and Republican leader McCaul. What extraordinary time to have recognition of the 70th anniversary of NATO and I want to thank each of you for being here. And as I think of the 70th anniversary of NATO, we now have the broadest spread of freedom and democracy than in the history of the world. Particularly with the former Warsaw Pact members now members of NATO, how exciting this is and the success of NATO needs to be recognized.

Mr. Brzezinski, Secretary General Stoltenberg has actually praised the President for his efforts to have all of the members of NATO increase their participation financially. What is your view about the financial contributions by our NATO allies?

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. I think those contributions are still short. They are making improvement. Secretary General Stoltenberg likes to emphasize that since 2016 we have had a $41 billion increase in their defense spending and it is on track to be $100 billion by 2020. That is good and it should be recognized.

I think it is actually eight countries now that are going to be this year at the 2-percent mark and ten have pledged to meet that by 2024, which is progress, but there are about to be 30 members in the alliance, so we are just over 50 percent of the alliance living up to the 2-percent pledge. It is urgent, because challenges that we face today are growing increasingly ominous. I mean the risks posed by Russia's military buildup in North Central Europe in the Black Sea Region require more robust investment.

We were talking about Germany. It is appalling the German spending levels particularly in the light of the readiness of their forces. I am not convinced they really have the capability to even generate two brigades in 30 days to reinforce NATO's Eastern frontier and they are in the backyard, so to speak.

So yes, there is progress being made. I think the administration can be commended for prodding that process in sometimes undiplomatic way, sometimes even a counterproductive way, but the progress is happening but a lot more needs to be done. Fifty percent meeting 2 percent is not sufficient. That is not the instate we see. We need a hundred percent commitment to 2 percent and we need to kind of, think more broadly about how we measure the outputs of that 2 percent.

I would like to see a return to inspections of committed allied forces. That is, during the cold war I think it was SHAPE, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, would do inspections of the forces that NATO members committed to alliance operations or

alliance contingency plans. Those inspections ought to be reinstated.

They could be conducted by SHAPE or Allied Command Transformation, and they ought to be reported to the ministers. And I think there ought to be a public dimension of that reporting because that is a good way to increase the pressure on governments and also to get public's confidence that their money is being well spent.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you. Another, to me, extraordinary achievement has been NATO forces being placed in the Baltic republics-Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania-the presence of American troops in Poland. For each of you, how significant is this as a deterrent, and in particular in Poland—I had the opportunity to meet with President Duda in New York last summer and it was so exciting to hear him explain how he would like to have actually a permanent American military presence that they would pay for, they would provide, and the relationship that we have with Poland has just never been better.

But Secretary Flournoy, everyone, what is the significance of having these troops as a deterrent, peace through strength?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think having NATO troops, including U.S. troops, in the Baltics is essential to signal to Vladimir Putin that if he comes across the border he is not just attacking Estonia or Latvia or Lithuania, he is taking on the United States and the full force of NATO.

I do think there are things we can do to strengthen our presence along the front line States including pre-positioning more heavy equipment, including readying more bases to be able to receive forces if it came to that in a crisis. I think the question of whether any additional presence in Poland should be permanent versus rotational deserves further study. But I really applaud Congress' support and this committee's support for the European Reassurance Initiative and the continued funding that DoD is providing.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. We are arguing that they should spend 2 percent on their national defense. We are also trying to argue to the American people that if they hit 2 percent they are doing enough. So we have the foreign policy establishment is arguing in both directions. Tell the American people settle for what you get and tell the NATO countries to spend more. Two percent is a benchmark that needs to be compared with what percent are we spending, and what is the commonly used figure that we use to talk to the Europeans about what percent of our GDP we are spending? Do we typically say something like 3 percent or three and a half percent?

Which of you is most familiar with what number we use? I see Mr. Chollet—oh, Mr. Lute.

Mr. LUTE. So we have consensus here. We typically cite 3.5 percent.

Mr. SHERMAN. Right. And the fact is that is our effort to lie to the American people because we have a two-angle here. We do not spend—we spend much closer to five and a half percent. Now how can you lie to the American people to tell them what Europe is

doing is adequate? Well, what you do is you exclude veterans benefits as if the pension costs—you know, I am an old CPA. If you had a company that in not listing the costs of product excluded its pension costs, they would go to jail. That is how big of a violation it is of accounting principles.

So you exclude veterans. You exclude the Coast Guard. You exclude the CIA. And that helps with one part which is trying to tell the American people Europe is doing enough, but it undercuts our efforts to get Europe to do more because they say, well, you know, if we hit 2 percent, you guys are three and a half percent, we are in the ballpark. Why is it in arguing with Europe that we decide that the Coast Guard does not count, the CIA does not count, and veterans benefits does not count?

Mr. LUTE. So I think I can address that. So NATO actually has rules about what counts and what does not count, so typically the shorthand.

Mr. SHERMAN. And why have we agreed to rules that all lie, that massively understate what any reasonable accountant would say we are spending?

Mr. LUTE. So I am not sure, Congressman, why we agreed to that.

Mr. SHERMAN. OK.

Mr. LUTE. But the standard has been for decades that basically ministry of defense——

Mr. SHERMAN. I understand. Europe's—there is Article 5 and there is Article 5. No one in the world knows what the U.S. response would be to an attack on an Eastern European country. We would clearly do something. There is an image that as long as we are legally in NATO we will respond as we did in World War II and/or with the full force of our nuclear weapons.

Is there any discussion in Europe that goes along the lines of, hey, if the American people think that we are only doing 2 percent or we are doing less than 2 percent, we are on the front lines and that is all we did that maybe the U.S. response would not be any greater than NATO's response that when America was attacked by the Taliban and al-Qaida.

That is to say, the U.S. might send a few hundred troops, a few thousand troops, but would not reinstitute the draft, endanger American cities. Is there any discussion in Europe that Article 5 compliance could be anything between a few hundred troops on the one hand and massive nuclear war on the other, or do they just assume that they get a World War II-level response?

Mr. LUTE. So, Congressman, NATO actually conducts war games often with our secretary of defense participating and they go through scenarios.

Mr. SHERMAN. But it will ultimately be a political decision. That you do war games in 2019 that does not mean that the United States in 2029 will allow the—use tactical nuclear weapons against a Russian army.

Mr. LUTE. Right. But these exercises reflect your point, which is that there is a lot of ambiguity in Article 5 and there is a range of potential national response.

Mr. SHERMAN. Is there any discussion in Europe that the ultimate political decision within that range to their defense and, more

importantly for them, the image to Russia of what that would be is dependent upon the American people's view as to whether they are carrying their own weight.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Sure, if I could share my perspective. What I think Europeans who are in decisionmaking capacities do is they look at what our footprint is in Europe, how much we spend on Europe, and what kind of operations we do in Europe. So when they look at our footprint, they have seen actually a return of U.S. forces to Europe, and not only just a return of U.S. forces, but a forward deployment of those forces in North Central Europe.

Mr. SHERMAN. I understand that the elites of Europe look at what the establishment in the United States does which is engage in those war games. But ultimately the decision in 2029 or 2039, or God hope this never happens, will not be made in Washington. It will be made in Peoria, in Wichita, and the American people will decide.

And I know that had the decision been made in Washington by the establishment we would have responded robustly to Assad's use of chemical weapons. And then we heard from constituents when President Obama asked for congressional support and I got four calls saying go bomb Assad and 500 calls on the other side.

So are the Europeans—and I realize I have gone over time. But it seems like the Europeans are focusing on whether they are meeting Washington standards and not whether they are meeting the American people's standard. And I will yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Perry.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I thank the panel for being here.

I do not personally believe that the American people think that there is a threat to the NATO alliance. And I think they certainly appreciate the value to the free world and that it is better to stem the tide of totalitarianism, communism, socialism, and violence on those borders as opposed to having come to our shores.

So I kind of reject and I completely reject the straw man argument that this President is flirting with leaving NATO legitimately even in the face of the fact that only eight of the NATO countries as you, Secretary Brzezinski, have pointed out have met the requirement and while 21 are falling well short, including Germany. And the American taxpayer, they understand that as well. They do not mind making the investment, but they do not want to be used and abused to defend Europe wholly and completely from here.

But let me ask a couple of questions. Secretary General Stoltenberg just last month at the Munich Security Conference said, "I am saying that President Trump's message has been very clear and that his message is having an impact on defense spending and this is important because we need fair burden-sharing in the NATO alliance."

Secretary Flournoy, is he wrong? Was he wrong to say that?

Ms. FLOURNOY. No. I think that President Trump's pressure and Secretary Mattis' pressure along with their predecessors Secretary Gates, Secretary Panetta, others, we have been at imploring the allies to do more.

Mr. PERRY. Right.

Ms. FLOURNOY. And that is correct. I think the objection is to using the 2-percent as the sole criteria for evaluating allied contributions——

Mr. PERRY. But nothing has worked in the past, right? Let me move on here. This is a statement we have heard recently.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think the Ukraine and Crimea has had something to do with the increased spending as well.

Mr. PERRY. And it should. But these are some other statements. This is a statement we have heard recently. "If we have got collective defense it means that everybody has got to chip in. And I have had some concerns about a diminished level of defense spending among our partners in NATO, not all but many." And then another statement, "One of the things that I think medium and long term we will have to examine is whether everybody is chipping in."

Secretary Brzezinski, do you know who said those two things?

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. No, sir.

Mr. PERRY. That was President Obama that said that.

And so my question for you is, to many people he made disparaging comments about our NATO allies going as far as calling them free-riders. And if that is the case, why is it that President Obama, who seemed to have some of the very similar rhetoric toward our allies, was not successful in getting them to try and meet their obligation but also was not criticized for it? Why do you suppose that is?

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. I think it is politics.

Mr. PERRY. Sounds fair to me. I mean, but we are talking about international and national security and it does not seem to be the place for politics. I mean, Secretary Gates under President Obama said that in 2011 in Brussels that NATO had a dim, if not dismal, future unless more member nations scaled up their participation in alliance activities.

Let me ask you this, Secretary Flournoy. In your testimony you say that using the 2-percent GDP goal as the only measure of burden sharing ignores other critical contributions and, most importantly and unforgivably, their shared sacrifice. Moving on, this is disrespectful, shortsighted, and wrong.

Now your former boss, Secretary Gates, criticized NATO members for not meeting their commitments. Would you say that he was disrespectful, shortsighted, and wrong as well?

Ms. FLOURNOY. No, because he was not using the 2-percent metric as the only metric of NATO contribution. I helped write the speech that you are referring to from Secretary Gates. We have bipartisan support from Bush, Obama, and Trump trying to get the allies to do more and that is a correct policy. But it should not be the only metric by which we judge their contributions to our security.

My point was they have fought and died alongside us. We should never overlook that in the way that we address our allies in terms of their contribution.

Mr. PERRY. So then let me just ask you this, rhetorically, if that is the case. And, OK, I will have an open mind about it. Will our NATO partners and allies be upset and be critical of the United States if we reduce our contribution lower than 2 percent saying, well, look, we do a whole lot of other things as well and we do not

want to only be measured by this 2 percent because we do a whole lot of other things as well that are not included in the 2-percent. Is that going to be fair?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Again, no. Again I think the 2-percent metric is important and valid and should be met. It is just not the only metric that we should use to browbeat our advocate.

Mr. PERRY. But it cannot be a one-way street. It cannot be a one-way street. The American taxpayer realizes——

Ms. FLOURNOY. Now that is true, absolutely. It should not be a one-way street.

Mr. PERRY [continuing]. Respects the investment.

Ms. FLOURNOY. We are in violent agreement.

Mr. PERRY. But we demand our NATO partners and allies meet their obligations as well.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes, but we should do it without calling into question their ability to rely on us as the leader of the alliance——

Mr. PERRY. We are not calling into question——

Ms. FLOURNOY [continuing]. And our commitment to work with them.

Mr. PERRY [continuing]. Their ability to rely on us, but I would say that past administrations had demanded the same thing as this President and gotten zero results. And with that I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. BERA.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Listening to my colleagues' line of questioning and I think in a bipartisan way we would like our NATO allies to step up and carry more of the burden. I think the difference between prior administrations and the current administration, I do not think we disagree with President Trump asking the question and pushing for greater contribution. I do think many of us are uncomfortable and disagree with the premise that we should pull out of NATO and even that rhetoric, I think, is very dangerous and sends the wrong signal to our friends and allies.

We can modernize what this alliance looks like. We share values. And, you know, if our allies across the world are listening as well as our adversaries, I think this body, when we passed the NATO Support Act 357 to 22 in a broad bipartisan way saying that we would not be pulling out of NATO, is speaking loudly and that is what Congress should be doing. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to take this act up and send it to the President and I would urge the President to sign this because that is the message of this body.

You know, in that light as we start to think about Congress' role in supporting our alliances and sending the message, you know, many Members of Congress will be here longer than 4 years and from one administration to the next. And I think NATO has served us incredibly well in the post-World War II environment. We are not suggesting that we do not need to modernize those alliances and look at it, but these are institutions that have served us well.

You know, maybe starting with Ms. Flournoy and just going across, what would you like to see Congress' oversight role be and how can we best provide that?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I would welcome, as Mr. Chollet recommended, a strong congressional vote, both houses, in support of NATO and

the value of NATO to U.S. national security and the continued U.S. commitment to the alliance. Beyond that in terms of your oversight role, I think it is important we get beyond the—you know, yes, the 2-percent metric is important. I acknowledge that and fully support it. I spent a lot of time in my previous capacity pushing our allies on this issue.

But I think it is much more important to ask how is that money being spent? How is NATO really investing to be prepared for a different set of future challenges than the ones that have defined our operational focus over the last two decades? That is the key question. It is a question of the type of readiness. It is the type of posture and positioning. It is the technology investment. It is all of those things and so getting beyond the just the 2-percent to say, how are we actually spending money and is that going to bolster deterrence and prevent conflict in the future.

Mr. BERA. Mr. Chollet.

Mr. CHOLLET. Congressman, three ways that Congress' role is indispensable, first, on the oversight obviously ensuring that the United States maintains robust funding for its security and diplomatic efforts in Europe is something that we are going to look to Congress to ensure. I took note that in the administration's budget request this week there is a $600 million cut in the European defense initiative and that is something I know your colleagues on the Armed Services Committee will take a close look at what is behind that.

No. 2, efforts that as Ambassador Lute has mentioned for Congress to not just show its support, but help protect NATO in some ways and U.S. leadership in NATO by ensuring that there is a very high bar that the executives should get over if there is a desire to pull out or diminish in some way the U.S. role in NATO.

And then third, as has been mentioned by many members of this committee, just your personal engagement in these issues, traveling to NATO headquarters, traveling to Europe not just to listen and talk about your support, but also to press NATO on the important reforms that we all agree in a bipartisan fashion it needs whether that is on defense spending or defense modernization, I think that is a very critical role that you all can play.

Mr. LUTE. Congressman, I would only cite the 50-some Members of the Congress both on the Senate and the House who went, as some members of this committee did, to Munich just within the last month. That is the largest congressional delegation in the 55-year history of the Munich Security Conference. That sends a very important message. So Congress to parliamentary engagement is really important and I would not—aside from that I would echo everything my colleagues have said.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Sir, I will just quickly reiterate what my colleagues have said. I would start by saying thank you for the resolutions that this body has passed in real time to demonstrate congressional support for the alliance. That was incredibly important last summer. I would second Derek's call, whatever can be done to kind of ensure this continued funding for the European Deterrence Initiative, it is important in light of the threat scenario as we face in Europe.

And in terms of oversight, I would recommend that you look into on a regular basis what are the readiness levels not just for the United States but for our allies. Do a deep dive on how ready are German, French, U.K., Polish battalions, brigades, aircraft, how sustainable and how deployable they are. Then I would also do a deep dive into what kind of contributions are our allies making to military operations?

And you will get a mixed picture from such oversight, but it will be helpful because it will help prompt our allies in the right direction.

Mr. BERA. Great, thank you. And I will yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Kinzinger.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here today. I appreciate it.

We all know that NATO is an important institution. And it is not just—I think it is important to remember that it is not just a benefit to Europe. I think we get as much of a benefit out of NATO as Europe gets out of it, out of our involvement. We all know the invocation of Article 5 after 9/11, the importance of that, NATO's role, including some folks that are not in NATO when you think of the Nation of Georgia, for instance, helping us in Afghanistan is important to keep in mind.

But I think we all understand the importance of NATO, but I do not think there is anything wrong with us or an administration pointing out weaknesses in an alliance. In fact, I think that is essential. And sometimes in our fervor to reaffirm NATO we skip over the reality that—I remember hearing about one European country that I will not mention that in the Balkans was unable to muster any combat power for that conflict because they realized the vast majority of their defense budget was actually just being spent on paying salaries, which makes it just a jobs program and not a military at that point.

The importance of our job in that so reaffirming that is important, but I think you also have to give the administration some flexibility in terms of calling NATO out on their weakness like that. Congress can play an important role, but I think Congress can overplay our hand sometimes too in consistently saying that you know, we are going to affirm NATO no matter what, regardless of their percent of GDP they are spending, as an example.

This committee later today is going to hear a bill to prohibit military action or authorization or action in Venezuela, which out of nowhere I found out we are doing, and, you know, where in the world? How do you—you take away the power of an administration to use military as even a carrot in terms of a diplomatic negotiation. And the first thing this committee did was already de-authorize the administration's involvement in Yemen.

So I think empowering an administration is extremely important, but we all realize the importance of NATO today.

So Ukraine I want to talk specifically about. They continue to face, as we know, significant challenges from Russia, from Russian meddling and aggression as Vladimir Putin seeks to rebuild the former Soviet Union. And I think the best way to push back against Russia is to give the Ukrainians what they need to defend

their sovereignty such as anti-tank Javelin missile systems that we delivered last year and any further support that they need in that. Back in November, Russia violated Ukraine's sovereignty yet again when it seized three Ukrainian vessels along with its 24 sailors as they passed through neutral waters in the Kerch Strait.

Mr. Brzezinski, General Scaparrotti, the current Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, recently testified that the administration is looking to deliver more lethal weapons to Ukraine. Do you believe this will help to defer actions, further conflicts between Russia and Ukrainian forces?

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Absolutely. I think while our support has improved to Ukraine in providing lethal assistance, we need to do more so that Ukraine is better able to defend itself. Right now it remains very vulnerable. I would add to the list that we have—and we are doing things that are useful like helping the Ukrainians train their forces and such, but the only lethal assistance we have provided have been the Javelins.

We should complement that with more capable ISR systems they can use. We may even want to do our own ISR flights over Ukraine just to keep the Russians on notice that we are watching. We should give them air defense assets and we should also give them anti-ship missiles like the harpoon, so that we do not have events occurring like we saw in the Sea of Azov again.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you. You know, and I think the important thing to note is, well, I do not always agree with the administration's words or lack of words on Russia and I call that out every time I can, but words versus actions are really significant. I think this administration's actions against Russia and actions Ukraine are far different than what we have seen in the past.

I am not a point back to the past kind of guy, but when you look at the prior assistance to the Ukrainian military it was basically blankets. That really does not do a lot in terms of pursuing allowing Ukraine to defend its territory. And there are reports that Germany and France declined the United States' request to exercise freedom of navigation drills through the Kerch Strait last year. While both countries were willing to do a single maneuver, they were unwilling to navigate those waters out of fear of provocation.

Mr. Brzezinski, how can we help to entice our NATO allies that we so strongly believe in to join us in showing Vladimir Putin that we will not accept his illegal activity in the Crimean Peninsula?

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. I think in that case you always find allies that will be in disagreement with you and so you have to move forward without them sometimes. That is why I think it was very important for the administration to move forward by providing lethal weapons, the Javelins, to Ukraine and to Georgia. If we are going to lead our allies we actually have to lead by doing.

And so the recommendations I outlined for you would be actions that I would take that would benefit the Ukrainians, it would help deter the Russians, and would also, I think, help lead some of our European allies to recognize our actions are sound rather than unwise.

Mr. KINZINGER. I think Vladimir Putin is a smart guy, but I do not think he is eager to cross red lines. I just think we need to

paint those red lines brighter with our allies. So thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much.

Mr. Lieu.

Mr. LIEU. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Since we are at a Foreign Affairs hearing I just thought it might be appropriate to announce that today is day 26 of our national emergency. I note for the record that the President played golf in the middle of our national emergency.

But I want to talk about a real emergency right now which is the destabilization of NATO by Donald J. Trump and his enablers. And we know based on various news articles and public reports that in 2018 Donald Trump talked about withdrawing from NATO.

So Ms. Flournoy, let me ask you. If the U.S. were to withdraw from NATO would that help U.S. national security?

Ms. FLOURNOY. No. I believe it would be catastrophic.

Mr. LIEU. Would it help Russia?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes, as I have said, I think any weakening of the transatlantic alliance it plays into Vladimir Putin's hand, weakens deterrence, and strengthens Russia's ability to meddle in our affairs and to advance their objectives.

Mr. LIEU. Thank you.

Donald Trump also questioned Article 5 of NATO which is the core of NATO's alliance. If the United States were to not abide by Article 5 would that help U.S. national security? Any of you can answer that.

Mr. CHOLLET. It would be devastating.

Mr. LIEU. Would it help Russia?

Mr. CHOLLET. Absolutely.

Mr. LIEU. All right. I also want to just quote from the national security strategy of the Trump administration. Quote, "experience suggests that the willingness of rivals to abandon or forego aggression depends on their perception of U.S. strength and the vitality of our alliances", end quote. Another quote, "we will redouble our commitment to establish alliances". And then a third quote, "the NATO alliance of free and sovereign States is one of our greater advantages over our competitors and the United States remains committed to Article 5 of the Washington treaty". I hope the President reads his own national security strategy.

So, Ms. Flournoy, you had mentioned about this 2 percent metric and that it might not make a lot of sense, so I agree that clearly our NATO allies ought to do more. But one reason the United States does more that we have a higher percentage of military spending on GDP is because we are a global superpower that responds to threats all over the world, not just Europe and Russia. Is that not right?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Right. I do not think the 2-percent is an appropriate standard for the U.S. because we have global responsibilities that other European nations do not.

Mr. LIEU. Right. So, in fact, we have bases in Japan and Korea in a way that Belgium does not, right?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Correct.

Mr. LIEU. Now the metric itself also does not make a lot of sense, because for example Germany could say, hey, we are going to in-

crease our defense spending by giving higher pensions to our military officers. That does not somehow help reduce U.S. defense costs, correct?

Ms. FLOURNOY. That is correct. It is also why NATO has said a certain portion of the money needs to be spent on actual capability development and modernization, not just personnel.

Mr. LIEU. Thank you. And it seems like there is also, at least the way the President talks about it that somehow all these countries should be super grateful that the United States has some military forces in their countries. I just believe that it is really mutually beneficial to both the U.S. and these other countries.

So, in fact, in one of the NATO countries, Turkey for example, it is true, is not it, that we launch airstrikes from Incirlik Air Base to go after ISIS targets in Syria?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes, that is true.

Mr. LIEU. And these NATO countries, having our forces there allows us to project force in a way that we otherwise could not; is not that right?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes. The forward basing is very much in service of U.S. interests in addition to benefiting NATO.

Mr. LIEU. One of my colleagues asked, well, why did not the media also sort of talk about this when the Obama Administration made similar statements about NATO? Well, let me just suggest Presidents Obama and Bush never talked about withdrawing from NATO. They did not disparage Article 5 of NATO. They did not beat up on our allies the way that Donald J. Trump has.

I previously served on active duty in the United States military. I believe our military is one of the greatest forces in the world. However, we are only stronger when we have our allies working with us and I think Donald Trump is hurting our national security with his sort of bizarre view of NATO. And it also seems to me that he does not quite understand how the funding works with NATO, because whether or not France decides to increase its military spending does not mean that somehow U.S. defense spending through appropriations committees makes any difference at all. And with that I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Wagner.

Mrs. WAGNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for hosting this hearing and thank you to our witnesses for their time.

As a former United States Ambassador having served in Western Europe, I understand just how central the NATO alliance is to safeguarding peace and prosperity and security in Europe and around the world.

General Lute, I understand that inadequate and unstandardized transportation infrastructure in Europe could make it difficult to move troops and equipment across the continent curtailing NATO readiness. At the same time, China is seeking to invest billions of euros in infrastructure projects in Eastern Europe as part of its Belt and Road Initiative that we have all heard about.

How is NATO incorporating China's growing infrastructure footprint into its plan to correct the mobility problem, I will say, in Eastern Europe?

Mr. LUTE. So it is responding insufficiently. In my opening comments I made the point that I think NATO needs to pay more attention to these Chinese investments.

Mrs. WAGNER. Right.

Mr. LUTE. Particularly in transportation and communications infrastructure, because with those commercial investments they expect a return in terms of political influence. And at the same time, the Chinese investments do not necessarily help the NATO mobility problem because they are not taking place in the areas we need. We need investment in transportation infrastructure. So we have problems today moving troops from the depth of NATO to the front lines.

Mrs. WAGNER. Correct.

Mr. LUTE. That is the transportation challenge we need to take on.

Mrs. WAGNER. And what are we doing in this and what is the U.S. bringing forward? I will ask Mr. Brzezinski.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. I would like to raise one important initiative that merits U.S. support and that is the Three Seas Initiative. It refers to a Central European initiative to accelerate the development of cross-border infrastructure, the three seas being the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea, and the Black Sea. This initiative has received rhetorical support from the administration. It is all about roadways. It is all about highways. It is all about railroads, energy pipelines, and such.

And it is interesting to me the point you made about the Chinese. Both the Chinese and the Russians are trying to pull the Central Europeans away, in part, through gaining control over infrastructure.

Mrs. WAGNER. Right.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. The Chinese announced $17 billion commitment to the upcoming Helsinki-Tallinn Tunnel. We need to get in that game. And we ought to support the Three Seas Initiative because it would have direct implications for military mobility because these roads and these highways would enable the alliance to move more directly to its Eastern frontiers. We ought to think about how we can financially incentivize Western capital to invest in the Three Seas projects.

Mrs. WAGNER. I appreciate that and thank you for that testimony and for that input.

Ms. Flournoy, Russia has increasingly focused on waging hybrid rather than conventional warfare to undermine the West without incurring decisive countermeasures. We have seen this in Russia's cyber attacks on Estonia and other NATO members and in its creation of frozen conflict zones in Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia, I believe, too. How should Russia's reliance on hybrid warfare change the way we think about collective defense?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think this is—you are right to highlight this because it is one of the areas where NATO is currently weakest and needs to get much stronger both member States and as an alliance. I think one step in the right direction is some of the cyber infrastructure NATO has put in place with a new Centres of Excellence and incident response capability, a smart defense initiative on cyber capacity building, and so forth.

So the alliance is starting to take the kinds of steps we need to see, but that more needs to be done and it needs to be done more urgently.

Mrs. WAGNER. And to that point, is our recently enhanced forward-deployed presence in Poland and the Baltics improving NATO's ability to deter hybrid warfare, would you say?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes. I do think that presence is a very important sign of commitment. I think a lot of the capacity building that we do with the Baltic States to make them look like indigestible porcupines to the Russian bear, I mean those kinds of——

Mrs. WAGNER. Indigestible porcupine. That is exactly the right term.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes. I think that is very, very important. But I would like to see our posture in Europe continue to evolve with more emphasis on these infrastructure and transportation issues, more pre-positioning of heavy equipment and so forth, to really look at what would it take to deter Russia in an actual crisis.

Mrs. WAGNER. I thank you. I am out of time. I have additional questions that I am going to submit for the record. I appreciate the chairman, thank you, and all of your testimony.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mrs. Wagner.

Mr. Levin.

Mr. LEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank all the witnesses for coming today and for your testimony.

I wanted to ask you a question to begin, Ambassador Lute, about withdrawal from the INF Treaty. I think President Trump's withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty represents a huge mistake for both America's security and for global peace. I do not think we should accept or be quiet about Russia noncompliance. I think we should redouble our push for full implementation of this and other treaties to keep Russia moving in the right direction on arms control.

This move on the other hand takes us backward. To make matters worse, the official withdrawal date is August 2d and the Trump administration still has not laid out a diplomatic plan for how the U.S. together with allies will pressure Russia to come back into compliance. So my question is whether there is any viable path forward either to save the treaty or to better ensure that the U.S. and Europe are in lockstep in sustaining arms control with Russia. In other words, what is next here?

Mr. LUTE. Well, Congressman, I think the good news here is that the administration deliberately went to the NATO alliance and secured consensus at 29 for condemning the Russian violation, and apparently the allies are in support of the administration's move to move away from the treaty. I think that the 6-month period between this announcement and August when we actually withdraw should feature every diplomatic opportunity, every diplomatic effort to try to cause Russia to come back into compliance so that in fact we can preserve the INF Treaty. I say this because the INF Treaty itself is a very stabilizing influence in Europe. That is why we have an INF Treaty.

Mr. LEVIN. Right.

Mr. LUTE. But also because just beyond next August is the renewal of the New START agreement and I am concerned that if we

take one cornerstone out of the arms control structure that you begin to erode trust and confidence in the whole structure. So this is not just about INF. I think it could have a carry-on effect——

Mr. LEVIN. So how do you prevent an unraveling like that?

Mr. LUTE. Well, I think, first of all, you preserve, you make every effort to preserve the treaty, hold Russia accountable, and then make sure you do so in alliance with the other 29 members of NATO. I would, frankly, have not left the treaty. I think our position is stronger and continues to focus on Russia, the violator of the treaty, if we stayed into the treaty. By the way we have apparently no intent to deploy INF-capable systems ourselves, so we left the treaty——

Mr. LEVIN. Then why walk? It does not make any sense to me.

Mr. LUTE. That is my position as well.

Mr. LEVIN. OK, thank you. Let me ask you about another matter. In your testimony you say that so-called hybrid tactics like cyber attacks, disinformation campaigns, and interference in our democratic process pose the greatest threats to NATO. Would you talk a bit more about why you feel that these sorts of threats pose perhaps even more of a danger than a military threat, say?

Mr. LUTE. Because I think the red lines established for nuclear aggression or conventional force aggression are quite clear and bright and I think Putin understands that. I think he would prefer to play in the cloudy, ambiguous arena of hybrid warfare where he complicates attribution of impacts, he uses cyber and these other tools. So it is in that part of the deterrence spectrum from nuclear, conventional to hybrid, where we need to actually spend the most, pay the most attention.

And candidly, most of the capabilities in the hybrid arena do not count today against the 2-percent pledge. So there is a disconnect here between what we are requiring allies to do, how much they spend, and what they actually spend it on.

Mr. LEVIN. And I guess the question for today's hearing particularly is, do you feel like NATO helps our European partners, and for that matter us, to combat these kind of threats, you know, these hybrid threats?

Mr. LUTE. So the U.S. has been a leader in highlighting cybersecurity in particular to the NATO alliance, but I think there is much more we can do. I mean, and another significant hybrid tactic is interference in our electoral processes. And now with our 2016 experience here in the United States we have some experience in what it is like to face that kind of interference.

So there is more we can do in this hybrid arena and that should be of real focus for us. That is where we are vulnerable.

Mr. LEVIN. All right, thank you. My time has expired. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Mast.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Chairman. I would take the opportunity to answer a question with a question that was asked a moment ago, why walk from a treaty, and I think the answer is relatively simple to state and not simple in terms of geopolitics. But if you have a partner in a treaty that is year after year, decade after decade not being a good partner in that treaty, then that is an answer

why you walk from that treaty. And I think that is the answer that President Trump came to as well.

Now I want to speak on a different issue. I am certainly willing to acknowledge that sometimes caution can be the better part of valor. I would say that the work of a statesman and work of policymakers in the U.S., it should not be conducted by those that are so cautious that they are viewed as scared. I am very thankful that we do not have a President that is so cautious that he is viewed as scared.

And I would say that NATO will better enable itself to address today's challenges if, in fact, it does shake itself to the core.

Ms. Flournoy, you said that NATO in some of your remarks is being shaken to its core. I think NATO is better off being shaken to its core for a number of reasons. The Soviet Union no longer exists. Russia is not the Soviet Union. It is still a massive threat, but it is not the Soviet Union. China is different today in 2019 than it was in 1989 and 1969, and China is not the Soviet Union.

The attack of today, it is different. It is a cyber attack. It is a currency attack. It is financial markets. It is trade. China is not acting yet today in the same kind of global military that the Soviet Union was. They do certainly act as a global cyber threat. They are trading with all. China is trading with all. They are not isolating themselves from all in the West. China, you know, they are not yet exporting communism. My friend and I, Mr. Yoho, were speaking about this yesterday. China is not yet exporting communism, but they are certainly spreading their own brand of Chinese socialism around the world.

So I believe that NATO in order to enable itself for the future, they should shake themselves down to the core. They need to shake off the rust. I think they probably should have done this after Germany was reunited many years ago. They failed to do it at that time. They probably should have done it at that time.

So I want to ask in that line to any of you—and probably certainly to you, sir—how do you suggest that we shake that rust off to ensure that NATO has strength through its relevancy to the current threats both beyond conventional military that exists today that are different, they are different types of direct attacks, how do we shake NATO to its core to recognize that a cyber attack is a cyber attack on all and get that kind of recognition so that we go out there and attack in the same way that we would expect through conventional military forces coming against us?

And to go beyond that can you give an estimate of costs as we constantly speak about the 2-percent, give an estimate of costs that are associated with a robust cyber defense as an alliance as well as having that ability to have a robust cyber attack ability as a NATO alliance. What is the difference in costs that are associated either up or down related to that? Sir?

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Sir, I cannot give you an answer on cyber cost. It is just out of my area of expertise. But your point about shaking up the alliance, I have a great degree of discomfort with much of the President's rhetoric. It can be divisive in an unhelpful way. It can communicate a lack of commitment that is not healthy to the alliance and maybe even animate some of the aspirations of the likes of Putin.

But he has brought and with almost like a sledgehammer a long-standing concern that has been bipartisan and has been shared by multiple administrations over the lack of, or the inability or lack of willingness of our allies to spend the money they need to do in order to meet their not just their 2 percent because it is not just 2 percent, it is their commitment to be ready to live up to the responsibilities they have in execution of Article 5. And when the President hits them hard on that it does shake them up.

I think when you have hearings like this, I think when the alliance has public reports that report on the readiness of allied forces that helps shake them up. You know, when I think about the German move to higher levels of defense spending, it is true they are not yet committed to 2 percent fully, even though they say they have done it through the Wales Summit.

But they have not put their idea into a plan on how to get there, the fact is they are making progress. Part of it is from U.S. direct pressure, part of it is from looking East and seeing what is happening, and part of it is because of news reports and parliamentary inquiries into the embarrassing state of readiness of the German military. When you have exercises being conducted with broomsticks as opposed to rifles and tanks, the German taxpayers do not like to see that. They are uncomfortable with it; it is a pride issue.

So the more the alliance can do, the more you can do to dig into and bring out the facts and figures about the readiness of our allies and relate that readiness to kind of the contingency plans we are planning for will help shake up the alliance in the way you wish.

Mr. MAST. My time is long expired. Thank you for your comments.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Ms. Spanberger.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the witnesses today.

In an article last year, the Atlantic Council highlighted not only the defense and security benefits of NATO, but also the economic importance of the alliance in securing and protecting European economies and incentivizing European acquisition of U.S. military equipment and platforms. And in a recent congressional Research Service report, they added the point of information that the EU, of which 22 member States are also NATO allies, the EU is the United States' largest trading and investment partner and through the promotion of security and stability in Europe NATO protects the extensive economic partnership that accounts for 46 percent of global GDP.

So my question for you all today is what are the economic impacts of the NATO alliance and are there benefits and, if so, could you speak to them to the U.S. economy and our own trade relationships that are tied to the existence and the continued strength of NATO?

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. I will take a quick shot at that. NATO provides a transatlantic security architecture that over the last 70 years has provided for peace among its members and defended them against external aggression. And I would say that is a core criteria for robust and sustained economic growth and that is how NATO contributes to the economic well-being of the transatlantic community.

Mr. LUTE. I would only add that first I agree with your data. I mean 46 percent of the world GDP, if you combine the United States and our European allies, is a substantial weight which is useful on our side if we are going to compete with China. So I think that is obvious. And then very much agree with Ian's point that the security architecture that secures that 50 percent of world GDP is NATO. So this is simply a matter of securing our investments.

Mr. CHOLLET. And just to build on that, when we talk about a Europe whole, free, and at peace it is often thought of in a political context. But of course one of the great triumphs of the post-cold war era has been the economic dynamism and growth of Europe. That has helped Europe a lot, which is why all of us have concerns about Europe's lack of spending on defense because Europeans are more able to spend on their defense than they were 25 years ago.

But that is also a huge benefit to the United States. Europe's success also can equal American success.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I would just add, in addition to modernizing and adapting NATO for the future, the most important thing we could do to shore up the transatlantic community for all the reasons you described is to negotiate a free trade agreement with the EU. That would give us tremendous leverage vis-a-vis China and tremendous additional prosperity for Americans here at home.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Thank you very much. And to buildupon the answers that you just provided and the prior line of questioning from my colleague from Florida, we are speaking a lot about moving into the future but he referenced the fall of the Soviet Union. He referenced the fall of the Berlin Wall.

And I am curious if you could comment on what impact you think the stabilization and strength that was provided to Europe as a whole, to the United States and our relationship with our fellow NATO countries, were in fact how the strength of NATO perhaps played into those changes that we saw shifting with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the fall of communism.

Mr. LUTE. Well, I think the image, the aspiration to join the alliance but also to join the EU was a great motivation for these newly freed, former Warsaw Treaty members and also some Soviet republics, the Baltics, for example, so it created for them an incentive to move toward. And when the wall came down, the Soviet Union broke apart, they voted with their feet. They were now free to make a choice and they voted to join NATO and they voted to join the EU.

So it has been a real inspiration and an incentive and I think it remains that way today, which is why a number of us have highlighted the importance of sustaining the open-door policy because it continues to serve as an incentive for the kind of political, economic, and military reforms that we favor.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Thank you so much for your comments on this topic related to economic strength that NATO brings or stabilization that NATO allows for the economic growth for the United States and also NATO member countries. I appreciate your time today. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much.

Mr. Pence.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, and the witnesses for being here today.

I am a strong supporter of NATO and believe our shared security interests are and should remain a feature of the transatlantic relationship. I will continue to support the President and his administration in strengthening NATO.

As you know, since the late 1990's, the EU has been working with limited success to form a unified European defense policy complete with independent EU defense capabilities. These efforts appear to have gained momentum in the past year or two. I want to rattle off a series of questions which are really basically the same, if you could each answer these.

What is your assessment of these efforts? Could the development of a more robust and independent EU defense capability benefit NATO and the United States? And is there a risk that EU efforts could undermine NATO's effectiveness and diminish its capabilities?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Congressman, I think that the intensification of this discussion within the EU on an independent defense capability is, in part, a result of the greater uncertainty they feel about the U.S. commitment to NATO. That said, I think if EU defense efforts spurs additional European defense spending, we should count that as a plus. What worries me is if the EU were to develop a sort of view of strategic autonomy that would sort of have Europe go its own way without really coordinating with, working closely with the United States in addressing shared challenges, I think that would be a loss for us and for our security.

Mr. CHOLLET. Congressman, I concur with that. I think on the one hand discussions within Europe which are only increasing about developing some sort of independent capability is a reflection of uncertainty about the U.S. and hedging about U.S. behavior, but it is also a response to an increase by all of us to urge them to spend more on their defense.

And it is also a recognition that—and I think this part is positive—that there are going to be things they do in the world where the U.S. is not going to do that, for example, in West Africa where the U.S. may not be as engaged as France and other EU partners. I think it is important though as they embark on this—this is not a new story. Twenty years ago we were also dealing with Europeans talking about developing a more independent defense capability.

Three rules to keep in mind or three principles, the three Ds: the Secretary of State, then Secretary of State Albright enunciated no duplication between what the EU is going to do and what NATO is going to do, to make sure this is complementary; no discrimination, so making sure that as Europe develops this capability they are not discriminating against those few countries that are members of the EU, but not of NATO or vice versa; and no duplication, so—sorry, no decoupling, meaning that this is not about Europe separating itself from the United States fully so it can go on its own.

I think as long as we keep in mind those core principles we should be supportive of Europe trying to make itself stronger on defense.

Mr. LUTE. Congressman, I think we can have it both ways. We can on the one hand say you must do more, and then when the EU comes up with incentive programs or ways to create efficiencies among EU members then we critique those as well. So I would err on the side of applauding the EU initiatives to try to generate capabilities.

I very much agree with no duplication and so forth. But quite candidly, in my view we are decades away from being in a position where we have to actually compare EU capabilities to NATO capabilities and worry about duplication. They have a long way to go.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Sir, I would just add on the duplication point, my concern is that there is a drive to create an independent command structure that would be duplicative of NATO. That is what the French are driving. That would be unhelpful. And when we look back at the history of EU defense initiatives it has not been that impressive. They have created battle groups that have never been used. They have talked about being a driver of increased defense spending. I have not really seen any evidence that the EU has been an effective driver of defense spending.

But if they are willing to talk about leveraging the EU and its economic capacities to increase the capacity to invest and the development of technologies and capabilities and capacities for defense operations, then I am kind of interested and I would make these recommendations to the EU. One, I would focus less on autonomy and more on the European pillar, because when we talk about the European pillar we are talking about European capability within the transatlantic framework.

I would urge them through projects like the European Defence Fund that they are standing up, a $13 billion fund and the PESCO initiative, to focus on things that are substantive, that are real NATO shortfalls. It would be far more useful if we could see the EU be a driver of increased air and missile defense capabilities within our European armed forces, more airlift, more air refueling capability, more in air and missile defense. If these EU initiatives were used to drive forward those capabilities I would be highly, highly supportive.

Then I would note that there is one area where they are actually, potentially, on the cusp of doing something useful. The EU will be directing in its next big 7-year budget 6.5 billion euros to help improve military mobility. That is, investing the infrastructure, the roadways and the highways and the airports and the ports that will help facilitate the more ready movement of heavy equipment for military operations. That kind of infrastructure investment is something that the EU is perfectly positioned to do and I encourage you to encourage them to move, you know, with dispatch on that.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Malinowski.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me start with you, Ms. Flournoy, back to the 2-percent of GDP target. That is, the whole point of that target is to get our allies to invest more in their actual military capabilities so that they can partner with us. If they spent that money on uniforms or increased salaries for their troops it would defeat the whole purpose of the 2-percent. Is that a fair assessment?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. If we were to demand that NATO allies pay us billions of dollars for the so-called privilege of being allowed to base our forces overseas that presumably could count against their 2 percent but it would not be investing money in their own defense capabilities. Is that a fair statement?

Ms. FLOURNOY. That is correct. And, you know, I think the truth is our allies already do defray much of, you know, a substantial portion of the costs of our basing overseas. It varies from country to country, but those are negotiated agreements. But we are there for our own interests. Our real interest on the 2-percent is to ensure that money is going into the capabilities we will need for the future, be it high-end military readiness capabilities or capabilities for the gray zone that Ambassador Lute talked about.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Exactly. And they would have less money to invest in those capabilities if we were somehow to force them——

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes.

Mr. MALINOWSKI [continuing]. To spend billions for hosting——

Ms. FLOURNOY. And I also do not think they would accept that deal.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Indeed.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think we would be invited to bring all of our forces home, which would be both detrimental to our security and very, very costly to the American taxpayer.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Exactly. So would we save any money if we brought our forces home where we pay——

Ms. FLOURNOY. No, it is generally in most cases it will be far more expensive to bring those forces home and rebase them in the United States.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you.

Mr. Lute, I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about Afghanistan. A number of us, and you have heard this I am sure from our colleagues, were in Munich. We had an opportunity to engage with our allies on these decisions potentially to withdraw from Syria and from Afghanistan. We are all very keenly aware of the anxiety that this has caused our allies who have been with us all the way in these deployments. They have no idea what we plan to do.

Let me ask you about one particular angle related to Afghanistan. If we were to follow through on the publicly stated plan to withdraw our regular forces from Afghanistan, assuming that there are still terrorists in Afghanistan's future, al-Qaida or ISIS, is it fair to assume that we would still have special forces, units operating in Afghanistan?

Mr. LUTE. I am sorry. That is the topic of the ongoing negotiations led by Ambassador Khalilzad. So how is it that we could by way of this negotiation with the Taliban and eventually the Taliban with the Afghan Government buy some insurances that the Taliban pledge that they will not allow ISIS or al-Qaida is actually enforced, so the nature of this enforcement mechanism is exactly what Ambassador Khalilzad is working on.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Yes, I am just trying to bear down on what realistically will happen because the American people are being told we are leaving and my expectation is we will still have special

forces operating in Afghanistan. We may not talk about it so much. We will still have CIA bases as we currently do in Afghanistan in the hinterlands. We may not talk about it as much.

And if I am right about that then the result of the withdrawal will be that we will still be in Afghanistan, but instead of partnering with our allies, instead of partnering with an elected Afghan Government that has some legitimacy, we will be partnering with warlords who are raping little boys and girls and doing things that actually will make the long-term mission harder to achieve. Bottom line, we will still be in Afghanistan. So is this really an honest conversation that we are having?

Mr. LUTE. So it is very hard for me to comment on negotiations that I am not participating in, but I know for sure that this question of how you sustain a Taliban pledge and how you enforce it if we were to withdraw, how it is actually done in practice. And so, you know, we are talking about conjecture——

Mr. MALINOWSKI. But in a future in which there is still al-Qaida and ISIS there, pledge or no pledge, we would not ignore that.

Mr. LUTE. I think we have to assume that al-Qaida and the Islamic State in that region would have some residual presence and we need to buy some insurance against that.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. OK, anybody else, thoughts on that?

Mr. CHOLLET. I would just say although I am not privy to the negotiations either, your assumptions are reasonable about what sort of presence we would seek to keep in Afghanistan given the threats that I think we all agree will remain there.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Yoho.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, panelists. I appreciate you being here and going through this long hearing.

We are at 70 years of NATO and it has been good. You know, there has not been another world war since NATO. Here we are 70 years later, yet the world is going through a challenge in world powers we have not seen since World War II, and a big part of that reason we have not is again because of NATO. It has been effective in that.

But things are changing. And if you look back—I am 64 and I have changed a lot in the last 64 years. And so things get stale after a while and they have to be updated. And, you know, I think, you know, the testimoneys we have heard today, the comments, you know, whether NATO is paying their fair share or not, I mean it has been hashed over and over again. President Obama said that. President Bush said that the people are taking advantage of us or free-riding.

At what point—and Ms. Flournoy you said that this is not the time to nickel-and-dime NATO. When would be the time? You know, do we wait another three to 5 years? Keep in mind we are at $22 trillion in debt, 5 years we are going to be about $30 trillion in debt. Our interest that we owe at that time will be equal what we are spending on our military. So when do we get other people to pay and, you know, pony up?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think we should continue to press for our NATO allies to pay their fair share, but my focus would be on what else are they doing to shore up deterrence against Russia.

Mr. YOHO. Sure.

Ms. FLOURNOY. What else are they doing to contribute to counterterrorism globally? What else are they doing to help us build gray zone?

Mr. YOHO. All right. But can we wait another 5 years before people do that?

Ms. FLOURNOY. No, and we are not and we should not.

Mr. YOHO. OK.

Ms. FLOURNOY. And no administration in recent memory has waited. They all pressed.

Mr. YOHO. All right. And as we look at the results, it was interesting. I went to the Cleveland Convention when it was Candidate Trump going into the Convention, and I spoke to a group of Ambassadors from around the world on energy. And it was interesting because there was a reception after that. They came up to me—I had my wife with me and our deputy chief of staff—and they says, we want to introduce ourselves, we are members of NATO but we have not been good members.

And this was when President Trump, Candidate Trump was talking about NATO is not paying their fair share. This is what happened. They told me they had been bad members but they were looking to increase their payment to 2 percent as was the pledge, in addition to pull up the arrears that they owed. So the rhetoric that he spoke, whether you liked his tactic or not, the results I think we are all in agreement was pretty effective. And, you know, people are not used to that kind of rhetoric, you know, we could say things better maybe.

But I would rather look at the results and get the positive results because it does get people to pay attention and kind of reorganize what NATO—and I think what my colleague, Mr. Mast, brought up, you know, we need to update this into the 21st century for the cyber attacks. I mean I just read today that China is hacking into our naval intelligence and our construction and all the new weapons that we are creating. Is that an attack on us? And when do we all come together collectively to do that?

And, Mr. Brzezinski, you were talking about Putin thrives on weakness indecisiveness—hence, Georgia; hence, Crimea. They walk into and they take over. We see that the freedom of navigations are not happening in the Azov Sea or the Baltic Seas and so Putin, as Xi Jinping, sees weakness so they aggress, Xi Jinping in the South China Sea. Putin is going to aggress unless we stand up definitely as a bloc.

And if they know we have been ineffective that members are kind of stale, yes, we are in this NATO thing but we do not really have to pay, it just shows weakness. And I think that is one of the reasons Putin did what he did. Am I wrong in that?

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Yes, sir—no, sir, you are not wrong in that.

Mr. YOHO. I was hoping you would say no.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Just a quote on burden sharing in talking about decades, my favorite quote goes back to 1953 when Secretary of State John Foster Dulles threatened, quote unquote, an agonizing

reappraisal of the U.S. commitment to European security if its allies do not step up. I think it is interesting. It shows how long a debate we have had on this, but at least we are making progress.

Mr. YOHO. You know and that is a great point because that has come up over and over, and through my notes I read it has come up over and over again. I mean some of this goes back, it says, two decades ago they were talking about this.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. It is time for a——

Mr. YOHO. I was going to say, well, damn it, when do you stand up and do it? But I should not say that. So dang it, when do you stand up and do something?

And I am thankful this President had the backbone. You know and he will admit, I am not your typical politician, but he is looking for the results and I think we should applaud the results that he is getting to get people to come forward because it makes us all collectively stronger. I mean would you agree in that?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think that we should applaud the burden sharing results, but the other result has been this sort of existential doubt that has been created on the part in the minds of our allies about whether they can count on the U.S. That is also a result of the same rhetoric. So there has been positive, but there has also been a negative and we need to take account of that as well.

Mr. YOHO. All right. Well, you go back to the criticism of NATO burden sharing have been articulated by both Republican and Democratic Presidents, and you go on and it says—I think you wrote this. It was Secretary Gates'.

It said President Obama called a number of American allies free-riders toward the end of the administration and also Secretary Robert Gates did a hard line against NATO's inability to share more of the burden during the farewell speech. The blunt reality is there has been a dwindling appetite patience, and it goes on.

And the end result is the General now, Stoltenberg, also said that President Trump is helping us adapt the alliance and has made these people pay up. So I think the results are good. Let's look forward and what we are going to do on the cybersecurity.

And I am way over. Sorry, Mr. Chairman and members.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Trone.

Mr. TRONE. Thank you all for coming here today.

My first question, let's go back to Turkey again. The case right now, they are working to look at buy the Russian defense, the S–400. They have already ordered, we have not delivered yet, the F–35. It is unacceptable that they buy this system and have the F–35. What is the response that Congress should have? What can we do here to make that crystal clear that we cannot go down this road?

Ms. Flournoy?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Well, I think as you review foreign military sales, I think you will have your opportunity to send signals to Turkey. But I would encourage delegations to go visit and to talk to, you know, Turkish, the Turkish President, his administration, other members of Parliament there, to let them know that this will really complicate our ability to provide the kind of U.S. defense capabilities that they like to have as part of the alliance.

And I think the backsliding on democracy needs to be part of the conversation. We have not been raising that issue enough with our Turkish counterparts. We need to press them on this issue. We need to connect what goes on in that sphere with what we can, you know, the degree to which we can cooperate in the security sphere.

Mr. TRONE. There is no question I think we need to connect that plus the democracy and the Kurds and the treatment we have had there and the potential for more atrocities in the Kurds as we pull out Syria.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Absolutely.

Mr. TRONE. Is there any point at all that you have to reconsider this, them being part of NATO? Are we going to reach that point at some point?

Mr. LUTE. So if I may, so unlike the EU treaty, which has provisions for sanctioning member states who drift from core values, the NATO treaty has no similar provision. In fact, the only thing that the Washington Treaty says is that if you wish to leave NATO you have got to give 1 years' notice.

So I think there are ways that we could pressure Mr. Erdogan and his political elite to come back into line, closer into line with U.S. interests, for example, the S–400 and F–35 debate. But also to underline Michele Flournoy's point about values, they need to understand that there is no NATO ally today which has slipped further from the founding values of the alliance than Mr. Erdogan's Turkey. And that is simply unacceptable.

Mr. TRONE. Agreed. The Baltics, lots of hybrid warfare there, cyber capabilities happening through the small Baltic States. Is this an area where these small NATO partners are innovating in any way that we could learn and that would be an advantage to us as we look to more problems with cyber and hybrid warfare from Russia down the road?

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. Absolutely. I mean if you look at the Baltics they are on the cutting edge when it comes down to combating hybrid warfare. There is a reason why NATO has a Cyber Centre of Excellence in Estonia, because they have been most forward-leaning. They are the ones who experienced the first kind of nationwide cyber attack in 2007, so they are thinking in very innovative ways how to deal with cyber attacks.

You go to Lithuania, they have one of the more sophisticated public response teams that deal with social media attacks. For example, when a NATO unit was deployed over there, there was false accusations made of a rape conducted by NATO soldiers. They, in real time, responded to dissipate the impact of that story. So there are many lessons we can learn from our Baltic allies.

Mr. CHOLLET. And if I can just add, what NATO is doing in the Baltics today is a great example of the distributed responsibility that the alliance can bring. This is not a U.S.-only effort in the Baltics to try to defend the Baltics and bolster them. This is something where there are four battalion-sized battle groups there: one led by the U.S., one led by the Brits, one led by the Canadians, and one led by the Germans.

So this is an example of how a strong alliance of capable allies willing to step up and lead can share the responsibility for the common good.

Mr. LUTE. I would just cite another dimension of this, and this is an effort to break the energy dependence that the Baltic States have on Russia. So, most important, there is an example of a recently opened LNG terminal in Lithuania which now opens them up to the potential of importing LNG energy gas from the world marketplace and not be wholly reliant on their ties to Russia.

Mr. CONNOLLY [presiding]. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentleman from Kansas, Mr. Watkins, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to the panel for being here.

I would like to talk about the Arctic, questions are open to anybody. Obviously the Arctic has geopolitical ramifications. What is the NATO's strategy with regard to the Arctic?

Mr. LUTE. It is very light on strategy, Congressman. I would say that there has been especially with regard to the climate, impacts in the Arctic and the potential that a sort of a northern tier transit route from China into the Atlantic becomes more and more a possibility over the coming years that NATO is paying more attention here. I would also highlight the Arctic though as an example of engaging with Russia.

Even though we have, the hearing has suggested many ways in which we compete with Russia, right, one effective way to engage with Russia is exemplified by the Arctic Council—I think that is the correct name—which brings together the seven Arctic nations to include other NATO allies, with Russia, to discuss about the climate but also security implications in the Far North. So this is becoming more important in climate here intersects NATO strategy.

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you. And I know we talked a lot about China today, but would NATO describe China as a threat to transatlantic security?

Mr. LUTE. Not today and not, I think, in the foreseeable future. But NATO needs to wake up to China as a competitor and in particular in the commercial investment space, transportation and information systems, and increasingly in the political space. They tend to buy their way into influence on the commercial side and then expect political payoff.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. If I could add on that, I mean NATO does have a foundation to work with when it comes down to dealing with China. Over the last decades it has developed partnerships with countries like Japan, Korea, Australia, and New Zealand. This provides a foundation upon which it kind of deep and a more elaborate, a more substantive set of engagements in the region.

It is something the United States should be encouraging NATO to do as we try to develop a more comprehensive strategy to dealing with an increasingly assertive China. And I think if we make the case to our Europeans we will find them somewhat more receptive than before because they are beginning to feel the pressure from China themselves in the economic and the cyber domains.

Ms. FLOURNOY. The other thing I would just add, sir, is that I think China watches U.S. behavior very carefully, globally, and that includes how we interact with our allies. So if there are troubles or tensions with our NATO allies, they—it often makes our

Asian allies very nervous as well and China looks for ways to divide and exploit that.

Mr. WATKINS. Well, let me ask about then what strategy, and if not strategy, roles, responsibilities, do NATO have with regards to North Korea?

Mr. CHOLLET. Other than these partnerships that Mr. Brzezinski mentioned, none.

Ms. FLOURNOY. But I think as politically, you know, the NATO allies become very, very important allies to stand with us politically to press for the objective of denuclearization and to make sure that North Korea and provocative behavior is deterred if not answered. So I agree there is no military role, but politically they can be very important.

Mr. WATKINS. Sure.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the gentleman. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Allred, for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLRED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our distinguished panel for being here today.

I am of the opinion that NATO is the most successful human alliance in history and that with this being the 70th anniversary of this historic alliance I want to make sure that we are doing everything we can in Congress to be a counterweight to some of what we have seen from obviously our President.

And I just want to talk to you a little bit about I try to drill things down for folks in my district, folks in Texas, I represent parts of Dallas, of what the impact of our foreign affairs and our foreign policy has on us at home and, you know, obviously NATO's ability for us to maintain kind of this era of post-World War II peace has been critical in that.

But, Ms. Flournoy, if you could just talk a little bit about our trade with that NATO empowers and enables, how that interaction with our allies is good for our economy and how this is really a critical relationship for us across more than just some of the things that might be people need to be more aware of.

Ms. FLOURNOY. So NATO has provided the foundation of stability on which the transatlantic economic relationships have been built, more than a trillion dollars of trade and goods and services between the U.S. and Europe every year. That accounts for, you know, a significant percentage of our GDP. It also accounts for a number of export-related jobs in the United States. I do not have the figures for your district in Texas, but I guarantee you there are some jobs in your district that are dependent on our trade with the Europeans.

So it is really, that trade relationship is an engine for the economies on both sides of the Atlantic. And as we all have said before, as a matter of strategy it would be very beneficial for the United States to leverage that in pushing back on China when we talk about its unfair trade practices or its theft of IP or its denial of our market access. We are much stronger when we push back together with our European-Asian allies than when we do it by ourselves.

Mr. ALLRED. Absolutely. I agree with you. The rules-based order that NATO and our transatlantic alliances have allowed to enforce, I think we underestimate its importance for our economy.

We had Secretary Albright in here recently, and in addition to being just an incredible person she said that this was Article 1 time and that it was time for the Congress to reassert itself in our foreign policy.

And I would just ask each of you, if you could, to touch a little bit—I am sure you have been asked this previously here in the hearing—about what you think Congress can do, what we can do and what I can do individually as a member and what we can do as a body to make sure that our allies understand our commitment.

We obviously had a vote a couple weeks ago that was overwhelmingly bipartisan showing our support for NATO, but what we can do to make sure that the rest of the world understands that we are committed to this alliance and that we are not going to let us backtrack?

Mr. LUTE. So three quick things, Congressman. First of all, the NATO Support Act is a big step in the right direction. And, you know, it may seem like something that does not sort of have an impact outside of Capitol Hill; our NATO allies read that and appreciate it. So that is step No. 1. Step No. 2 is fully fund the European defense initiative which promotes the kind of work that we have talked about here this morning.

Step No. 3, I think Congress needs to go one step further and that is to pursue bipartisan legislation that prohibits the President from unilaterally withdrawing from our most important alliance. And as I said in my opening statement, it took two-thirds of the Senate under advise and consent, a constitutional requirement, to approve the NATO treaty; should not simply be an executive move to depart.

Mr. CHOLLET. Congressman, if I could just add, I concur with those three points and the fourth, which has come up several times so far this morning, which is having you all engage directly. The incredible show of support by the size of the delegation in Munich was widely noticed throughout Europe.

There is going to be another opportunity obviously in less than a month when the Secretary General of NATO comes to speak before a joint session of Congress. And also many NATO ministers will be here in Washington and I know will be anxious to interact and hear from all of you about your views not just on the U.S. role in the alliance and the importance of U.S. leadership, but also ways the alliance needs to get sharper and needs to reform. And I think that is an important message that comes from Congress as well.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

And before I call on Mr. Zeldin, I just, Mr. Chollet, to your point we had the largest delegation in living memory both at the Munich Security Conference—I think there were 55 of us there—and at the first, the opening session of the Parliamentary Assembly and the North Atlantic Assembly meetings in Brussels. It was also the first time ever a speaker of the House attended both meetings and which having the third ranking member of the U.S. Government there to reinforce. And then as you know, subsequently we have invited Secretary General Stoltenberg who I believe may be the first Secretary General of NATO ever to be invited to address a joint session of the Congress.

So I think we are making statements and we certainly, I think we will followup legislatively, Mr. Lute, on what you cited as well. But I think on a bipartisan basis, Senate and House, statements could not be clearer in terms of where we are in our support for this alliance.

And with that I call on the gentleman from New York, Mr. Zeldin.

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, thank you. And as someone who was also at the Munich Security Conference I would echo Mr. Connolly's point. I believe that it was important to have such an important bipartisan showing there. And the support for this alliance should not just remain strong, but as Mr. Chollet just pointed out we need to find ways to make it even stronger.

I wanted to talk briefly about Turkey and Syria, but as two different topics. And like can we go into a little bit more into detail, I believe, Mr. Lute, you started to get into it as you were discussing with Mr. Trone the dynamics of Turkey purchasing an S–400 surface-to-air missile from Russia, purchasing F–35s from the United States, I believe the S–400 acquisition would be made by Turkey before the F–35s are scheduled to be delivered.

If you could just—and I would hate to see that S–400 operating in that particular airspace whether it is our F–35s or anything else as far as the United States military and our allies go. So you can just get—and the question is open to all four of you. If you could talk a little bit more about what this means and why this is problematic.

Mr. LUTE. So the original challenge here is the Turkish decision to buy the S–400. That is important because that Russian-based system will never be integrated into the overall air and missile defense system in NATO. And we will simply block that integration because integrating the Russian system would open vulnerabilities to the whole NATO integrated system. So Turkey is essentially spending money to buy a national-only system which from the outset they have been told will never be integrated.

So it is a very sort of selfish nationalist sort of decision which is shortsighted and will never be used. It will never contribute to NATO. It is further complicated if we were to proceed with an F–35 purchase, because now you would have under one national command structure the premier Russian-built air defense system against our premier aircraft. And you can imagine that we would never be certain enough to ensure that these did not game one against the other and open up vulnerabilities for the rest of the F–35 fleet. So this is a two-part story and they are both bad news.

Mr. ZELDIN. Anybody like to add anything?

Mr. CHOLLET. If I could just add, just to complicating this further on the F–35 side, my understanding is that part of the Turkish purchase of F–35 involves some co-production, so which means part of the plane would actually be built in Turkey. And so I know that our EUCOM commanders are talking through with the Turks about how that in itself would be extremely problematic. Let alone them acquiring but then producing the F–35 at the same time they also are trying to stand up a Russian system on their own territory will, I think, make it even harder to see how that would go forward.

What I can say is my sense is this administration, really actually going back two administrations now as this has been on the table, it has been very consistent and very clear with the Turkish Government about the mistake we believe this would be and the fact that it will jeopardize other elements of our military partnership with them.

Mr. ZELDIN. It seems like there is some kind of a game of chicken going on here between Turkey and the United States to see who blinks first. And I think the United States needs to remain resolute in insisting that if Turkey wants to acquire F–35s that they are not going to be able to proceed with their S–400's. Either of the other two witnesses want to add anything else on this topic?

Shifting gears to Syria, at the Munich Security Conference there was a discussion of what our European partners thought about taking on a bigger role in Syria. I would like you, if any of you could comment on what that would look like from a NATO standpoint, please.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I do not foresee NATO taking on a much larger role because I do not think there is consensus across the alliance for that. But I, you know, we have had key allies individually step up sort of relying on the backbone of U.S. Special Operations Forces and our enablers and our Command and Control to contribute as whether it is as trainers or in reconstruction or in ISR overhead combat air missions.

I think if the U.S. were to withdraw or sharply reduce our presence, the backbone that they rely on would—those capabilities would not be there and you would see a commensurate reduction if not complete withdrawal of our European allies. So I do think the U.S. posture is critical as kind of the linchpin to the coalition posture against ISIL.

Mr. ZELDIN. And then real briefly——

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. I could add to that. I agree with what Michele has said. It is also a little bit of issue in getting the cart before the horse. You are not going to get NATO involved——in Syria until there is a real clear path toward peace and stability and reconciliation in that war-torn country. So when thinking about NATO and Syria I would look at the example set by NATO and Afghanistan, where an ally went in with some other allies and took control of the country, and when things reach a certain point with a certain degree of confidence that an alliance contribution would be part of a coherent strategy toward peace and reconciliation in the country, then the alliance would be more prepared. And actually I would say those are the circumstances under which we would want the alliance to get engaged.

Mr. ZELDIN. My time has expired. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much.

Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

And just another footnote, Mr. Lute, the resolution denying the President unilateral authority to pull out of the agreement is actually H.J. Res. 41 here in the House and that was introduced by Mr. Gallego and myself. And we have a companion bill in the Senate introduced by Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia, so we will work on

that and with the help of the chairman we will get it before our committee.

I want to followup a little bit on Turkey too. Mr. Lute, you kind of, I think you said something that I would call provocative. Not necessarily bad, but here is a NATO ally, one of the staunchest historically and yet they seem to be testing almost everything. They seem to be testing the common values that presumably unite NATO members, not just what we are against but what we are for, what we stand for.

They are challenging us with respect to the Kurds who are the only group that consistently, successfully, fought by our side and won territory from the ISIS. And yet, the Turks would have you believe that all of those Kurdish fighters in Syria are, in fact, terrorists or affiliated with terrorists and we need to force them to give up territory they won with their own blood and our support and create some kind of cordon sanitaire, I guess, between Syria and Turkish border that presumably would be patrolled by the Turks. One does not know what the fate of the Kurds would be in that set of circumstances.

Purchasing Russian equipment almost in defiance, maybe not almost, maybe in defiance of any kind of norm in terms of standard-setting by NATO, a crackdown on freedom of press, crackdown on opposition, on and on, using the coup maybe as a pretext to do all of that, what is one to conclude and what do you think ought to happen? Because there are other NATO members that are sliding too, Hungary and Poland come to mind, and it seems to me we have to have a current message or we become this disparate groups of 28 or 29 members that the only thing we have in common is, I guess, resisting Russian aggression in Central Europe.

Mr. LUTE. Congressman, I could not agree more. I think the values that are in the second sentence of the Washington Treaty, well before you get to Article 5 you have passed through the values, right, and that was agreed by all 29. So I think it is right for us both within the alliance, largely led by the Secretary General, to have quiet, diplomatic engagement with Turkish leaders about what they are placing at risk with their behavior.

I also think though there is some introspection here for us. I mean we have no U.S. Ambassador in Turkey. We have a vacancy in the European bureau of the State Department. Who will do this engagement with Turkey if we have only people in acting positions? So we have to sort of vote with our own time and space and get senior level diplomats in place and then engage relentlessly with the Erdogan regime. But they are heading in the wrong direction.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chollet, you are shaking your head yes.

Mr. CHOLLET. I could not agree more. I mean Turkey is, as Ambassador Lute said, the one member of NATO that has gone the furthest, the fastest in terms of its democratic backslide and that is only going to be a continuing irritant in the alliance. And, in fact, as you suggested, Congressman, could, you know, undermine the second sentence of the preamble of the Washington Treaty which is all about democratic values. And we are not, frankly, in a good position right now to address this issue and deal with the Turkish Government on this issue.

So beyond the military challenges we have which are significant with them with the acquisition of the Russian system, these political challenges of which NATO has an important role to play are going to be paramount.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I want to give Ms. Flournoy and Mr. Brzezinski an opportunity also to comment and it is primarily about Turkey, but it also, feel free to include our concerns about Hungary and Poland, and then I would yield back with the indulgence of the chair.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I agree with what my colleagues have said. I just think that one of the things that has gone missing in our diplomacy is an emphasis on democracy and human rights and the protection of minority rights. It is so much about who we are as a Nation, it is so much about who we are as an alliance that that has to be part of the hard conversation we have with allies who demonstrate some degree of backsliding.

You cannot have it both ways. You cannot be, you know, a member in good standing in an alliance that was formed to protect democracy and be in the process of obliterating democracy in your own country.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. I concur with my colleagues. I would just add it is interesting to me the forward edge of the Russian sword is social media and hybrid attacks designed to undercut the commonality of values we have in the alliance that is binding it. By attacking those values and by attacking the unity around those values, our adversaries are actually trying to weaken one of our strongest assets which is the NATO alliance.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much.

Ms. Titus.

Ms. TITUS. Well, thank you.

Just to followup, when you talk about Turkey, nobody has mentioned the relationship with Greece and what is happening in Cyprus. Those are kind of sidelines to the main event, I guess. Also, I would say it is very difficult for us to take some of the members to task when we set such a bad example ourselves and I go back to the comment you made.

You know, we heard a lot of praise for the President and getting the NATO countries to pay more of their share, but Ambassador Lute, you said that our single greatest challenge is the lack of real leadership now. I just want to put on the record the tweets, and I will use their word, the President's words, not just my paraphrasing of them.

In July 2018 he said, "While I had a great meeting with NATO raising vast amounts of money, I had an even better meeting with Vladimir Putin of Russia. Sadly, it is not being reported that way. The fake news is going crazy." Then he followed up and said, "While the NATO meeting in Brussels was an acknowledged triumph with billions of dollars more put up by member countries, the meeting with Russia may prove to be in the long run an even greater success. Many positive things will come out of that meeting."

So what are our fellow members of the alliance supposed to think, do as I say or do as I do, or you do something different from the message that we are putting out? I can understand your frustration and I share it.

I would like to talk about the contribution they make besides arms and besides dollars when you look at the countries of NATO. I serve on the House Democracy Partnership and we meet with a lot of new democracies trying to have exchanges between legislatures to buildup democratic institutions, whether it is parties, whether it is the media, whether it is the courts and the rule of law. You mentioned Ukraine and Georgia. Those are two partners.

Would you just talk about how being part of NATO helps to either create, buildup, or strengthen democratic institutions, because I think that is one of our greatest successes, potentially.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I will say just a few words and then hand it off. When we went through the first round of NATO expansion we had the Perry principles from Secretary Perry and there were certain criteria that we laid out for new, for NATO aspirants. One of them was you have to be a functioning democracy that protects minority rights. You had to be a free market economy. You had to make certain, meet certain milestones in terms of interoperability in your military capabilities and so forth.

But democracy and has always been, whether it is at the founding of the alliance or the expansion of the alliance, it has always been a key criteria. And I will defer to others to add.

Mr. CHOLLET. I agree with that. And I think that is a further reason for why enlargement in the open-door policy of enlargement has been so important and I think remains so important, because NATO serves as a kind of a magnet, an incentive system for countries to make those transition in countries in the post-Soviet space, the post-communist countries to make the kinds of decisions in terms of their political system, and also the way the role their militaries play within their governments because many of these countries coming out of the Soviet system, the military and the security service has played an outsized role in the governance of those countries.

And so ensuring that their ministries of defense reform and that they are budgeted in a way with transparency is also critical to democratic health. So I think NATO, the values at NATO's core we need to keep them there, and NATO operationally by serving as a magnet and incentivizing countries to maintain their democratic core values will remain indispensable.

Mr. LUTE. So I applaud focus on this. You know, yesterday was the 20th anniversary of the welcoming of the first three post-cold war allies to the alliance, so Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Today, 20 years later, they are allies, right, and Poland and Hungary are among the worst in terms of slippage or backsliding on democratic values, which they signed up to when they joined the alliance.

So going back to basics here and remembering what it takes to become a member of the alliance and then quietly, diplomatically, with discretion holding allies accountable is really a very important initiative both for the Secretary General, but ideally from the United States because we would be doing so from a position of example, of good example. And I am actually as an American citizen concerned today that we are not maybe as strong an example on these core principles as we have been in the past.

Mr. BRZEZINSKI. The alliance has been extremely effective in helping particularly transitioning countries to understand the value and importance of civilian control over the military and that has been its most direct contribution to democratic principles. As an alliance, as members, we contribute to democratic principles that Doug and others have talked about, not necessarily through NATO but more bilaterally.

So when I think of NATO, I think of a political military organization whose primary mission is putting lead downrange, but as part of its contributions it helps governments more effectively do that by helping them institutionalize the culture and practices of civilian control of the military.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, thank you very much. I think this brings the hearing to an end. I want to thank our four excellent panelists. And you notice we had so much interest in it, so many people kept coming and leaving when they had to but making sure that they came back and it really was, I think, one of the best panels we have had and I want to thank all four of you for doing that.

I want to remind the committee that at 2 o'clock we have a meeting with King Abdullah of Jordan over in the Capitol, so I would hope the members of the committee would attend that. And again I want to thank our witnesses and the hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:01 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Eliot L. Engel (D-NY), Chairman

March 13, 2019

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/):

DATE: Wednesday, March 13, 2019

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: NATO at 70: An Indispensable Alliance

WITNESSES: The Honorable Michèle Flournoy
Co-Founder and Managing Partner
WestExec Advisors
(Former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy)

The Honorable Derek Chollet
Executive Vice President and Senior Advisor for Security and Defense Policy
The German Marshall Fund of the United States
(Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs)

The Honorable Douglas Lute
Senior Fellow, Project on Europe and the Transatlantic Relationship
Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs
(Former United States Permanent Representative to NATO)

Mr. Ian Brzezinski
Resident Senior Fellow, Transatlantic Security Initiative
Atlantic Council
(Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Europe and NATO)

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Wednesday* Date *03/13/19* Room *2172 RHOB*

Starting Time *10:07 a.m.* Ending Time *1:01 p.m.*

Recesses *0* (____to____) (____to____) (____to____) (____to____) (____to____) (____to____)

Presiding Member(s)
Chairman Eliot L. Engel

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☑
Executive (closed) Session ☐
Televised ☑

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☑
Stenographic Record ☑

TITLE OF HEARING:
NATO AT 70: AN INDISPENSABLE ALLIANCE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:
See attached.

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:
N/A

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☑ **No** ☐
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*
SFR_Cicilline
IFR_Engel (I)
IFR_Engel (II)
QFR_Wagner

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *1:01 p.m.*

Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

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STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD FROM REPRESENTATIVE CICILLINE

Statement for the Record from Representative David N. Cicilline
NATO at 70: An Indispensable Alliance
March 13, 2019

I'd like to thank the Chairman for calling this hearing on such an important issue – the future of NATO. I'd also like to thank the witnesses, Ms. Flournoy, Ambassador Lute, Mr. Chollet, and Mr. Brzezinski, for their incredible public service.

NATO is, in my view, truly an indispensable alliance. It is indispensable for defending the United States, indispensable for maintaining peace, and indispensable for defending democratic values. It forms the foundation of the transatlantic partnership that has ensured unparalleled peace and prosperity in Europe and North America for decades. Without a doubt, NATO makes the United States safer and more secure.

NATO is not a body designed to make war, in fact, the opposite – NATO is a defensive military alliance designed to ensure peace and prosperity, a mission it has accomplished over the last seven decades. NATO is an alliance founded on a set of common, shared values, which is why our NATO allies are among our closest allies. We often forget that the only time the collective defense response was invoked was after September 11th – in our hour of need, our allies resolutely stood by our side. NATO is not a charity, or a collection of freeloaders, as President Trump would suggest.

I am alarmed, dismayed, and shocked by how President Trump has attacked NATO and our allies. He shows a complete total lack of knowledge about the basic tenets of NATO. He shows a galling lack of understanding for the concept of mutual, collective defense. He bullies our allies. His rhetoric has weakened this critical alliance and left our friends wondering if they can trust us, and our adversaries emboldened. Many allies question whether or not the United States would come to their defense.

I want to commend Ambassador Lute and Nicholas Burns' excellent report on NATO at 70, released by the Belfer Center at Harvard. It is a thoughtful, sober analysis of the current state of the alliance and a roadmap for its future. The report warns: "President Donald Trump is regarded widely in NATO capitals as the Alliance's most urgent – and often most difficult – problem." That is an extraordinary statement. NATO, an alliance founded by the United States and our closest allies in great part to defend the United States, now sees the President of the United States as a threat. Incredible.

Today, I have a message for our NATO Allies – the United States is absolutely committed to NATO, and Congress will continue to ensure we are resolute in our support for the alliance. America's commitment to Article V remains iron-clad. The United States will remain a leader in the alliance, we will continue to invest in collective transatlantic security, which makes us all safer and more prosperous.

That said, we must all continue to work to ensure that NATO remains committed to the shared, democratic values that form the foundation of the alliance. As Ambassadors Lute and Burns note, democratic backsliding is a "cancerous threat from within." I am concerned by trends in

Poland, Hungary, and Turkey, for example, that show an erosion of basic democratic principles. American leadership is crucial, yet President Trump, far from upholding democratic principles, often attacks them. That is why Congress must continue to resolutely speak out and send a clear message to our allies about what we stand for and what NATO stands for.

Over the last seventy years, NATO has grown and adapted to face new threats, while remaining true to its core mission of collective defense, defense of shared, democratic values, and a defense of peace. As we face new emerging threats NATO remains truly indispensable, and Congress must ensure President Trump does not try to walk away from this vital alliance.

MATERIALS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD FROM CHAIRMAN ENGEL

Executive Summary

Approaching the seventieth anniversary of its founding in April 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) remains the single most important contributor to security, stability and peace in Europe and North America.

NATO provides the umbrella defending Europe from conventional and nuclear attack and a secure geopolitical landscape for the world's two largest economies—the European Union and the United States. NATO members comprise the largest and strongest alliance of democratic countries in the world. They contain Russian aggression and protect over 100 million East Europeans who now live in democracy and freedom after the fall of communism.[1] Far from obsolete, NATO remains vital for the more than 900 million Europeans and North Americans who benefit from it every day.[2] It is no overstatement that if NATO did not exist today, countries on both sides of the Atlantic would need to create it in a troubled, divisive 21st century where authoritarian powers are on the rise.

The NATO allies, however, are confronting daunting and complex challenges that are testing both their purpose and unity. Based on extensive discussions with current European and North American leaders, former senior officials, academics and journalists during the past six months, this report argues that NATO needs to come to grips with ten major challenges this year. The list is long, with simultaneous challenges from within the alliance, from beyond NATO's borders and looming on the horizon. Most significant is a challenge NATO has not faced before: the absence of strong American presidential leadership. NATO's leaders need to act decisively in 2019 to meet these tests and heal the widening divisions within the Alliance before it is too late.

Challenges from Within NATO

Reviving American Leadership of the Alliance

NATO's single greatest challenge is the absence of strong, principled American presidential leadership for the first time in its history. President Donald Trump is regarded widely in NATO capitals as the Alliance's most urgent, and often most difficult, problem. NATO leaders, for example, considered not holding a 2019 summit to mark the seventieth anniversary this spring as they did in decades past. They feared President Trump would blow up a meeting in controversy as he has done each time he has met with NATO leaders during the past two years. Wary of his past behavior, NATO plans a scaled down leaders meeting for December 2019.

President Trump's open ambivalence about NATO's value to the U.S., his public questioning of America's Article 5 commitment to its allies, persistent criticism of Europe's democratic leaders and embrace of its anti-democratic members and continued weakness in failing to confront NATO's primary adversary President Vladimir Putin of Russia, have hurtled the Alliance into its most worrisome crisis in memory.[3]

There is no reason to believe President Trump's attitude will change for the better during the next two years. He believes NATO allies are taking advantage of the U.S.[4] These are the same allies and partners who came to America's defense on 9/11, suffered more than 1,000 battlefield deaths alongside American soldiers in Afghanistan,[5] are fighting with the U.S. now against the Islamic State and shoulder the main burden sustaining a fragile peace in the Balkans, in both Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

President Trump is the first U.S. president to view the European Union as an economic competitor rather than a vital partner of both the U.S. and NATO. His troubling anti-NATO and anti-Europe bias has caused European governments to question the credibility of the U.S. as the leader of the West for the first time since the Second World War.[6] The European public confidence in American leadership is also at historically low depths.[7] Every American president before Trump has encouraged the strength and

unity of Europe as a core interest of the U.S. Trump may well cause even greater damage to the Alliance while he remains in office.

For this reason, Republicans and Democrats in Congress must act together as a blocking force against President Trump's dangerous policies. Congress, on a bipartisan basis, should reaffirm the U.S. commitment to the Article 5 defense clause in the NATO Treaty. Congress should pass legislation this year requiring Congressional approval should President Trump attempt to alter U.S. treaty commitments to NATO allies or to have the U.S. leave the Alliance altogether.[8] Congress should continue to fund the "European Deterrence Initiative" to bolster U.S. military strength in Europe that is the primary deterrent against Russian adventurism.

Restoring European Defense Strength

NATO's European members and Canada pose their own challenge to the Alliance—the weakness of their collective defense spending for NATO's common defense. President Trump has been right to push allies to spend more on defense. He has the support of the U.S. Congress and many Americans in doing so. It is simply unfair that only five of the twenty-nine allies are currently spending at least 2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on their military budgets, while the U.S. is spending 3.5 percent and shouldering much of the defense burden.[9]

Germany, the largest and wealthiest of the European allies, has a major shortfall as it is currently spending only 1.24 percent of its budget on defense. Its coalition government has not summoned the strength and determination to convince the Bundestag and the German public to reach the minimum 2 percent level soon. Germany is thus abdicating this most basic obligation as a member of NATO. Italy, Canada, Spain, the Netherlands and other allies are also spending well below the agreed 2 percent level.[10]

Having made his point, President Trump should also acknowledge that aggregate NATO defense spending trends are actually heading in the right direction, despite insufficient spending by some allies. NATO allies have produced four consecutive years of real growth for a

collective increase in spending of $87 billion, particularly in reaction to Putin's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and President Trump's public pressure since 2017.[11] A majority of NATO members plan to reach the 2 percent level by the agreed target date of 2024. More than half will spend 20 percent of their defense budgets on new equipment and research and development.[12] This new spending is critical to produce added NATO defense capabilities, including intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance, cyber and digital technologies.

The challenge for President Trump on NATO defense spending is to pivot from chief critic to chief cheerleader. His administration should also support new European Union efforts to strengthen the EU's own defense capacity as long as it complements, and not duplicates, NATO's existing capabilities and programs.

Upholding NATO's Democratic Values

NATO is struggling to confront a potentially cancerous threat from within. Three allied governments—Poland, Hungary and Turkey—have undermined their own democracies in varying degrees by suppressing free speech and a free press and limiting the independence of the courts.[13] As NATO is, first and foremost, an alliance of democracies, the actions of these governments threaten the core values—democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law—to which each ally is committed in the North Atlantic Treaty.

Nearly every current and former NATO official with whom we talked for this report worried that a recommendation for NATO to discipline these anti-democratic governments would be highly problematic and divisive. Nonetheless, we believe NATO must find a way to shine a light on these recalcitrant allies. For example, NATO could review annually each ally's democratic practices, perhaps in a report prepared by a high-level, outside group. Allies that violate basic democratic standards could be suspended from NATO military exercises or denied access to NATO training and common infrastructure funding.

More than one European mentioned to us the ironic fact that the U.S. itself may be chastised for a deterioration of its own democratic standards in

such a process. Nevertheless, ignoring this challenge of democratic principles will undermine the core convictions that brought NATO together seventy years ago.

Streamlining NATO Decision-Making

NATO allies have always reached critical decisions by consensus. This continues to make sense for all allies to agree on how NATO should act on major issues. But, it is time for the Alliance to empower the Secretary General on the administrative and resource issues that impede focusing on more significant challenges. The Secretary General must have the operational power to move an often-unwieldy Alliance forward in the way it plans and operates on a daily basis. Also important is improving decision-making in crisis scenarios.

Challenges from Beyond NATO's Borders

Containing Putin's Russia

NATO faces a challenge to deter further Russian aggression in Eastern Europe. Russian President Vladimir Putin is destabilizing NATO partners Ukraine and Georgia by the continued occupation of their territories. He also seeks to weaken the three Baltic allies from within.[14] And Russian cyber attacks, political subversion and aggressive social media campaigns pose a threat to all the NATO democracies and their electoral processes.

NATO allies thus need to take much stronger measures against Moscow than they have to date by:

- Reaffirming economic sanctions on Russia will remain in place for as long as it occupies Ukrainian territory;
- Sustaining indefinitely current back-to-back NATO rotational troop deployments to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, while adding enablers and improving readiness of reinforcements;

- Addressing vulnerabilities in the area of hybrid warfare urgently, the most likely form of Russian aggression against the Alliance;
- Preparing cyber offensive options to deter Russia from further cyber attacks.

At the same time, it makes sense for NATO leaders to maintain continuing contacts with the Kremlin on the many issues that divide NATO allies and Russia: Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereign territory, dangerous Russian air and sea maneuvers in the Baltic and Black Sea regions, the Russian Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) violation, Afghanistan and measures to prevent miscalculation that could lead to conflict that all wish to avoid.

Containing Russian power will be a generational challenge until Putin's Soviet-trained leadership circle leaves power during the next decade, perhaps beyond. There is no more important external challenge for NATO.

Ending the Afghan War

NATO's largest and longest combat mission in Afghanistan is at a critical juncture. The war with the Taliban is at a stalemate. Afghan civilian and military casualties are at an all-time high.[15] Few believe the war can be won outright. President Trump appears determined to have the U.S. depart quickly sometime in 2019 after nearly 18 years of combat. President Trump and his advisors should proceed carefully, in close coordination with the Afghan government, to avoid a precipitous U.S. departure that would jeopardize American interests and risk further instability in Afghanistan.

The Trump administration is right to engage directly with the Taliban to explore a political process to end the war. A durable, sustainable settlement ultimately must be made among Afghans, including the elected Afghan government and the Taliban. The interests and views of Afghanistan's neighbors and the NATO allies with troops on the ground must be considered as well. The U.S. should proceed slowly and carefully, conditioning troop withdrawals on the Taliban's meeting agreed security and political benchmarks beginning with a ceasefire and including agreeing to engage

with the Afghan government. NATO allies should adhere to the "in together, out together" principle, avoiding unilateral national withdrawals.

Refocusing NATO Partnerships

NATO maintains a partnership with forty-one countries outside the Alliance from Mauritania in West Africa to Japan.[16] Many states have been invaluable members of coalitions in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans and in the fight against the Islamic State. Most important, NATO should strengthen its partnership with the European Union. Partnerships with the Gulf Coordination Council, the African Union and the Arab League could promote stability along NATO's periphery.

Maintaining an Open Door to Future Members

Following a historic two-decade expansion of the NATO Alliance with thirteen new members, NATO would be well advised to consolidate that expansion once North Macedonia joins the Alliance in the coming months. Over the next decade or two, however, NATO should keep the door open for any European democracy that meets the strict qualifications for membership. Georgia and Ukraine may not meet the conditions for years to come, but it is in NATO's interest to hold open the possibility of membership in the long term. No country outside the Alliance, most especially Russia, can have a veto over who NATO accepts as it pursues its goal of providing for a free and peaceful European continent.

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Challenges on the Horizon

Winning the Technology Battle in the Digital Age

NATO faces yet another critical challenge in adapting quickly to a rapidly changing, global, military technology landscape. Its often-byzantine defense planning processes date to the Cold War, long before the extraordinary, current advances in military arms powered by artificial intelligence, cyber, robotics, quantum computing and biotechnology—perhaps the most decisive change in military technology since the start of the nuclear age. NATO allies, led by the United States, must now commit a far greater share of their military budgets to acquiring these new military technologies, lest China and Russia gain a decisive advantage in the decade ahead.

Competing with China

While China does not pose a direct military threat to most NATO allies, it is emerging as a global competitor politically, economically and in seeking dominance in digital military technologies. Europe, the United States and Canada need to adopt a more cohesive approach to China. Beijing is emerging as the strongest strategic competitor of both North America and Europe in this century. The European allies need to focus more intently on the challenge from Chinese economic and technological power and industrial espionage. NATO allies should thus tighten restrictions on Chinese investments in key technology sectors on both sides of the Atlantic. And NATO should strengthen its military partnerships with Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and others.

China will be the main geo-strategic competitor of the United States in the decades ahead. It is in the interest of NATO allies to take on the defense burden in the trans-Atlantic region more equitably, to enable the U.S. to focus increasingly on the competition with China. In this strategic sense, NATO's military strength and unity could be a potentially decisive factor in the long-term competition ahead in the Indo-Pacific. The goal is to live and work with China where possible, but to compete to maintain the primacy of the free, democratic countries in both Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

Summary

The United States bears a special responsibility to help its allies to meet these tests. President Trump is wrong to question NATO's central importance to American security. On its own, the United States is a powerful nation. But America's European and Canadian allies expand and amplify American power in ways that Russia and China—with few allies of their own—can never match. United States access to European air and naval bases alone bring American forces a continent closer to the Middle East, Africa and parts of Asia.[17] The United States is substantially stronger in NATO than it would be on its own. There is ample evidence President Trump does not understand—and certainly does not appreciate—this basic strategic fact about NATO.

This is why decisive action by the Congress this year to reassert America's commitment and leadership in NATO is imperative. And it is also why NATO allies, on both sides of the Atlantic, must work together to narrow the growing divisions within the Alliance and to meet these historic challenges as NATO turns seventy.

Notes for Executive Summary

1 The population of East European countries in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is approximately 109 million. See "NATO Countries: Statistical Profile," Nation Master, accessed January 3, 2019, https://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/groups/NATO-countries.

2 "NATO Countries: Statistical Profile," 2018; "US Population," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed January 3, 2019, https://www.census.gov/popclock.

3 Julian E. Barnes and Helene Cooper, "Trump Discussed Pulling US From NATO, Aides Say Amid New Concerns Over Russia," *The New York Times*, January 14, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/14/us/politics/nato-president-trump.html; Aaron Blake, "Trump's Montenegro comments make it abundantly clear he doesn't understand NATO," *The Washington Post*, July 28, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2018/07/18/trump-makes-it-abundantly-clear-he-doesnt-know-how-nato-works/.

4 David Welna, "Fact Check: Trump's Claims On NATO Spending," *National Public Radio*, July 18, 2018, https://www.npr.org/2018/07/11/628137185/fact-check-trumps-claims-on-nato-spending.

5 "Afghanistan Fatalities, Fatalities by Country," iCasualties, accessed December 26, 2018, www.iCasualties.org.

6 Angelique Chrisafis, "Europe can no longer rely on US for security, says Emmanuel Macron," *The Guardian*, August 27, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/27/europe-can-no-longer-rely-on-us-for-security-says-emmanuel-macron; Michael Birnbaum and Rick Noack, "Following Trump's trip, Merkel says Europe can't rely on 'others.' She means the US," *The Washington Post*, May 28, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/following-trumps-trip-merkel-says-europe-cant-rely-on-us-anymore/2017/05/28/4c6b92cc-43c1-11e7-8de1-cec59a9bf4b1_story.html.

7 "Confidence in Trump remains low in key EU countries," *Pew Research Center*, September 28, 2018, http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/10/01/trumps-international-ratings-remain-low-especially-among-key-allies/pg_2018-10-1_u-s-image_0-5/.

8 The United States House of Representatives passed the NATO Support Act on January 2, 2018, which prohibits the appropriation or use of funds to withdraw the United States from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. United States Congress, House, NATO Support Act, HR 676, 116th Congress, 1st sess., introduced in House January 17, 2019, https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/676; Similar action is under consideration in the Senate. See United States Congress, House, NATO Support Act, HR 676, 116th Congress, 1st sess., introduced January 17, 2019, https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/676.

9 "Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2011-2018)," NATO Press Release PR/CP(2018)091, July 10, 2018, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_07/20180709_180710-pr2018-91-en.pdf. However, data on defense spending can be misleading. While the U.S. devotes 3.5 percent of GDP to defense, not all of that is committed to NATO.

10 "Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2011-2018)," 2018.

11 Nicholas Burns, "What America Gets Out of NATO," *The New York Times*, July 11, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/11/opinion/what-america-gets-out-of-nato.html.

12 "Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2011-2018)," 2018.

13 Jonathan Katz and Torrey Taussig, "An inconvenient truth: Addressing democratic backsliding within NATO," *Brookings Institution*, July 10, 2018, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/07/10/an-inconvenient-truth-addressing-democratic-backsliding-within-nato/.

14 Paul Stronski and Richard Sokolsky, *The Return of Global Russia: An Analytical Framework* (Washington, DC: *The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, December 2017), https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/12/14/return-of-global-russia-analytical-framework-pub-75003, p. 3-30.

15 "Quarterly Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 1 January to 30 September, 2018," United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, October 10, 2018, https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unama_protection_of_civilians_in_armed_conflict_3rd_quarter_report_2018_10_oct.pdf; Idrees Ali, "Afghan security forces' deaths unsustainable: US military official," *Reuters*, December 4, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-military/afghan-security-forces-deaths-unsustainable-u-s-military-official-idUSKBN1O32CS.

16 Partnership for Peace: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Malta, The Republic of Moldova, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan; Mediterranean Dialogue: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia; Istanbul Cooperation Initiative: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates; Partners from across the globe: Afghanistan, Australia, Colombia, Iraq, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan; International organizations: United Nations, European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. See "Partners," NATO, last updated November 11, 2015, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/51288.htm.

17 Jens Stoltenberg, "The Value of NATO in the 21st Century," *Heritage Foundation*, Washington, DC, September 14, 2018, https://www.heritage.org/defense/event/the-value-nato-the-21st-century/.

MATERIALS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD FROM CHAIRMAN ENGEL

REEVALUATING DIPLOMATIC & MILITARY POWER

What Are America's Alliances Good For?

Hal Brands and Peter D. Feaver
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ABSTRACT: The costs and risks associated with America's military alliances have always been more visible and easily understood than the benefits. In reality, however, those costs and risks are frequently overstated, whereas the benefits are more numerous and significant than often appreciated. This article offers a more accurate net assessment of America's alliances in hopes of better informing current policy debates.

President Donald Trump has shaken up the foreign policy debate in the United States, and nowhere more so than in relations with America's longstanding treaty allies. Since Trump emerged as a presidential candidate in mid-2015, he has often put US alliances squarely in his crosshairs. Trump labeled the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) "obsolete" and suggested leaving its easternmost members to defend themselves. He floated the idea of encouraging nuclear proliferation by Japan and South Korea to enable US geopolitical retrenchment. As president, Trump pointedly refused to explicitly affirm America's Article 5 commitment at his first NATO summit, and he publicly dressed down the European allies for failing to spend more on defense.[1]

In a subsequent trip to Europe, Trump offered a more robust statement of US commitment to NATO, but nonetheless vented his frustration with allies for not, in his view, shouldering sufficient burdens.[2] Underlying these critiques has been the idea that US alliances are fundamentally sucker bets—one-sided relationships in which a guileless America bears all the costs and parasitic allies derive all the benefits. "We're taken advantage by every nation in the world virtually," Trump commented in February 2017.[3]

Not surprisingly, the bipartisan US foreign policy elite has generally reacted with alarm at the administration's rhetoric and policies. Leading commentators have warned that Trump is threatening to harm the alliances Washington spent decades building, institutions generally considered to be among America's most precious geopolitical assets.[4] Likewise, international observers have worried that the United States

1 See, variously, Aaron Eglitis, Toluse Olorunnipa, and Andy Sharp, "Trump's NATO Skepticism Raises Alarm for Allies Near Russia," Bloomberg, July 21, 2016; Stephanie Condon, "Donald Trump: Japan, South Korea Might Need Nuclear Weapons," CBS News, March 29, 2016; and Jeremy Diamond, "Trump Scolds NATO Allies over Defense Spending," CNN, May 25, 2017.

2 Abby Phillip and John Wagner, "In Poland, Trump Reaffirms Commitment to NATO, Chides Russia," *Daily Herald (Chicago)*, July 6, 2017.

3 Lauren Gambino and Sabrina Siddiqui, "Trump Defends Chaotic Foreign Policy: 'We're Going to Straighten It Out, OK?'," *Guardian*, February 2, 2017.

4 See, for instance, Dov Zakheim, "Trump's Position on Treaty Commitments Has Already Hurt America," *Foreign Policy*, July 22, 2016.

seems to be turning away from its most important friends.[5] Yet despite the reaction they have provoked, Trump's critiques have nonetheless revealed a fundamental asymmetry in the cost-benefit assessment of US alliances.

The fact of the matter is that the costs and risks associated with America's alliances have always been more visible and easily understood than the benefits. Moreover, because US foreign policy elites have long become accustomed to military alliances as facts of geopolitical life, even proalliance observers often struggle to specify, in concrete terms, why those institutions are so valuable. Supporters are thus at a rhetorical disadvantage in these arguments. They often defend alliances by pointing to vague and ill-defined benefits, or simply by invoking tradition, whereas critics can point to specific dangers and burdens, including those more easily reduced to a campaign trail slogan or a pithy tweet. And Trump is not alone in his attacks on US alliances—many leading "realist" academics have long offered similar critiques, which the president has now effectively appropriated as his own. "The U.S. net gain from its alliance relationships is . . . not commensurate with the cost," Barry Posen writes: "the bargain has become unprofitable to the United States."[6]

In this essay, we offer a more accurate net assessment of America's alliances by detailing the purported costs and considerable—if less widely understood—benefits. We first summarize the most common critiques of US alliances and explain why many of those critiques are less persuasive than they initially seem. We then provide a detailed typology of the myriad benefits—military and otherwise—of US alliances. As this analysis shows, the net assessment of US alliances is strongly positive, and the balance is not even particularly close. Today as always, there remain significant challenges associated with alliance management and reasonable debates to be had about addressing them. But those debates need to be informed by a better understanding of what US alliances are good for in the first place.

Costs, Real and Perceived

Trump is not the first prominent observer to critique US alliances. Ever since the country's founding, permanent military alliances have been a source of controversy. The alliance structure built from the ashes of World War II, and gradually expanded in the decades thereafter, has itself been the subject of heated debate. Leading political figures such as Senator Robert Taft initially opposed an American commitment to NATO; Senator Michael Mansfield sought to force withdrawal of half the US troops deployed to Europe in the early 1970s. The post-Cold War expansion of NATO touched off perhaps the most intense foreign policy debate of the 1990s. And in recent decades, there has been a lively cottage industry among academics who deem US alliances expensive, unrewarding, and dangerous, and who argue for attenuating or simply abandoning those commitments. The standard academic critique—much

5 Krishnadev Calamur, "Germany's Merkel Urges 'Europe to Take Our Fate into Our Own Hands,'" *Atlantic*, May 30, 2017.

6 Barry R. Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 34.

of which Trump has adopted or adapted as his own—adduces several key costs and dangers associated with US alliances.

First, America's military alliances require Washington to defend countries whose security is not vital to the United States. Second, US alliances compel military expenditures far higher than would be necessary simply to defend America itself. Third, maintaining the credibility of US alliances forces America to adopt aggressive, forward-leaning defense strategies. Fourth, having allies raises the risk of the United States being entrapped in unwanted conflicts. Fifth, America's allies habitually free ride on America's own exertions. Sixth, alliances limit America's freedom of action and cause unending diplomatic headaches.[7]

So how accurate are these critiques? We consider each in its turn. In sum, America's alliance system is hardly costless, and all of these critiques contain at least a kernel of truth. In many cases, however, the costs are significantly exaggerated—or critics simply ignore that the United States would have to pay similar costs even if it had no alliances.

Alliances require defending countries whose security is not vital to the United States. The United States has formal security commitments to over thirty treaty allies in Europe and the Asia-Pacific and informal or ambiguous security commitments to over thirty additional countries.[8] These commitments, particularly the formal treaty commitments, represent something approaching a solemn vow to shed blood to defend non-American lands. And some of the countries protected by US guarantees are not, in and of themselves, critical to the global balance of power or the physical security of the United States.[9] The United States could be called upon to resist a Russian seizure of Estonia, and yet the American people could survive and thrive in a world in which Estonia was occupied by Russian forces.

Yet if this critique is not baseless, it is often overstated, because the United States does have a vital interest in defending many of its current allies. The basic geopolitical lesson of World Wars I and II—a lesson many critics of US alliances endorse—is that Washington should not allow any hostile power to dominate a crucial geopolitical region such as Europe, East Asia, or the Middle East.[10] Accordingly, the United States could still find itself compelled to fight to defend those regions—and

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7 For examples of these critiques, see Posen, *Restraint*; Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006); Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: Norton, 2006); Christopher A. Preble, *The Power Problem: How American Military Dominance Makes Us Less Safe, Less Prosperous, and Less Free* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009); Eric A. Nordlinger, *Isolationism Reconfigured: American Foreign Policy for a New Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); and Ted Galen Carpenter, *A Search for Enemies: America's Alliances after the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 1992). Some of these works build on earlier (and often less critical) studies of alliance dynamics, including Mancur Olson Jr. and Richard Zeckhauser, "An Economic Theory of Alliances," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 48, 3 (August 1996): 266–79, doi:10.2307/1927082; and Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

8 See Adam Taylor, "Map: The U.S. Is Bound by Treaties to Defend a Quarter of Humanity," *Washington Post*, May 30, 2015. A precise count of US allies is difficult to achieve because the actual meaning and implications of certain US defense agreements—the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, for instance—are ambiguous.

9 It is important to note that all of America's defense commitments provide an "out" through clauses allowing Washington to act in accordance with its own constitutional processes. In essence, treaties—although they are ratified by the Senate and carry the force of law—represent more of a moral obligation than a tightly binding legal obligation to other states.

10 See John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Case for Offshore Balancing: A Superior U.S. Grand Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 95, 4 (July/August 2016): 70–83.

many key countries therein—even if formal alliance relationships did not exist. This was, after all, precisely what happened during both world wars and the Persian Gulf War, when American officials concluded that US security required defending or liberating key countries in these regions, even though Washington had not previously had military alliances there. Alliances do not cause US entanglements overseas; entanglements cause alliances.

US alliances compel military expenditures far higher than would be necessary to defend America itself. To defend allies in the western Pacific or Europe, the United States requires global power-projection capabilities and a military that can win not just in its own backyard but in the backyards of its great-power rivals. America thus needs a larger, more technologically advanced, more sophisticated force than would be necessary strictly for continental defense, along with an accompanying global-basing network.

For these reasons, the US military is indeed more expensive than it would be absent US alliances. Yet this critique is also overblown. After all, if the United States has an interest in preventing any hostile power from dominating a key region of Eurasia, then alliances or no alliances, Washington would still require a military capable of projecting decisive power into these regions in an emergency.[11] Likewise, because America has geopolitical objectives beyond the protection of allies—such as counterterrorism and securing the global commons—the need for advanced power projection capabilities and overseas bases would remain even in a world without alliances.

Such a force might still be smaller than today's military. If the United States pursued a strategy in which it rolled back or attenuated key alliances, one critic suggests, it could reduce defense spending to 2.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), as opposed to 3.5 or 4 percent.[12] Yet America would still have the world's largest defense budget by a considerable margin under this approach, and such a force—which would consist, for instance, of only four carrier strike groups instead of 10 to 11 today—might not actually be sufficient to command the global commons and fight its way back into key regions in a crisis.[13]

In fact, if the United States pulled back from its alliance commitments and waited for a crisis to develop before surging back into key regions, it might find such a mission more difficult—and more expensive—than simply protecting its allies in the first place. It was precisely this fact—that the United States ended up deploying millions of troops to liberate Western Europe and East Asia during World War II, at financial and human costs that would be almost unimaginable today, that led American policymakers to adopt a different approach featuring formal alliances and forward deployments thereafter.[14] Nor would eliminating parts of the US basing network associated with protecting American

11 Evan Braden Montgomery, "Contested Primacy in the Western Pacific: China's Rise and the Future of U.S. Power Projection," *International Security* 38, no. 4 (Spring 2014): 121, doi:10.1162/ISEC_a_00160.

12 Posen, *Restraint.*

13 Hal Brands, *The Limits of Offshore Balancing* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2015), 23–28.

14 See Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 205; and James R. Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, "An Ocean Too Far: Offshore Balancing in the Indian Ocean," *Asian Security* 8, 1 (March 2012): 11, doi:10.1080/14799855.2011.652025.

allies save much money absent corresponding force reductions, because host-nation support arrangements often make it roughly as cheap, if not cheaper, to station American forces overseas than to station them in the United States.[15] American defense expenditures could slightly decrease in a world without US military alliances, at least in the short-term, but the savings would be less dramatic—and perhaps more ephemeral—than one might expect.

Maintaining the credibility of American alliances requires adopting forward-leaning defense strategies. This critique comes closer to the mark. Prior to the Cold War, the US strategic posture was essentially one of allowing aggressors to conquer friendly states in Europe and East Asia, and then mobilizing to liberate those areas. Since the late 1940s, however, US policymakers have worried that American allies will be unlikely to risk aligning with Washington—and thereby antagonizing hostile neighbors such as the Soviet Union—if they believe the United States will simply allow them to be overrun in a conflict. If being liberated first requires being conquered, who wants to be liberated?[16]

Accordingly, since the early Cold War, the United States has focused on defending rather than liberating allies. This strategy required Washington to pledge to defend West Germany at the Rhine despite the enormous difficulty of doing so, to forward-station forces in Europe and East Asia, and even to pledge rapid nuclear escalation to defend vulnerable European allies.[17] Since the end of the Cold War, the dilemmas associated with forward defense have been far less dangerous and agonizing because the United States has not confronted a rival superpower. But the return of great-power competition in recent years has begun to raise these issues anew, albeit in less dramatic fashion. Part of the rationale for the Pentagon's much-hyped Air-Sea Battle concept appears to be to cripple China's power-projection capabilities before it can subdue US allies in the Western Pacific.[18] The recent stationing of US and NATO battalions in the Baltic states—in some cases, less than 200 miles from major Russian cities such as St. Petersburg—reflects similar imperatives.

Having allies raises the risk of entrapment. Critics of US alliances point to the danger of "reckless driving" and "chain-ganging." Reckless driving occurs when an ally, protected by a US security guarantee, behaves more provocatively than would otherwise be prudent. Reckless driving, in turn, can trigger chain-ganging. If an ally intentionally or unintentionally triggers conflict with an adversary, a formal security commitment may force the guarantor to enter the conflict whether it desires to or not. There is some irreducible danger of reckless driving and chain-ganging in any credible alliance, of course. Yet historical evidence suggests that this problem is actually less severe in US alliances than one might expect.

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15 See Patrick Mills et al, *The Costs of Commitment: Cost Analysis of Overseas Air Force Basing* (working paper, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, April 2012).

16 On this dynamic, see Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, The Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

17 Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

18 On AirSea Battle (now called the Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons), see Andrew F. Krepinevich, *Why AirSea Battle?* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2010).

As Michael Beckley and Victor Cha have shown, US policymakers have long been sensitive to this dilemma, and have thus inserted loopholes or escape hatches into security agreements with potentially problematic partners, such as Syngman Rhee's South Korea or Chiang Kai-Shek's Taiwan.[19] Today, for instance, the US security commitment to Taiwan is ambiguous for this very purpose: to prevent Taipei from assuming Washington will automatically rescue Taiwan if its leaders provoke China. NATO forbids new members from having outstanding territorial disputes for the same reason.

In recent decades, moreover, the United States has repeatedly pressured allies and security partners to behave with restraint and warned those allies against provoking stronger neighbors. American officials underscored this point in dealings with Taiwan during the George W. Bush administration, and reportedly, with the Philippines and other allies in their more recent maritime disputes with China.[20] As a result, scholars have found few, if any, unambiguous cases over the past 70 years in which the United States was dragged into shooting wars solely because of alliance commitments.[21] Reckless driving and chain-ganging are risks, but US officials have so far proven fairly adept at managing them.

Allies habitually free ride. The opposite of reckless driving and chain ganging is free-riding. Logically, because America is committed to defend its allies, those states can spend less than they would otherwise on their own defense. In 2011, for instance, the United States spent around 4.5 percent of its GDP on defense, compared to 1.6 percent of GDP for European NATO allies and roughly 1 percent for Japan.[22]

To be fair, these statistics exaggerate the free-riding problem because America's defense budget includes higher-than-average personnel costs as a way of recruiting and retaining an all-volunteer force in contrast to many allies and partners whose labor markets enable them to recruit personnel at lower wages or who rely primarily on conscription.[23] Moreover, this gap was subsequently narrowed as US military spending, which had been inflated by the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, fell after 2010. Yet free-riding is nonetheless real enough, as US officials have frankly recognized. As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told NATO in 2011, "The blunt reality is that there will be dwindling appetite and patience in the U.S. Congress—and in the American body politic writ large—to expend increasingly precious funds on behalf of nations that are apparently unwilling to devote the necessary resources or make the necessary changes to be serious and capable partners in their own defense."[24]Indeed, this problem has troubling implications, for it renders

19 Michael Beckley, "The Myth of Entangling Alliances: Reassessing the Security Risks of U.S. Defense Pacts," *International Security* 39, 4 (Spring 2015): 7–48, doi:10.1162/ISEC_a_00197; and Victor Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

20 Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), chapter 7. See also Ja Ian Chong and Todd R. Hall, "The Lessons of 1914 for East Asia Today: Missing the Trees for the Forest," *International Security* 39, 1 (Summer 2014): 23–24, doi:10.1162/ISEC_a_00165.

21 Beckley, "Myth of Entangling Alliances."

22 Posen, *Restraint*, 35–36.

23 Lindsay P. Cohn, "How Much is Enough?," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (Fall 2015): 47–61.

24 Thom Shanker and Steven Erlanger, "Blunt U.S. Warning Reveals Deep Strains in NATO," *New York Times*, June 10, 2011.

the allies less capable of contributing to either out-of-area interventions or collective defense operations.

If free-riding is indeed a dilemma, however, it is also an implicit goal of US alliances, and it probably costs less—when "cost" is defined holistically—than the likely alternatives. As extensive scholarship demonstrates, a primary reason Washington created its postwar military alliances was to break the cycle of unrestrained geopolitical competition in Europe and East Asia, for fear such competition would give rise to arms races and wars. Moreover, another prominent goal of US alliances has been to restrain nuclear proliferation, for fear the spread of nuclear weapons would make nuclear war more likely and dilute American influence.[25]

In other words, some degree of free-riding is a feature of America's alliances, not a glitch. The United States has traditionally preferred for allies to spend less on defense than they otherwise might, because this restraint creates a world in which America itself is safer and more influential. To put it another way, does Washington really want a world in which Germany and Japan both spend 5 percent of GDP on defense and engage in nuclear arms-racing with adversaries? The answer is surely no, even if US officials might still urge these countries to spend moderately more than they do today.

Alliances limit America's freedom of action and cause unending diplomatic headaches. This is true enough. In international politics, it can be harder to do things multilaterally than unilaterally. In many cases, relying on allies means relying on less capable military forces to perform functions the US military could better perform on its own, as Washington discovered during the intervention in Kosovo in the late 1990s. Allies bring their own idiosyncrasies into the relationship, often with messy and frustrating results. A vivid example of this dynamic was the set of caveats each NATO ally brought to the mission in Afghanistan—restrictions on when, where, and how its forces could fight—ensuring that, in terms of combat punch, the whole was somewhat less than the sum of the parts.[26]

Making alliances work also requires continual "gardening," in the phrase of George Shultz—continually massaging difficult relationships and suffering insufferable allies such as Charles de Gaulle. As Jimmy Carter once remarked, a meeting with allies represented "one of the worst days of my diplomatic life."[27] Yet there are obvious counterpoints here: frustrations are inherent in any diplomatic relationship, the United States undoubtedly finds it easier to address those frustrations within the context of deeply institutionalized alliances, and any constraints on US freedom of action have to be weighed against the myriad other ways in which alliances enhance US flexibility and power.

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25 See Francis Gavin, "Strategies of Inhibition: U.S. Grand Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation" *International Security* 40, no. 1 (Summer 2015): 9–46, doi:10.1162/ISEC_a_00205; and Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, *America Abroad: The United States' Global Role in the 21st Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 88–121.

26 Seth Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 238–55.

27 Hal Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 24.

Overall, the costs and frustrations of US alliances are not illusory, but many of those costs are actually less severe or salient than they appear. The benefits of US alliances, by contrast, are both more diverse and more significant than often appreciated.

Benefits, Direct and Indirect

Just as critics overstate the costs of alliances, so they dramatically understate the benefits. The most direct and obvious advantages involve the way allies allow the United States to punch above its own weight by augmenting US military strengths across a range of issues and contingencies. Yet alliances also offer additional geostrategic, political-diplomatic, and economic advantages that enhance American power and support a number of critical US national objectives. In other words, America's alliances are less entangling than empowering. By binding itself to the defense of like-minded nations, the world's sole superpower makes itself all the more effective and influential.

Military Punching Power

First and foremost, having allies significantly increases the military power the United States can bring to bear on a given battlefield. During the Cold War, European forces were vital to maintaining something approximating a balance of power vis-à-vis Warsaw Pact forces.[28] NATO countries and other treaty allies also contributed to nearly every major US combat operation of the postwar era, even though nearly all of those operations occurred "out of area." The United States may have waged the Korean War in part to prove its willingness to defend its treaty allies in Europe, but the NATO allies contributed over 20,000 troops—in addition to other capabilities—to the fight.[29] Even during the Vietnam War, treaty allies South Korea and Australia contributed substantial fighting elements (and bore substantial casualties); South Korea sent over 300,000 soldiers to Vietnam over the course of the conflict and lost over 4,500 in combat.[30] Virtually everywhere the United States fought during the Cold War, it did so in the company of allies.

In the post-Cold War era, this benefit has sometimes seemed less important, because of the vast margin of US dominance vis-à-vis its rivals, and because the gap between what Washington could do militarily and what even its most capable allies could do militarily widened markedly. Yet even so, the United States has relied heavily on allied participation in nearly all of its major interventions.

During the Persian Gulf War, key NATO allies such as France and the United Kingdom made large contributions to the coalition effort, with the British providing 43,000 troops along with significant air and naval contingents. The NATO allies provided roughly half of the 60,000 troops who policed Bosnia as part of the Implementation Force mission in that country from 1995 through 1996, and a majority of the 31,000 troops who made up the subsequent Stabilization Force. NATO

28 See Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, and Leffler, *Preponderance of Power*, 385–90.

29 The number may well have been higher; 20,000 seems like a rough and conservative estimate. For general information, see Paul M. Edwards, *United Nations Participants in the Korean War: The Contributions of 45 Member Countries* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2013).

30 James Sterngold, "South Korea's Vietnam Veterans Begin to Be Heard," *New York Times*, May 10, 1992.

contributions to the US-led war in Afghanistan peaked at around 40,000 troops; this contingent helped sustain the mission at a time of heavy US focus on Iraq and made it possible for Washington to surge 30,000 additional troops into Iraq when its forces were strained to the limit.[31]

Other US wars—in Iraq, Libya, and against the Islamic State—have also featured noteworthy contributions from treaty allies in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Both critics and defenders of US alliances often speak of the frustrations of unequal burden sharing. But America's military burdens would be much higher if it did not have allies willing to share them.

Having formal allies as opposed to relying on ad hoc partnerships also yields a second and related military benefit: it eases the process of mobilizing cobelligerents for action in a crisis. It is possible to assemble military coalitions on the fly, of course, and every coalition military venture in which the United States participated prior to 1945 was in some sense improvised. Moreover, even in the post-World War II era, the United States has solicited ad hoc contributions from nonallied partner states. It is even possible, as the United States has repeatedly demonstrated, to make a purely transactional alliance of convenience with a "devil"—a country that otherwise shares very few interests with America, such as the Soviet Union in World War II or Syria in the Persian Gulf War.

The possibility of improvising military cooperation when needed has led some critics to argue the United States can do away with formal, institutionalized alliances altogether.[32] But turning every military operation into the equivalent of pickup basketball greatly increases the difficulty of building an effective combined force. Pushing the analogy further, pickup basketball is very hard to arrange in the absence of long-standing arrangements and customs that increase the predictability of the other actors. Economists refer to these difficulties as transaction costs; the routines and institutionalization of formal alliances make it much easier to bring military power to bear at much lower transaction costs.

In formal alliances, the partners practice together in peacetime, develop interoperability, and may even develop common equipment, thus easing logistics challenges. They also establish diplomatic forums and longstanding, fairly predictable relationships, thereby making it easier to coordinate interests and achieve the political consensus necessary to use force in the first place.[33] To be sure, everything could be negotiated on the fly, but the price America would pay for this flexibility would be the

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31 See Hal Brands, *Dealing with Allies in Decline: Alliance Management and U.S. Strategy in an Era of Global Power Shifts* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2017), 9–10; Spencer C. Tucker and Priscilla Mary Roberts, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Middle East Wars: The United States in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq Conflicts* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 214; "Peace Support Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina," NATO, September 7, 2015, www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52122.htm; and Jones, *Graveyard of Empires*, 243–45.

32 Benjamin Schwarz and Christopher Layne, "A New Grand Strategy," *Atlantic*, January 2002, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/01/a-new-grand-strategy/376471/.

33 Both the advantages and limits of these practices are discussed in David P. Auerswald and Stephen M. Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014). Seth Johnston argues that institutionalization also facilitates NATO's adaptation and innovation, keeping NATO relevant and useful long after its original purpose had been eclipsed. Seth A. Johnston, *How NATO Adapts: Strategy and Organization in the Atlantic Alliance since 1950* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017).

significantly greater difficulty—and, most likely, the significantly longer timelines—of piecing together a coalition in a crisis.

A third major military contribution of allies is the specialized capability they can bring to the table. Sometimes this is material capability: British, French, and Australian special operations forces have all made vital contributions to the Global War on Terror. The Japanese have some of the finest antisubmarine warfare capabilities in the world, which would be essential in a US conflict with China.[34] More often US allies contribute geographical capability in the form of proximity to the theater of interest. This proximity allows forward staging of the strike and intelligence assets, particularly air assets, on which the American way of war depends. It also allows for specialized technical intelligence collection that would be nearly impossible to conduct without local partners. The counter-ISIS campaign, for instance, would have been vastly more difficult had the United States not had access to key facilities controlled by either treaty allies (Turkey) or long-standing military partners (Qatar or Bahrain).[35] Similarly, the United States would face a nearly impossible task in any North Korean contingency without the extensive US basing network in Japan.

And, of course, the United States has also traditionally relied on another allied contribution: intellectual capability. By virtue of their history, US allies have unique networks of relationships, along with the distinctive insights those relationships afford, in many regions of interest. This translates into intelligence—particularly human intelligence—that would be almost impossible for America to generate on its own; consider, for instance, the intelligence advantages possessed by the French in northwest Africa or the Italians in Libya.[36]

The existence of formal, deeply institutionalized alliances, in turn, facilitates the sharing of such intelligence. Three out of the four countries that make up the Five Eyes intelligence partnership with the United States are longstanding treaty allies; Washington also cooperates extensively with its NATO allies on intelligence matters.[37] In this as in other respects, America's alliances make it far stronger and more capable militarily than it would otherwise be.

Geostrategic Influence and Global Stability

If alliances are thus helpful in terms of the conflicts America wages, they are more helpful still in terms of the conflicts they prevent and the broader geostrategic influence they confer. Indeed, although the ultimate test of America's alliances lies in their efficacy as warfighting

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34 See, for instance, "The Japanese Military's Focus on Anti-Submarine Capabilities," Stratfor Worldview, June 24, 2013, https://worldview.stratfor.com/analysis/japanese-militarys-focus-anti-submarine-abilities.

35 American officials described access to Incirlik, Turkey, as a "game changer" in the counter-ISIS campaign. Ceylan Yeginsu and Helene Cooper "U.S. Jets to Use Turkish Bases in War on ISIS," *New York Times*, July 23, 2015.

36 On local and regional advantages, see, for instance, Christopher S. Chivvis, *The French War on Al Qa'ida in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

37 See Sir Stephen Lander, "International Intelligence Cooperation: An Inside Perspective," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17, 3 (October 2004): 481–93, doi:10.1080/0955757042000296964; and Richard J. Aldrich, "U.S.-European Intelligence Co-Operation on Counter-Terrorism: Low Politics and Compulsion," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 11, 1 (February 2009): 122–39, doi:10.1111/j.1467-856x.2008.00353.x.

coalitions, the most powerful benefits they provide come in the normal course of peacetime geostrategic management and competition.

First, US alliances bind many of the richest and most militarily capable countries in the world to Washington through enduring relationships of deep cooperation. Alliances reflect shared interests rather than creating them, of course, and the United States would presumably have close ties to countries such as the United Kingdom even without formal alliances. But alliances nonetheless serve as "hoops of steel." They help create a sense of permanence and shared purpose in key relationships; they provide forums for regular interaction and cooperation; they conduce to deeply institutionalized exchanges (of intelligence, personnel, and other assets) that insulate and perpetuate friendly associations even when political leaders clash.[38] And insofar as US alliances serve these purposes with respect to immensely influential countries in Europe and the Asia-Pacific, they help Washington preserve a significant overbalance of power vis-à-vis any competitor.

Second, alliances have a strong deterrent effect on would-be aggressors. American alliances lay down "redlines" regarding areas in which territorial aggression is impermissible; they complicate the calculus of any potential aggressor by raising the strong possibility that an attack on a US ally will mean a fight with the world's most formidable military. The proposition that "defensive alliances deter the initiation of disputes" is, in fact, supported by empirical evidence, and the forward deployment of troops strengthens this deterrence further still.[39]

NATO clearly had an important deterrent effect on Soviet calculations during the Cold War, for instance; more recently, Russia has behaved most aggressively toward countries lacking US alliance guarantees (Georgia and Ukraine), rather than toward those countries possessing them (the Baltic states or Poland). In other words, alliances make the geostrategic status quo—which is enormously favorable to the United States—far "stickier" than it might otherwise be.

Third, and related to this second benefit, alliances tamp down international instability more broadly. American security guarantees allow US allies to underbuild their own militaries; while always annoying and problematic when taken to extremes, this phenomenon also helps avert the arms races and febrile security competitions that plagued Europe and East Asia in earlier eras. In fact, US alliances are as useful in managing tensions among America's allies as they are in constraining America's adversaries.

NATO was always intended to keep the "Americans in" and the "Germans down" as well as the "Russians out"; US presence, along with the creation of a framework in which France and Germany were

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38 On deep institutionalization, see Celeste A. Wallander, "Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War," *International Organization* 54, 5 (Autumn 2000): 705–35; and Aldrich, "U.S.-European Intelligence Co-Operation."

39 Jesse C. Johnson and Brett Ashley Leeds, "Defense Pacts: A Prescription for Peace?," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7, 1 (January 2011): 45–65, esp. 45, doi:10.1111/j.1743-8594.2010.00122.x; Brett Ashley Leeds, "Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes," *American Journal of Political Science* 47, 3 (July 2003): 427–39, doi:10.2307/3186107; Paul K. Huth, "Extended Deterrence and the Outbreak of War," *American Political Science Review* 82, 2 (June 1988): 423–43, doi:10.2307/1957394; and Vesna Danilovic, "The Sources of Threat Credibility in Extended Deterrence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, 3 (2001): 341–69, doi:10.1177/0022002701045003005.

incentivized to cooperate rather than compete with one another, would help stifle any resurgence of tensions between these historical rivals.[40] Similarly, US alliance guarantees in the Asia-Pacific were designed, in part, to create a climate of security in which Japan could be revived economically without threatening its neighbors, just as the expansion of NATO after the Cold War helped prevent incipient rivalries and territorial irredentism among former members of the Warsaw Pact.[41] US alliances keep things quiet in regions Washington cannot ignore, thereby fostering a climate of peace in which America and its partners can flourish.

Fourth, US alliances impede dangerous geostrategic phenomena such as nuclear proliferation. As scholars such as Francis Gavin have emphasized, US security guarantees and forward deployments have played a critical role in convincing historically insecure, technologically advanced countries—Germany, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, among others—to forego possession of the world's absolute weapon. In several of these cases, moreover, the United States has used the security leverage provided by alliance guarantees to dissuade allies from pursuing the bomb after they had given indications of their intent to start down that path.[42] If, as seems likely, a world with more nuclear powers is likely to be a more dangerous world in which crises more frequently take on a nuclear dimension and the risk of nuclear conflict is higher, then the value of American alliances looms large indeed.

In sum, as the framers of the post-World War II order understood, phenomena such as massive instability, arms racing, and violence in key regions would eventually imperil the United States itself.[43] Whatever modest reduction in short-term costs might come from pursuing a "free hand" or isolationist strategy was thus more than lost by the expense of fighting and winning a major war to restore order. Accordingly, America's peacetime alliance system represents a cheaper, more prudent alternative for maximizing US influence while also preventing raging instability by deterring aggression and managing rivalries among friends. The fact that so many observers seem to have forgotten why, precisely, America has alliances in the first place is an ironic testament to just how well the system has succeeded.

Political Legitimacy and Consultation

Beyond their military and geostrategic virtues, alliances provide important political benefits that facilitate the use of American power both internationally and with respect to the domestic audience. The chief political advantage of alliances is enhanced international legitimacy.

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40 See Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*; also Timothy P. Ireland, *Creating the Entangling Alliance: The Origins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981).

41 The role of NATO's persistence and expansion in stifling security competition in Europe is, ironically, acknowledged by one of the alliance's foremost academic critics. See John J. Mearsheimer, "Why Is Europe Peaceful Today?," European Consortium for Political Research Keynote Lecture, *European Political Science* 9, 3 (September 2010): 388, doi:10.1057/eps.2010.24.

42 See Gavin, "Strategies of Inhibition"; Gene Gerzhoy, "Alliance Coercion and Nuclear Restraint: How the United States Thwarted West Germany's Nuclear Ambitions," *International Security* 39, no. 4 (Spring 2015): 91–129, doi:10.1162/ISEC_a_00198; and Mark Kramer, "Neorealism, Nuclear Proliferation, and East-Central European Strategies," in *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies after the Cold War*, ed. Ethan B. Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 385–463.

43 Leffler, *Preponderance of Power*.

Formal alliances and the partnership of allies—particularly democratic allies—in cooperative ventures confer the perceived legitimacy of multilateral action. This perception is especially important when an administration is unable to secure the formal legitimacy of a UN Security Council Resolution authorizing the use of force. In the case of the Kosovo conflict, for example, being able to conduct the mission under NATO auspices somewhat mitigated charges of "American unilateralism."[44] Similarly, the ability of the United States to muster a coalition of the willing involving both NATO and Asia-Pacific allies in the Iraq War provided some rebuttal to critics who declaimed the invasion as a "unilateral" endeavor.

Allied support also enhances the perceived legitimacy of the actions for domestic audiences, thus strengthening the political foundations for military ventures.[45] The willingness of other states to participate in a military intervention can signal that the resort to force is a wise and necessary move, has reasonable prospects for success, and will enjoy some minimal moral legitimacy. All of these factors can shore up public support and give the intervention greater political resilience should it prove more difficult than expected, and this international cooperation is easier to achieve in the framework of longstanding military alliances.

Finally, allies provide useful input on use of force decisions. Particularly when the deliberations involve long-standing treaty allies, US officials can have more honest discussions about difficult policy choices because the participants are "all in the family." Put another way, every US president reserves the right to use force unilaterally when American interests demand. Yet as presidents have generally understood, the failure to persuade other partners to approve and to join America in the effort is itself a powerful cautionary warning.[46] The need to make persuasive arguments to allies and partners is a useful disciplining device to prevent policy from running off the rails.

Diplomatic Leverage and Cooperation

Beyond their military, geostrategic, and political impact, having formal military alliances greatly increases the diplomatic leverage US leaders can bring to bear on thorny international challenges. Formal alliances and long-standing partnerships give US leaders myriad fora in which to raise concerns and advocate favored courses of action. Europeans are obliged to listen to the United States on European issues because Washington's leading role in NATO makes it the central player in European defense; the same dynamic prevails vis-à-vis US allies in the Asia-Pacific. To give just one concrete example, the United States has repeatedly prevented the European Union from lifting its arms embargo on China because of the security leverage it has through NATO.[47]

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44 For an argument stressing the reliance on alternative sources of legitimacy during the Kosovo crisis, see Robert Kagan, "America's Crisis of Legitimacy," *Foreign Affairs* 83, 2 (March/April 2004): 74–77.

45 Joseph M. Grieco et al., "Let's Get a Second Opinion: International Institutions and American Public Support for War," *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (June 2011): 563–83, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2478.2011.00660.x.

46 For instance, the Bush Administration was stymied on the Sudan by the reluctance of the rest of the international community to intervene. Condoleeza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2011), 582–85.

47 See Glenn Kessler, "Rice Warns Europe Not to Sell Advanced Weaponry to China," *Washington Post*, March 21, 2005.

Having allies also increases US diplomatic options vis-à-vis adversaries. Here, the danger of entrapment (getting drawn into conflicts America might otherwise have avoided) must be weighed against the benefits of having more options in dealing with the adversaries Washington cannot ignore. One such benefit is the increased range of signaling options available to strategists during an unfolding crisis. Consider US efforts to constrain the North Korean nuclear program. Without military alliances with South Korea and Japan, the United States would have only two baskets of military options short of actual resort to force in order to signal resolve and to shape North Korean calculations: either taking relatively meaningless actions, such as changing the alert levels in the homeland or in other theaters, or taking relatively dramatic escalations, such as moving an aircraft carrier battle group within range of the Korean peninsula or flying sorties close to the North Korean border. With South Korea and Japan as allies, however, Washington has a wider variety of midrange actions—increasing missile defense capability or readiness in theater, raising local alert levels, and so on.[48] These steps give leaders ways of responding, and thereby influencing diplomatic negotiations, while also better positioning America to respond if diplomacy fails.

Finally, alliances enhance US diplomatic efforts on security issues beyond those directly related to collective defense. The United States has used its alliances as vehicles for cooperation on counterterrorism (both prior to and since September 11, 2001), as well as for countering cybercrime, proliferation, and piracy; addressing climate change; and responding to other challenges. All of these efforts involve substantial intelligence sharing, information pooling, and coordination across law enforcement and other lines of action. And all of this coordination is greatly facilitated when conducted through deeply institutionalized alliances and long-standing cooperative relationships.[49]

The United States has, of course, also been able to achieve tactical cooperation even from long-standing adversaries on issues such as counterterrorism, but such cooperation is frequently less significant, harder to obtain, and comes at a higher price in terms of the reciprocal American "gives" required in transactional relationships. It is thus with good reason that, when an international crisis breaks or a new global challenge emerges, the first phone calls made by US leaders are usually to America's closest allies.

Economic Benefits

As noted, the economic costs of US alliance commitments are lower than conventionally assumed because the alliances allow Washington to project military power much more cheaply than otherwise would be the case. Alliances also generate numerous indirect economic benefits—so many that they may constitute a net profit center for the United States.

As a recent analysis of the deployment of US troops abroad and of US treaty obligations shows, both of these forms of security commitments

48 See, for example, the US-South Korean incremental tit-for-tat response to recent North Korean military provocations, Dan Lamothe, "U.S. Army and South Korean Military Respond to North Korea's Launch with Missile Exercise," *Washington Post*, July 4, 2017.

49 Art, *Grand Strategy*, 201–2.

are correlated with several key economic indicators, including US bilateral trade and global bilateral trade.[50] The more US troops are deployed to a given country, the greater US bilateral trade is with the country in question. Furthermore, the effect extends to non-US global bilateral trade: "Countries with U.S. security commitments conduct more trade with one another than they would otherwise." Adding all the economic costs and benefits of these treaty commitments together produces the estimate that the alliances offer more than three times as much gain as they cost.

American alliance commitments advance US economic interests in other ways, as well. For decades, US diplomats and trade negotiators have used the security leverage provided by alliance commitments to extract more favorable terms in bilateral financial and commercial arrangements. During the Cold War, West Germany made "offset" payments to the United States—transfers to shore up the sagging US balance of payments—as a means of preserving the American troop presence in Europe.[51]

More recently, American negotiators obtained more favorable terms in the South Korea-United States trade agreement than the European Union did in a parallel agreement with Seoul. "Failure would look like a setback to the political and security relationship," one US official noted; this dynamic gave Washington additional negotiating leverage."[52]Additionally, as other scholars have shown, the US willingness to defend other states and police the global commons reinforces the willingness of other countries to accept a global order which includes favorable economic privileges for the United States, such as the dollar as the primary global reserve currency.[53] And, of course, by sustaining a climate of overall geopolitical stability in which trade and free enterprise can flourish, alliances bolster American and global prosperity in broader ways, as well.

Conclusion

The balance sheet on America's alliances, then, is really not much of a balance at all. There are costs and dangers associated with US alliances, and some of these are real enough. But many of those costs and dangers are exaggerated, blown out of proportion, or rest on a simple misunderstanding of what the United States would have to do in the world even if it terminated every one of its alliances. The benefits of US alliances, conversely, are far more diverse and substantial than critics tend to acknowledge. In sum, any grand strategy premised on putting America first should recognize that by creating and sustaining its global alliance network, America has indeed put itself first for generations.

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50 Daniel Egel and Howard Shatz, "Economic Benefits of U.S. Overseas Security Commitments Appear to Outweigh Costs," The RAND Blog, September 23, 2016, http://www.rand.org/blog/2016/09/economic-benefits-of-us-overseas-security-commitments.html.

51 Francis J. Gavin, *Gold, Dollars, and Power: The Politics of International Monetary Relations, 1958–1971* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

52 Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth, "Don't Come Home, America: The Case against Retrenchment," *International Security* 37, 3 (Winter 2012/13): 44.

53 G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

If this is the case, then why have alliances proven to be such lightning rods for both academic and presidential criticism of late? Part of the answer lies in the dynamic noted at the outset of this piece. The dangers and risks inherent in US alliances are mostly obvious and intuitive, whereas the benefits are often subtler, more indirect, or require digging deeper into the underlying logic of American internationalism to understand. Those benefits, moreover, often reside in things that do not happen—and are thus harder to observe, let alone measure. Yet part of the answer also undoubtedly lies in the fact that American alliances, like so much of American foreign policy today, appear to be in danger of becoming a victim of their own success. The fact that US alliances have been so effective, for so long, in maximizing US influence and creating an advantageous international environment has made it all too easy to take their benefits for granted. It would be a sad irony if the United States turned away from its alliances, only then to realize just how much it had squandered.

American alliances do not function perfectly, of course, and today as at virtually every point since the late 1940s, there are challenges on the horizon: the relative decline of many key US allies vis-à-vis US adversaries, the difficulties of prodding partners in Europe and Asia to do more on defense, the threat posed by coercion and intimidation meant to change the geopolitical status quo without triggering alliance redlines. Likewise, reasonable observers can debate what military strategy the United States should pursue for upholding its alliance commitments in the Baltic or the western Pacific. But the vexations of addressing these challenges within the framework of America's existing alliances are undoubtedly less than the costs and perils to which the United States would be exposed without its alliances. Winston Churchill had it right when he said, "There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them." The US policy community would do well to heed this admonition today.

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RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Questions for the Record from Representative Ann Wagner
NATO at 70: An Indispensable Alliance
March 13, 2019

Question:

Mr. Chollet, I am deeply concerned that the recent authoritarian drift in Hungary, Turkey, Romania, and elsewhere is hurting NATO's ability to effectively deter adversaries like Russia and China. How can the United States work with our NATO partners to reverse democratic backsliding within the alliance?

Answer:

Mr. Derek Chollet: NATO is facing a growing crisis within its ranks. As an alliance rooted in common values, the organization is about much more than armaments and military capabilities. The Washington Treaty clarifies those values, stipulating that Members States are "determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law." Therefore, any form of democratic backsliding is a serious threat to the purpose of the Alliance.

While NATO's day-to-day work focuses largely on bolstering territorial defense and deterring aggressors, there remains ample opportunities for combatting the rise of authoritarianism within the Alliance. More specifically, the United States and its partners can use NATO's mechanism for political deliberation – the North Atlantic Council (NAC) – as a venue to work with Member States who are not fully living up to the Alliance's core values. The U.S. can raise these concerns during the weekly meeting of Permanent Representatives, or at special NAC meetings of Ministers of State or Heads of Government.

Congress also has an important role to play in keeping our allies faithful to NATO's founding values. One venue for such engagement is NATO's Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA). While this body is not an official component of NATO, it is an important consultative mechanism that brings together parliamentarians from across the organization's Member States. Congress should use this forum to foster frank conversations about embracing democratic principles.
Finally, NATO must guard against democratic backsliding caused by meddling adversaries. Countries such as China and Russia are adept at identifying and exacerbating social cleavages, leading to the rise of extremist candidates and civil strife. Therefore, the United States and its NATO partners should combat its adversaries' use of methods short of war, such as election interference and propaganda, in order to protect the integrity of our democratic political processes.

Question:

Mr. Brzezinkski, I'm glad you mentioned Georgian and Ukrainian accession to NATO. Many of our newer members, such as Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, have proven invaluable and committed partners. How might NATO countries work with Russian interlocutors to offer Ukraine and Georgia a path to membership without unduly antagonizing Russia?

Answer:

Mr. Ian Brzezinkski: The accession to NATO by Ukraine and Georgia would in no-way threaten any legitimate Russian interest. It would in no way threaten Russia's territorial integrity. The only thing that NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia would antagonize would be President Putin's revanchist ambitions, including his efforts to reassert Moscow's control over the space of the former Soviet Union and part of what was once the occupied Soviet Bloc.

Any decision regarding NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine is an issue between solely the members of the Alliance and these two democracies, respectively. There is no role for any third party, including Russia, in such decisions. Russia cannot be allowed to have any say over the legitimate transatlantic aspirations of any European nation, including NATO membership.

It is also important to remember that NATO member states, including Latvia, Lithuania, and Norway have bordered Russia proper for many years. Their NATO membership has helped normalize and stabilize their relations with Russia just as NATO membership has for the other NATO member states of Central Europe. There is no reason why NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia would be any different.

In response to Moscow's invasions of Ukraine and Georgia, the West's should further limit its engagement with Russia, particularly its senior officials. Economic sanctions should be strengthened as part of this strategy.

With that said, some consultations with selected members of the Russian media, academia, and officialdom, including members of the Duma, to share perspectives on issues of concern and to explore areas of potential collaboration, such as arms control and the Arctic melt, are in order. They can play a constructive role in an effort to foster a more stable and peaceful relationship with Russia.

These consultations can and should be used to articulate the falseness and illegitimacy of the assertions that underpin President Putin's efforts to prevent nations of Europe from pursuing NATO and EU membership. They can also underscore how NATO membership, by providing greater security for Georgia and Ukraine, will make it easier these two democracies to normalize their relations with Russia amidst the fresh experience of Russian aggression – assuming that Moscow returns the territories it has seized from these two nations.

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