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Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on our defense policy in the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) area of responsibility. It is my honor to appear alongside EUCOM Commander General Christopher Cavoli.

President Trump has directed the Department of Defense (DoD) to reorient U.S. defense strategy so that it puts Americans' interests first. In Europe, that means working with our interagency partners to bring an end to the war in Ukraine. It also means finding new ways to strengthen the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) so that the Alliance can be as effective in this century as it was in the last. To be sure, neither of these efforts will be easy—not for us, and not for our allies. But taking these measures are essential, it is doable, and doing so will leave both the United States *and* our allies and partners all better off.

Ukraine

President Trump has spoken often and clearly about achieving lasting peace in Ukraine. This is vital to stop the bloodshed. It will also set Europe on a trajectory toward security and stability like the region has not seen for many years. This is not only good for Ukraine. It is also good for our NATO allies. And of course, it is good for Americans, who benefit from a stable and secure Europe.

Already, the President's team is making progress in this regard. Under his leadership, both Russia and Ukraine have come to the negotiating table, and already, we are seeing initial ceasefires take hold. The contours of a lasting peace are also coming into view. President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have stated clearly that the United States will not put boots on the ground in Ukraine. At the same time, they have made clear that Europeans must take the lead in supporting Ukraine's defense requirements in the years ahead, and our allies are taking steps to that effect. Last month, for instance, the United Kingdom hosted the Ukraine Defense Contact Group. The UK and France have also committed to lead additional efforts to ensure a lasting peace in Ukraine. As the President and Secretary have said, far more will be required of them and other allies. But it is a promising start, and our allies deserve credit for these initial steps.

Given the sensitive nature of ongoing negotiations, I will limit my remarks on this subject to this statement. I look forward to being able to share more as peace negotiations proceed.

NATO

NATO played a central role in America's strategy throughout the Cold War. If not for the Alliance, it is not clear that the Cold War would have remained just that—cold. But then the Cold War ended, and as it did, our NATO allies forgot how important it was to invest in their defenses. Instead, they grew accustomed to the peace that defined Europe at the height of the “unipolar moment,” and they divested of their militaries accordingly. But peace can never be taken for granted. It must be maintained—and that requires that all of us do our part.

Unfortunately, that has not been the case for far too many of our NATO allies.

In the East, some of our allies did not forget the necessity of investing in their defenses. Even today, allies like Poland and many of the Baltic nations already spend more on defense than the United States does as percentage of GDP—and they are going even higher. These are model allies, but they can only do so much on their own. Western and Central Europe are home to several of the world's largest economies. These allies are more than capable of raising powerful militaries. Tragically, however, they have chosen not to. Instead, for decades, they have shown themselves content to free ride not just at the expense of American taxpayers, but at the expense of their fellow allies' security.

President Trump has been clear—this is not acceptable. As a matter of justice, Americans are tired of subsidizing Europeans' defenses, and by extension, their vast welfare states. But this is also a matter of prudence. Over the last four years, the international threat environment has grown far more dangerous, and we must all do our part to restore peace through strength. That is why Secretary Hegseth has reoriented DoD squarely on warfighting and lethality. And it is why he has called for a “factory reset” for the NATO Alliance.

As the Secretary said at the gathering of NATO Defense Ministers in February, it is time for our NATO allies to take primary responsibility for Europe's conventional defense, relying on the United States for critical but more limited support, including our extended nuclear deterrent. As stated above, that means that our NATO allies must take the lead in providing Ukraine with the security assistance that it needs to achieve lasting peace. At the same time, they must generate, field, and sustain the forces required to deter aggression against the Alliance itself, including the seas around it, like the Red Sea.

If our allies do these things, then there is no question that NATO can be as effective in this century as it was in the last—that all of Europe can realize peace and stability for decades to come. But our allies will only be able to achieve these goals if they raise defense spending to 5% of their respective GDPs as President Trump has demanded. At the same time, our allies must focus those resources where they are needed most—on Europe's defense. Not on the Indo-Pacific. And not on the host of other missions that NATO has taken upon itself in recent years and detract from the Alliance's proper focus on warfighting, lethality, and deterrence.

President Trump has vowed to achieve peace through strength, and the Department of Defense will do its part. Now it is time for our NATO allies to do theirs, and in the process, set conditions for lasting peace in Europe.