

**THE UNITED STATES, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
AND THE CHALLENGES AHEAD**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

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CONTENTS

	Page
Corker, Hon. Bob, U.S. Senator From Tennessee	1
Cardin, Hon. Benjamin L., U.S. Senator From Maryland	3
Breedlove, General Philip M., USAF (ret.) Distinguished Professor, Sam Nunn School, Georgia Institute of Technology; Board Director, Atlantic Council; Former Nato Supreme Allied Commander Europe; Former Commander, U.S. European Command; Washington, DC	6
Prepared statement	8
Smith, Julianne, Senior Fellow and Director, Strategy and Statecraft Pro- gram, Center for New American Strategy, Washington, DC	10
Prepared statement	12
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD	
Responses of Julianne Smith to Questions Submitted by Senator Todd Young	53
The Committee Received no Response From General Philip M. Breedlove for the Following Questions	55
Letter to The President From Senator Cory Gardner	56

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:59 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Rubio, Johnson, Gardner, Young, Barrasso, Isakson, Portman, Paul, Cardin, Menendez, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, and Booker.

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

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

Since November of last year, this committee has tried to get witnesses from the prior administration to testify about a wide range of issues currently challenging the United States-Russian relationship. While the Obama administration did make officials available for classified briefings, they would not allow anyone to speak publicly about the strategic issues driving this relationship.

By the way, that is not a criticism. It is an observation. And I know they wanted to get everybody on the same page relative to things that led up to the election.

But the point is, it has taken us a while to actually have a Russia hearing, and we are glad to be able to do that today.

At the same time, the Trump administration continues the process of nominating its own people and establishing its own priorities, so not a lot of people in the Trump administration to testify today either.

This committee turns to the expertise of previous government servants with deep knowledge of Russia. And I am going to welcome you properly in a moment, but I just wanted to say thank you so much for being here today.

Specifically, we have asked them here to discuss the overall state of our bilateral relationship and the elements of a successful strategy to defend American interests.

Russia possesses not only the second most powerful military in the world—behind the United States in everything except nuclear weapons—but also a seat at the United Nations Security Council, where their veto can complicate much of what we try to do in the world.

Just to amplify and say that the U.N. Security Council was set up to create stability around the world, and those permanent members were put there because they were seen as a stabilizing force. Now Russia is a member of this, and obviously will continue to be, and has very much become a destabilizing force and has kept us from doing things around the world in unison that should be done.

So today, we must discuss the broad spectrum of issues that our country has with the Russian Federation and its behavior in recent years.

As we have heard multiple times in this room, Russia violated the Budapest Memorandum when it invaded Ukraine, where it continues to occupy stolen land and enable combat operations that kill innocent civilians. Just another report out recently regarding what is happening in eastern Ukraine, the depravity that people are dealing with there, again, solely by the Russians supporting the rebels there.

I appreciated the comments last week of our new Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, who strongly condemned Russia's role in the recent escalation of violence in eastern Ukraine and insisted U.S. sanctions over Crimea would remain in place. And I would note communications staff in the White House verified that that was the administration's position.

As the New York Times reported in October of last year, Russia has also developed ground-launched cruise missiles, GLCMs, as we call them, that violate the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, giving them a serious military advantage at the expense of international law.

And at some point, you wonder what the purpose is of a treaty that we know—that we know—Russia has violated and, in essence, in some ways is abrogating.

And as we have seen on our own televisions and smartphones, Russia has joined the Syrian civil war on the side of the Assad regime, participating in the destruction of hospitals and schools, and targeting civilians. The resulting instability contributed to the migration crisis and terror threat that has gripped Europe.

I know General Breedlove has been there seven times since his retirement in May. Not much of a retirement, I might add. But I know you will be able to shed light on that.

These are only a few examples of ways in which Russian actions directly conflict with American interests. The entire list is longer, including the deployment of Russian forces into Georgia and Moldova; unprecedented efforts to interfere in our elections; and the increasingly hostile approach that the Russian Government has taken to silence opposition politicians, a free and independent press, and civil society in general.

The sudden hospitalization of pro-democracy advocate Vladimir Kara-Murza, who testified here not long ago, who continues to fight for his life, stands as a stark reminder of the risks borne by Russians when they speak out against an increasingly autocratic regime.

Similarly, the Russian courts' treatment of Alexei Navalny begs questions about the democratic process under Putin.

How we deal with Russia is going to be one of the major projects for Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and is something for which he

is ideally suited, given his deep relationships and understanding of the geostrategic issues at play. Secretary Tillerson knows the dangers posed by Russia and the importance of restoring a credible U.S. deterrent so Moscow can no longer exploit what it perceives as American weakness.

With that, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how to address these problems in a way that moves our approach to Russia in the right direction.

Again, thank you. And I will turn to our distinguished ranking member and my friend, Ben Cardin.

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

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I welcome both of our witnesses today. We are, indeed, very fortunate to have you participate in this discussion. We have two people who are very knowledgeable in U.S.-Russian relations.

And, Mr. Chairman, I want start by thanking you. There is no person in the United States Senate that is more protective of the role of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee than our chairman, Chairman Corker. And I very much appreciate that. It is one of the reasons why I think people want to serve on this committee, because they recognize that our chairman will preserve the importance of this committee in the Senate and in this country.

And the chairman is absolutely correct. After the attack on our country by Russia, and our election system, there was a strong desire to hold hearings. Senator Shaheen was one of the leaders to suggest that there needs to be greater congressional involvement and awareness of what Russia was trying to do to the United States.

We were caught in transition. We had an administration that was leaving and an administration that was starting up, and it was not possible to hold meaningful meetings of our committee in an effort to carry out our responsibility.

So I very much appreciate this hearing as we start our discussion on how the United States needs to deal with Russia. And from the point of view of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, what can we do in regards to use of our diplomacy?

We are the committee that authorizes force. We have a lot at stake as to how we can protect our country against the actions that Russia has taken, and how we can also try to change the equation. How can we change the equation from Russia's point of view, as they show aggression?

It is not just the attack on our country—we know that—on the free election. But we also worry what they may do in the future, not only in the United States but in Western Europe.

It is also what they continue to do in Ukraine. The chairman pointed out they violated the Budapest Memorandum, the Minsk agreements. And they have invaded Ukraine. They occupy Crimea today. And they are still interfering in the eastern part of Ukraine.

And then we see what they are doing in Syria. We just got a report from Amnesty International about 13,000 people who were executed in a prison north of Damascus. These are war crimes—war

crimes. And they are assisted and carried out because of the support of Russia to the Assad regime in Syria.

All those issues beg for us to be engaged as to how we can change Russia's calculations, because we know where there is a void, they are going to fill it in a way that is contrary to the interests of our national security. So we need to remain strong.

Mr. Chairman, I very much agree that this committee needs to be engaged. I have, as you know, filed for an independent commission, like the 9/11 commission. I think that should be done also, because that is an independent, full-time commission that can look at what happened to our country and help us prepare. But I strongly support the efforts that we are doing here.

I want to say just one word that concerned me, with President Trump trying to drive a moral equivalency between the murderous conduct by Mr. Putin and activities in our own country. There is no equivalency whatsoever, and I think that did a disservice to the service men and women who have really defended our country and our democratic values, and I needed to say something.

I was pleased to see Ambassador Haley's comments, supported by the White House, that the sanctions in Russia will remain. They need to remain, in my view, until Russia complies with the Helsinki commitments and withdraws from Crimea, and interference with Ukraine, and they live up to all the terms in the Minsk agreements. So I was pleased to see that.

Yesterday, Senator Graham and I, along with other members, filed the Russian Sanction Review Act. It is patterned after the bill, Mr. Chairman, that you and I and Senator Menendez and others, Senator Kaine and others, worked on to have a review of the Iran nuclear agreement. It is patterned very similar to that, so that before the President would consider changing the sanction regime in Russia, he would give Congress an opportunity—and the American people—to understand the policy, before that could go into effect. It is bipartisan, and that is the way I think we should operate.

I have also filed with Senator McCain—and joined by members of this committee, Senators Rubio, Portman, Gardner, Menendez, Shaheen, and Murphy—a bill that would strengthen our ability to use sanctions against Russia because of these conducts.

I think all of that is important.

Washington needs to send a signal of resolve. Otherwise, Moscow will continue to interfere in our democratic process and those of our allies. It will continue to violate the sovereignty of its neighbors. It will push until it is stopped.

Mr. Chairman, I want to close with a quote from Kara-Murza, the person who we have talked about in recent days. He is a courageous democratic activist in Russia who was poisoned in 2015. He asserts that the government attacked him for his activism.

Last week, we received word that he once again was in a coma as a result, we believe, of another effort to poison him. I just want to say one word of encouragement. We have heard today that he is coming out of that coma. That is good news. But he is still very, very seriously ill.

This is what he said when he testified before our committee, sat where our two witnesses are sitting today, but he sat there on June the 7th of last year, and this is his quote: "Our friends in the West

often ask how they can be helpful to the cause of human rights and democracy in Russia. And the answer is very simple. Please stay true to your values. We are not asking for your support. It is our task to fight for democracy and the rule of law in our country. The only thing we ask from Western leaders is that they stop supporting Mr. Putin by treating him as a respectable and worthy partner, and by allowing Mr. Putin's cronies to use Western countries as havens for their looted wealth."

I pray that Mr. Kara-Murza will recover. I pray that he will continue to be allowed to participate in the Russian society. I pray that the Russian people will have a government that is reflective of the greatness of them as individuals. And I think we can play a role in this committee.

I look forward to our hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you for those comments. And I just want to reiterate something you said. I see no moral equivalence—none—between ourselves and the actions that Russia has taken.

And I agree with you. Those comments, to me, do not reflect certainly most members of the United States Senate. I would say all, but I think at least most. And I could not agree more.

Secondly, I thank you for efforts legislatively. I have talked a little bit with General Breedlove prior to coming in. And having spent some time with Tillerson, understanding the route he is planning to take to ratchet back what Russia is doing, I want to spend a little time making sure that what we do to strengthen his hand is appropriate.

And I think you are going to see a very different type of activity towards Russia personally than we have seen. This is not to be pejorative, but, let us say one more time, I mean, Russia and Putin took advantage of what they saw to be weakness. And I think what we all want to do is show strength, but we want to do so in conjunction with activities that we think can have a degree of flexibility, but move ahead together in a much stronger way.

So again, thank you for that.

With that, our first witness is Retired General Philip M. Breedlove, distinguished professor at the Sam Nunn School at the Georgia Institute of Technology and board director at the Atlantic Council. General Breedlove previously served as former NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and former commander of U.S. European Command. We have all spent a lot of time with him in Europe and here, and we thank him for his incredible service to our Nation, which is continuing as we speak.

Our second witness today is Ms. Julianne Smith, who has been before us in the past, a senior fellow and director at the Strategy and Statecraft Program at the Center for New American Strategy.

We thank you again for being with us. I think both of you know you can summarize your comments, which would be appreciated, in about 5 minutes. Without objection, your written testimony will be entered into the record.

Again, thank you for being here on this most important day with this hearing. Thank you.

And if you could just begin, General Breedlove, we would appreciate it.

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL PHILIP M. BREEDLOVE, USAF (RET.)
DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR, SAM NUNN SCHOOL, GEORGIA
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY; BOARD DIRECTOR, ATLANTIC
COUNCIL; FORMER NATO SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
EUROPE; FORMER COMMANDER, U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND;
WASHINGTON, DC**

General BREEDLOVE. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, thank you for this invitation to testify before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. It is really an honor to be here.

We are here to discuss an urgent topic, and you have both led in well to it, and that is U.S. policy towards Russia.

Not surprisingly, at the start of a new administration, there is much talk about a new effort to reach out to Moscow and to start a dialogue. This was true at the start of George W. Bush's administration and President Obama's.

Given the current difficulties in U.S.-Russia relations, this interest makes a good deal of sense to me. Russia is, as you have mentioned, a great power. They have a proud history. They have the largest country in terms of territory, and they are a player in influence in Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East.

Russia possesses the world's second most powerful military, as you pointed out, Mr. Chairman, a nuclear arsenal comparable to ours, and conventional forces that are easily the most powerful in Europe.

While its economy is stagnant and hit hard by the low prices of oil and natural gas, it is still the 12th largest, in dollar terms.

We cannot simply dismiss Russia. I think we would do that at our peril.

It makes great sense for our government to have meaningful discussions and meetings with Russia. We have much to discuss with the Kremlin. But first, we would like to make sure that our relationship does not deteriorate further.

For me, the most urgent matter concerns Moscow's current practice in flying warplanes dangerously close and without their transponders on, and to the incursions between our aircraft and their ships. Such incidents risk fatal accidents and even a clash between the U.S. and Russia. We need to reestablish substantive communication between our two militaries in order to avoid such incidents and, when they occur, to move towards de-confliction.

In our initial communication and/or cooperation, if it is successful, then more senior dialogue might be warranted. Maybe a summit would permit us to see if there is a basis for cooperation on a number of global issues of possible interest to both of us.

That should start with a subject that has been at the heart of relations between Washington and Moscow for over half a century, and that is nuclear disarmament. This area has been dormant since the first Obama administration.

Equally important, especially for President Trump, is potential joint action against the Daesh or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL.

The problem here is that, thus far, Moscow's extensive military operation in Syria has devoted little attention to the extremists. It has, instead, been directed against the weak moderates who we

support and, lately, as it works with Ankara, against the Kurds. And its indiscriminate bombing against civilian populations has fueled refugee flows, exacerbating the refugee crisis in Europe.

Moscow's principal objective in Syria is to shore up the weak, yet savage, Assad regime. If we backed off active opposition to Assad, a serious concession to Mr. Putin, is Moscow really willing to partner in Syria and beyond?

Another area to explore is Iran. Moscow has been an active partner of Iran in Syria. As we saw recently, Iran even provided Russian warplanes a base for a brief period of time. Yet, at the same time, it worked with us and others in persuading Tehran to sign the agreement on its nuclear program.

The Trump administration has indicated that it wants to take a second look and improve the terms of that agreement. Is Moscow willing to partner? Or does it prefer good relations with Tehran at the expense of stability in the Persian Gulf?

This is by no means a complete list. Space exploration and counternarcotics are among the other areas we could possibly cooperate. But all these issues point to the important business we can do when U.S. and Russian interests overlap.

We must not, however, be naive. There are a number of critical areas where Moscow is challenging U.S. interests, including our vital interests. As the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, I had a ringside seat for 3 years of watching Moscow do just that.

President Putin has made clear that he wants to upend the post-Cold War order established in Europe. He and senior Russian officials have justified aggression in Ukraine by claiming a right to protect ethnic Russians and Russian speakers there, and they have said that this principle applies elsewhere.

Their goal is to weaken NATO, the European Union, and the transatlantic relationship.

The peace that we established in Europe in 1945, and that we reinforced at the end of the Cold War in 1989, has been the basis of the unprecedented security and prosperity that we have enjoyed for the past 25 years. It put an end to the unbridled great power rivalries that gave us World Wars I and II, the most destructive wars in human history.

We have a vital interest in maintaining a strong NATO and a vibrant Europe.

Over the past 9 years, the Kremlin has committed multiple acts of aggression: in Georgia in 2008; in Crimea in early 2014; and, since then, an ongoing, not-so-covert war in Ukraine's east. It has agreed to two ceasefires, Minsk I and II, and violated each repeatedly.

And Moscow has intimidated by actions and statements that, if it succeeds in Ukraine, there will be future targets. These targets may include our NATO allies Estonia and Latvia where ethnic Russians comprise 25 percent of the population.

We have a vital interest in stopping Moscow's revanchist policies before they move to other countries and especially our NATO allies in the Baltics. While we conduct a dialogue with Moscow, we need to strengthen NATO's presence in the Baltic States and other Eastern members of the alliance.

The Trump administration should endorse the decisions taken at the Warsaw NATO summit last summer to do just that. It should reaffirm our Article 5 commitment to defend each NATO member under threat, and it should take the lead in enhancing NATO capabilities to deal with hybrid war.

To underscore our commitment to the alliance, it would make sense for the President to meet first with his NATO colleagues before seeing President Putin.

The administration, which understands the value of negotiating from strength, should adopt a position of forward defense in dealing with the Kremlin challenge to NATO. It should fully support Ukraine against Kremlin aggression.

The Obama administration was reluctant to provide Ukraine with the defensive weapons necessary to better defend itself. The new term should to relook at that. It is also essential to provide Moscow no free passes in the war on Ukraine.

Our and Europe's economic sanctions, which cost the Russian economy in 2015, were imposed as an incentive for Moscow to meet its Minsk commitments and withdraw from Ukraine's east, and as a deterrence against additional aggression. It would be a sign of weakness to ease those sanctions for anything less than Moscow's full compliance with Minsk.

The more trouble the Kremlin has conducting its war in Ukraine, the less likely it is to cause trouble for us with our eastern NATO partners.

We must also ramp up substantially our cyber defense to withstand the nasty operations that the Kremlin has been conducting against us and others. We also need to consider how we can respond to future cyberattacks in ways maybe not public that discourage them from continuing.

So in closing, sir, a dialogue with Moscow is possible, as is co-operation on certain important issues. But we should not be fooled by that prospect to surrender either our principles or our interests. We should enter that conversation with good faith and respect, but also from a position of strength. That is the way to achieve agreements that serve our interests and that last.

Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of General Breedlove follows:]

THE PREPARED STATEMENT OF GENERAL PHILIP M. BREEDLOVE

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, thank you for this invitation to testify before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (SFRC). It is an honor to be here. We are here to discuss an urgent topic: U.S. policy toward Russia.

Not surprisingly, at the start of a new administration there is much talk about a new effort to reach out to Moscow and to start a dialogue. This was true at the start of George W. Bush's administration and Barack Obama's.

Given the current difficulties in U.S.-Russian relations, this interest makes a good deal of sense. Russia is a great power with a proud history, the world's largest country in terms of territory, and a player of influence in Europe, East Asia and the Middle East. Russia possesses the world's second most powerful military: a nuclear arsenal comparable to ours and conventional forces that are easily the most powerful in Europe. While its economy is stagnant and hit hard by the low prices of oil and natural gas, it is still the 12th largest in dollar terms. We cannot simply dismiss Russia as a declining and regional power. We would do that at our peril.

It makes great sense for our government to have meaningful discussions and meetings with Russia this year. We have much to discuss with the Kremlin. First we would like to make sure that our relationship does not deteriorate further. The

most urgent matter concerns Moscow's current practice of flying warplanes dangerously close, and at times without their transponders on, to American and other NATO planes and ships. Such incidents risk fatal accidents and even a clash between the U.S. and Russia. We need to re-establish substantive communication between our two militaries in order to avoid such incidents, and when they occur, to move toward de-confliction.

If our initial communication and/or cooperation is successful then more senior dialog may be warranted. A summit would permit us to see if there is a basis for cooperation on a number of global issues of possible interest to both of us. That should start with a subject that has been at the heart of relations between Washington and Moscow for over half a century: nuclear disarmament. This area has been dormant since the first Obama administration. Equally important, especially for President Trump, is potential joint action against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other Salafi extremists.

The problem here is that thus far Moscow's extensive military operation in Syria has devoted little attention to these extremists. It has instead been directed against the weak moderates whom we support and lately, as it works with Ankara, against the Kurds. And its indiscriminate bombing against civilian populations has fueled refugee flows, exacerbating the refugee crisis in Europe. Moscow's principal objective in Syria is to shore up the weak, yet savage, Assad regime. If we back off active opposition to Assad—a serious concession to Mr. Putin—is Moscow willing to be a real partner in Syria and beyond against Islamic extremists?

Another area to explore is Iran. Moscow has been an active partner of Iran in Syria. As we saw recently, Iran even provided Russian warplanes a base for a brief period of time; yet at the same time it worked with us and others in persuading Tehran to sign the agreement on its nuclear program. The Trump administration has indicated that it wants to take a second look and improve the terms of that agreement. Is Moscow willing to partner on this? Or does it prefer good relations with Tehran at the expense of stability in the Persian Gulf?

This is by no means a complete list—space exploration and counter-narcotics are among the other areas where we can cooperate. But all these issues point to the important business we can do when U.S. and Russian interests overlap.

We must not, however, be naive. There are a number of critical areas where Moscow is challenging U.S. interests, including vital ones. As the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, I had a ringside seat for three years watching Moscow do just that.

President Putin has made clear that he wants to upend the post-Cold War order established in Europe. He and senior Russian officials have justified aggression in Ukraine by claiming a right to protect ethnic Russians and Russian speakers there; and they have said that this principle applies elsewhere. Their goal is to weaken NATO, the European Union, and the Transatlantic relationship.

The peace that we established in Europe in 1945, and that we reinforced at the end of the Cold War in 1989, has been the basis of the unprecedented security and prosperity that we have enjoyed for the past twenty-five years. It put an end to the unbridled great power rivalries that gave us World Wars I and II, the most destructive wars in human history. We have a vital interest in maintaining a strong NATO and vibrant Europe.

Over the past nine years, the Kremlin has committed multiple acts of aggression: in Georgia in 2008; in Crimea in early 2014; and since then an ongoing not-so-covert war in Ukraine's East. It has agreed to two ceasefires—Minsk I and II—and violated each repeatedly.

And Moscow has intimidated, by actions and statements that if it succeeds in Ukraine, there will be future targets. Those targets may include our NATO allies, Estonia and Latvia, where ethnic Russians comprise 25 percent of the population.

We have a vital interest in stopping Moscow's revanchist policies before they move to other countries, and especially our NATO allies in the Baltics. While we conduct a dialogue with Moscow, we need to strengthen NATO's presence in the Baltic states and other eastern members of the Alliance. The Trump administration should endorse the decisions taken at the Warsaw NATO summit last summer to do just that. It should reaffirm our Article 5 commitment to defend each NATO member under threat; and it should take the lead in enhancing NATO capacities to deal with hybrid war—the appearance of disguised Russian agents or little green men—in Allied countries.

To underscore our commitment to the Alliance, it would make sense for the President to meet first with his NATO colleagues before seeing President Putin.

And the Trump administration, which understands the value of negotiating from strength, should adopt a position of forward defense in dealing with the Kremlin challenge to NATO. It should fully support Ukraine against Kremlin aggression.

The Obama administration was reluctant to provide Ukraine with the defensive weapons necessary to better defend itself. The new team can do better than that.

It is also essential to provide Moscow no free passes in its war on Ukraine. Our and Europe's economic sanctions—which cost the Russian economy 1–1.5 of GDP in 2015—were imposed as an incentive for Moscow to meet its Minsk commitments and withdraw from Ukraine's East, and as a deterrence against additional aggression. It would be a sign of weakness to ease those sanctions for anything less than Moscow's full compliance with Minsk. The more trouble the Kremlin has conducting its war in Ukraine, the less likely it is to cause trouble for us with our eastern NATO partners.

We must also ramp up substantially our cyber defenses to withstand the nasty operations that the Kremlin has been conducting against us and others. We also need to consider how we can respond to future cyber-attacks in ways—perhaps not public—that discourage them from continuing such practices. Doing that might persuade them to enter a serious dialogue on avoiding cyber confrontations.

A dialogue with Moscow is possible, as is cooperation on certain important issues. But we should not be fooled by that prospect to surrender either our principles or our interests. We should enter that conversation with good faith and respect, but also from a position of strength. That is the way to achieve agreements that serve our interests, and that last.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Ms. Smith?

STATEMENT OF JULIANNE SMITH, SENIOR FELLOW AND DIRECTOR, STRATEGY AND STATECRAFT PROGRAM, CENTER FOR NEW AMERICAN STRATEGY, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. SMITH. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning on Russia.

Let me just start by saying that the U.S.-Russia relationship is fraught with more tension today than at any point since the end of the Cold War. Russia is engaged in a sophisticated and long-term strategy to undermine the rules-based order that we spent 70-some years creating and reforming with our European allies.

As the general noted, Russia is doing everything it can to undermine our democratic institutions. It is trying to divide Europe from within. It is trying to divide Europe from the United States. And it is trying to create spheres of influence.

Because of these efforts, because of what Russia is trying to do to undermine our interests, I think the role that Congress plays is more important than ever. And so I am very grateful for this opportunity.

Russia is using a variety of tactics and means to achieve its objectives, and I want to cite just a couple this morning as some examples.

First, Russia is redrawing Europe's borders as it did in 2014 by invading Ukraine. Russia, as the general also noted, continually uses its modernized and formidable military forces to intimidate and threaten our European allies. They regularly fly into European airspace with their transponders off and show up in their territorial waters.

Russia is also weaponizing stolen information that it obtains through hacking, as we saw it do in our elections last fall. And it is interfering in the political processes of our European allies, as it is doing right now with the French elections that will take place in May.

Russia spends a significant amount of money on its vast network of propaganda outlets. The Russia Today office in Washington

alone has a \$400 million budget, and there are now more YouTube subscribers to Russia Today than any other broadcaster, including the BBC, which has a significant global reach.

And according to our own intelligence community, Russia is one of the most sophisticated actors in cyberspace. As you all know, it has penetrated the computer systems at the White House, at the State Department, and U.S. critical infrastructure. It is doing that to our allies in Europe as well.

So what have we done about this in recent years, particularly in light of what Russia did in Ukraine in 2014? We have done a number of things. We have worked to create new tools with our European allies. We have worked to isolate Russia. We kicked Russia out of the G8, returning that forum to the G7. We have reassured our European allies by putting more posture in Europe and providing them with more resources. We imposed sanctions. And we, of course, have supported Ukraine.

But despite all of that, Russia continues with its aggressive behavior in its immediate neighborhood and beyond. And at home, as Senator Cardin noted, it is curtailing the press. It is weakening civil society and suppressing the opposition.

We are now at a point where the new administration is weighing its options and looking at how we carry forward with the U.S.-Russia relationship. And as the administration looks at that relationship and determines the way forward, I would make five brief recommendations.

First, make any change in U.S. policy conditional on Russian behavior. Put the onus on Russia. Do not give away anything for free.

Two, be very wary, as the general noted, of aligning with Russia in Syria. They have very little to offer.

Three, do not do anything without consulting our European allies first. To the extent that we want to engage with the Russians, we should do so in consultation with our closest allies.

Four, as Senator Cardin also noted, let us get to the bottom of what Russia did in our election through a bipartisan commission to prevent and deter these types of attempts in the future.

And, lastly, I would suggest that the administration work with Congress to address the threat of Russia's very aggressive cyber behavior.

I do not want to leave you with the impression this morning that I do not support engaging with Russia. I do. And I think there have been many points in our history where we have engaged Russia, and it has served both our interests. We did so during the Cold War, and we have done so since the end of the Cold War.

But I think we have also learned some very important short-term lessons about the dangers of short-term deals, and that Russia tends to overpromise and under deliver.

Therefore, I think we should proceed with caution and ensure that we are doing everything to protect our relationship with our European allies.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Smith follows:]

THE PREPARED STATEMENT OF JULIANNE SMITH

THE U.S.-RUSSIA BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning on the United States, the Russian Federation, and Challenges Ahead. The U.S.-Russia bilateral relationship is fraught with more tension than at any point since the end of the Cold War. Ever since President Vladimir Putin returned to power in 2012, the bilateral relationship has increasingly soured, and today, Russia poses a serious threat to the security and interests of the United States and its allies in Europe. Russia is engaged in a sophisticated, long-term strategy to undermine the rules based order that the United States and its allies constructed after World War II. Russia's tactics aim to undermine our democratic institutions, sow divisions within NATO and the EU, and carve out a sphere of influence. Because of Russia's blatant and continuous efforts to undermine U.S. interests at home and abroad, the role that Congress plays to defend these interests is more important and necessary than ever before.

As we speak, Russia is deploying a wide array of tools to achieve its objectives, including military, cyber, intelligence, and economic efforts aimed at harming the United States, exacerbating rifts in Europe, and coercing neighboring states to make concessions to Russian interests. Most alarmingly, Russia has redrawn Europe's borders for the first time since World War II, and assaulted neighboring states with military force. Russia invaded Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 when those states took steps to integrate more closely into the West. Russia's support for separatists in eastern Ukraine, designed to subvert Ukraine's sovereignty, continues unabated while the Kremlin continues to lie about the true nature of its intervention there. The fighting in eastern Ukraine, which has intensified in the past week, has claimed the lives of around 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers and civilians since 2014 while inflicting enormous costs on the Ukrainian economy.¹

The Russian military has also been deeply involved in the ongoing conflict in Syria, where since September 2015 it has worked with the Assad regime to combat opposition forces. Despite Putin's outward claim that his intervention is aimed at eradicating terrorist groups, the bombing campaign has dramatically improved the position of Assad's forces while doing little to weaken the Islamic State (IS) and other extremist groups operating within Syria's borders. Senior U.S. officials have said that Russia's intervention changed the calculus of power in Syria completely, leaving Assad in a much stronger position.² Efforts by the United States to reach a political settlement in Syria have gone nowhere due to Russian stonewalling and repeated ceasefire violations. Humanitarian organizations and journalists have for months reported extensively on Russian bombing of civilians, hospitals, and schools.³

Military operations like these have allowed Russia to showcase some of its new capabilities, doctrine, and training. Since 2011, Russia has been modernizing its nuclear forces and honing new conventional capabilities to the tune of \$700 billion. In addition to conducting operations abroad, Russia has used its newly-modernized and more formidable forces to routinely threaten U.S. allies. Russia regularly conducts largescale snap exercises near its western borders while sending warplanes and submarines to skirt allied airspace and waters, often turning off transponders or engaging in maneuvers that risk accident or miscommunication. Russian submarine activity in the Baltic and Arctic Seas is at a post-Cold War high, and coincides with years of deterioration in U.S. and allied anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities.

In addition to dramatically modernizing its military forces, Russia has deployed hybrid forms of information and cyber warfare in ways that, until now, have been unfamiliar to most Americans. By weaponizing stolen information and propagating disinformation, Russian intelligence services have worked to discredit the United States both at home and abroad, disrupt its foreign policy, and sow divisions internally. The most recent glaring example, of course, was Russia's intervention in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, which the Intelligence Community confirmed was aimed at aiding the election of President Trump and undermining Americans' confidence in our electoral system.

Russian intervention in foreign elections to advance its interests is not a new phenomenon, and it is not confined to the United States. The governments of Germany and France have sounded alarm bells that Russia is currently conducting similar operations on their territory in advance of national elections this year, targeting candidates thought to be unfriendly to Russian interests. Throughout Europe, Russia supports (both politically and financially) populist parties that fuel anti-EU and anti-immigrant sentiment. One example of such assistance was a Russian bank's loan of over \$11 million to French presidential candidate Marine Le Pen's National

Front, which promises to hold a Brexit-style referendum on continued French membership in the EU should it win elections this spring. If Le Pen wins and removes France from the European Union, it is unlikely that the European project will survive, news that Moscow would no doubt celebrate. President Putin knows that a failed EU would have dire consequences for the United States and the global economy.

Russia also spends significant resources on a vast network of propaganda outlets, including Russia Today (RT) here in the United States, to disseminate disinformation that weakens democratic consensus and strengthens the political fringe. RT reportedly spends \$400 million on its Washington bureau alone.⁴ RT has more YouTube subscribers than any other broadcaster, including the BBC.⁵ Russia oversees dozens of other “news” sources in tandem with RT, seeding salacious stories through one website that are picked up and amplified through others. Deep in the shadows, Russia employs hundreds of English-literate young people—many aspiring writers—to operate a vast network of fake online identities. In a 12-hour shift, these professional internet “trolls” might be expected to write 15 blog posts and 200 comments,⁶ the tone and content of which are dictated by overseers from the Kremlin. The goals of these efforts vary. Sometimes, the goal is to “stack tinder, throw matches, and see what happens.”⁷ Other times, the misinformation campaigns have narrowly defined policy objectives and targets.

Russia’s ability to wage information warfare has been greatly aided by its heavy investments in cyberspace, where the United States remains ill-equipped to counter or deter its aggressive probing. Russia’s activity in this domain reflects an updated national security strategy that emphasizes asymmetric tactics to exploit vulnerabilities in adversaries while weakening their ability and resolve to counter Russian policy. In recent public reports, the U.S. Intelligence Community identified Russia as one of the most sophisticated nation-state actors in cyberspace. Significant Russian cyber incursions in the United States have included penetrations into the computer systems of the White House and State Department as well as critical infrastructure.

Similarly, European capitals have suffered cyberattacks that have debilitated national institutions. This happened in Estonia in 2007 when a barrage of attacks disabled the websites of entire ministries, banks, companies, political parties, and media publications. Similarly, last year Germany experienced a slew of attacks of likely Russian origin on major national institutions. The West’s collective vulnerability to Russian cyber aggression led NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to declare cyberspace a new operational domain alongside sea, air, and land, meaning that a cyberattack from Russia or anyone else could trigger the Alliance’s Article 5 obligations.⁸ National governments and multilateral institutions have launched new efforts to fortify our collective cyber defenses but much more remains to be done to deter, detect, and disrupt such attacks.

Russia also relies on energy coercion to intimidate our European allies and fuel instability in its near abroad. For years, European and American leaders have promoted greater energy diversification in Europe to reduce the continent’s dependence on Russian gas. But despite those calls, Russia remains capable of blackmailing European nations with energy resources, threatening to cut off gas supplies at the height of winter and advancing pipeline projects that harm the energy independence of Allied nations highly exposed to Russian gas. Unfortunately, there are significant policy divisions among Europeans on future and ongoing energy projects involving Russian gas and investment. These political divisions give Putin a strong opening to drive Europeans even farther apart while expanding Russian influence over the continent.

RECENT U.S. STRATEGY

After Russia invaded Ukraine and annexed Crimea in 2014, America and its allies undertook a series of punitive measures to signal transatlantic unity and resolve. First, the United States and Europe imposed tough sanctions on Russia, targeting government officials and other individuals responsible for Russia’s Ukraine policy and human rights abuses. The West then took steps to isolate Russia on the world stage. In 2014, Russia was asked to leave the G8, transforming the Head of State gathering back into the G7. Working with its NATO allies, the United States also took steps to reassure Central and Eastern Europe by stationing rotational troops in the Baltic States and Poland and staging exercises on their territory. Finally, because Ukraine’s territorial integrity is a common interest to both sides of the Atlantic and reflects decades of American commitment to Europe’s peace and security, the United States and its allies stepped up political, financial, and military support for Ukraine.

Few would disagree that the European and U.S. sanctions (conveniently paired with a drop in oil prices and Putin's economic mismanagement) have hurt the Russian economy. Almost every indicator—the value of the ruble, capital flight, living standards, growth, investment, access to foreign capital markets, or federal budget constraints—points to an economy that is weaker and more unstable than it was just a few years ago. At best, the Russian economy faces slow growth; at worst, it faces prolonged stagnation.

Despite Russia's flailing economy, though, President Putin has yet to halt his aggressive behavior in his neighborhood and elsewhere. Overseas, Putin continues to both believe he is at war with the West and pursue a multifaceted strategy to undermine the rules based order, transatlantic unity, and U.S. leadership. At home, he continues to curtail freedom of the press, weaken civil society, and suppress any opposition. According to two reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, "Vladimir Putin is presiding over the worst era for Russian human rights since the Soviet Union."⁹ Just this week, a prominent Russian opposition leader, Vladimir Kara-Murza, suddenly fell into a coma at a Moscow hospital and now clings to life. His current illness is eerily similar to his sudden incapacitation in 2015, which doctors concluded was "acute intoxication by an unknown substance." As members of this committee may recall, Mr. Kara-Murza submitted a letter to this committee last month during Secretary of State Tillerson's confirmation hearings, warning us all that Russia's practice of violently targeting opposition figures has intensified in recent years.¹⁰ Members of the committee may also recall that two years ago Kara-Murza's close mentor and friend, Boris Nemtsov, was gunned down just outside the Kremlin.

THE WAY AHEAD

The new administration is currently contemplating how to approach Russia going forward. What seems clear is that instead of taking steps to make the current strategy more durable, innovative, and effective, the President will likely opt for a new grand bargain. Throughout the campaign and during the transition, President Trump made several statements expressing an interest in engaging the Russians with the hope that the United States and Russia could enhance their counter terrorism cooperation. The president has also expressed an admiration for President Putin and his leadership style. Last weekend, in an interview with Bill O'Reilly on Fox News, President Trump put Russia and the United States on the same moral plane, suggesting that both countries kill people. Those statements and others have led many to conclude that the administration is indeed leaning towards the idea of grand bargain.

As the administration weighs its policy choices regarding Russia, I recommend the following:

First, make any changes in U.S. policy conditional on Russian actions. Engaging face to face with the Russian government makes sense. This is something the Obama administration did even during some of the darkest periods in the bilateral relationship. But even so, President Trump should proceed with considerable caution. Experience proves that President Putin often overpromises and under delivers. The most recent example of this was in regards to U.S. efforts to establish a "Joint Implementation Center" with Russia in the fall of 2016 to conduct strikes against IS. Despite promises to the contrary, Russia failed to meet the agreed upon conditions for the establishment of such a center, causing the entire concept to collapse. The new administration should therefore ensure that any change in U.S. policy be conditional. For example, the United States should make clear to the Russians that it will not even consider lifting economic sanctions until Russia has met its commitments outlined in the Minsk Protocol. Putin knows full well that unraveling sanctions is far easier than imposing them, which can take years.

Second, be wary of aligning with Russia in Syria. President Putin likes to tell the world that Russia is fighting the Islamic State in Syria. Before the new administration seeks ways for Russia and the United States to do more to combat the Islamic State together, it should seek greater clarity on what exactly the Russians have done in Syria to date. Contrary to what President Putin has said about Russia's actions in Syria, almost 80 percent of the Russian strikes in Syria have been in areas not held by the Islamic State.¹¹ Instead, Russia has targeted non-extremist opposition forces and has indiscriminately bombed civilians, hospitals, and homes around the country. Why? Russia's overarching goal, along with Iran's overarching goal, is to keep its ally Bashar al-Assad in power.

Russia's geopolitical goals are thus fundamentally opposed to those of the United States in Syria. The new administration should therefore be very wary of aligning with Russia inside Syria. Doing so would bolster Russia's strategic position in the

Middle East and provide cover for Russian war crimes that have killed tens of thousands of civilians under the pretense of fighting terrorism. It would also make the United States a de facto partner with Iran, the very country the new administration just “put on notice.” In addition, it would lead the United States to partner with the Assad regime, which for six years has perpetrated brutal war crimes against its own people with Russia’s cover and assistance. Allying tacitly with the Assad regime could come back to haunt the United States down the line by provoking more radical extremist sentiments and attacks against us, and also by alienating important regional allies that have opposed the Assad regime for years.¹²

Third, don’t do anything with Russia without consulting European allies. While almost all of America’s allies in Europe would support the new administration engaging with the Russian government, no ally wants this to occur in isolation. If the new administration were to cut a grand bargain with Russia above the heads of U.S. allies in Europe, the very foundation of the transatlantic relationship would start to crack. The EU has been a stalwart partner in imposing sanctions on Russia even though it has felt the negative consequences of those sanctions far more than the United States. The new administration should therefore consult European allies on its Russia strategy before reaching out to Moscow. And it should do so not just out of respect for our European allies but because many countries in Europe have valuable insights and experience in working with President Putin and the Russian government more broadly.

Fourth, reassure skittish allies about U.S. commitments to NATO and European security. President Trump’s rhetoric about NATO’s obsolescence before and after the election has alarmed U.S. allies in Europe at a time when Moscow is actively seeking to undermine the future of the European project. Yes, European allies can and should do more to enhance their defense budgets. But naming and shaming individual allies and calling into question our commitment to uphold Article 5 of the NATO Treaty only plays into Russia’s hands. President Putin wants nothing more than a divided alliance and a split in the transatlantic unity that has been on such prominent display in recent years. We should not grant him that victory and instead engage with Russia from a position of strength. Russia wishes it had the vast network of partners and allies that the United States has today. We should not do anything to jeopardize that network.

Fifth, let’s get to the bottom of what happened in our election. President Trump has publicly accepted the Intelligence Community’s conclusion that Russia was responsible for intervening in the 2016 election. But countless questions remain about possible coordination between U.S. nationals (especially anyone with official ties to either political campaign) and Russian officials; what other vulnerabilities in the U.S. political system Russia may be working to exploit; and perhaps most importantly, how our government—working with allies—can prevent and deter such attacks in the future. We need an independent commission of foreign policy, national security and elections experts to set the record straight on what happened. As Congressman Eric Swalwell, ranking member of the CIA subcommittee, of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence said recently, “The specter of foreign leverage over our incoming president should send a chill down every American’s spine.”¹³ Congress must make investigating Russia’s intervention in the election a top priority, and I urge you to share your findings with the American people as openly as possible.

Sixth, continue to highlight Russia’s dismal human rights record. In all the talk about Russian actions abroad, we sometimes lose sight of what President Putin is doing at home. The United States and its European allies should speak clearly in support of democracy and human rights in Russia; speak out against Putin’s internal repression; and highlight political persecution in Russia. We should also pursue opportunities to work with elements of Russian civil society to support democratic governance, human rights (including LGBT rights), freedom of speech and transparency.

Finally, work with Congress to address the threat of Russia’s cyber aggression. We know that Russia’s intelligence agencies have been breaking into the United States’ computer networks for decades, and while these attempts have wreaked havoc on our government’s networks and imposed costs on companies that lose proprietary information in the private sector, we have been slow to respond decisively. The greatest mistake we can make at this juncture is to let up on calling out the Russians publicly for their brazen cyber espionage. Congress must fund efforts to bolster network security and work with the administration to coordinate a whole-of-government approach to fortify our networks against Russian cyberattacks. I urge this committee in particular to hold more hearings on this issue and impress on all your colleagues and other parts of the government the serious national security implications of Russia’s increasingly brazen use of this asymmetric tool of warfare. In

this critical endeavor, the United States should not go at it alone; our NATO allies also find themselves on the receiving end of aggressive and destructive Russian cyberattacks. The administration should elevate this issue to the top of the NATO's priority list.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, engaging the Russians is a laudable goal, one that at different points in our history has served U.S. interests.¹⁴ But history also tells us a lot about the risks of short-term deals that put the liberal order at risk. The United States and its European allies have spent 70 years creating and reforming a collection of institutions that protect and promote the values we share. The new administration must avoid doing anything that would jeopardize that system, which, while imperfect, is also indispensable.

The new administration, despite the risks stated in this testimony and many others, may ultimately take steps to lift sanctions against Russia without demonstrable steps on Russia's part to implement Minsk II and withdraw its troops and materiel from Ukraine. Before that occurs, Congress should re-impose those sanctions legislatively over the President's veto. It is because of situations like this that the U.S. system of checks and balances is so important, and today, Congress's check on the President's power to conduct foreign policy has never been more needed. If Russia's foothold in eastern Europe becomes permanent, decades of post-World War II American policy dedicated to bolstering the freedom, unity, and prosperity of the European continent will have gone to waste. This would not only be a dereliction of our commitments to our European partners, but it would be in direct conflict to the very values that the United States embodies. In sum, Congress must stand at the ready to defend the liberal order, which has advanced U.S. values, interests, and security for the past 70 years.

Notes

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the original START Treaty. Russia joined us in imposing sanctions on Iran, without which the JCPOA could not have been negotiated.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for that testimony. I just would say to folks, we have a Republican witness and a Democratic witness.

Senator CARDIN. Which one is which?

The CHAIRMAN. You pick. I do not care. It does not matter to me. They are both good.

But the fact is that they are both saying the same thing, generally speaking.

We have, from my perspective, an opportunity that we have not had in 10 years on this committee, to work in a coordinated fashion with an administration that is coming on to really develop thoughtful, meaningful policies that can be coordinated. I know that is not well-received yet by all. I see an opportunity for us.

And I just hope that we will take advantage of an opportunity for the first time since I have been here in a decade, to take full advantage of helping shape policies towards Russia, towards Iran, and towards other places.

And, again, I point to these witnesses and say there sure is a lot of agreement amongst us relative to how to deal with them.

With that, I will reserve the rest of my time and turn to Ben Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, I certainly agree with that assessment, that this committee can play a major role. And I think we already have seen some impact with Ambassador Haley's comments on the sanctions. So I really do believe you are absolutely correct.

And we need to see how we can weigh in with the administration so we have unity, because that is always the best. And where we need to take congressional action, we should make sure we can do that in a nonpartisan way in the best interests of our country.

There is so much to talk about, and I will limit myself only to the 5 minutes I have. So I am not going to be able to cover everything I would like, and we will continue this discussion beyond today.

But we have the European Deterrence Initiative as an effort to show, from a military point of view, we are prepared to stand up to Russia by placing our strength in NATO along the areas that you mentioned, that there is the Russian population in NATO countries. That is, I think, a very smart, strategic move.

But I want to go to a related subject, Ms. Smith, that you talked about, and that is that Russia's using democratic institutions to try to undermine democratic institutions. We saw that with our election process here in the United States.

We know that Europe is vulnerable to this, with the way that they use propaganda to try to bring down the free democratic institutions of Europe. And we have suggested perhaps a European democracy initiative with our European allies to shore up the democratic institutions against the propaganda and cyber and everything else that Russia is doing to try to get false information out and to undermine the democratic rule of law.

Can you just comment a little bit about how useful that would be for a coordinated effort among Europe and the United States to protect our democratic institutions?

Ms. SMITH. Sure. Thank you, Senator.

Absolutely, I think such an initiative would be welcomed by our European allies and one that makes perfect sense. Europe has been, frankly, dealing with what we are seeing from Russia in many ways longer than we have. Many of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, but now in Western Europe as well, have been dealing with an array of kind of information-shaping policies and tactics by the Russian Government to try and alter the political dynamics inside these countries.

Sometimes their goal is to fuel instability by fanning the flames and concerns of Russian minorities, and creating some doubts among those populations about how their national governments are responding to their needs. Sometimes they are simply supporting either politically or financially a particular party.

It has been well-documented that Russia has actually loaned Marine Le Pen, her actual campaign in France, money. It is expected that they will do that again in the lead-up to the May election in France.

And so this is a challenge that many of our European allies are grappling with. Anything that we could do to share lessons with our European allies and develop better tools to both detect what is going on and then figure out what we can do collectively to push back on these efforts and also expose them would be extremely helpful.

Senator CARDIN. And we saw that in Montenegro parliamentary elections, where they tried to disrupt it so that Montenegro would not be eligible to join NATO. We see their activities in Georgia today to make it more difficult for Georgia to become a NATO partner. We see it over and over again.

General, I want to ask you about a dilemma we have. Senator Corker and I both agree that the international community did not show enough resolve in support of Ukraine. That left a void where Russia was free to interfere not only with taking Crimea, but in eastern Ukraine. And this committee looked at providing a much stronger response by the United States, including providing lethal weapons to Ukraine.

We were rebuked by the administration, and the main reason they said is that Europe—they wanted to be in step with Europe, and Europe was not anxious for the United States to provide that type of assistance to Ukraine.

So my question to you is, you indicate you want us to work in concert with Europe, and I agree with that. But it seems to me that Europe is a little bit timid at times where the United States could do more. How do we reconcile that, so that we do not give space to Russia for their aggressive activities?

General BREEDLOVE. So thank you, Senator. And if I have 20 seconds, I would also like to add a remark to your first question.

But to the latter concern, I think it is important when we deal with Russia that we are consistent, that we either do not reward bad behavior or that we do not let bad behavior go unaddressed. And I was supportive of supplying what were at the time termed defensive lethal weapons. I do not really like that distinction. Any weapon can be used defensively or offensively.

But I was in favor of allowing Ukraine to defend itself. I believe that every Nation has a right to defend itself. And so I do believe that, although we do want to act as often as we can in concert with our allies, and many of our allies were actually in favor of some of that, some were not, but I do believe that we had an opportunity to give Ukraine a better capability to defend itself in the Donbass. And as I sort of mentioned in my opening remarks, I think that is something that needs to be relooked.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Did you want to say something else about his—

General BREEDLOVE. I do not want to overuse the Senator's time, but I would just say that, broadly, I would expand the problem a little bit.

Mr. Gerasimov, my general officer counterpart in Russia, describes what he calls war by other means, indirect means. I call it war below the lines.

What can we do—"we" being the Russians—do in a nation below that threshold at which either the nation or the international community reacts? And I believe that Mr. Gerasimov and others see this different in every nation. They can get away with more in one than the other.

I think shocking is how far they believe now they can get away with this in our nation, as witnessed in what happened in the election. And so your initiative would be a tool to take the field to counter this war below the lines.

I do not believe that we in NATO, the European Union, or the West, in general, have really come to an understanding of how we are going to react to this war by indirect means or war below the lines—cyber, disinformation campaigns, coercion with force, all of it lumped together in this war. We need a broader approach to how we counter it.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. I am glad we gave you an extra few minutes.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Paul?

Senator PAUL. Thank you for your testimony.

General Breedlove, with regard to dealing with Russia, do you think that the problems can be discussed region by region? Or do they have to be discussed altogether? Can Ukraine be discussed somewhat separate from Syria, somewhat separate from cyber incursions, somewhat separate from the Baltics?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, thank you. I have testified to this before in front of another committee in the Senate, and I remain committed to my original line of answer, and that is that everything Russia does is connected.

Pressure in one nation could be pressure only on that nation. It could be signaling the Baltics. Pressure in Syria could be only about Syria. It could be signaling that their military is capable of doing things in Europe. And so I believe that we need to look at Russia in a very interconnected way.

I do not disqualify that we could begin to find sub-areas where we might be able to begin to reestablish a trust relationship, which, by the way, we do not have now. So maybe sub-areas can be ad-

dressed, as I mentioned in my remarks, to begin conversations to reestablish trust.

But I do believe that everything Russia does is in the context of a larger attempt to diminish the West and to raise Russia.

Senator PAUL. Do you think if we were looking at the Syria situation somewhat separate and not necessarily dependent on the rest of the world—you mentioned what most people agree with, that the Russians have been more concerned with supporting Assad than they have with extremists.

But that also, I think, is related to the fact that the rest of the world has been more concerned with getting rid of Assad. They feel as if they want to defend their base there. I do not think they are giving their base up. I think that is not something they are going to give up, that base. To them, they see the base as important, and Assad as an important protection of their naval base there.

You did mention something, though, that would have been pretty provocative to a lot of people, to actually consider whether or not the time has come to reconsider conditions as they are on the ground, that Assad is probably not going anywhere.

I do not think we necessarily need Russian troops. In fact, I think Russian troops or American troops will be equally bad in the taking back of Raqqa. But I think if you did not have Assad's forces also battling whoever comes into the region—we had people here in the committee just recently saying, "Oh, well, the Kurds will take Raqqa." Yes, I think there is going to be a lot of people unhappy about the Kurds taking Raqqa, including Assad's forces.

So I continue to believe there needs to be some kind of arrangement, and some of it is maybe regional autonomy to where people are within Syria as of today. But I think you continue to need that to have a final outcome of any sort there.

But maybe you could expand a little bit upon what you think the odds of—or whether the reasonability of actually discussing whether or not we do not have a precondition that Assad goes.

General BREEDLOVE. So, Senator, thank you.

If I said that I supported talking to Syria in my remarks, I misstated. I see a lot of problems with working with Russia and Syria, and I will talk about those in a moment.

I still believe that, in Syria, Russia has a hierarchy of what they are trying to do, and getting after ISIL is the last of that hierarchy. It is propping up the murderous regime of Assad. It is retaining access to naval and air bases in Syria. It is raising the stature of Russia as a great power out there in the world. It is then getting after the moderate opposition, which in some cases we support. And then I would say last of the five, Russia is after ISIL or Daesh.

So I do not see their priorities the same as ours in any way, shape, or form in Syria.

Clearly, we all want to get after Daesh and/or ISIL, however you would like to refer to them. And having a conversation with Russia I do not think is out of bounds, but we need to be clear-eyed and wide-eyed.

My biggest concerns about that is, to align ourselves with Iran and Russia in Syria would be very problematic, to me. To align ourselves with Iran and Russia in support of Mr. Assad would be very tough for me to deal with.

As an F-16 fighter pilot, watching the way bombing has been conducted in Syria, to try to associate our type of conducting this conflict in Syria with Russia's way of conducting this conflict in Syria would be an affront to the way that I believe we should conduct that.

Senator PAUL. I am not arguing there is any equivalency. I am arguing that the world is what it is, and we can say that Assad must go, but we have been saying that for a long time. I would say, at this point, it is unlikely that Assad goes.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Before turning to Senator Coons, if Russian troops were used to clear Raqqa, is it likely that the number of civilian casualties, because of the way they go about doing their business, would be equivalent to the way that they do bombing right now?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, I am not really sure that I can draw that clear of a line. I think when you do ground warfare, it is going to be tough any way you do it.

But I do agree with every statement of this committee so far. I do not draw equivalency between the way we do business and the way they do business.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin. Thank you for lifting our eyes to the very real prospect that this is a moment and a challenge where this committee is particularly relevant in a way it has not been in the past decade.

And thank you for your great testimony, General Breedlove and Ms. Smith, and for echoing a shared view, a very clear-eyed view, and, I will remind you, a view that was raised repeatedly with now-Secretary Mattis and Secretary Tillerson about do they see Russian aggression clearly.

As you both testified, in recent years, the Russians have invaded and occupied Ukraine, armed and supported rebels in eastern Ukraine. They have committed atrocities in support of the murderous regime of Bashar al-Assad. They have sold an S-300 missile defense system to Iran. And they have directly attacked our democratic system.

That we are not in a strong and persistent bipartisan way directly engaged in understanding this threat and pushing back on this threat concerns me gravely. And I am grateful that this committee is stepping up to this challenge.

So it seems to me that, as you testified, knowing that open and democratic societies that are critical both military and economic and political allies of ours face imminent elections, the Dutch elections, French elections, German elections, and hearing from you what I have heard from them, that they believe they also face this sort of hybrid warfare, intentional Russian efforts to undermine their democracy, I am struck that we are not pushing relentlessly for a united effort.

Senator Cardin asked about what might we do to promote a democratic initiative in Western Europe. I will remind you some questioned the relevance of NATO in the course of the campaign. The Heritage Foundation has said that our alliances keep us safe, that NATO is not an act of charity. NATO is an act of self-interest

and self-defense. It raises the cost to Russia of its aggression. And it is unclear whether we are united in our commitment to NATO.

I agree with you that before anything is done to reset the table with Russia, we should meet with our NATO allies first and affirm the Warsaw commitments, and that we should make no move in Syria that strengthens Russia's hand on the ground and that would drag us into, I think, a devastating conflict.

If I could just ask both of you to speak to, given the hybrid warfare and this new approach to warfare below the line, that we have directly been affected by here in this country, what would you do to strengthen our Western European allies, their democratic societies, their resolve and their capabilities to push back against the weaponization of information that is misused after being expropriated, and the misuse of propaganda, and, in some cases, direct financial support for candidates in their upcoming campaigns?

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator. I am going to be honest. This period in the transatlantic relationship is dire, and our allies are nervous and anxious, very anxious about what is happening on their own continent, what is happening in the transatlantic relationship, and, frankly, some of the comments we have been hearing come out of Washington about the value we place on the NATO alliance and our views toward the European Union.

They are under enormous pressure internally by the migration crisis, weak economies, and externally by counterterrorism challenges, what Russia is doing to their democratic systems, the rise of far right and populist parties. This is a very troubling time in the relationship.

In terms of the way forward and the role of this committee and what Washington can do, first and foremost, we have to reassure our allies. I know there is an exceptionally large delegation going over to the Munich Security Conference next week. I find that very reassuring. Our allies will be reassured to see so many members coming and bringing such a large delegation. They are excited to hear from the Vice President. They are excited to hear from the Secretary of State.

I look forward to those comments. I hope we can reassure our allies and let them know that we value this relationship, and we would do nothing to undermine it.

The last thing Europe wants to feel is to be in a position where Washington and Moscow are actually aligned in an anti-EU, anti-NATO position. That would be devastating to the European project.

We should also maintain our force posture in Europe, maintain support for the European Deterrence Initiative. We should ensure that we are developing new tools inside the NATO alliance and working with the EU as well to see what we can do in terms of enhancing our counterterrorism cooperation, law enforcement, intelligence-sharing.

There is a long list of things here, and there is plenty of work to do. But it must start first and foremost by reaffirming our commitment to this project.

We are not a member of the European Union. We do not have a vote in this institution. We do not have a voice. But it is, in some ways, an American project, one we have invested a great deal in.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

General?

General BREEDLOVE. Let me first say that I join all those remarks.

Second, as a Supreme Allied Commander of Europe past, number 17, I am an unapologetic supporter of what NATO means to us and what we should be doing in support of NATO.

If I could just add a little to what was said about this war below the lines or hybrid, really, a small part of that is military. The rest of it is decidedly nonmilitary and exists to contest all of those things that are the rest of our government, the rest of what we do.

And so our allies have a hard time seeing and understanding and characterizing it. I talked to them about being able to recognize a problem, that it is not normal. Characterize it as not a legitimate political issue and then attribute it to an aggressor. And if they can get through that recognize, characterize, attribute, they can then go to the NAC with an Article 4 or an Article 5 and get support. Short of that, they may not be supported.

So we need to look at our own capabilities and capacities, and the capabilities and capacities of our allies, to get through that recognize, characterize, attribute. Can we see it? Can we detect it in cyber? Will we take the field in the information campaign? The speed and power of a Russian lie and how fast they can create them and how long it takes us to debunk them—2 years to debunk the shoot-down of the aircraft in eastern Ukraine.

And so I just believe we need to take the field and begin to look at those capabilities that we have and our allies have to recognize, characterize, attribute to move out on these issues.

Senator COONS. General, Ms. Smith, thank you for your testimony.

Seven decades of peace in Europe was bought at an enormous price in American dollars and lives. And I think we should be fighting jointly for NATO and for our European allies.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I could not agree more.

Senator Portman?

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to General Breedlove, you spoke earlier about Ukraine and let me just say that when you were Supreme Allied Commander, you had the courage to stand for providing the Ukrainians the lethal weapons that they needed to defend themselves. And as you say, I will not say defensive, because they can also be used offensively.

But one reason I think we have the situation we are seeing on the eastern border of Ukraine today, which is dire—the Ambassador wants to come see me today about it—is because we did not act.

But you stood up. And you are not just saying it now after the fact, and you did so privately and publicly. And I appreciate that.

I think NATO needs to be described better, too. I mean, do you think countries in NATO ought to contribute more to the mutual defense of all of us?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, thank you for that question, and I get asked this a lot. And so let me get quickly through. I do believe that the nations of NATO need to contribute more.

Senator PORTMAN. Okay. I do not want to interrupt you, but I have a lot of questions, so I just want to get that on the record.

I think they do need to contribute more, a better percentage of their GDP. And I think we should not hesitate to ask for that and even insist on that.

Second, I think there is a misunderstanding about the importance of NATO. I think the interoperability we have with these NATO forces is a force multiplier in ways that perhaps we do not explain.

Can you briefly talk about that, from a military point of view?

General BREEDLOVE. Absolutely, Senator, and then I would like two minutes to go back to that first one.

Senator PORTMAN. We may not get 2 minutes. I have more interesting ones for you.

General BREEDLOVE. Clearly, the interoperability of our NATO allies and some of our partners who are not allies is very important, because it allows us to quickly assimilate the combat power we might need in a tough place.

That having been said, we all, including our military and certainly the militaries of Europe, need to look at our readiness and responsiveness in order to be able to respond. But maintaining that ability to rapidly integrate and work together is clearly a huge deterrent.

Senator PORTMAN. Interconnected communications, logistical interconnectedness, the ability for us to have common tactics and doctrines are invaluable, right? And that helps us to be able, again, to tell our taxpayers and our citizens this is a good investment for our military.

Let us talk about Russia for a moment. There is a lot of discussion about the possibility of aligning with Russia to fight ISIS. All of us want to take down ISIS, as you said earlier.

But with regard to that interoperability, can you talk a little about what we have with Russia? How effective would a joint military campaign be with Russia as an example?

Even in Syria, should we have the same interests, which, as you noted, we seem not to, but with the broader campaign against ISIS?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, if you would allow me, I will talk about problems I think of the U.S. and Russia fighting alongside of each other. I think that people with more experience in CENTCOM can better speak specifically to the Syria piece of it.

But what I do know is that, in observing what has happened in Syria over the past months and years, we do not have the same approach to targeting. We talk about collateral damage. Yes, we still have some collateral damage, but it is miniscule compared to wars of the past.

We approach protecting nonbelligerent life in a very different way. We have a not adequately deep, but deeper bench of precision weapons. And what we saw is the Russians used precision weapons only for a short time and then went to unguided, fairly indiscriminate weaponry.

I do not find that we are well aligned in the way we would conduct a fight and that—

Senator PORTMAN. We also do not have the interoperability in terms of weapons and communications and technology. I think it is a point that sometimes is lost in this discussion.

And I am not suggesting that we do not have the ability to work with Russia where we can find common ground. But I think it is clear that we do not have the capability with Russia that we have, for instance, with our NATO allies, and that ought to be considered.

You talked about warfare before the line, as you called it. The Russians sometimes call it the new generation war, and Ukraine is a good example of it.

I appreciate the fact, Ms. Smith, that you talked about this issue and specifically the connection between the propaganda and the cyberattacks, the troll farms on social media, the funding of the useful think tanks, political organizations, state-sponsored media, and so on.

One thing I was concerned about even in how the Obama administration responded to what the Russians are alleged to have done here with our campaign is that their own executive order was designed to punish cyberattacks and hacking and not these information campaigns. I think it is much broader than that.

And I guess my question to you would be, how can we be more effective? We did establish legislation. Senator Murphy and I had put forward this legislation. It was part of the NDAA. It is now set up over a 2-year period, \$160 million authorized for this Global Engagement Center to deal with this broader issue of disinformation.

Is that, in your view, a good idea? That is to consolidate all the agencies to make one agency accountable, to actually provide grants for NGOs and others to fight back on the frontlines? Should we be doing more? And do you agree with me that these cyberattacks are a huge problem but that the broader problem is really this broader campaign of disinformation?

Ms. SMITH. Yes, absolutely. It is a huge problem and our large bureaucratic structures are just ill-equipped to deal with this challenge.

We are not moving fast enough. We are not really working on detection, deterrence, our defense of these systems. But most importantly, we have not really figured out to date how to link up with the private sector and utilize expertise that exists above and beyond what the government can offer.

And I think if we are going to win this information war and really come at Russia with a much more effective approach, we are going to have to figure out ways in which we can lash up the skillsets that we have in the private sector, build better trust there to assess our vulnerabilities, and then connect with our allies to do so.

So I support the work that you have put forward, the initiatives, legislation, and all the rest. I think we have not served this country well with the efforts to date. We have to be much more quick on our feet and far more innovative in working with a wider set of actors to really get a grip on this.

So I would support that, absolutely.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you both.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you both very much for being here and for your testimony.

I think it is very clear that part of Russia's strategy is not just what they are doing in terms of military buildup and interference in Eastern Europe, but also their effort to undermine our democratic processes as they did in the United States. It is very clear that they interfered in our election.

So what other steps can we take to address that kind of interference? In your view, are the sanctions helpful? Should we ratchet those up? Are there other actions that we should take? And should we be working with Europe as we look at Russia's attempts to interfere in the French and German elections?

And also, I want to ask you separately about the Balkans, but maybe I can ask you to start with that.

Ms. SMITH. Well, thank you, Senator.

I do think that Congress should reimpose the sanctions legislatively. I think we should certainly maintain what already exists, but go above and beyond it, working with our European allies.

But first and foremost, we really need to establish the facts of what exactly transpired last fall. We need a much more public discussion of this. A lot of it remains classified. Our public deserves to know. Our allies need to know, as they prepare for these elections.

As was noted earlier, there will be several elections in Europe next year. The signals we are getting from those allies is that they are already seeing a spike in Russian cyber activity.

So first and foremost, we need to establish what happened last fall, and do our very best to determine from that set of facts how we will then prevent and deter attacks in the future, both on our system and on the system of our European allies.

Senator SHAHEEN. General Breedlove?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, thank you.

And if I might, it is not going to sound very military, but part of what happens here is Russia puts out a lot of disinformation that they really do not care whether learned people see as being false. They are appealing to groups of people who want to believe them in the first place, in many of these countries.

And what I have not seen among the Western nations who are under this attack is a strong unified voice of indignation, outrage, and to bring force to this. We see partial penny-packet responses that do not come strongly either in a policy sense or in just a public message sense.

And I think that the West, who is under attack here, needs to bring this together to out the behavior and then try to erode that base of people that want to believe them.

Senator SHAHEEN. I could not agree more with both of you. And I think it is very sad and disappointing that this Congress has not acted more forcefully to make public in a much broader sense what we know about what happened and to take action to address it.

So I appreciate that Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin have talked about the importance of an investigation, but an investigation that goes on for the next 2 years is not an investigation at all. It is an effort to obstruct what happened.

And sadly, what we are seeing from the White House is support for that kind of obstruction. So I hope we will take action and do it in a way that is very forceful.

With respect to the Balkans, we are also seeing Russian interference in the Balkans in a situation where we have countries that are not as established in terms of their democratic processes.

So can you talk about whether we should be looking separately at what is going on there, and is there particular support you think we should be giving to some of our friends in the Balkans?

Ms. SMITH. Well, Senator, you are right—thank you—to point the vulnerabilities that one finds in this corner of Europe. These are, in many ways, embryonic democratic systems that do have vulnerabilities like our own system. And we have already seen some very blatant attempts on the part of the Russians to undermine the political processes.

I believe it was Senator Cardin that mentioned earlier the specific case of Montenegro. There have been just blatant attempts to overthrow governments in this part of Europe.

And I agree with General Breedlove. Our strongest asset right now is transatlantic resolve and unity in calling this out. And frankly, we do not have that right now.

And until we get that, we will not be able to come at Russia from a position of strength, with common transatlantic positions and tools, and support those young, frail democracies in places like the Balkans.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

General Breedlove?

General BREEDLOVE. Again, I join those remarks.

I think that we have made a huge investment in this part of the world, and some of the things that we value the most in democratic institutions have a real chance. We should not now wither from the task.

And, again, I think there is a lack of a strong, broad European voice, because there are some nations that are backing away from it a little bit in order not to provoke Russia and others. And I think we need a strong, unified Western and European voice to put this right in the Balkans.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you both.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could, just for the record, I feel the same way you do about making sure we do this quickly. I do not think you intended to say that Ben and I are stonewalling an investigation.

Senator SHAHEEN. No, no. What I intended to say was that I appreciate the fact that you all have come out in support of doing an investigation.

The CHAIRMAN. Good. And actually, trying to coordinate, although it has been very difficult, with other committees that have jurisdiction to make sure that this does not take a long time, that it happens in a very speedy way, and goes from the beginning to the end.

I knew you did not intend that. I just wanted to make sure the record indicated that.

Senator CARDIN. And, Mr. Chairman, can I point out that, under your leadership, the chairmen and ranking members of the relevant committees are meeting in order to share information about

what every committee is doing, and I thank you for coordinating the work.

Senator SHAHEEN. But if I could, Mr. Chairman, just to try to be more clear, I do think there are principles and people within the Congress who would like to see an investigation drag on to the point that the public forgets about it.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. That is very possible. Very possible.

Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Chairman.

I thank our panelists for being here today.

General Breedlove, based on your years of experience, your observation that, in the wake of the Cold War, we drew down our military forces in Europe, seemingly under the assumption that Russia posed less of a threat. And understandably, I think, at the time, many harbored that assumption.

Times have changed, which is why we are holding this opportunity about the challenges ahead and implicitly the opportunities.

You argue in your prepared statement that the U.S. should adopt a position of forward defense in dealing with the Kremlin. And there are many challenges to NATO and the broader rules-based world order.

Specifically, in terms of our military posture, what do you recommend? Where should new forces be placed? What should the composition of those forces be?

If you would kindly give us your summary view of that issue, please.

General BREEDLOVE. Thank you for the opportunity, Senator. I do believe in an increased forward defense.

And not to give a history lesson, but we started in Wales making a change to NATO, in making a change in U.S. support to NATO. In Wales, we said this is not the end. We are going to have to look at more.

That was to assure allies in Warsaw. And before Warsaw, we adopted a change whereby we said we now need to move to more of a deterrent posture, and what does deterrence mean. And I said, leading into that summit, that it is the road through Warsaw, not the road to Warsaw.

In other words, we would probably have to relook, even after the changes we have made in Warsaw, which you see happening today, the battalion arrivals in the Baltic nations, the brigade arrivals in Poland and others.

I do believe it is a road through Warsaw. We are not where we need to be. I would give you a broad recipe.

First of all, we are looking at pre-positioning of materials. I believe our NATO allies need to come alongside of us, and they look at pre-positioning of materials forward. Being able to rapidly join forces to materials rather than having to move the weaponry and materials to Europe gives us a quicker response.

So I do believe we need to look at more rotational force, more forward-based, pre-positioned materials in order to rapidly fall in on those.

And I think that we should encourage our allies to come more forcefully alongside of us in both respects.

Senator YOUNG. Do you regard the military rotation as sufficient into and out of the Balkans? I note that the border between, on one hand Russia and Belarus, and the other hand our Balkan countries, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, is roughly the same length as the border that we had between West Germany and the Warsaw Pact, much greater military presence at that time.

Should we be looking at that as a benchmark? Or do you feel like the military rotation is sufficient for the times?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I have been fairly vocal in the past that—

Senator YOUNG. I meant to say Baltic, as opposed to Balkan.

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir.

Senator YOUNG. Thanks.

General BREEDLOVE. I have been fairly straightforward in the past that I believe the real and perfect solution would be increased permanent forward forces. But I do not think that is a realistic opportunity in today's setting.

I do not mean to be too forward here, but I am not sure that any of you would sign up to moving forces out of your States permanently to Europe. And so I, as a realist, looked at how we should look at rotational forces and forward pre-positioned materials as a lesser but acceptable solution.

Senator YOUNG. So why should a rank and file Hoosier, I consider myself one, why should they care about Europe? And how might I defend to them the benefits to the United States of having troops in Europe?

General BREEDLOVE. So I think my colleague might have some really good words here, too.

I would put it very straightforward. Two of the most destructive wars in the history of this world have been fought in Europe, and thousands and thousands of American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are buried there as a testament to what it cost us.

We are inextricably linked to our European allies, and the commerce between us still is almost half of that in the world.

We are not going to be separated from Europe, and what we do not need is to be complacent and slip into another very costly conflict there.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

And, Ms. Smith, thank you for your presence here today. You provided some excellent written testimony with respect to Europe's energy dependence on the Russians. And I know you will have some thoughts on things we might do or not do to help our European allies address their challenges on that front. So I will be submitting some written questions to you.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. And I really appreciate you joining our committee. Thank you.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And great testimony, to the witnesses.

I just add my voice to those who have said Congress has to get to the bottom of this investigation of Russia and the effect on the 2016 elections. No ally will believe we will help them if we do not show that we are interested in protecting ourselves. If we are un-

willing to protect ourselves, we lose credibility with everybody on the theory that we can be of assistance and a supporter to them, whether it is about free elections or anything.

This was an attack on the United States. And if we treat it in a lackadaisical manner, we lose credibility as a partner with anyone in the world.

I am deeply worried that the President and some members of the administration want this to go away, and that is going to create challenges. But it is a test of this branch, and the Article I branch is Article I for a reason, as to whether we show resolve and get to the bottom of it.

So I echo my colleagues who have made that comment.

So many things to ask about. I am going to just ask about one, the Russia-Iran relationship. We are in an Armed Services Committee hearing, too, that I came from, and the witness this morning was General Nicholson, who was talking about the current posture of the U.S. effort in the NATO effort in Afghanistan. And here was something he said in his testimony: "Russia has become more assertive over the past year in Afghanistan, overtly lending legitimacy to the Taliban to undermine NATO efforts and bolster belligerence using the false narrative that only the Taliban are fighting ISIL. Similarly, neighboring Iran is providing support to the Taliban while also engaging the Afghan Government over issues of water rights, trade, and security."

General Nicholson talked—but he did not say they were collaborating together, but he said both Iran and Russia were supporting the Taliban in their efforts to destabilize the Government of Afghanistan.

President Trump made a comment a couple of weeks ago that suggested that he thought he could work with Russia even to check Iran, but the Kremlin immediately came out and said, no, that is not the case. Iran is an ally and friend.

Talk a little bit about the Russia posture, vis-a-vis Iran right now, whether that is just an alliance of convenience on a couple of issues or whether this is something that we are going to have to deal with more long term, as we think through these issues.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator.

Just 10 seconds: I forgot to mention the importance of getting Montenegro into the NATO alliance, and I really want to get that out there, and the importance of ratifying to move forward.

And then, just quickly, 20 seconds on what you say to your average American. I am from the State of Michigan. What I say to my friends and family in Michigan is, when there is a crisis, the first people you are going to call for help are in Europe, whether it is Ebola, the rise of ISIL, or Russia invading Ukraine. And you are not going to call anybody else. And that is just the bottom line. They are the best allies we have.

On Iran, it is funny, when we talk about Russia in the Middle East, we get really consumed with what Russia is doing in Syria, and that is really the focus of so much of the work in this town, from the think-tank community, what the government focuses on.

But the reality is that Russia is actually working to undermine a series of relationships that the U.S. has throughout the Middle East. We should note not only the linkage between Russia and

Iran—and I too am incredibly skeptical that we would pull Russia over to our side and that they would abandon this relationship with Iran, that they would abandon their relationship with China, which I think has also been put out there as an idea. I think we are completely misrepresenting Russia's interest in these relationships.

But again, back to the point I was just making, we should note that Russia is enhancing its relationships with Turkey, with Egypt, with Israel, with the Saudis. We need to step back and take a look at this and figure out what it is doing in the wider region.

What Russia is doing in the Middle East is not just about Syria, and we need to be on alert and tracking this and understand how it is undermining our relationship with a NATO ally in this region.

So thank you for bringing this up. I think I am interested in what General Breedlove has to say, but I personally am extremely skeptical that we are going to pursue the Russians to suddenly align with us, particularly given the relationship they are working together in Syria. How would we peel them away from each other?

I just find that—to me, it seems very unimaginable.

But please, General?

General BREEDLOVE. In opening remarks, the chairman and the ranking talked about the episode where Iran had provided basing for Russian military efforts. Again, I am completely aligned with my colleague's remarks.

And all I would add is that there seems to be now a lot of instances where Russia and Iran are finding that their interests align, and they are becoming more and more cooperative. And that is a troubling thing, in a military sense.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Senator ISAKSON?

Senator ISAKSON. Mr. Chairman, at the previous hearing we had, you made a profound statement, which I have repeated in front of you a couple of times and that was Syria was a war of proxies—plural, proxies, a lot of them—which I thought was very true, which makes that war very difficult to deal with, in terms of our relationships.

You made a comment today that we had a Republican and a Democratic witness. I think a majority and minority witness. I have listened to the testimony. I cannot tell which one is which. Can you tell me which one is which?

The CHAIRMAN. General Breedlove is the Republican. Ms. Smith is a Democrat. And yet, as this committee is on most issues, they are very aligned.

Senator ISAKSON. Which brings me to the point I want to make for a second, because I was sitting here trying to figure out which was which. I was favoring General Breedlove, because he is a Sam Nunn professor and Sam Nunn is one of my dear friends and a great American Senator who led this country in many ways through the Cold War, 24 years of service.

But my suggestion to think about is this. Being old enough to have been in college during the Cuban Missile Crisis, I remember when John Kennedy put pictures of the missile silos and the missiles on the back of the ships that were going to head to Cuba, and

drew a line in the sand with Nikita Khrushchev, which was the most memorable moment in my early years of life, because it was a tense time. We all thought we were going to fight, because it was that big a threat.

The absence of knowing exactly what the cyberthreat is, is the equivalent to that period of time, because if we had a picture of cyber potential like we had a picture of those missiles, it would be pretty clear what we ought to do. I do not know what the cyberthreat really is. I am not a good technology guy. I do not what that is.

But the quicker we know what the potential of that threat is and can paint that picture, the quicker we can have a more solidified approach toward dealing with Russia.

And my closing point, not my closing out, but my closing point is, my two favorite Presidents were, one, John Kennedy, a Democrat, and the other was Ronald Reagan, a Republican, and for two principal reasons. Both were hawks, but both had the ability to stand up before the American people and argue a point that the American people might have disagreed with and win them over.

Kennedy did it in the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Reagan did it with his speech in Berlin about the Berlin Wall. And in the end, communism fell after Reagan's speech, and Nikita Khrushchev backed up after Kennedy's speech.

We are getting to a point in time in U.S.-Russian relationships in contemporary times where, if there is such evidence out there of the danger of the cyberattacks, it would be as dangerous of a collateral effect as the Cuban Missile Crisis was.

We ought to be very clear in our policy. It ought to be bipartisan. And we ought to be direct with the Russian people and the Russian leadership.

So I am not trying to make a speech. It just occurred to me those two times in history are very analogous.

Let me ask both of you the \$64,000 question. To the extent that you have the knowledge of it, what is the Russian capability of cyber use that you can tell us?

General BREEDLOVE. I will jump on the grenade first.

I just remarked that I thought this was a very interesting analogy of the potential of cyber to the Cuban Missile Crisis. And I think in severity, it is exactly right.

I would only offer one thing. We understood a little better how to address the Cuban Missile Crisis because it was a decisively military-feeling thing, and we had very decisive military responses.

The cyber thing is even more scary to me because we have not really defined what is an attack. We have not really defined policies that say how we are going to respond.

Now I will use the "we" of NATO. We still shirk from thinking about offensive cyber and only think of defensive cyber, when our opponent has taken the gloves off completely.

And so I am a little more scared, Senator, about the cyber thing, because we really have not got a framework yet by which to address it.

Ms. SMITH. I would just add that General Breedlove and I were participating at a tabletop exercise yesterday, and there were different moves throughout the game, as there always are. And when

you had any conventional military operation on the part of our adversaries, you would see participants looking at the order of battle. So what tools do I have in my toolkit, and how do I respond and move posture and move military assets to respond to the threat at hand?

The minute the team had to deal with a potential cyber hack that had been inserted into the game, you could see people were flipping—there is no order of battle. We do not know what the toolkit looks like. We do not have a proper way to assess the threat, to figure out what tools we will use to deter it, to detect it.

We are getting better. The United States is certainly far ahead of many other countries around the world. But we still are far too clumsy in our response and our ability to cope with this challenge.

Senator ISAKSON. I would only add, Mr. Chairman, we proved ourselves as a Nation when we located the Cyber Command at Fort Gordon next to NSA in Georgia. When we compare cybersecurity in this country with NSA and put them side by side, there is a comparison there that we recognize that is important. And this is a real potential threat we need to try and be able to quantify and paint a picture of. So instead of talking about generalities, we are talking about specifics.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I do not think anybody has brought greater clarity to that issue than you just did. And it not only matters to us but, let us face it, NATO has been wrestling with what an Article 5 attack is.

So we do not need to just understand for our own good what a weaponized cyberattack means, but we need to help the world define it, because, very soon, it is likely that in parts of the world adjacent to Russia, it will be more weaponized. And we are going to have to make a decision as to whether we are coming to the aid of one of our allies.

So a very, very important point. Thank you for making it.

Senator MENENDEZ?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I find this hearing incredibly important.

I am concerned that it will take the Congress, particularly the Senate, to help lead on these issues with Russia, because there are times that we have led when administrations have not sought to be engaged or to be engaged in a way that we collectively have thought is necessary. Iran is a great example of that.

And my concern with this administration on Russia is profound. I only hear you can impugn our allies of longstanding, but you treat with a soft velvet glove one of the most significant strategic challenges we have with Russia.

You can actually say that there is a moral equivalency that we have killers here and that you think the United States is so good when you are speaking vis-a-vis Russia, who poisons its opposition, kills its opposition, invades another country, violates the international norm, goes ahead and indiscriminately bombs in Aleppo civilians, and somehow you can even fashion a statement that there is some degree of equivalency?

It is shocking. Shocking.

And then to have a cyberattack against the United States to pursue the very fundamental elements of democracy in the world's greatest democracy and, therefore, send a message globally and not have a sense of urgency about an investigation? It is shocking to me.

If this was a different time, I would hear a different chorus of voices. So I really do hope—I really do hope—and I am proud to see that some of our colleagues are moving in that direction, whether it be the legislation that Senator Cardin spoke to, to have a congressional review as to whether sanctions should be relieved on Russia if, in fact, they have not met their obligations under international norms, or to further pursue sanctions, as I understand from listening in my office in between meetings some of the commentary and testimony that has been taken here.

I really am concerned. And so I think this is incredibly important for us to continue to take a role.

And I personally have never necessarily waited for an administration to give me the green light, because, at the end of the day, it is what we collectively think is important. And sometimes the Senate leads in these regards, and we get others to realize it is the right policy.

Let me ask you some specific questions.

General Breedlove, I know you had a conversation with Senator Portman. I just want to get these two statements on the record.

We all aspire for NATO to meet its obligations of two percent across-the-board, without equivocation. But as we seek to make that happen, the absence of any given country not having 2 percent should never undermine the very essence of the importance of NATO to us. Is that a fair statement?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, if I could answer that question, but finish what I was going to say—

Senator MENENDEZ. I have a minute and 30 seconds, so I will give you 20 seconds.

General BREEDLOVE. Two percent is incredibly important. Of that 2 percent as important to me is the 20 percent investment in recapitalization of equipment. If all 2 percent are spent on just personnel, it is that not relevant to me.

Senator MENENDEZ. But it is important to us as a force multiplier and the hosting of bases—

General BREEDLOVE. Absolutely.

Senator MENENDEZ.—among other things, in our own national interest and security. Is that a fair statement?

General BREEDLOVE. That is correct. And what I would also—

Senator MENENDEZ. And let me ask you this. Would it be wrong—I ask this of both of you—would it be wrong to remove sanctions on Russia unless Russia ultimately resolves what it has done in invading Crimea and Ukraine, and restores its obligations under the international order? Would it not be fair to say that that would send the wrong message globally?

Ms. SMITH. Absolutely, it would be wrong to trade sanctions for anything outside of Russia's actions in Ukraine. Those sanctions are there for a reason. They are not arbitrary. And they should only be lifted when we see a change in Russian policy inside Ukraine.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Breedlove? I mean, General Breedlove.

Maybe you are going to run for the Senate. Might not be a bad thing.

General BREEDLOVE. I am not qualified for that, sir.

I would just say that a conditionality, as you have described it, is absolutely key to me.

Senator MENENDEZ. I have other questions, but I will wait, if we get another round. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I doubt very seriously, after being the Supreme Allied Commander, that he would want to be called Senator.

So with that, Senator Johnson?

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will just remind my colleagues that, in the last Congress, our European Subcommittee of this committee did hold a hearing on political assassinations in Russia. We held a hearing on the propaganda and misinformation campaigns of Russia. I do not recall those hearings being particularly well-attended, so.

When I found out, and we all found out—I mean, America was well-aware of the fact that Russia was hacking into emails and publicizing these things. I was not shocked. Their methods have been well-known.

Cyber warfare, when it comes to political interference, is just a new tool.

To define cyber warfare, by the way, there are some classifications. You have criminal theft. You have industrial espionage. You have political interference. And you have cyber warfare.

And we also have seen that in Ukraine, the incredibly sophisticated cyberattack that shut down their utilities, their electrical grid.

So we do see this, and that is really the line of questions I want to pursue with General Breedlove.

Can you describe to me—paint that picture of what Russia is doing right now in eastern Ukraine? We are hearing reports of stepped up activity. I think reports are of about 30,000 troops in Crimea. What is happening in eastern Ukraine right now?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, I must disqualify a little bit. It has been 6 months since I have had the really good classified briefings.

But as I follow this in the open press and others, nothing surprises me that I hear being reported.

Continued pressure on the line of contact; that pressure does not happen unless it is supported from without.

The use of very sophisticated, not only electronic warfare capabilities, but surveillance, UAVs, RPAs, whatever you want to call them; this support clearly comes from outside of the forces that are east of the line of contact.

In the cyber piece, I think we do not know what we do not know. What we see is a sophisticated hybrid or, as I have described it, below-the-line set of warfare in Ukraine.

If they can just delay Ukraine making the changes to their government that the Maidan required long enough, there could be another Maidan to oust this government that is trying to get it done. They need to break contact.

Senator JOHNSON. What do we know that we can discuss in this setting, in terms of Russian troop levels in eastern Ukraine?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I am unqualified to answer that question right now.

Senator JOHNSON. So when you were qualified——

General BREEDLOVE. Yes.

Senator JOHNSON.—are we aware that there were——

General BREEDLOVE. Absolutely, there are today.

Senator JOHNSON. In the thousands. Would you estimate in the thousands?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, again, I am unqualified.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could, at one time, tens of thousands; is that correct?

General BREEDLOVE. Yes, sir.

Senator JOHNSON. Talk a little bit about what we have done in terms of training Ukrainian military to respond. And I want to know specifically, I mean how many troops should we pre-position in whether it is the Baltics, in Poland? What should we provide specifically to Ukraine, so they can defend themselves?

General BREEDLOVE. So, Senator, our training has been centered on an area called Yavoriv. It is in the extreme western part Ukraine. I will be there next Tuesday again, by the way. And we have been training first what they call their national guard troops. It does not really translate like ours does. But we have finished a series of training in the national guard troops battalions, and we are now training some of what we would call active duty troops there.

The Ukrainians are being very smart. They are bringing battle-hardened leaders off, marrying them with new recruits, putting them through our training with our U.S. Army forces there in Yavoriv. And we are turning out battalions and battalion leadership that are quite good.

This should continue. That is one of the pieces that we recommended for Ukraine.

Senator JOHNSON. Yes. I am just trying to lay out the reality.

As in Georgia, Russia invaded. They set up shop. They continued to pressure. I mean, they have a fait accompli. Crimea, same way, 30,000 troops.

Is that basically what they are establishing in eastern Ukraine?

General BREEDLOVE. Clearly, right now, they are establishing that in the eastern Ukraine. There are learned voices on both sides that would argue they want to stay or they do not want to stay.

But clearly, at the moment, they have established that handhold in the Donbass, and there does not appear to be any movement to release it.

Senator JOHNSON. The migrant flow from the Middle East into Europe is, on its face, destabilizing. What is the possibility, successful possibility, of actually setting up safe zones so that we can really stop the migrant flow out of Syria?

I know it is a big question. Eleven seconds.

General BREEDLOVE. So, sir, the tough part about safe zones is they begin with a belligerent act. If you are going to set up a safe zone, you have to eliminate the enemy's defenses in that safe zone.

If we set up a safe zone, and it falls under the coverage of Syrian air defense, we would have to eliminate the Syrian air defense. Our Nation would have to make a policy decision that it would take these actions in order to establish a safe zone. And that, I think, is a tough discussion.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General.

The CHAIRMAN. I will use a portion of my time.

Ms. Smith, I could not agree more with the comments that have been made, as far as getting to the bottom of what has happened. And I will say Ben and I both are probably very frustrated at the way this has begun.

And it is great to find out what happened, obviously, and we need to deal with that. I guess I would ask the question, we knew it was happening, we have known it has been happening. Clear evidence showed it was happening strongly beginning last March.

Why do you think we did not take actions when we could have blunted it?

Ms. SMITH. Well, I left the administration in 2013. I was not privy to the discussions that they were having in the last few months of the administration, when they started to get signals that this was underway.

You know, we can all look at the public statements that the President made weeks and months later, talking about how it would be received by the American public, what kind of political frame we were operating in at the time, questions about the proper types of responses to Russia.

So again, I would rather let the administration speak for itself. I was not part of that team making that decision. And I have what you have, and that is what the President has said publicly.

The CHAIRMAN. General Breedlove, do you have any reason why we would not have immediately countered what was happening while it was happening?

General BREEDLOVE. I would also just say that, at the time, Senator, as you understand, my job was to provide my military advice, and I was doing that.

What I heard in this capital, and what I heard in many of the other capitals, was a reticence to provoke Russia.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

For the record, I think this issue did rise to the level, to the principals. There was a conversation between President Obama and Putin on this subject. And reporting that I have read suggested that that had some effect, at least on decisions that might have been made regarding Election Day interference. But I think it is a good question that you are asking.

And just add me to the chorus of worry that you are hearing from this committee, that there is not going to be a bipartisan investigation, that there is not going to be a bipartisan response with sanctions levied from this Congress.

I take you at your word, and I am glad to hear Senator Cardin's comments that you are trying to push this process forward as quickly as possible.

But we are five weeks into this new Congress. And pretty soon, we will be 10 weeks, and then we will be 15 weeks. And I do not really know how we can expect Europe to take a strong stand against Russian interference in U.S. elections if the message is so muddled coming out of the United States.

President Trump spent weeks and weeks attacking the intelligence community for their report stating unequivocally that there was Russian interference in these elections. He later corrected himself, but we have the ability in a bipartisan way to set the record straight here, and then to take action.

And so I am glad that you are pushing on your colleagues, but many of us do believe that this is just a slow walk—not by you, but perhaps by others—so that we never get to the facts.

I want to ask just a couple questions, two questions, really.

And the first is about what messages matter, because one of the things that worries us is that we are hearing conflicting messages from this administration about Russia.

And so I will just put this to you, General Breedlove. There has been a lot of praise here for Ambassador Haley's remarks on Russia and Ukraine, and I share that praise.

But 2 days after she made her remark, President Trump was asked about the Russian presence in eastern Ukraine, and his response was: "We do not really know exactly what that is. They are pro forces. We do not know. Are they uncontrollable? Are they controlled? That happens also. We are going to find out. I would be surprised, but we will see."

I do not really know what that means, but it was widely reported that he was casting doubts at the highest levels of the American Government on whether there were Russian control and command, or Russian involvement in the forces in eastern Ukraine.

So I guess my question is this. Who are the Russians listening to? Right? Are they listening to Nikki Haley? Or are they listening to President Trump?

General BREEDLOVE. I was giving my colleague a chance to jump into that one. Senator, levity was not intended. It is just I was giving a moment there.

Ms. SMITH. I am happy to wait.

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, if you would allow, there are two messages that matter to me, and they are completely disconnected from any of the current political conversations. They are two messages I have been delivering for a long time.

The first message, as it relates to Russia, is the solidarity of the NATO alliance. What they fear most is an indivisible NATO. What Mr. Putin tries to do every day is find ways to find cracks in NATO, to divide it and, therefore, render it neutral.

And so the first and foremost and most important message I ever saw, and I watched the Wales summit come to it early, is the absolute solidarity of our alliance and commitment to Article 5.

Senator MURPHY. But I guess my point is, is that not evidence of a pretty significant crack, when the President of the United States casts doubt on whether the Russians are controlling or involved in forces in eastern Ukraine?

Ms. SMITH. It is. Yes, it is. It is worrisome to our allies, because they are not exactly sure which narrative is the right one. They are

hearing conflicting messages when it comes to the EU, NATO, and Russia repeatedly among Cabinet members of this administration and the President.

And what they are waiting for is some clarity on which view will prevail. Will what we heard from Ambassador Nikki Haley recently about Ukraine and Russia hold to be true? Or will we, in fact, see an administration and a President moving toward a grand bargain?

This is of deep concern to our European allies. I meet, like you, regularly with delegations, with Ambassadors coming through from Europe. They do not like what they are hearing right now coming from our President, in terms of an unwillingness to call out the Russians for what they have done and what they are doing, and an unwillingness, it appears, to stand with the EU during this very turbulent and difficult time.

General BREEDLOVE. May I jump on the second part?

Senator MURPHY. Yes. Sure.

General BREEDLOVE. As it relates to Ukraine, I think that the most important message is that everything that has happened there is completely illegitimate and outside the boundaries of the norms we expect by nations in Europe.

Russia has put force back on the table to change internationally recognized borders in the European land mass, and I think that is unacceptable. And I think those messages do not change based on any of it.

Senator MURPHY. I just bring it back to the chairman's point. To the extent there are mixed messages, it is more important than ever that messages coming from Congress and this committee are as clear and as bipartisan as possible.

The CHAIRMAN. And in spite of the unfortunate statements that end up being made, I think there are folks within the administration that have a very, very different point of view. And I think us working with them to empower them to create policies that we would support is something that we can play a role in doing.

With that, Senator Gardner?

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to our witnesses today for this hearing. It is a very timely hearing, important hearing.

Today, I sent a letter to President Trump, with a number of colleagues in this committee—Senators Young, Portman, and others on the Defense Committee and the Intel Committee—to suggest a sensible policy path for the administration to take with regard to our relationship with Russia.

As the letter states—and I would ask it to be submitted for the record. I have it right here.

As the letter states, the administration should pursue, and I quote, “a results-oriented, but tough-minded and principled policy toward the Russian Federation,” a policy where we should seek common ground with Russia in the areas of mutual interest but never at the expense of our fundamental interests of defending our allies and promoting our values. We have to relay our values and be clear to Russia that values like human rights are simply non-negotiable.

In addition, yesterday, I introduced a bipartisan resolution with Senator Blumenthal and Senator Rubio to express our unequivocal

support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, which is indisputably the greatest military alliance in modern history. The solidarity that you talked about we must maintain and stress. It remains the key to global peace and security.

That resolution also notes that NATO states must fully meet all of their financial obligations. You talked about it, and I want to ask a question about making sure that our allies are more forcefully alongside us in our efforts. And I know U.S. taxpayers appreciate the bipartisan message to our allies.

Last month, the 4th Infantry Division troops from Fort Carson in Colorado were deployed to the European theater to defend our NATO allies. And last year, I had the opportunity to visit with you in NATO headquarters, along with other Fort Carson soldiers stationed in Europe.

So, General Breedlove, it is certainly great to see you again. I had a great visit with you.

We talked about several things, including muscle memory in Europe, the fact that the European Reassurance Initiative, stationing our soldiers in Europe, helps us bring back muscle memory of what it means to be in Europe in the face of Russian aggression.

So I guess two questions. Could you talk a little bit about that muscle memory? How are we? Are we gaining, regaining that muscle memory? And number two, on February 3rd last year, the RAND Corporation released a study that claimed Russia forces could overturn the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in about 60 hours. As a result of that regain of muscle memory, have we turned back the clock?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, thank you. Past the 2, and the 2 percent.

The other intangible we do not talk about, and some of our allies do wonderfully at, is give us exquisite access to their bases and capabilities. It is an intangible that is hard to measure, but I think it needs to be also a part of our conversation.

The muscle memory in Europe that we talked about, there are a lot of skillsets that we lost across the last 2 decades as our military has gone away from large-scale operations and moved toward counterinsurgency or, as I call it, COIN. The size, scope, and speed of those two problems is very different.

And so we are beginning to fight now to regain that, the Trident Juncture exercise recently in the past, trying to gain scale and the skills to meet that scale.

There are a lot of problems yet. A couple of those classified that I would love to talk to you about another time.

But the bottom line is, how long does it take, 20 years of losing muscles? It may take a lot longer than a year to regain that 20 years.

And so we are on our way. The attitude and the approach is correct. We just need to keep moving forward.

The RAND study, I get asked about this almost every time I am in front of a group. Dave Ochmanek is a great friend and a wonderful human being and incredibly brilliant. And I do not question what he came to, but every study is based on what are the assumptions upfront.

If our Nation and if NATO can take policy decisions at speed and get in front of a problem, it changes the answer that Dave came to. If we cannot make decisions at speed, we will face the problems that Dave came up to in his studies.

Senator GARDNER. So under that analysis that RAND did, assuming you keep the same assumptions that they made, would it still be 60 hours or would it be greater?

General BREEDLOVE. Sir, I was not a part of the exercise, so I am not really qualified to judge that.

Senator GARDNER. Going back to Ms. Smith, a little bit of the questions on cyber, I guess head of Air Force cyber warfare, General Bender, was in Colorado Springs—Colorado Springs, Colorado, obviously—at a cyber summit. And he was talking about putting out fires in the realm of cyber, but putting out fires all the time makes it difficult, and I think this is a quote: “It makes it hard to make sufficient changes to meet the challenge overall of our threat in cyber and drawing out a better cyber policy.”

So what do we need to be doing, in terms of moving beyond just the legacy computing challenges that any service or governmental agency faces, moving into a more strategic plan with cyber, and actually having a developed plan that we talked about that lays out what happens the next time Russia attempts to influence elections?

Ms. SMITH. Yes, and I would just note that it is a very good question, Senator. I would just note that Russia is not just using its cyber tools to interfere in the political processes of our allies, but they are also taking down whole systems.

I mean, Estonia in 2007 experienced half of their capital just going down. I mean, they targeted banks and government institutions just across-the-board. And they have done it in countless other places.

So I think we have to really bring the NATO alliance into the 21st century. NATO has tried to move ahead, vis-a-vis cyber. But to be frank, I think a lot of the work to date has focused on securing the systems, the operating systems, and not really having a broader discussion, which is difficult for some allies because, frankly, there is a huge disparity between what some allies have and what others lack.

And it is difficult for us collectively to have this conversation. But we do need to get to the bottom of it, and that is what was raised earlier. Does a cyberattack justify an Article 5-like response?

The NATO Secretary General right now says yes. Frankly, I am not sure all allies are onboard with that. Assuming we get consensus on that, the next question is, what are the array of tools offensively and defensively that we can use to apply to that?

But right now, Russia is operating under the assumption that NATO will not respond because it is not comfortable in this space, and that we no longer or we still lack an agreement on what the response could look like.

Could we message to the Russians what the response would be? Absolutely. We could cite what an array of responses could look like even from an asymmetric perspective, to let them know that just because they come at us through the cyber lens does not mean we have to respond that way either, and that we will look at an array of tools.

But we have not messaged that to Moscow, to date. And this is really a task for the alliance going forward.

Yes, we have to focus on defense budgets. It is absolutely important. It is something I have dedicated the last 2 decades of my life to. But at the same time, in addition to defense budgets, we really have to look at these new challenges and getting NATO ready for kind of the 21st century-like challenges that we face.

The CHAIRMAN. Before turning to Senator Markey, General Breedlove, if we had a Secretary of State that we felt was truly committed to walking back Russia's involvement, as we look at legislation, what are the things we need to take into account? I mean, you can freeze sanctions in place. That is certainly something we are all going to be looking at.

But what else do we need to be taking into account, assuming we felt that we had a Secretary of State that had the relationship but also the strong desire to walk back Russia's destabilizing efforts?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, a little tough for a military person to address but I have talked about it before, and that is we in the military use a very simple way of describing a nation's power. We use the American coin, the dime, D-I-M-E, diplomatic, informational, military, and economic.

And I think that as we have approached Russia in the recent past, we have most of our pressure in the economic sphere, and we have not really used some of the tools we might have in the D or diplomatic, I or informational. In fact, I really do not think we have taken the field in the information battle.

And we need to explore more in the military. And, as you know, I recommended defensive—

The CHAIRMAN. Absolutely.

General BREEDLOVE.—or lethal weapons for Ukraine.

So I believe that there are other tools that we could use. And frankly, I am not averse to some positive aspects of working with them. But we need to do that, again, based on conditionality of good behavior.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Markey?

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The new administration has a responsibility to try to find a way of extending the New START treaty. And obviously, both countries have bloated nuclear arsenals. President Trump is saying he would not mind a nuclear arms race with Russia, that Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Japan have nuclear weapons programs.

It is a dangerous environment that could be created, if we just allow for that kind of rhetoric to continue.

So my question to you, let me begin with you, Ms. Smith, would be, what is the best way that President Trump can move to pursue serious nuclear arms control negotiations with Russia while strengthening the NATO regime and resisting Russian aggression? How can we square that circle?

Ms. SMITH. Thank you for that, Senator.

I would just open by saying the goal of limiting the modernization plans on both sides, to try and save money and stabilize the nuclear balance, is a laudable one. And it is a good idea that I think many of us would support.

But I think we have to be very careful how we proceed. And I think the best way to proceed would be kind of the crawl, walk, run. And the crawl, walk, run approach starts with pushing Russia to clean up their act when it comes to the INF Treaty.

So they are in violation of the INF Treaty. And I think before we have any conversations with them about something above and beyond New START, something that would take an entirely new shape, we have to focus on what they are in violation of today. So that is point number one.

To the extent that we want to move forward with dialogue in this space—again, a laudable goal—we have to basically take the trust or distrust and verify approach. I mean, Putin has shown in many, many situations, whether it is Syria or all sorts of other environments where you are sitting down with him and he promises you the moon, and a day or two later, it is a very different story in terms of implementation. He has done this in Ukraine and Syria.

Senator MARKEY. So if I may, so from your perspective then, should Trump meet first with NATO before he meets with Putin in order to be reassuring our allies that we are going to be backing them on the INF negotiations and that we are firmly behind that perspective to ensure that Putin understands that there is a united stance that exists on the enforcement, of the integrity, of the pre-existing nuclear agreements?

Would you say that would be a wiser approach for President Trump to take with NATO first?

Ms. SMITH. One hundred percent agreement, that is the right approach. Consult with Europe first, then move to a dialogue with Russia, and do not include sanctions as part of your opening move.

Senator MARKEY. Do you agree with that?

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, I am sorry, it is kind of what I said in my opening remarks. I do believe that it is important for our new President to meet with our allies before he meets with Mr. Putin.

And I would like to echo, I share your concerns about other nuclear discussions and things, but my focus as the SACEUR and the European Command commander was on the fact that Russia has abrogated the INF, and what does that mean to us tactically?

Senator MARKEY. Okay. That is very important.

Well, how can we bring Russia back into compliance with INF without further raising nuclear tensions in Europe? What is the best approach that you would recommend?

General BREEDLOVE. I think we should share this one. I will speak a little more militarily, and Julianne might speak in a policy manner.

As far as the INF, the way that we got to the INF was confronting a situation where the Russians were presenting a tough and ugly problem. And so I do believe that, in order to get back to the INF, we may have to take some tough and more deliberate actions.

I think we have an incredible team in the Pentagon now between our new Secretary and Joe Dunford. I have worked with both of these gentlemen and for them in my life.

I think they will come with a framework for getting to this. But until that time, I still ascribe to the framework that Ash Carter put

out there. And I think that that we just have not started down the path of what Ash Carter laid out. And so I very much ascribe to his deploy active defense, counterforce capabilities, and then countervailing strike capabilities, as a stepping stone to try to bring pressure on the INF.

Senator MARKEY. Okay. So we have the military perspective. Can we get the policy perspective?

Ms. SMITH. I mean, I would absolutely agree with that. I mean, frankly, I have nothing to add. I think that is exactly the right approach. I support what Ash Carter put on the table. And I certainly, as noted earlier, support ensuring that we bring our European allies along in this process.

Senator MARKEY. My fear is that, if we do not try to find a peaceful but aggressive way of responding, then we just play into the hands of the military complex in Russia and, to a certain extent, our own military complex here that just want to have a trillion dollars' worth of nuclear buildup. It is in their economic interests. It is in their own personal political interests, because that makes them more powerful within the society.

So the more that we can use this negotiated resolution, the more we can avoid squandering, as we did in the 1980s, just so much more money than we had to because we were not willing to kind of get to the table and try to be reasonable but firm in reaching a result that would help us on all fronts.

And then you can move on with Russia, which that was the key issue that then led to the fall of the Berlin Wall. You first had to resolve this nuclear conflict. And without that, all the other regional conflicts, all the proxy wars, all were just going to continue.

So that was the central issue, and I think it still continues to be, to a very large extent. The more that we talk about this offensive, defensive technology deployment, that just plays into the hands of the most conservative elements in their country.

So we thank you for your testimony.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Rubio, Ben and I have something we have to leave for at 12:25. I am going to defer asking any questions. I think Ben is too. There are some other folks that I think want a second round. And so, in order to accommodate that, we will go to 12:25.

Senator Rubio?

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, let me just say, General Breedlove, the Supreme Allied Commander has to be one of the greatest titles that I have ever seen in my life. You must have a very impressive LinkedIn account, as people go on there and look at it.

The CHAIRMAN. A direct link to God, I am sure.

Senator RUBIO. That is a heck of a title. But anyway, we obviously appreciate your service.

We thank you both for being here.

I want to begin by asking you, I think one of the things that maybe is missing in our analysis of this, I think you both hinted at it in your opening statements, is how to view all of this. I do not think we understand enough in our debates about Russia how much this is about domestic politics within Russia itself.

And so I wanted to share with you my view, which I think others share as well, and kind of get your sense of whether I am on the right track, so that we can then analyze any proposed grand bargain with Russia through the lens of that.

The old deal that Putin seemed to have with his society was that he would create a system where people could make a lot of money, especially the elites, if he had total political control. And it seems like the new model now is that he is basically trying to generate popular support by creating this perception that he has restored Russia to great global power status on par with that of the United States, and, in that process, understanding the tools that he has available to do that.

He cannot do that economically. They are the 12th largest economy in the world, so they are not insignificant. I think it would shock a lot of people to learn that the Russian GDP is equal to that of Italy. They also do not have tremendous soft power.

And so, largely, what has given them influence in the world and allowed them to kind of position themselves the way he has internally, especially, is their willingness to use the assets they do have: conventional military capabilities, the nuclear threat, the use of cyber tools, and to use them in brutal ways often, certainly indiscriminately.

And I think through the lens of that, through the lens of that goal is how you begin to understand Ukraine, where now they hold onto Crimea. There is all this talk about NATO, and assimilation with the West has vanished. You look at Syria where their engagement basically shifted the entire dynamic. They have now positioned themselves, in the eyes of the Russian people and many in the world, as a regional powerbroker which is, in fact, an alternative to the United States.

I think that is how you view some of the actions that occurred in our elections, not to mention the opportunity to go back and say to the people in Russia the American republic is a fraud. It is a scam. It is corrupt. It is no more superior than anything else. It is all hypocritical.

You see it often, of course, in the crackdown of what is happening internally in Russia where people who oppose Vladimir Putin wind up in jail; convicted, as we saw yesterday, on trumped-up charges; or poisoned in a hospital bed, in intensive care and dead.

And, of course, the military buildup for a country that is suffering dramatically economically, they continue to expand their military capabilities while the rest of the economy—and I guess it leaves Vladimir Putin at this moment in a position—and maybe this is an exaggeration. I do not think it is. I think he has more power amassed in his hands than we have ever seen in Moscow since the death of Stalin, in terms of the control that he has over that government and that society.

And so that is why I view, and I want to have your opinion on this, both of you have talked about it, why I think this whole notion of a grand bargain where they are going to help us kill terrorists and fight ISIS in exchange for lifting sanctions is a fantasy.

For starters, I think it is borderline immoral because it basically views the Ukraine situation as a bargaining chip to be used as part

of a broader deal, in essence, an asset that we can give away in exchange for something broader, which I do not think the Ukrainians are going to go for to begin with, and I do not think there is support for it in Ukraine.

But this talk about fighting against ISIS, that is what Putin says he is doing now. Obviously, why would we have to cut a deal to get him to do what he claims to already be doing?

The other risk of that, of course, is the way that he claims to fight terrorists is by bombing civilian populations. So if we are in partnership with him fighting ISIS, and he kills a bunch of children and bombs a hospital in Aleppo, that is on us too, because we are in partnership with them. So imagine the impact that would have on us.

And then what about the price we would have to pay? I think, and I just wrote some things I think he would insist on, he would want us to recognize a sphere of influence in the former soviet republics, obviously give up on everything that has to do with Ukraine, get NATO off his border, lift the sanctions.

And I say all this—why is it a fantasy? Because I do not think there is any internal pressure in Russia on Vladimir Putin to cut a deal.

First of all, you cannot pressure him because you die. And if you try to, there is no media. So we are going to try to cut a deal with a guy who thinks he is winning, has no internal pressure, and wants us to give up everything in exchange for him doing what he claims to be doing anyway.

So maybe I am a little harsh, but I think that is a really stupid deal. What do you think?

The CHAIRMAN. That is a yes or no answer.

[Laughter.]

Ms. SMITH. Agreed. I mean, I could not have said it better myself. I mean, the grand bargain mythology is really getting a bit laughable at this point.

I mean, let us be clear, you said, Senator, President Putin is claiming that he is combating ISIL. He says that. You are right. But I think you and I and everyone here, we know they are not combating ISIL. Eighty percent of the strikes that they are undertaking in Syria are in areas where the Islamic State is not even present. So let us not kid ourselves.

And then think about the assets they bring to bear. So they would bring what? They would bring air? I mean, we do not need air in Syria or Iraq.

So I truly appreciate what you are trying to say, and I agree with you 100 percent that the list of things that we could potentially give Russia is huge, top of the list is lifting sanctions. And the list of things that we get in return is really a big fat zero in many ways, in terms of how I look at it.

And thank you for mentioning the situation at home. He is leading a declining power. It does not feel that way based on the investments that he has made in his military and the way he is acting. But he is at threat at some point of losing control of the situation. And I think because of that, he creates this constant narrative of Russia as victim. He is the only one upholding Russian values. It all borders on the ridiculous.

But the situation at home is very important, and that is why I am so glad you raised it, to mention, to understand his calculus, and why he needs to be out in the world to then create this narrative at home that serves his interests in terms of staying in power.

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, again, I agree. Thank you for talking about how he is fashioning his view of Russia and Russia's view of him.

I would just add one thought. I think also central to the way he does this is creating a common enemy. And demonizing the United States as a leader in the West, and how we do business, is clearly a part of that calculus that you walked through.

I would say this in just a little different way, and I have been saying it for some time now. And that is, we currently have no trust in this relationship with Russia, as was described, and as many of you have described. There is no trust. You cannot surge trust. You have to earn it over time.

If we are to begin to have agreements with Russia, I think we need to start in smaller, more meaningful ways where we can demonstrate that both sides are earnest in their approach and that our objective then can be viewed by the world, not argued by TASS versus CNN or whatever.

And if we build trust over time, then we can find ourselves in a place where possibly we could have these conversations. But I do not think you go from zero to 120 miles an hour. We do this incrementally.

The CHAIRMAN. We have had two Presidents in a row that began hoping to develop trust and were met with distrust, and I think we have learned a lot from that.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Udall?

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

And thank you to the witnesses. This has been a very engaging and I think wide-ranging session. I really appreciate your comments, both of you.

And, Mr. Chairman, I also want to add me to the list. I have watched you and Senator Cardin talk about Russia and the hacking and the bipartisan effort that we are trying to pursue in this committee. I really believe this committee is the right place to do this. I mean, all of us have talked about this committee being an island in a way of bipartisanship in this Congress. And I think it needs to be a public process rather than just being over in Intelligence.

And so I would just say it is getting really late, and we are losing valuable time, and I hope that we can put an urgency check on that. So thank you for that.

Ms. Smith, you wrote in August of last year, and this is a quote from one of your articles, I think, "The theory behind the economic sanctions was that they would eventually bring Putin in line. Forced to choose between Russia's economic future and international adventurism, the West assumed that at some point Putin would wisely choose the former."

Why did we think that Putin would bow to sanctions when he has support domestically for his narrative that the West is encir-

clinging Russia in a threat? And did we think Putin would gain domestically from a decision to give into sanctions pressure?

Ms. SMITH. I think we were under the belief at that time that the sanctions would issue a blow to a very weak economy and a situation where they are heavily dependent on their interaction with both Europe and the United States, in many ways more so Europe than the U.S.

And if you look at all the indicators since we imposed sanctions, whether it is the value of the ruble or capital flight, or I mean you could look at growth, you can look at living standards, basically any indicator you take, you still see that, by every indicator, this is an economy that is in decline.

We are right, though, to also say, despite that very real fact and the fact that it has been paired with a drop in oil prices, that has not stopped his aggression. And I am the first one to admit that. But that does not lead me to conclude that we should lift the sanctions or put that option on the table in exchange for, say, help in Syria.

I do think, in the long run, he is increasingly feeling the pain of these sanctions. I think he genuinely wants to see if he can work with this administration, to see if those sanctions might be lifted. And he is taking very active measures in Europe to try and divide Europe from within to pull off some of the members that might have some hesitation about renewing these when they come up for renewal this summer.

Senator UDALL. And, General Breedlove, did you have anything on that?

In the scenario you are talking about, in terms of Russia and the relationship in Syria, and what is going on there and increasing the pressure, do you think that, in the long term, he sees that this could be a real domestic terrorism problem in terms of Russia, the longer he is in Syria, the longer he is doing what he is doing in terms of the killing and the war effort, and asserting Russia in the entire Middle East as a major, major player on that international scene?

Ms. SMITH. I do not feel like I can answer that. I think he appreciates that the mission will have costs, over the long run. And a very active mission that would involve thousands of troops is not something that he wants to sustain over the long term. But I do not feel like I am the right person to answer the counterterrorism piece.

Senator UDALL. General Breedlove, you wrote in Foreign Affairs that Russia will continue to improve its military ability to offset the technological advantages currently enjoyed by NATO.

What are the most alarming technologies being developed? And where does the Russian development of hypersonics fit among these potential threats?

General BREEDLOVE. So, Senator, I see that both in a low-end context and in a high-end context. This is a learning and adaptive military. They made some pretty bad blunders when they went in to Georgia in 2008, and they took a shellacking in some places as they did that.

They learned. And when they went into Crimea, they were better. They were much better. They learned in Crimea. And they got better when they went into the Donbass.

In fact, now we see some very sophisticated linking of small forward UAVs to counterbattery and to artillery fire. In fact, it is pretty well known in the Ukrainian forces, you see or hear a certain kind of drone and within 2.5 to 4 minutes later, you are going to get Grad rockets and other things.

So they have gotten much better at this low-end piece, at stitching together their capability to bring military might to the battlefield. Certainly, in the high end, we are not the only Nation in the world that is working toward fifth-generation fighters, stealth technology, incredible jamming capabilities that we see in the fighters. It does not surprise that the front end of some of these fighters look an awful lot like the front end of our fighters, because the technology has been stolen.

And so we see Russia making advances in the low-end technology and the high-end technology.

Hypersonic, sir, I think that has to be a classified conversation that you might want to have with the Pentagon.

Senator UDALL. Good. Thank you very much. Thank you both.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the courtesy. I appreciate it.

General Breedlove, a day or 2 ago, we met with several of the Baltic ambassadors to the United States, as well as Poland. And in the course of that conversation on many things, one thing that had struck me is they say that there is a Russian exercise coming up of 100,000 Russian troops in Belarus.

Now, we can conduct exercises, I get that. But 100,000 Russian troops in Belarus? So much so that I understand Belarus notified, I believe it is NATO, because of the size.

If you were advising President Trump, what is an appropriate action response set of circumstances to make sure that a training exercise does not end up as anything more than a training exercise?

General BREEDLOVE. So, Senator, thank you. That is Zapad 17, Zapad 13. And "zapad" means west in Russian, so what this is pointed at is very clear.

The Zapad 17 is a bit alarming because Zapad 13 was who do you listen to? Ten thousand to 20,000 troops. Sir, I have heard 200,000.

What I do know is that the Russians have ordered 83 times—not 83, but 83 times—the railcars that they ordered for Zapad 13. And so the size of this exercise will be demonstratively bigger than Zapad 13.

Nations have a right to exercise. Nations do not have a right, I think, to exercise irresponsibly on other borders and in configurations that represent offensive capability.

Part of the problem I saw as a SACUER in these snap exercises that we see, in NATO, our exercises are scheduled, published. Size, duration, and objective is all published. The snap exercises we see in Russia I think are a tool that actually we may have used in the

past of conditioning an enemy so that they do not really see what is happening.

And we saw a lot of that conditioning going on in the western and southern military district before they went into Crimea and before they went into the Donbass.

And so I think the problem with this exercise is size and scope directly on the border, a name that orients it west, and the fact that the unpredictability of it makes it very alarming.

How do we respond? NATO has debated. Do we tit-for-tat? Do we remain calm? Do we do some portion of increasing alert and others? I am not a fan of tit-for-tat. I think we should drive our exercise based on what we need to learn and do.

But I would be a supporter of what I would call responsible increases in alert and posture, should the unthinkable happen.

Senator MENENDEZ. Yes. I do not know what is unthinkable anymore, after Crimea and Ukraine. And that is why I worry about this exercise and its magnitude. Maybe a large delegation of members of the Senate in that part of the world at that time might be a good thing too.

Let me ask you both—this is the final question, and it piggybacks a little bit on the question that Senator Rubio or the statement that he was raising.

You know, I found a TIME Magazine article from December, which I also cited during Secretary Tillerson's confirmation hearing, to be rather illuminating, at least from the perspective of what it was saying. I would like to get both of your takes on it, about Russia's intentions with the new administration. And I am going to quote from the article. It says, "What the Russians want from Tillerson, however, is bigger than sanctions relief. They want to see a whole new approach to American diplomacy, one that stops putting principles ahead of profits, focuses instead on getting the best political bargain available, and treats Russia as an equal on the global stage. 'For the next four years, we can forget about America as the bearer of values,' said Vladimir Milov, a former Russian Energy Minister who went on to join the opposition. 'America is going to play the deal game under Trump. And for Putin, that's a very comfortable environment,'" he told a radio show in Moscow.

"It is an environment," and this is where I worry, "it is an environment where statesmen sit before a map of the world and haggle over the pieces available to them, much like...weighing the oil fields of Texas against Russia's reserves in the Arctic. Through the canny eyes of a political dealmaker, many of Washington's oldest commitments in Europe and the Middle East could come to be seen in much the same way, as a stack of bargaining chips to be traded rather than principles to be upheld."

What do you think? Do you think that is an insightful view of what Russia wants, expects, and hopes for? And should we be looking at—it is one thing to be realpolitik and being pragmatic. The other thing is negotiating away the very essence of our principles and negotiating other countries' territories. If you are not at the table, that is not a particularly good deal for you.

Can you give me insights as to your perspectives on it?

Ms. SMITH. Yes. Thank you, Senator.

I agree with the piece. I think he has multiple goals, Putin, in undermining the democratic institutions that served as the bedrock of the transatlantic relationship for 70 years. He would love nothing more than to call into question our commitment to each other, the values that we share, we work to protect and promote, which is his biggest worry.

His biggest fear has always been that the West would somehow fuel some sort of color revolution inside Russia. And he called out Secretary Clinton, who was the Secretary of State at that time, for doing exactly that, for planting the seeds of the protests that erupted after he was elected again in 2012. And so he has been very anxious about everything that the West stands for.

And so, yes, he wants to undermine our values, our institutions, our unity and resolve. And I think we have to work now and quickly to ensure that he does not do that.

General BREEDLOVE. Senator, if I could, not to be contrary to the piece or any others, I would just offer that, in my mind, Russia's intentions have not changed. It does not matter which—from several administrations to now, their intentions really have not changed.

Maybe the tools might change based on the approach of the leadership in the West. But to question the West, and certainly question the U.S. leadership of the West, to establish Russia as a world power, and certainly as the director of operations in their region, all these things I do not think have changed, just the tools might have changed.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I know Senator Murphy had—I will just say one thing. The committee wished to push back really strongly on the Syrian issue when chemical weapons were used. And then we tried to empower, 4 years ago, the administration to do more. I mean, in many ways, we have sort of fed the beast by not pushing back in ways that I think Congress wished our administration to push back. And I think you are going to see legislation fairly soon to try to deal with this.

And obviously, sanctions are one element. But I would just ask you both, before turning to Senator Murphy, that you are going to have some questions. We hope that you will answer those. They will come in by the close of business Monday. But it seems to me that we are at a point where there is a much broader effort that needs to take place against Russia. It is not just about keeping sanctions that are in place from being lifted but something far broader than that.

And I would just ask that you send back to us a paper, if you would take time to do so, to talk about those other things that you think would be important relative to us doing so.

[The information was not available at the time of print]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just one final question, to let you put a finer point on I think a point you have been making throughout this hearing.

I have been a big supporter of the European Reassurance Initiative, but I do think it is curious that we have largely viewed Euro-

pean reassurance purely through a military lens. And you sort of made this comment a couple of times over, but I just wanted to let you close the loop on it.

I just think it is an interesting question as to whether \$3.4 billion is best spent simply on military reassurance or whether there are other ways that you can spend pretty big amounts of money in order to gain longer term security in the region. Let us just pretend that you spent \$3.4 billion on helping countries on Russia's periphery become permanently energy independent, right?

I just wanted to allow you to square the circle a little bit and talk to us about maybe how we should look at European reassurance in the future and if there are other things beyond just the military support that might get us a little bit more of a long-term benefit?

General BREEDLOVE. So, Mr. Chairman, I see these as related, and I would be happy to respond to your request for those thoughts. I talked a little earlier about this war college model that we use of DIME. There is a much broader set of tools, which I think could be brought to bear.

Senator, I must say, though, that having served in Europe as a captain in the very early 1980s, and knowing at that time that there were two corps, seven-plus divisions, multiples brigades, ten fighter wings, et cetera, et cetera, in Europe to handle a problem back then, and now we look at something far smaller than that. I would submit that there is at \$3.4 billion worth of military work to be done. There is clearly other work to be done.

You hit it on the head. One of the first tools they use is this energy dependence, and our ability to help Europe to be less energy dependent would be huge step forward and may not be so bad for American business either.

Ms. SMITH. Yes. I would just absolutely echo everything that General Breedlove just said. I think you are exactly right.

I mean, let us be clear, a lot of the allies in Central and Eastern Europe do seek reassurance through military means. They like to see U.S. troops come through. They would love it even more if they stayed permanently. And so they do seek that regularly and repeatedly, as you know well.

But at the same time, you are right, making an investment in the institutions, in energy independence, in better tools to deal with the strategic communications challenges, with the cyber challenges, with energy coercion challenges, all of that has to be part of our reassurance package as well.

It also just starts with traveling more to Europe and being present, not just at the Munich Security Conference, but at lots of other forums and in other delegation trips to take to very sensitive regions that are hurting, that are seeking clarity from the United States right now. We are going to need more engagement with our partners than ever before.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. I just wanted to thank our witnesses, and let us remember the words of Mr. Kara-Murza when he said stay true to our principles. You know, we talk about entering into some types

of arrangements that could be transactional in nature. But if they are outside the scope of our values, it will not work.

So I thank our witnesses. I think you have added greatly to our discussions.

The CHAIRMAN. I, too, want to thank you. It has been an outstanding hearing. I think you have, first of all, heard a lot from members that maybe will help you with that piece of paper that may be coming back. But we have certainly learned a great deal from you.

Thank you for sharing your knowledge, your expertise, your commitment to our country's national security with us today.

And with that the meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:24 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF JULIANNE SMITH TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. Why did the "Russia Reset" fail? What lessons do you draw from that failure that could inform the Trump administration's strategy toward Moscow?

Answer. At the beginning of his first term, President Obama, much like his predecessor, saw an opportunity to cooperate with Russia on a limited set of issues to achieve U.S. foreign policy goals. In cooperation with President Medvedev, his administration launched the "Russian reset" policy, which stressed enhanced bilateral engagement particularly in regards to arms control. During the President's first term, the two countries made some important breakthroughs: the New START nuclear arms control treaty, an agreement to dispose of excess weapons grade plutonium,¹ and the opening of the northern distribution network to shepherd NATO supplies to and from Afghanistan.² Russia also became a party to the tough U.N. sanctions regime on Iran and delayed sales of advanced anti-air equipment to Iran. Furthermore, Russia abstained from vetoing the NATO military intervention in Libya. Finally, Presidents Obama and Medvedev established the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Commission's Defense Cooperation Working Group.

However, the bilateral relationship began to unravel shortly after Vladimir Putin's return to the Russian presidency in 2012. He blamed the United States, and in particular, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, for the large-scale protests that erupted in Moscow over reports that the Russian government tampered with the November 2011 parliamentary elections. President Putin, facing economic stagnation at home (even before the sanctions that came in 2014) decided he needed to return Russia to its great power status. He prioritized Russia's military modernization, portrayed the United States, NATO, and the European Union as external enemies, and challenged the West both conventionally and asymmetrically. Today, Russia is redrawing the borders of Europe (see Ukraine in 2014 and Georgia in 2008), propping up President Assad in Syria, building a vast propaganda network, weaponizing information through cyber hacking, intimidating its neighbors, and actively working to divide Europe from the United States through energy coercion, cyber activities, and disinformation campaigns.

We have learned in recent years that President Putin is not especially interested in collaborating with the West. In forming a strategy toward Russia, the Trump administration should engage Moscow. But President Trump must understand that Putin believes his favorability at home is largely dependent upon a tough posture abroad. Therefore, President Trump should maintain economic and political pressure on Russia and be very wary of a grand bargain with Putin who has yet to meet his obligations outlined in the Minsk II Agreement.

Question. Can you provide additional details on how Russia uses energy as a weapon? Is it in America's national security interests to help European allies to be less dependent on Russian energy?

Answer. Russia has shown a willingness to use its vast energy holdings as a political weapon to coerce and punish U.S. European allies. This has provoked a sense of fear and uneasiness throughout Europe, and it is in America's national security interest to help Europe decrease its dependence on Russian energy. Some European countries, such as Latvia and Estonia, receive virtually all their energy supplies

from Russia, whereas others, such as France, receive little to none. This exposes varying ranges of susceptibility to Russian energy pressure throughout Europe, and makes it a difficult issue to address.³ Today, our partners worry that they could be susceptible to Russian pressure in the form of debilitating delays in gas delivery, as happened in Ukraine during the winter of 2014. The failure to address Europe's continued reliance on Russian energy imports, therefore, could threaten to undermine the sustainability of the sanction regime against Russia, and could potentially affect Europe's (specifically, Eastern Europe's) willingness to work alongside the United States for fear of Russian retaliation.

Question. What specific steps should the new administration take to hold Russia accountable for its violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty?

Answer. There is little doubt that Russia is testing the United States' commitment to and enforcement of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty by deploying two battalions of prohibited ground-launch cruise missiles. This clear violation of the INF treaty is a dangerous provocation. Therefore, the U.S. should take several steps to hold Russia accountable. First, we must work to avoid miscalculations and miscommunications by increasing military to military channels between Russia and the U.S., such as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs' recent meeting with his Russian counterpart. Second, the U.S. should consult with European allies to determine how to respond to this and future provocations, and we should explore potential countermeasures in consultation with NATO.

Question. What specific weapons and equipment do you believe the U.S. should provide Ukraine?

Answer. The conflict Ukraine remains a fast-moving crisis. The U.S. should continue to give political, military, and economic support to the Ukrainian government for its efforts to reform its political system and resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine's political and economic success is vital in deterring future Russian aggression. In terms of providing specific weapons and equipment, I would defer to U.S. military leaders.

Question. What is your assessment of Russian global information operations, and how can the U.S. respond more effectively in the information operations domain? Please provide specifics.

Answer. The Kremlin's updated military doctrine states that Russia will use "information warfare . . . to achieve political objectives without the utilization of military force," and accordingly, the state should invest in "the intensification of the role of information warfare."⁴ Today, Russia's information policy targets countries in its immediate neighborhood and beyond (as seen in the recent U.S. election). While respecting the First Amendment right of news outlets, even foreign-owned and managed ones such as Russia Today (RT), to operate freely in the United States, the next president should request funding for initiatives to correct Russian fabrications and expose agents of disinformation in cases where they can be identified. RT is a particularly active source of disinformation and spends \$400 million per year on its Washington bureau alone.⁵ Today, there is a glaring misalignment between Russia's investment in this strategic arena and an appropriate U.S. response. The next president should support initiatives that challenge false narratives, expose hidden connections and interests, and support independent fact-finding efforts. An example of such an initiative is the bipartisan Countering Information Warfare Act of 2016.⁶ The next president should prioritize the passage and implementation of this kind of legislation. More broadly, the government should develop new public-private partnerships aimed at defending, detecting, and deterring Russian information warfare.

Question. Ms. Smith: What specific steps should the United States take to help reduce the energy dependence of our European allies on Russia?

Answer. Europe receives approximately one-third of its gas from the Russian energy company Gazprom, which from 2006 to 2009 periodically withheld deliveries to Ukraine during cold months to maximize Russia's political leverage over Kiev.⁷ The United States should encourage Germany and others to pursue gas import diversification from multiple suppliers. Because diversification of pipeline routes does not signify diversification of suppliers, the European Union should block Nord Stream 2 and instead, pursue pipeline projects from other suppliers. Moreover, Poland's experiment with investing in LNG import facilities and re-gasification capacity is a good example that the United States should encourage throughout the EU. Under Secretary Clinton's leadership, the State Department worked with European allies to reduce energy dependence on Russia,⁸ and the incoming administration should support similar initiatives to assist our European allies with diversifying external energy supplies and increasing domestic energy efficiency.

Notes

¹“U.S., Russia Sign Protocol to Dispose of 17 Thousand Weapons’ Worth of Plutonium,” ABC News, April 13, 2010.

²Richard A. Oppel, “U.S. Secures New Supply Routes to Afghanistan,” The New York Times, January 20, 2009.

³“Energy production and imports,” Eurostat, July 2016.

⁴Russian Federation Presidential Edict, “The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 5, 2010.

⁵Amanda Abrams, “Fighting Back: New Bill Aims to Counter Russian Disinformation,” The New Atlanticist, March 17, 2016.

⁶S. 2692, “Countering Information Warfare Act of 2016,” March 2016.

⁷James Kanter, “Europe Seeks Alternatives to Russian Gas Imports,” The New York Times, February 16, 2016.

⁸Peter Nicholas, “Hillary Clinton Says She Pushed for Europe’s Energy Independence,” The Wall Street Journal, September 04, 2014.

THE COMMITTEE RECEIVED NO RESPONSE FROM
GENERAL PHILIP M. BREEDLOVE FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Question. 1. Why did the “Russia Reset” fail? What lessons do you draw from that failure that could inform the Trump administration’s strategy toward Moscow?

[No Response Received]

Question. 2. Can you provide additional details on how Russia uses energy as a weapon? Is it in America’s national security interests to help European allies to be less dependent on Russian energy?

[No Response Received]

Question. 3. What specific steps should the new administration take to hold Russia accountable for its violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty?

[No Response Received]

Question. 4. What specific weapons and equipment do you believe the U.S. should provide Ukraine?

[No Response Received]

Question. 5. What is your assessment of Russian global information operations, and how can the U.S. respond more effectively in the information operations domain? Please provide specifics.

[No Response Received]

Question. 6. General Breedlove: Do you agree that we must not allow Moscow to gain military advantage as a result of this INF Treaty violation?

[No Response Received]

Question. 7. General Breedlove, in terms of the threat from Russia, what are your leading North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) readiness concerns?

[No Response Received]

LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT FROM SENATOR CORY GARDNER



February 9, 2017

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20050

Dear Mr. President:

We write to ask you to pursue a results-oriented, but tough-minded and principled policy toward the Russian Federation. Russia's cooperation is desirable, and in some cases essential, to global initiatives such as nuclear arms control, counter-terrorism, drug trafficking, or promoting global health. We should maintain active and ongoing dialogue with Russia on these and others areas of mutual interests, as every U.S. President has done since the end of the Cold War. However, while we should seek common ground with Russia in the areas of mutual interest, we must never pursue cooperation with Russia at the expense of our fundamental interests of defending our allies and promoting our values.

The United States should unequivocally condemn – and take proactive steps to stem – the continued Russian aggression in Ukraine. Russia has invaded Ukraine and illegally annexed the Crimean peninsula, in violation of international law, and has directly abetted the so-called “separatist rebels” in eastern Ukraine. Since 2014, over 10,000 Ukrainians have died in this tragic conflict, and there are as many as 1.5 million internally displaced persons because of the violence. The most recent escalation of fighting along the “line of contact” in eastern Ukraine should serve as a reminder of Russia's nefarious intentions.

The Administration should maintain the current U.S. sanctions regime against Russia and Russian entities – and to impose new sanctions as necessary and merited by Russian behavior – unless Ukraine's control over Crimea is restored, Russia fully respects the Minsk agreements, and ceases all efforts to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty. Furthermore, we ask you to expedite the provision of defensive lethal weapons to Ukraine, and we were encouraged that Secretary of State Tillerson supported this position during his confirmation hearing.

The United States should not enter into any military or diplomatic agreement with Russia regarding Syria's future until Moscow halts its military operations that have caused immense damage and human suffering and ceases support for the murderous regime of Bashar al-Assad. It is plainly evident that despite Russian claims to the contrary, Moscow's main goal is not the defeat of the Islamic State, but the preservation of the Assad regime at any cost. According to the Pentagon's spokesman, as of February 3, 2016, only 10 percent of Russian airstrikes were against Islamic State targets. However, according to an estimate released by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights on December 31, 2016, at least 4,700 civilians died in Syria due to Russian shelling, including the targeting of schools and hospitals. The U.S. must condemn these Russian atrocities and condition any future negotiations regarding Syria's future on Russian compliance with international norms and basic human rights.

Furthermore, we must recognize and counter the active cyber and information warfare Russia is conducting against the United States and Western democracies, including attempted interference in our democratic elections process. According to the 2016 Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community: "Russian cyber operations are likely to target US interests to support several strategic objectives: intelligence gathering to support Russian decision-making in the Ukraine and Syrian crises, influence operations to support military and political objectives, and continuing preparation of the cyber environment for future contingencies." The U.S. must have a firm response to this belligerent behavior from Moscow, which should include diplomatic actions, economic consequences, as well as a strengthened military posture in Europe.

Most importantly, we urge you to relay to Moscow that the values of democracy, human rights, transparency, and accountability are central to U.S. foreign policy, that these values are non-negotiable, and that the United States will continue to advance these values globally, including with regard to Russia. President Putin must know that the United States remains a beacon of hope and democracy around the world, and will stand up for what is right.

Mr. President, we look forward to your reply and maintaining an open, ongoing, and respectful dialogue with you regarding U.S.-Russia relations.

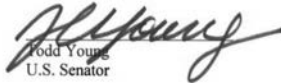
Sincerely,



Cory Gardner
U.S. Senator



James M. Inhofe
U.S. Senator



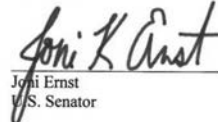
Todd Young
U.S. Senator



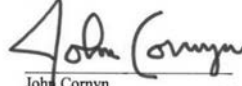
Rob Portman
U.S. Senator



M. Michael Rounds
U.S. Senator



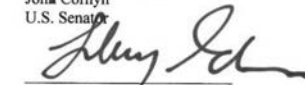
Joni Ernst
U.S. Senator



John Cornyn
U.S. Senator



Susan Collins
U.S. Senator



Lindsey Graham
U.S. Senator