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Oversight of the European Reassurance Initiative

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, United States House of Representatives, One Hundred Fourteenth Congress, Second Session

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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

**STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL DAVID ALLVIN
DIRECTOR OF POLICY, STRATEGY, PARTNERING AND CAPABILITIES**

U.S. FORCES EUROPE

July 13, 2016

I would first like to thank Chairman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier and the other Members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am pleased to represent the men and women of our armed services and civilian personnel of the United States European Command. On behalf of the US European Command, thank you for your unwavering support.

I am privileged to discuss the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) — which marks a major turning point in the USEUCOM's prioritization of activities in the European Theater. The United States seeks to maintain its role as a secure, stabilizing presence in the theater, in light of Russia's provocative actions and destabilizing interventions— ERI provides the funding to help us accomplish that goal.

We have carefully devised a strategy to address this Russian threat, and assert our commitment to NATO Allies. However, strategy alone will not impede Russian hostility. Through continued Congressional support of the ERI, we will continue to implement strategy by resourcing capabilities deterrent activities and increasing responsiveness.

Over the last few years, the European Security environment has drastically evolved. Since the beginning of Russia's occupation of Crimea in 2014, our largest area for concern is Russian military activity to the east and north. Russia is increasingly aggressive in Eastern Europe and is militarizing the Arctic. Russia employs multiple types of warfare—conventional, irregular, and asymmetric—to induce regional instability. Russia's its malign intervention causes political and economic disruption along its border with Eastern Europe/in many places/etc.

Since 2014, U.S. forces have taken measures to assure our NATO Allies and partners by communicating our commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Under the ERI in previous fiscal years, we have accomplished a great deal to assure our NATO Allies and partners.

Through your support, we have increased the U.S. military presence in Europe; conducted bilateral and multilateral exercises; improved U.S. and allied military infrastructure in Europe; prepositioned more U.S. equipment in Europe; and intensified efforts to build the capacity and interoperability of NATO Allies and partners.

We recently completed Exercise ANAKONDA 2016, a multinational training exercise in Poland integrating over 31,000 forces from across 24 nations including NATO Allies and our partners. This exercise supported our assurance effort by demonstrating collaborative

capabilities to deploy, mass, and sustain combined land, sea, air, and Special Operations Forces combat power. Nearly simultaneously, we conducted a U.S. Army Europe-led airborne crisis response exercise that focused on exercising the U.S. Global Response Force to conduct rapid, efficient and effective joint forcible entry operations alongside allied airborne forces in Europe. Exercise Swift Response demonstrated U.S. and our NATO Allies' ability to respond to a crisis scenario from staging bases in both Europe and the United States. On the sea, a U.S. Navy-led exercise, BALTOPS is the premier maritime exercise in the Baltic Sea region and one of the largest exercises in northern Europe. Held from June 3-19, 2016, the exercise demonstrated interoperability between U.S., NATO Allies, and partners and assured nations of NATO's commitment to the security and stability of the Baltic Sea region. The exercise concentrated on maritime interdiction, anti-subsurface warfare, amphibious operations, and air defense in a joint environment.

Fiscal Year 2016's ERI has had a substantial impact on the assurance of our NATO Allies through these bilateral and multilateral exercises. However, there are large gaps in our capability to deter Russian aggression. The FY 2017 ERI request includes five lines of effort (discussed below) that address those gaps. The execution of these events shows that ERI is not solely operating in the context of a US bilateral effort, but serves as an impetus for NATO coordination and cooperation.

In this past weekend's NATO summit, member nations announced they would continue these efforts to deter Russia and assure partnership capacity and committed to reestablishing a credible deterrent along NATO's eastern flank by implementing the Readiness Action Plan, fully sourcing an enhanced forward land presence in Poland and the Baltics, making discernable progress on the allied defense investment pledge, and committing to improve allied preparations to resist armed attacks, as well as other initiatives.

The FY 2017 European Reassurance Initiative will continue to provide assurance measures to our NATO Allies and partners, and provide the funding to continue reversing over twenty-five years of atrophy in our combat capabilities in theater. Additionally, FY 2017 ERI will continue building credible deterrence. Both assurance and deterrence is addressed through five lines of effort. I would like to expand upon these lines of effort, and explain how they fit into our theater strategy.

Our first line of effort is to increase our presence in theater. USEUCOM intends to increase the presence of forces in the air, sea, and on land with a heel-to-toe approach, which continuously maintains forces on the ground without gaps between rotations. This will include a mix of permanently deployed and rotational forces with the capability to effectively deter adversaries. ERI ensures that all U.S. military services will augment their presence and enhance deterrence in Europe through stepped-up rotations and, potentially, deferring previously planned force reductions in Europe. In FY 2017, the Army will augment presence through the rotation of U.S.-based units from an Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), the Air Force will sustain its current Mobility Air Force (MAF) capability, add new intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities in Europe, and source theater security packages that provide 5th Generation capabilities, and Navy and Marine forces will maintain a presence in the Black Sea, Nordic and Baltic regions.

Secondly, our FY17 request continues additional bilateral and multilateral exercises/training with NATO Allies and partners. Through these activities, we assure our NATO Allies and partners that we are willing, committed, and ready. Additionally, these exercises address the challenges and threats emerging in Europe by demonstrating interoperability and responsiveness.

Our third line of effort sets the stage for a strong, prepared force through enhanced prepositioning of U.S. equipment. Preparedness-to-defeat is a key point of the ERI deterrence message. Army Prepositioned Stocks (APS) increases responsiveness and options for deterrence in Europe. Prepositioning of U.S. equipment will allow EUCOM-based forces to respond more rapidly to potential contingencies that appear in the EUCOM area of responsibility (AOR). Additionally, APS will also decrease force deployment times for U.S.-based units because stocks are already in place. With Russia expanding its military capabilities and technologies, Europe needs to have a ready, responsive ability to deter.

Our fourth line of effort, improved infrastructure, supports our increase in exercises, forces, and prepositioned equipment. This infrastructure is not solely new military construction, but includes improvements to existing structures, such as training centers and airfields. These improvements to infrastructure will provide flexibility and enhance readiness in our AOR.

Our fifth line of effort is to intensify efforts to build partner capacity with NATO Allies and partners. Russia continues to exert and bolster instability in neighboring countries and are

creating detrimental economic and social impact through their malign influence. We seek to counter these activities by strengthening partners' ability to react when a crisis occurs.

Through these five lines of effort, we will not only strengthen existing relationships with NATO members and other partners, but we will also show our strength and deter future Russian provocations. The sum of all ERI lines of effort is greater than the five individual parts, when considering that increased rotational presence allows us to sustain more frequent allied and partner exercises and therefore build interoperability more rapidly. Similarly, improving infrastructure builds national capacity in addition to increasing U.S. and NATO readiness.

Again, I thank you for your support. Through the European Reassurance Initiative, you have amplified our nation's commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty—one of the cornerstones of Europe's security and stability.

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY

MS RACHEL ELLEHUUS

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OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON

THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN REASSURANCE INITIATIVE

SECOND SESSION, 114TH CONGRESS

JULY 13, 2016

Chairman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present this opening statement outlining the United States' European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), and the strategy, implementation, and challenges related to this initiative. In addition to these points, my remarks will highlight measures NATO has taken including outcomes from the NATO Summit held last week in Warsaw, Poland.

In response to Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea and destabilizing actions in eastern Ukraine and elsewhere in Europe, the United States, individual Allies and partners, and NATO have worked together since 2014 to develop a broad range of efforts designed to demonstrate our collective commitment to the security and stability of the transatlantic space. Since then, these measures have evolved in step with the security environment in Europe, with initial efforts to assure Allies and partners shifting to a focus on reinforcing deterrence and defense.

Turning first to those efforts undertaken by the United States, President Obama in June 2014 called on you, Congress, to approve up to \$1 billion to support the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). Under ERI – for which Congress provided \$985 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 and \$789.3 million in FY 2016 – the United States launched Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR) to maintain a persistent, rotational presence of air, land, and sea forces on the territory of the eastern Allies, from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. In FY 2015 and FY 2016, activities funded under ERI focused on expanding exercises and training with NATO Allies and partners; building the capacity of our regional Allies and partners; and augmenting prepositioned European Activity Sets of equipment for use in joint exercises. Building on this, our current FY 2017 ERI request of \$3.4 billion represents a significant augmentation of these efforts, enabling us to move from assurance to deterrence by expanding and deepening activities within five lines of effort:

- Increased Presence. In addition to maintaining our commitment to a persistent, rotational presence of air, land, and sea forces, the United States will contribute to the broader deterrence posture by rotating an Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) on a heel-to-toe basis into Europe. We will also deploy the rotational ABCT headquarters to Poland, and the ABCT will be able to move around Central and Eastern Europe as appropriate to participate in training and exercise activities. This, together with the two brigades already stationed in Europe, will provide for a division-sized ground force capability that can respond across the theater, if necessary.
- Enhanced Prepositioning. To support this increased presence, the United States will use ERI to place additional Army Prepositioned Stock (APS) in Europe. These additional combat vehicles and supplies are intended to reduce force deployment times and enable a rapid response to any potential contingencies.
- Improved Infrastructure. Improvements throughout Europe to areas such as airfields, training areas, and ranges on military installations will improve military readiness and provide for quick dispersal of forces, if required.
- Bilateral and Multilateral Exercises and Training. ERI will also enable us to continue extensive U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners with the aim of demonstrating resolve and improving overall readiness and interoperability.
- Building the Capacity of Allies and Partners. ERI funding will continue to help build the capacity of Central and Eastern European Allies and partners to defend themselves and bolster their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

Yet, as President Obama discussed at last week's NATO Summit in Warsaw, our ERI contributions are but one part of the broader NATO efforts. At the Wales Summit in 2014, NATO developed its Readiness Action Plan (RAP), under which it decided to enhance the NATO Response Force (NRF), generate the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), and create NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) to facilitate rapid reinforcement of forces. At last week's Warsaw Summit, NATO, like the United States, took concrete steps to strengthen deterrence by announcing the deployment of a NATO battalion-sized battlegroup, the so-called Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP), into each of the three Baltic nations and Poland. The United States will be the eFP Framework Nation for Poland, with the UK, Canada, and Germany serving as Framework Nation for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, respectively. These eFP NATO battalions will result, for the first time, in rotational units being deployed persistently in the region whose mission is specifically focused on countering any action by aggressive actors in the region. Taken together, these U.S. and NATO combat forces will represent the greatest gathering of Allied deterrent power in the Baltic nations and Poland since the end of the Cold War.

Although these U.S. and NATO steps to reinforce deterrence and defense are significant and contribute to greater transatlantic security in the short run, challenges remain. First, NATO must continue to adapt institutionally to ensure its decision making, command structure, and defense planning processes are flexible and agile. Additionally, the United States must continue to encourage our European Allies to meet the Wales Defense Investment Pledge target of spending 2% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defense within a decade and to make the necessary investments in readiness and capabilities. Since the Wales Summit, a majority of NATO Allies have taken steps to reverse negative trends in defense spending, with 23 of 28 Allies having halted the decline in their defense spending in absolute real terms. Collectively, Allies will spend more on defense in 2016 than the year prior, making this the first time since 2009 that total NATO defense spending has increased. Finally, we must weather the trends of internal political

fractiousness and stand united against those who seek to divide the Alliance and undermine the rules and norms that underpin our security.

In closing, I thank Congress for its continued support of ERI. I also thank and applaud the performance of the entire team – including the Military Departments and Services, the Joint Staff, U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), and NATO – all of whom have been central to implementing this strategy. The transatlantic community stands stronger together; we are working together to strengthen transatlantic and, in turn, global security. I look forward to this session and to answering any questions you may have.

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

SECOND SESSION, 114th CONGRESS

ON

THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN REASSURANCE INITIATIVE

JULY 13, 2016

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

Chairman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, distinguished members of the committee, I have a brief opening statement to highlight some of our initial insights about the current status of the United States' European Reassurance Initiative, or ERI, our evolving support to NATO initiatives, and on specific Army's strategy, execution, and challenges.

As my colleague from OSD Policy will address in more detail, in March of this year, the Secretary of Defense issued a formal announcement to NATO member states and host nations of our planned deployment of rotational and deterrent forces in support of ERI. Since then, the U.S. has enjoyed in-depth cooperation with our Allies in developing a synchronized plan to address challenges to European security. That cooperation continues to this day as we with the land forces of our Allies and partners work to address common issues and realize our shared goals.

The U.S. European Reassurance Initiative has evolved from an initiative primarily focused on assurance to one focused on deterrence. Under ERI, we introduced rotational units on an intermittent basis as part of our effort to maintain a persistent, rotational presence of air, land, and sea forces. As part of this, we established a single pre-positioned armored brigade combat team (ABCT) equipment set, as part of the first European Activity Set. This activity set was used for deployments and our initial rotational commitments. This increased U.S. presence in Europe, as well as increased funding, has enabled a capstone DOD assurance event, the recent Polish national exercise, Operation Anakonda.

Operation Anakonda, held this past month fielded 31,000 multinational soldiers from 24 countries, almost half of whom were American. The 4th Infantry Division Headquarters deployed and provided all command and control for U.S. military elements and operations. Army forces, including those already assigned to Europe, units from the 82nd Airborne Division, 10th Army Air & Missile Defense Command, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve conducted multinational air assault and airborne operations, air defense operations, combined artillery live fire operations,

bridging operations, and numerous other training events. Continuing such complex, realistic, tough exercises with multiple partner nations will improve the Army's collective warfighting capabilities across the full range of military missions, and demonstrate credible US and allied capabilities to potential adversaries in the region.

With Anakonda complete and 66 exercises scheduled with U.S. Army - Europe participation in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, we are increasing our capacity for deterrence which we deem as the bedrock of future strategy in the region. The previously-mentioned ABCT equipment set, already in Europe will form the core of new division-sized Army pre-positioned stock (APS) equipment sets under APS-2 supporting EUCOM. An ABCT equipment set will soon be joined by equipment sets for a Division Headquarters and Division-level artillery brigade. By the end of FY 2017, these three equipment sets will be on the ground as the foundation of the European Command's (EUCOM's) deterrent force. Over the next five years, the Army plans to add enabler units, as well as additional combat equipment sets to APS-2. These pre-positioned sets could round-out a Division's worth of potential combat power that can be rapidly manned and fielded for deterrence exercises or in response to contingency operations.

During this next fiscal year, the Army will transfer the ABCT equipment set in the European Activity Set to pre-positioned stock. US-based ABCT's will deploy to Europe with their entire complement of tanks, fighting vehicles, and support equipment. This deployment, which we refer to as a "heel-to-toe" rotation, will establish a persistent presence in Europe, while providing Army units the opportunity to practice and develop their deployment skills.

These ERI contributions are part of the broader NATO effort to strengthen deterrence, which include deploying a NATO battalion-sized battlegroup, called Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP), into Poland and each of the three Baltic nations. These eFP NATO battalions will result, for the first time, in units being deployed persistently in the region whose mission is specifically focused on countering any incursion.

Through deterrence and Enhanced Forward Presence, the United States' efforts define the theater strategy the Army is developing and executing with ERI funding provided by Congress. We are doing this in close cooperation with, and in support of, the Joint Staff and EUCOM Commander. As the President and Secretary of Defense further define support to NATO, the Army will adapt strategies and plans in Europe to meet new requirements. We fully support an increased deterrent posture in Europe.

Having addressed the strategy and execution efforts to date, I'd like to discuss some challenges we face in fully realizing the effects we desire. First, of course, is the instability associated with ERI budget requests.

Our base budget remains challenged; without augmentation or tradeoffs to other defense priorities, it will be unsustainably stressed in order to support emerging demands to demonstrate US commitment to Europe and deter aggression, requiring a high operational tempo, ready units, and modernized equipment. Serious risk will be introduced to other Army commitments. Building deterrence requires significant amounts of equipment and materiel over the future year defense program. Our ability to do that while continuing to reset the Army after 15 years of war and meeting Combatant Command mission requirements worldwide with ready forces places immense pressures on the Army budget. The overall plan to restore the health of our nation's Army, especially over the next two years, is at risk unless the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 ERI budget is approved at the requested level.

Increasingly, it appears that the Department will be starting FY 2017 under a Continuing Resolution and operating under the restrictions therein. Continuing Resolutions may limit the Army's ability to deploy rotational brigades and build EUCOM's prepositioned equipment sets starting early in 2017 to meet exercise timelines.

The second challenge we face, as we develop contingency plans in Europe, is the need for more coordinated support at the government level from our Allies to ensure a synchronized and cooperative environment, should plans need to be executed. We welcome NATO actions to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the freedom of maneuver necessary to support assurance and deterrence initiatives; and we encourage greater speed in its development. In the near term, the Army will benefit from NATO's execution of the Enhanced Forward Presence effort as collective action will ensure these efforts are complementary towards building our shared deterrence goal.

Your support, through funding the President's requests for ERI, is an essential component of the European deterrence strategy. However, our ability to support steady-state and peacetime priorities will no doubt be challenged if we must meet emerging requirements at the same time.

In closing, I thank Congress for your support of the European Reassurance Initiative and applaud the performance of the entire team –the Department, NATO, as well as the National Guard and Reserves, all of whom have played key roles in this strategy. We're rebuilding strength in Europe more and more every day. I am also privileged to observe the great contributions of the young men and women in our Army who are key to improving security in NATO and the wider world. I look forward to this session and answering any questions you may have.