

# House Armed Services on National Security Challenges in Europe

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Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Committee will come to order. Today we will continue our posture hearings. Would you come? I'll remind members when we adjourn the hearing, we will immediately move upstairs for the close briefing.

I want to thank our witnesses for being here and for their service to our nation. The United States is moving into an era of unprecedented danger. We've heard from the commanders of SOUTHCOM AFRICOM, CENTCOM and indo PAYCOM. They each raise grave concerns about how China, Russia, Iran and North Korea are working together to reduce America's global influence, harm our alliances and undermine our national security.

Nowhere is that more apparent than in Ukraine, Iran and North Korea are arming Russia with deadly effect. In return, they are receiving advanced technologies and other illegal aid from Putin. And while China has yet has not yet provided weapons to Russia, z is providing Putin critical economic and security assistance. This includes dual use materials and components for weapons.

Kim z and the Ayatollah are eagerly aiding and abetting Putin's brutal invasion of Ukraine. Because they know a Russian victory, there will seriously undercut the credibility of American deterrence and leave our security partners exposed. It is the green light these despots have been craving for for decades. A Russian victory will embolden Kim Zi and the Ayatollah to confront South Korea, Taiwan, Israel and ultimately the United States in a new and failed in new and vital ways.

And I fear Putin will use a victory in Ukraine as a springboard to invade Eastern Europe. We can't let that happen. We must restore American deterrence. It starts with this administration finally articulating a winning strategy.

Since the start of the war, President Biden's Ukraine policy has been plagued by hesitation. Every major weapon system the United States has provided from stingers to Abrams to attack comes only came after serious congressional pressure, and it usually arrived months late and in insufficient numbers. The President's hand wringing has only prolonged the war and driven up cost in terms of dollars and lives. Meanwhile, the US sanctions have failed to make much of a dent in Putin's war machine.

The President's use, the president should use the billions frozen in Russian assets to support Ukraine, and he should arm Ukraine at the speed of relevance. But in order for that to happen, Congress needs to pass the National Security supplemental. If the United States isn't able to send additional weapons to Ukraine, Putin will win. And I would remind my colleagues that nearly all the money we're spending to arm Ukraine doesn't leave this country.

It goes directly to us come Companies in American workers to produce more weapons at a faster pace. This funding is revitalizing our defense industrial base. After decades of atrophy, it's exactly what we need to do to prepare for potential conflict with China. But we can't do it all.

The president needs to force our European allies to do more. While the UK Poland and ball and the Baltic states and the Czech Republic are punching well above their weight, there are some European countries that can and must do more. We all want this war to end. But that can't happen if the West hedges.

If Putin thinks he can win, he won't come to the bargaining table. The quickest way to end this conflict is to strengthen Ukraine's negotiating position by ensuring they are well armed and well supplied. I look forward to working with my colleagues to do just that. Finally, last week marked the 75th anniversary of the founding of NATO.

NATO has been enormous ly successful at keeping America and our allies secure and providing the deterrence necessary to avoid another world war. But as we enter this new era, where China Russia, Iran and North Korea are working together to

flaunt international laws and destabilize whole regions, NATO needs to broaden its focus. It needs to secure its supply chains and reduce its dependency on China and Russia for goods and energy. And all NATO nations must meet their requirement to spend at least 2% of their GDP on defense.

With a war raging in Eastern Europe, it's entirely unacceptable that a dozen nations are still falling short. When NATO meets in Washington this summer, the president should insist should demand these nations present a clear plan on how they will meet the 2% benchmark. As soon as possible. Every member state needs to fulfill its commitment because now more than ever, we need a strong NATO.

I look forward to our discussion today and hearing from our witnesses about their security posture in Europe. And with that, I yield my friend and colleague, the Ranking Member.

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with almost all of what the Chairman said particularly about the importance of NATO and the importance of the fight in Ukraine, I definitely look forward to hearing from our witnesses who are very well positioned to update us on the specifics of that fight and on the on the Alliance that is pushing back against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. And I will just right off the top foot stop the point. The House has waited months now to approve the security package to help protect Ukraine.

You know, weeks ago, we were too late. And now every day is at an extreme cost to our ability to deter Russia, to deter Russia and Ukraine. But as the Chairman correctly pointed out, to deter the whole broad Alliance that is trying to basically tear down the international rules based system, all of that pushes them forward. So we have the bill, the Senate bill, that we can pass, I would urge every member of this body to ask the speaker and implore the speaker to bring that up for a vote, it would pass the House and be signed by the President in short order.

All we need is a little democracy, give us the chance to vote on that bill so that we can give Ukraine the help that they so desperately need, would love to get an update today from our witnesses about the fight in Ukraine. You know, my personal opinion is that Ukraine is in a strong position to stop Russia where they are. If we give them the help, then this is where I have a tiny little bit of disagreement with the Chairman's remarks. I think the Biden administration has been very clear on their policy from day one, which is defend Ukraine make sure that we maintain a sovereign democratic Ukraine, while not stumbling into World War Three with Russia.

And that second goal is not irrelevant. Okay. Making sure that that didn't happen is an important part of the policy, because that would make everything vastly worse. It is not simply a matter of we're going to war with Russia, no matter what.

There are very complicated calculations to make sure that we don't stumble into that broader war, which would definitely jeopardize our interests and the world's interest, which means that taking some care, and how we do that was actually a very smart policy. But even with that, if we go back to February of 2022, when the war started, the assumption was, it was over. There was nothing Ukraine could do. Russia would take them out in a matter of weeks.

The coalition that was pulled together in large part by this President, and by this administration, that built a 50 nation strong coalition to support Ukraine is the reason part of the reason the other part being Ukraine's incredible courage and ability to fight that that was stopped. I think we need to recognize that we also need to recognize As the other point, and I'll get back to agreement with the Chairman at this point, that if we walk away from that mission, that will undermine our ability to build the alliances that we need to confront all elements of this not just Putin, but China, and Iran and North Korea and Hamas and Hezbollah and all the groups that threaten us. So you can't say, well, we need to walk away from Ukraine, because China is more important. If China is more important, that just emphasizes the fact that we should not walk away from Ukraine as we go forward.

The other piece that I'm interested in both of our witnesses, thoughts is on the sanctions piece. You know, part of the reason that sanctions have not been as effective as we would have liked, is because China in particular has been there as an economic backstop, but not just China. Other nations like India, South Africa, Brazil, have continued to do business, there was a fundamental shift in US economic power globally, and that there are other nations now that are stepping into that void, we don't have the ability to simply choke off another nation that we once had, because of that alliance that is being built. And I think that means that we should start thinking about well, how do we deal with that?

What is a new strategy to recognize that we are definitely in a competition now for economic primacy in the world? And how do we best confront that competition, I'm worried that we overly rely on sanctions, certainly not in this case, not where Russia is concerned, but a number of other cases that push nations across the globe away from us and into the arms of China

and Russia, which only further weakens our ability to hold Russia to account for this war. But let me close where I started. And that is the importance of Ukraine, Ukraine can in fact, when they can maintain a sovereign democratic Ukraine and stop Russia, but only if we help them.

And the implications of that, certainly for NATO more broadly, are profound. So I urge the speaker again, give us that vote so that we can help Ukraine defend the interests that are important to us, as well as to Ukraine and the rest of the world without a yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

The Ranking Member now introduce the witnesses. We have the honorable Celeste Wallander, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for international security affairs and also General General Christopher Cobolli is the commander of US European command. I welcome the witnesses. Ms. Wallander.

We'll start with you.

Celeste Wallander

Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith and distinguished members of the Committee. This is a great opportunity to testify. And I want to also thank you for the support of Congress and the Committee.

To enable the Department of Defense's operations and posture in Europe, it is an honor to appear alongside general Kavali. With its unprovoked invasion in 2022, Russia revealed its determination to revert to an international system that rewards aggression, in response to Putin's challenge, and to ensure continued deterrence and defense of our collective security. The Department has enhanced its posture in Europe over the last two years. But we are not alone.

I can report that our allies in Europe are sharing the responsibility for collective defense. Together with our allies, the Department is committed to reinforcing the lesson that aggression will result in very costly failure, American security and prosper and prosperity rely on that fact. In Ukraine, our strategic goal is to see a sovereign, independent, economically viable and democratic Ukraine emerge from Russia's failure, a Ukraine with the means to deter and defend itself against further aggression. Russian forces continue their assault in Ukraine's eastern South, and target civilians and critical infrastructure across Ukraine, Ukraine's defenses and its population will face devastation without additional US security assistance to join with Europe's.

With congressional support, we will strengthen Ukraine in forging a strong defense industrial base that provides Ukraine with its required capabilities and resilience. Meanwhile, we have organized our allies and partners into coalition's focused on key capability areas for Ukraine's Air Force, ground based air defense, artillery, maritime security, armor, information security, information technology, D mining and drones. Through us leadership of the Ukraine defense contact group, we have provided more than \$88 billion in security assistance to Ukraine. US leadership is ensuring that Russia is bearing enormous costs as a result of its war against Ukraine.

Russia has expended \$211 billion to equip, deploy, maintain and sustain operations in Ukraine. Resources that Russia is limited economy ill afford Words, Russia's Armed Forces have suffered at least 315,315 100,000 casualties in the fight. Yet, because of Putin's obsessions, Putin's Russia will be a threat to European and US security for years. DOD has focused on our defense and on deterring Russia from attacks on the United States and our NATO allies.

NATO is stronger today than ever. Finland and Sweden, our allies and more allies than ever are devoting at minimum 2% of GDP to defense. Today, 18 allies meet the 2% requirement, compared to only nine in 2020. Several more will meet 2% by the July Washington summit in 2024.

NATO allies will invest a total of \$470 billion in defense, which amounts to 2% of the aggregate GDP. Of all of the members of the alliance. NATO Allies together are answering the call to meet this historic threat. The Department will continue working with allies to defend our countries and our freedoms throughout Europe, including on its eastern flank those facing Russia, where American soldiers serve on the front line from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

America will welcome our allies this summer for the Washington NATO Summit to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the signing of the Washington Treaty that established the NATO alliance founded on freedom and democracy. There are also

states beyond NATO's Article Five umbrella threatened by Russia. Moldova recognizes the threat posed by Russia and is undertaking significant defense reforms. Moscow continues its occupation of 20% of Georgia's territory and maintains an unwelcome military presence in both Armenia and Azerbaijan.

DOD works with all four to strengthen ties build resilience, and advance Euro Atlantic integration. I want to emphasize how important Congress is to achieving our strategic objectives and Europe and beyond your reliable, stable and consistent support and funding are critical. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to your questions.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Thank you Dr. Wallander. General Cabella, you're recognized.

Christopher Cavoli

Thank you, Chairman, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the Committee. It's an honor to testify before you today on behalf of the men, women and families of US European command. I'd like to publicly recognize our service members shared sacrifice, and I'd like to praise their devotion to the mission and thank you for your support of them. I'm lucky to be accompanied by Command Sergeant Major Rob Abernathy here today, who represents those men, women and families and I'm honored to testify next to Dr. Wallander.

We're facing challenging times to say the least in the European Theater. Russia's brutal, unprovoked war has ravaged Ukraine for over two years. Their forces are demolishing cities and are destroying innocent lives on a scale we have not seen since the Second World War. Moreover, Russia is turning to the People's Republic of China, Iran and North Korea to sustain its campaign in Ukraine.

These countries are forming interlocking strategic partnerships in an attempt to challenge the existing order. This is profoundly inimical to US national interests, and Russia sign shows no signs of stopping. Nor does Russia intend to stop with Ukraine. Russia presents a chronic threat.

US EUCOM has responded to this Russian threat by enhancing our deterrence posture across Europe. We have strengthened our eastern flank with rotational force deployments, we have expanded pre position stocks, and we've modernized our infrastructure to enable rapid reception of reinforcing forces. We have demonstrated this capability to reinforce in all domains through dozens of multinational training exercises. So we're ready to defend and this allows us to deter, and we have deterred Russia from attacking our alliances.

USU comm is also very proud to lead the international effort and support of Ukraine. We do this through the security assistance group Ukraine, sag u, which is led by Lieutenant General Tony Agudo. In the past 26 months of this war, the US and our partners have delivered vast amounts of critical munitions and equipment to our Ukrainian colleagues. The sag EU has facilitated a full range of training to promote unit readiness.

We have ensured that Ukraine knows how to use their new equipment and knows how to maintain it. Nevertheless, Russia persist and its vicious campaign. And meanwhile, Ukraine remains almost entirely dependent on external support to stay in this fight. The severity of this moment cannot be overstated.

If we do not continue to support Ukraine, Ukraine could lose. So our efforts are great. But in all of this, US UConn is not alone. war in Europe has given our allies and partners clear purpose and unity.

And they've seized the opportunity presented by this catastrophe over the past year, there have been profound changes. In NATO, we have new war plans. For the first time in 35 years, we have a new force model and a new readiness model. It makes more than 700% more European troops available to the Supreme Allied Commander me than just a couple of years ago, we have a streamlined and focused command structure.

We have new authorities that give me the ability to respond to crisis in a timely manner. and European governments are backing these organizational changes with a concrete uptick in investment in 2020. For at least 20 nations are expected to meet the 2% of GDP defense spending mark. This compares to only three that did so in 2014.

Continued US leadership is essential however, our allies are stepping up. But they require and they hope for our continued leadership, in example, by upholding our commitment to Ukraine, and by demonstrating steadfast cohesion with the NATO

alliance, we provide a clear deterrent to our adversaries should that deterrence fail us EUCOM alongside our allies is ready to fight and win. I thank Congress for your unwavering support to your servicemen and women, to our mission to their safety and to their well being. Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith on behalf of the entire European Command.

Thank you again for this opportunity today. I very much look forward to your questions.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

I think the witnesses I recognize, recognize myself for questions. General Cobolli, what will be the consequences for Ukraine, the United States and NATO, if Congress fails to in a timely manner pass the supplemental funding bill.

Christopher Cavoli

Chairman Rogers, you know, I can't predict the future. But I can, I can do simple math. And when I look at the supply rates, I look at the supply sources when I look at the consumption rates, if we do not continue to support Ukraine, Ukraine will run out of artillery shells and will run out of air defense interceptors. in fairly short order, Mr. Chairman, based on my experience in 37, plus years in the US military, if one side can shoot and the other side, can't shoot back, the side that can't shoot back loses.

So the stakes are very high. We are the main supplier of ground based air defense and artillery shells for Ukraine right now, it's important to note that our allies are increasing their production rates, they're just not able to take it all under their control yet, they just don't have the supplies. They're increasing rapidly. Both NATO and the European Union are working to increase European production.

That will be the first part of the bridge to the future. And then meanwhile, we're all working with Ukraine to increase their organic production rates. They're already producing about 11,000 artillery shells a year and some other things. So we're bringing that up, but in the meantime, they're really dependent this year.

On us, Mr. Chairman, and without our support, they will not be able to prevail.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Dr. Wallander, some of our members are frustrated, they feel like the administration doesn't have a clear plan or objective in Ukraine, could you articulate that for us?

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The the objective is Russia's strategic failure. Putin's goal is to subjugate Ukraine, to strip it of its sovereignty and independence, but also to weaken and subvert Europe, America, and especially, of course, the NATO alliance. So our objectives and what has guided our policies for the last two years is that Ukraine remain a sovereign, independent European country that is able to defend and deter and to deliver that failure to Putin.

And Ukraine is doing that with our support every day. And it is to strengthen the NATO alliance to defend America's European security, which is the core of our global security. Our alliances in Europe enables American military presence more broadly, globally, as well as to defend and deter against Russia. And China's watching how we perform in Europe, because they're drawing lessons for how we will live up to our commitments to allies and partners in the Indo Pacific.

So we need to ensure that Putin also fail in his goal to undermine European security. We are doing this out of self interest out of American national security interests, as well as, of course, the admiration that we Americans feel for Ukraine. But in the end, we are doing this so that Americans can be secure at home and abroad.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

General Cambodia, if if funding is not provided by the US and NATO for Ukraine and government falls, do you believe that Russia will take the entirety of the country or just a portion thereof? Mr.

Christopher Cavoli

Chairman, I believe that Russia will take as much of that country as they can get. And if the Ukrainian Armed Forces are not able to hold, they'll take as much as they can. This could in the worst case put Russian soldiers throughout Ukraine, which

would put them on many more NATO country borders than they are currently. And that would, that would cost an awful lot for us to deal with.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

And Do y'all have an expectation of what would happen next after assuming that Ukraine falls in Russia takes the entirety of the nation? At some point? Do you believe there'll be further aggression or not? And if so, what would that be?

I

Christopher Cavoli

Believe Russia would be emboldened. Mr. Chairman, I believe at some point, they would commit further aggression. And if I if I may, I'd like to ask Celeste if she has that as well.

Celeste Wallander

I fully agree with general Kavali. Putin is not going to stop at Ukraine. Ukraine is a step towards undermining European security and the Transatlantic Alliance and therefore American security. thank

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

The witnesses Chair recognizes the Ranking Member for any questions that you may have.

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Corolla taking the flip side of that question, if we get assistance to Ukraine, as is currently outlined, what do you assess their chances of stopping Russia? Where they're at at least right now?

Christopher Cavoli

Sir, I think those chances would be very good, I think they would be able to do it. We worked very closely with them on on their general plans, and, and the way to accomplish them, and they have solid plans, they have a solid approach to their defense. It does need to be resourced however.

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.)

Because at the moment Russia is trying to press the advantage they have because Ukraine is rationing what they use because of the lack of support. But even then, you know, Russia seems to be struggling to break through. Can you give us your assessment as to why that is? What are the weaknesses or strengths of the Russian force and why they're still in the situation they're in?

Christopher Cavoli

Absolutely. The first and primary reason the Russians are unable to break through is due to the tenacity of the Ukrainian defenders. They are defending very, very hard, they fight very hard they fight every day. On the Russian side, the Russians are struggling to put together combined arms operations or operations at the battalion level above the company level, it's very hard to aggregate very small unit actions into a larger offensive, they are trying, they're spending enormous quantities of material and enormous amounts of life to try to break through just by piling small attack after small attack.

It has not worked so far. But in the end numbers matter and warfare, of course, as you know, Ranking Member Smith and those those numbers. If we don't support Ukraine will favor the Russians over time. Thank you

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.)

And Dr. Wall under a more difficult policy question. The other aspect of the the Biden administration's policy here is to make sure that there was a sovereign democratic Ukraine. Yes, Russia focus that you emphasized? And your answer to the chairman's question is there.

But we wanted to make sure that Ukraine was there if we were able to get them support, and we stop Russia, where they're at. That, of course, is not the ultimate objective of Ukraine. Ukraine would like to take back all of the territory back to the pre 2014 borders. At the moment, that seems unrealistic, what would you say is the scenario and the administration's position on negotiations so we get them the aid we stop Russia so that Russia cannot achieve their maximum mullahs goals?

I see risk if at that point, we continue out, we got to keep fighting because we got to get it all back. How do you have that very difficult discussion with Ukraine and also crucially with other Eastern European allies, who are quite right, I mean, Ukraine should have you know, pre 2014 borders, but but should and what what should happen is in the same as what can happen, how do you handle that discussion, to get to a piece in Ukraine?

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman Smith. First and most important is we, our policy is to fight to preserve to support Ukraine so that it is sovereign and can make its own choices. So we have to understand that in the end it is the Ukrainian people and their leadership who will decide how whether in what terms they might be willing to negotiate with Russia. And it's very important to remember that, and we are supporting them in a prime in security assistance, but also economic assistance and other parts of the US government so that Ukraine can be that sovereign country and have that decision and live to see that day.

I do think there is a misconception that what Putin is after his territory, he's not after territory. He's not after Buck moods are of the WQA, or even Odetta. He's after Ukraine. Yes.

And so we have to understand that while there may be a negotiation over territory, at some point, some territorial resolution, we have to be ready for the fact that that probably doesn't mean that Putin gives up on the goal to subvert Ukraine and through Ukraine, Europe. So we have to do both things. We have to support Ukraine and in negotiations, if it chooses to negotiation, negotiate, but we must not be fooled into thinking that brings an era of peace and cooperation back any negotiation

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.)

Would have to make make sure that there were clear security protections for Ukraine going forward, we could not simply rely on Putin's word that he would not go further. I completely agree with that. I yield back. Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Scott.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Wilder, I have a tremendous amount of respect for you. I would tell you, I disagree on the Odessa statement, I do think Putin wants Odessa, I think it gives him control of the economy of Ukraine. And that port is extremely important to him.

And I think that he would like to charge a tax on everything, leave in that port and give it to one of his oligarchs, or keep a portion of it for himself. But my question gets to your statement about Russia strategic failure being the Biden administration's goal. Certainly that's my goal. I want Russia to fail a little Putin to fail.

I want Ukraine to win. And you also talked about Russia's limited economy. But most numbers show that Russia's economy grew at a rate of 3.6% for 2023. Is that your understanding?

Celeste Wallander

Yes. And its inflation rate is 13%. Okay,

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

So it's 13% nation

Celeste Wallander

Rate is 13%. Okay.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

But their economy is growing. And the Biden administration has looked the other way, while India whose economy is also growing at a pace that's actually about 7%. has bought billions of dollars worth of oil from Russia in violation of the sanctions? Is it correct?

I want to ask you about the opinion on the Biden administration. I will ask you though, is it correct that India has purchased billions of dollars worth of oil in violation of the sanctions from Russia?

Celeste Wallander

India has purchased oil from Russia, yes,

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

In violation of the sanctions? i That

Celeste Wallander

Would be a technical issue on whether they are paying more than the price cap, and I'm afraid I'd have to get back to you. Okay,

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Fair enough. As I said, I respect you. I'm not trying to play gotcha here. But my concern is that there are things that Biden administration could do that would hurt Russia's economy, and then and they have not done it.

I'm also concerned with the fact that Russia, when the Ukrainians hit Russia's oil and gas infrastructure, the Biden administration came out and condemn the Ukrainians for hitting Russia's oil and gas infrastructure and suggested that they should not do that again. Can you tell me why? While Russia is attacking Ukrainians, oil and gas and energy sector of Washington, the Ukrainians attack the Russian oil and gas and energy sector.

Celeste Wallander

The issue on attacking critical infrastructure is when those are civilian targets. We have concerns because Ukraine holds itself to the highest standards of observing the laws of armed conflict. And that's one of the elements of being a European democracy. But

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

But the Russians are attacking the oil and gas infrastructure in Ukraine, correct? Absolutely. And if you're going to win a war, you can't sit back and take punches and not deliver punches. So Washington, the Ukrainians attack the oil and gas infrastructure in Russia.

Celeste Wallander

Congressman, we have concerns about striking at civilian targets. When we support countries again, this is Ukraine sovereign decision, but we express those concerns

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

But but those oil and gas infrastructures in Russia are owned by the Kremlin. Correct. It's not like they're owned by a private corporation that have shareholders and private assets are being destroyed.

Celeste Wallander

They are owned by private Russian citizens who are part of the Putin regime. That is correct.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

I mean, it makes sense to me that we should destroy him. General General Kavali. You talked a lot about our NATO partners in their ascension to the 2%. Russia is currently spending, as I understand it, 6% of their GDP on their military.

My question is, is the 2%. Enough, if your enemy is spending 6%, if your greatest threat is coming from a country that is spending 6% of GDP? Should that 2% threshold? Should we work to raise that 2% threshold for the NATO partnerships?

Christopher Cavoli

Thanks, Congressman. So first of all, there is a lively discussion among the nations in NATO right now about whether 2% is even even any longer the relevant figure, should it be higher. As you know, a number of our allies are spending significantly above 2%. I'd call attention to Poland here, especially which is closing in on 4% of GDP.

I personally believe in the absence of any any North Atlantic Council decision or agreement, I do think we're going to find that three to 2% is too low a figure. We have plans that have driven for structure requirements that nations are now going to be asked to build towards. So there's a there's a blueprint, there's a shopping list for that 2%. And I think we're going to find the 2% goes pretty quickly.

Congress.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentleman's time has expired. Chair now recognizes gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Courtney. Thank you,

Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.)

Mr. Chairman. And, again, just want to join the Chairman and the Ranking Member in terms of the urgency of getting this supplemental assistance package voted on again, I think it's important to remember that the vote in the Senate was 70, to 28, which, you know, in this polarized environment, that sends a very strong, confident message that the votes will be there in the House, if we take this measure up, and hopefully we could do it tonight, there is a discharge petition that's actually been filed to force a vote. And it's just shy of 200 to 18, is the magic number.

And again, something hopefully, members will think about, as the clock keeps ticking in terms of the urgency of this issue. Joe, your testimony, pretty powerfully described the fact that in and pages two to five about the fact that you know, Russia, despite the like horrific losses that they're experiencing, that is not slowing down investment in their military and their defense sector sector. And you and I just had a brief conversation to talk about, you know, one of the areas where they have been continuing to invest is in the undersea domain, particularly, again, because of the their presence and activities in the North Atlantic. They've been steadily increasing over the years with construction of more sophisticated submarines, such as the separate events Classic and the upgraded kilo platforms.

Again, I know a lot of this sort of topic has to happen or be discussed in a classified setting. But I guess the question, is that in terms of your command, I mean, you and your predecessors have testified to this in the past. The Russian submarine activity in the North Atlantic is steadily surely in 2022 2023 2024 growing, is that correct? Absolutely correct.

And the can you talk about the need for, you know, our Navy to again, have adequate attack submarine fleet to be out there to again safely and effectively conduct anti submarine warfare?

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, Congressman, thank you for the opportunity, in fact, because I think it's an extremely important topic. We absolutely have a need for a strong undersea warfare capability. As you pointed out, the Russian losses in Ukraine have been primarily in the land domain, we do not see significant losses in the air domain, especially their long range and strategic aviation fleets. Other than the Black Sea Fleet losses, we see no losses in the rest of the Russian Navy fleet.

And in the modernizing rapidly modernizing nuclear forces, we see continued investment and heightened level of activities underwater especially. So our ability to handle that depends on a number of different things, but one of the primary things it depends on is our attack submarine fleet. And we have requirements that I share with us NORTHCOM to defend the United States against the threat posed by Russian submarines. And we can always use more so Marines to pursue that threat, sir.

So

Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.)

Just put it more bluntly, I mean, your requests in terms of requirements are not met in terms of what is available in terms of the missions, my

Christopher Cavoli

Requirements exceed what, what what I am provided on, on a regular basis. Right. Thank

Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.)

You. Again, you mentioned the Black Sea, you know, activities that are out there. I mean, in terms of people who are sort of have doubts about Ukraine's commitment to stay in the fight here. I mean, it actually has been just, in my opinion, under played success in terms of how they have, with no navy, really been able to inflict incredible losses.

20% of the Black Sea Fleet was the latest number I saw. And can you just sort of comment in terms of, you know, that sort of signal that, you know, they're in the fight? And there is a plan?

Christopher Cavoli

Absolutely. It's, it's easy sometimes, I think, Congressman, for us to stare at the fight on the land, and think that it represents the totality of the situation, it does not the fight on the Black Sea, and the fight for the Black Sea is an important part of this. It's especially important because of what it does for the Ukrainian economy. Without the rollback of the Black Sea Fleet.

We wouldn't be able to get as much of Ukraine's grain out and onto market that would cause food security problems across the globe and severe and acute problems for the economy of Ukraine, which is obviously under great stresses. It is I think the Ukrainians have done a fantastic and groundbreaking job, using largely unmanned systems to push the Russian fleet back east of Crimea. It is very rare that a Russian warship ventures past the Western Sun ventures west of the southern tip of Crimea right now. It's a big success story.

And it's there's no back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee, Dr. Deja Lee.

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

Thank you, Dr. Wallander. First, I want to say thank you, I was pleased to see that the Pentagon Pentagon's OIG launched a new website last month that will allow the American people to directly see where our tax dollars are being spent to support Ukraine, something we've been talking about, I think for about six months in our briefings, it's still a pretty hard sell back home because people don't see a pathway to victory. Basically, what they're seeing is a stalemate that's got dragged on for two years now. And with the continued problems in our own country, with the border, etc.

It's hard to justify this spending, even though most of us in this room understand the importance of it. And one, one message it does seem to sell back home is when you talk about the the evolving alliances between Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea is almost an axis similar to World War Two, Germany and Italy and Japan. So that seems to get people's attention. What do you both see as a successful end of the conflict in Ukraine?

And what more can the administration and the DoD do to message the reasoning for spending this money to the folks back home?

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman. In addition to the strategic strategic objectives, that I already identified on as Ukraine remaining of sovereign, independent European democracy, let me clarify that we are also supporting Ukraine, to put it in the best possible position, should Russia want to negotiate an end to the conflict on Ukraine's terms, in order for Ukraine to be in the driver's seat in any negotiation, they have to have the advantage, and the military and security assistance support that we've been

providing to Ukraine has given them significant advantages, including controlling most of their black sea coasts, as General Kavalari pointed out. So those are the stakes. And if the answer also has to be that constituents need to understand that of the \$60 billion in the supplemental that was requested 48 billion of that goes to American industry, to either replenish US stocks or to procure for the longer term and to support general Cobolli forces in Europe who are working to defend and deter.

So that is money going, actually to American companies and to American citizens to support the work that they are doing for your European security.

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

And I think that's a message the President should deliver directly to the country. I've said that before. And I still think that, you know, they're not getting that message. I hear and understand what you're saying.

And I think it would help to hear that. I wanted to get both your opinion on Secretary Blinken announcement last week that Ukraine will become a member of NATO sooner or later. Seems like a pretty provocative remark. And I want to see if you had any response to it.

Celeste Wallander

US policy since I believe is 2008. has been that Ukraine will be a member of NATO some day. And we have focused our bilateral relationship as well as the work we do with NATO allies to bring Ukraine up to the standards of not just NATO membership, but EU membership, because that's the aspiration of the Ukrainian people. They've elected leaders again and again, who have promised to keep Ukraine on that path.

So that that Secretary Blinken was reiterating a long standing bipartisan policy.

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

Okay. Well, if memory serves just two years ago, that was a major red line for Putin. If Ukraine entered NATO, the escalation could go way beyond Ukraine. At least that was his threat.

And one of the reasons that I think even as the Lansky said, Ukraine does not want to be a member of NATO, or at least at that time. So it just seems antithetical in a way to throw that out there right now, what we're trying to secure peace and or victory in Ukraine. You know, maybe that's something that should have happened two years ago, in hindsight, but who knows, but it just seemed pretty bold. General.

Did you have any opinion on that?

Christopher Cavoli

No, not with regard to US policy. Congressman, I would just add from a NATO's perspective, NATO's agreed policy among the 32 nations, is that when the time is right, and all allies agree, Ukraine will become a member of the alliance. But those two conditions are an important part of of NATO's NATO's position. They have not been met yet.

Okay,

Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.)

I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Garamendi, for five minutes.

Rep. John Garamendi (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And a personal thank you to you for your strong statement about the necessity of passing the supplemental bill, your leadership, and the colleagues, all of us on this Committee play a critical role in getting that done. And my question really goes to general Kavalari. In your written statement, you continue to use, quote, despite its military evidence, deficiencies, dysfunction, Russia, continues to pose an existential threat to Ukraine.

Ukraine cannot sustain the fight alone, the United States, our allies and partners must continue to provide Ukraine with munitions, weapons and material. How dire is the situation in Ukraine? And what is the role of the United States not providing support to that dire situation? If in fact, it is dire?

Christopher Cavoli

Thank you, Congressman. The situation is extremely serious. The the best way to think about this is in terms of what are the specific things that Ukraine needs, our allies provide for some of those things, right. For instance, tanks 90%, more than 90% of the tanks that have been given have not been given by the United States.

They've been given by allies, they sustained by allies 100% of the fuel, the petroleum products that Ukraine needs have been provided by allies not by not by the United States. But there are two places where the American contribution is critical there in the provision of artillery munitions, and interceptors for air defense. Those two things also happen to be the most critical things on the battlefield. The biggest killer on the battlefield is artillery.

In most conflicts, but in this one, definitely. And should Ukraine run out, they would run out because we stopped supplying because we supply the lion's share of that 155. Likewise, the air defense interceptor sir Russia launches very large scale attacks every few days, keeping with their production rate, what we believe their production rate to be they produce, they save up, they launch a big attack, those attacks would absolutely cripple the economy and the civil society as well as the military of Ukraine, if they were not defended against without us provision of interceptors. That will happen.

And in closed session, Congressman, I'd be delighted to talk to you about the exact consumption rates and exactly how long I would predict things could go on without without a supplemental.

Rep. John Garamendi (D-Calif.)

I think it's extremely important that in an open session, we fully understand the critical situation and the timeframes associated with it to the extent that you can and describe it. You've already described it as an existential dire threat without United States, munitions, 155 and air defense. Plow that field and other time. If you want to restate it, restate it, it's absolutely critical that this Congress and the American public understand the situation.

So, say it again, if you need to and Miss Wallander, if you would also chime in here, the nurse perspective

Celeste Wallander

Just two points. To reinforce this. We are already seeing the effects of the failure to pass the supplemental the Ukrainians are having to use less artillery. They're having the Russians have made some advances.

And they're having to decide what to defend. And that's why the Russian attacks are getting through and really harming the Ukrainian electricity grid. So we're or we don't need to imagine we're already seeing it, General. So

Christopher Cavoli

The Ukrainians have been husbanding their shells in anticipation of, you know, the supply running out, Congressman. They have been rationing them, they are now being out shot by the Russian side five to one. So Russians fire five times as many artillery shells at the Ukrainians then the Ukrainians are able to fire back. That will immediately go to 10 to one in a matter of weeks.

We're not talking about months. We're not typing a talking hypothetically. Again, I'd like to be detailed in closed session, but we're talking about weeks. Congressman, thank you for the opportunity to underline that.

I do deal with time when

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

You're not recognized gentleman from Nebraska. Mr. Bacon.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

Thank you both for being here. Appreciate your testimony. I was meeting with Israeli families of hostages. So I may duplicate some of the questions but firstly, I would like to know if Russians prevailed in Ukraine.

What's the likely outcome for Moldova?

Celeste Wallander

Well, Russia already occupies Moldova territory. It uses that military occupation to subvert Moldova's democracy and its economy. Corruption is rampant because of that Russian influence. And Moldova is very much in Russian policy, unfinished business.

They've been limited by being able to control more territory because Moldova because Ukraine stands between Moldova and Russia. But Moldova is ranks high. As part of Putin's unfinished business.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

It stands to reason Ukraine falls, Moldova will be next. Also, Russia leaders have been threatening the Estonian Prime Minister, the Latvian Prime Minister of fact a leader, and the Kremlin called them fake states. How much threat will the Baltics be under if Ukraine falls?

Celeste Wallander

Again, Russian nationalists and Putin themselves are very public and clear that they believe that the status of the Baltic states as former elements of the Russian Empire remains unresolved. And that is business that they intend to get to. I do believe that NATO, NATO's Article Five commitment is strong and credible, and we need to keep it so. But we also need to make sure that Russia's operations in Ukraine are a failure.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

But what we're saying here is this is not the sport with Ukraine, by the way, just on its own merits as barbaric. Russia is invading a country that was independent, wanted to go towards the west want to go to free markets, was an unprovoked invasion by by Russia. So it's, it's been in its own right. But this war with Ukraine is not just about Ukraine.

Would you agree?

Celeste Wallander

I absolutely agree with you, sir.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

Well, thank you. I am the Baltic security Chair. I'd like to maybe ask General cupola, if you could talk a little bit about what we're doing there. I know we're trying to get better air defenses are trying to get more a division equivalent therewith Could you give us an update how we're doing because I think it's very much in our national security interest.

I have a deterrence in the Baltics.

Christopher Cavoli

First of all, Congressman, I agree with you on that last point. Absolutely. I think our ability to help deter conflict in the Baltics is extremely important. It is a vulnerable part, geographically speaking military geography of the Alliance.

I would also point out that Dr. Wallander his comments about about Russia's intentions which, which reflected yours. Those are shared by the leaders of those countries. And they feel them acutely and talk to me about them frequently, and I agree with their concerns. So Congress has been very generous and provided for Baltic initiative Security Initiative,

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

Which point out our initiative which rag on it.

Christopher Cavoli

We're about 1.4 billion into that right now. We have started with air and missile defense improvements. We've completed the sensor network, and now we're moving into effectors, or the shooters. I think it's having a big effect there in parallel.

We've got the plans in place for the other five components, which include land forces, medical forces, and the other things you're aware of, sir, it's going very well. I mean, we have eager eager partners there, right? The three Baltic countries, in and of themselves, just individually are very serious about their defense, and have done you know, extraordinary things to prepare different things in some cases, but extraordinary. In the case of Latvia, they've reintroduced conscription, for example, which is not something we would have been thinking about some years ago.

In addition to the Baltic Security Initiative, we're doing a few other things. As the Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, I'm responsible to put together a plan for rotational air and missile defense, one of the primary locations for those rotations is going to be in the Baltic country. And then we have bilateral agreements that have been made between our Secretary and the and the ministers of all three countries. So as the US European command Commander, I maintain forces in each of those countries, they work to improve our interoperability and and stiffen the the defense capabilities.

Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)

I don't have really time for another question. But I have to make a comment. So I'm free to chew on. I support have an armoured units and Poland and Eastern Europe.

But being at the rotational it's been a huge strain on the families. And we've saw report that suicide rates for folks in these armored units are significantly higher than the rest of the army. I think they need some kind of stability of maybe permanency there. We don't have time for you to answer.

But this is a huge concern for many of us. Thank you. I yield.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Yeah. And I would echo that I would like to have more discussion with you general about exactly that point. But anyway, we'll recognize the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Key,

Rep. Bill Keating (D-Mass.)

I think it was Chairman. General Corolla. Yeah. You turn this is extremely serious.

You said that the severity of this moment, this moment, can't be overstated. And I've heard political deflection here in this Committee today. And I hear it out. Outside of this Committee room, on the floor, I hear it in all kinds of news reports, deflection, deflection that mentioning President Biden that, you know, two or three years ago, maybe he should have done more deflection, that there's no policy, in spite of the fact that Dr. Wallander just concisely laid out our policy, very clearly, deflection, that Europe's not doing enough.

And why should we do anything if they're not doing enough when we know that the GDP of European countries is greater than ours committed to this, we know that a new NATO country like Finland, is committed to 10 years of their fight against Ukraine. We know even that, historically, Germany, for the first time since World War Two is deploying troops, right in Lithuania, something that you wouldn't believe was possible, even a year ago, to put a line of defense up against Russia's aggression. And we've heard the name Biden again and Biden again. Yet, we're here right now in this Congress with our responsibility, and one person is holding this up.

One person is holding up a huge, bipartisan supported package in the Senate, supported by the president administration, supported by the majority of people on this Committee across the aisle, and I think close to 300 members on the floor one person, but I have never heard the name speaker Johnson invoked once, not once the person that's holding this up, not once, and I hope during the Committee that will hear that that name, because he is holding this up. And we need action right now, which you've made very clear. The one thing I want to extend or is the idea that China is looking China China's doing more than looking right now. Chinese have entered agreement with Hungary, led by President Oban who the former president praises and emulates inked an agreement to allow the Chinese police to patrol the streets of Hungary a NATO country.

China has helped rebuild Russia's defense industrially and and economically militarily has helped them in this war, providing non lethal assistance and drones and computer chips and increase imports and Russian goods by 12%. Last year, China's no

limit partnership has been parroting Russian disinformation about Ukraine. And several European ports have been entered into agreements with China's national transportation logistics public information platform where they present a risk, I believe, to US and NATO allies that use these European ports to ship military equipment throughout the region. So all these things are real.

And we do nothing here in Congress, when we can do the one thing, that'd be the most important thing at this moment. That so serious, just want to comment for those two that don't recognize the threat to the rest of Europe, in terms of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, and that's the fact that just a few weeks ago, Belrose began military exercises on its border Belarus, the ally of Russia, in this, the proxy of Russia in this. They began military exercise in the border, not just with Ukraine, but with Lithuania and Poland. So I'd asked about the significance of this.

And to emphasize once again, what the threat is to the rest of Europe here, including with this recent military exercise to NATO countries, where we have an Article Five commitment, a commitment that Europe and our rest of our allies came to our call after 911 to do everything we can, including deploying troops in the ground US troops on the ground, if you could.

Christopher Cavoli

But thank you, Congressman. Yeah. So if Bella ruse is an extension of Russia, and its military is an extension of the Russian military, that closes the gap between the Russian Armed Forces and NATO, and that presents additional problems in terms of time space, in strictly military terms. Our allies there realize that our allies when faced with the weaponization of emigration, last a couple of years both, you know, state sponsored pushes of migrants across the border into Poland, Italy, Lithuania, both responded by by fortifying the border and closing the border with Belarus.

So relations with Belarus are going in the wrong direction, and it's because of Russia, and it does have military complications. And I beyond that, and perhaps Dr. Wallander has something to say.

Rep. Bill Keating (D-Mass.)

Thank you very much. I yield back.

Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.)

Mr. Moylan, you're recognized for five minutes.

Del. Jim Moylan (R-Guam)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, General for your leadership and working with our NATO allies. It's a lot of coordination to do. But obviously you're asking us to continue to support in which I absolutely do.

Our allies, of course, are are important in our future battles as well. And General, my first question regardless, just that, and NATO's responsibility and what they're able to do for future battles. Specifically, as we look at Guam, Hawaii and other US Pacific Island territories, are not covered under Article Five of the NATO chapter, meaning if these jurisdictions were attacked, NATO Allies would not be obligated to defend the United States. Now, while many countries have bound, they vowed to defend us Indo Pacific, what assurance can Eurocom give to my constituents in Guam regarding the relationship to NATO,

Christopher Cavoli

Or thank thanks, Congressman. First, a little bit about a little bit about the coverage of the North Atlantic Treaty or the Washington Treaty, as it were, Article Six lays out what the boundaries are, that were agreed at the time and have been routinely updated over the years it's north of the Tropic of Cancer is is the first thing that excludes French possessions in in Polynesia like French Polynesia. It excludes a British possession such as the Pitcairn Islands, and it technically excludes Guam. However, that is changeable.

It is amendable all nations to include the United States if elected not to amend that over the years and opportunities have come up. So as a highly technical matter, that that's correct. However, any nation under Article four, any nation that's attacked any place can always invoke consultations or article four, say I have been attacked, and I expect the rest of you to do something about it. And they may or may not choose to apply Article Five no matter what the treaty says.

So it is it is a technicality. Is it a technicality that's within our hands to to amend but I also think it's it's an extremely unlikely scenario. And I know that our allies are committed to our defense just as we are there, sir.

Del. Jim Moylan (R-Guam)

Thank you General, it's very assuring and appreciate that. My final question is the future battlefields will present some unique challenges in the form of great distance sea and air and sea on 2021 Rear Admiral do kinds of Chief logistic. For your calm stated. The contest environment demands Swift, adaptability and flexibility to develop new ways to address challenges.

One of those challenges will be the medical evacuation of our servicemembers general, given the different environments and climates and geographic combatant commands. Has there been talks of best practices for the most effective medical evaluation plans that will result in the continued tactical, operational and strategic advantages for our various commands and combatant commanders?

Christopher Cavoli

Yeah, absolutely, Congressman, it's something we work on quite a bit. We work on even harder now because of what we're observing in Ukraine, right that the casualty rates are just are just enormous. And if you contemplate a large scale war across the European continent, we can expect them to be greater. So medical evacuation and casualty evacuation inside the European Theater would necessarily And inevitably, include civilian infrastructure.

And we have coordination cells in NATO that help us do that. And do kites also was responsible for making sure that as US European command, we were plugged into that system. It is complicated, because each country has its own national health system, some don't have national health systems. So there's quite a patchwork to be put together at the tactical level, I think, you know, getting a casualty off the battlefield is something we're entirely capable of doing.

The further processing of casualties beyond that is where it would become complicated. The second point I would make on this has to do with the defense health agency and the transition to a new health care system. In the health care system, the military health care system, in the European theater, and I believe lung Aquilino feels this way in the Pacific as well, is actually an inherent part of our combat capability. And so we've been lucky to be able to, to be sort of last in line for some of the transition there.

And the final thing I'd say is, I am concerned about this, one of the only things I offered as an unfunded priority. Back to the back to the Congress this year, sir, was the construction of an aeromedical evacuation facility at Ramstein, thank you for the opportunity, sir.

Del. Jim Moylan (R-Guam)

I appreciate that. Thank you for your leadership and protecting our nation.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Thank you. I now recognize the gentlelady from Michigan Mr. Slaton?

Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Chairman. And I want to appreciate our Chairman and Ranking Member for their bipartisan support for aid. We do need to get it over the finish line and supporting it here in Committee and supporting it out in the world is great, but we need to get it on the floor. We've heard this repeatedly.

Speaker Johnson has a choice to make. I accept that it's a complicated choice. I accept that he's at risk of losing his job over that choice. But that's what leadership is.

It's it's the big boy pants and making tough choices. I also want to note that there's a discharge petition right now on the floor of the House. It's the exact bipartisan bill that the Senate passed, that includes Ukraine aid, we have one Republican who signed it on his way out the door, we need I think two more in order to have a vote that will pass on the House floor. So we're not without action here or without actions that we can take to move this forward.

Even members of this Committee, you've spoken eloquently about the consequences of not providing aid about what Putin will do what he's proven to do. I mean, what he's demonstrated he will do, you've talked about how China is watching and the demonstration this is setting to my knowledge unless someone corrects me, we the United States of America has never allowed a sitting democracy to be taken over by a sitting autocracy since World War Two, correct me if I'm wrong. So this would be precedent setting. And Ronald Reagan is right now spinning in his grave, that we are giving up or threatening to give up on peace versus peace through strength.

And I am super confused by the messages coming out of the other some of the members of the other side of the aisle, both here and in the Senate about how Vladimir Putin should get a choice on who gets a NATO that somehow he has a veto over our alliances. And maybe that logic would make sense if we thought that it would prevent him from invading other countries if a deal with him would prevent but he's gone into Moldova and Georgia and Ukraine and Ukraine again. So like he's done it people there is no deterring him, unless we take a strong stand and that includes USAID. I saw a report in The Washington Post yesterday that made my breath, vacate my body, that while we're complaining about how about the rise of Iranian weapons are being used by the Russians in Ukraine, that out of desperation the United States of America is now sending seized Iranian weapons from the Houthis from Yemen area to Ukraine.

Please give me the details on that and help us understand just the depths of our desperation, I guess, ASD Wallander.

Celeste Wallander

Allah can talk more about the details of provisions of specific capabilities to Ukraine. But we have used every opportunity to find ways since December to find extra stocks to work with allies and partners. And we've have had to get quite creative. And the Ukrainians have made good use of that while we wait for a decision on the supplemental.

Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-Mich.)

I just I think, again, if Ronald Reagan was spinning at our hesitance in providing arms to Ukraine, he is I don't know what exploding if he would see that seized Iranian weapons are now helping a partner, you know, stave off further invasion of their country? Can you outline for us what you think additional air defenses could do? Or basically, can you outline what you think would be sort of the next things that we would want to provide in terms of not quantity, but quality to the Ukrainians that might have a decisive impact? We have lots of questions about air defenses.

But can you walk me through a certain systems that are in this next tranche? That would be decisive?

Celeste Wallander

So thank you for the question. Because I want to highlight something that often gets missed, which is the supplemental would include not just PDA urgent the capability we can deliver next week as fast as you can can move it, but putting on contract things like Patriot systems, missiles, for replenishment missiles for nice Sam's replenishment missiles for Patriots, and those are long lead times. But the sooner we can put them on contract, the sooner we can get them to Ukraine. So Russia knows that that they can't wait us out that Ukraine will continue to be able to defend itself.

I'll turn to general quality to speak about priorities. But I think those are the stakes as well. Thanks. So

Christopher Cavoli

In addition to that, it's it's the monies that provide the demand signal that creates investment in the defense industrial base, and that's one of our big challenges getting getting our wartime production up congressman.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Time has expired Chair now recognizes gentleman from Indiana Mr. Banks,

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

Dr. Wallander, DOD admitted last month that it underestimated the cost of replacing American weapons we've sent to Ukraine leaving a \$10 billion hole in our own stockpiles, the day after announcing that it was overdrawn. The DoD took \$300 million that it found and immediately sent it to Ukraine. What Why didn't that money go to filling the \$10 billion hole in our own stocks?

Celeste Wallander

Congressman, I I'm, I apologize, I believe what we did was we figured we assess that we had overvalued the value of the stocks that were given to Ukraine. And that was what created. We hadn't used as much PDA authority, as we had originally estimated. So the the reference he made to that particular package was that there had been an overvaluation of what the material and stocks were.

So it gave us more headroom to be able to provide capabilities, there's the

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

Pain and the mysteriously finding the \$300 million. You say, overestimating, we unpack that more. What does that mean? happen?

Celeste Wallander

Yes, sir. The procedures are for PDA is to you're supposed to value it at the value of the existing stock, not the replacement value. The replenishment value is absolutely key, as you note and the replenishment money in the supplemental, is calculated at the cost of replenishing. But in terms of the value of the under the PDA authority, I know it's very technical, and in mind blowing, but the value of what we have authority from Congress to give Ukraine is supposed to be set at what the value of the stocks themselves was

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

This unusual, I mean 300 Mind blowing \$300 million. Seems like that would be very unusual.

Celeste Wallander

That was over a period of two years of PDAs. So I can't give you the exact percentage of what that was of the value of the PDA but I can follow up with you on that.

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

It seems to me like funny math. So we find we overvalue \$300 million so we send more money to Ukraine. I I'm trying to wrap my head around it I can't

Celeste Wallander

We sent more not money we cert we sent more capability more equipment

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

What Why the emphasis on sending more money to Ukraine over replenishing our stockpiles,

Celeste Wallander

There is not the those go hand in glove in replenishing our stock files, we need the authority and the appropriation from Congress, for the replenishment funds, as well as the authority for the PDA to

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

Be more interested in sending our stockpiles to Ukraine, instead of replenishing them here, I'm not trying to make a point, I'm just really confused by it, we find an extra 300 million we shovel it to Ukraine, that

Celeste Wallander

Again, that was the authority and it is matched by the replenishment money that that Congress has provided us, and that we need in order to be able to do more under the supplemental. So after

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

You found this \$300 million, as you said, mind blowing, is a great word for it. What did you do something to address that moving forward, that we're not going to find another that the Pentagon is not going to mysteriously find another \$300 million dollars in extra money next year? I mean, how do we, how do you account for that moving forward?

Celeste Wallander

We do believe that that was a one time opportunity that we were able to advance because of the waiting for the decision on the supplemental, we do not expect that there will be similar findings and savings. So

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

The public is hopefully paying attention to this hearing today. And they they hear about the Pentagon me the media covered this as well. headlines about 300 million \$300 million found at the Pentagon to me is is that embarrassing to you?

Celeste Wallander

I was relieved that we were able to provide capabilities to

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

More money to do more for Ukraine, but we the Pentagon was seriously fined 300 \$300 million in extra money that we can give to Ukraine. I mean, it's really is that embarrassing.

Celeste Wallander

I was relieved that we were able to find authority to be able to provide Ukraine with some artillery ammunition so that Ukrainian forces don't get overwhelmed on the frontlines.

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

Your colleagues said last year that it'd be it would be bad to send \$650,000,000.02 of US weapons to Taiwan without cash to replace them. Do you think it's dangerous to send Ukraine \$4 billion in weapon weaponry without the funding?

Celeste Wallander

We would not send capabilities to Ukraine were it not for Congress passing appropriations for replenishment I

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.)

Gotta say me I lose trust in the in you and the Pentagon when incredibly mind blowing \$300 million is found and sent to Ukraine rather than replenishing our own stockpiles is really bizarre. I yield

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Back. Chair now recognizes gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Bolton for five minutes.

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

Dr. Wallach, I have a question about disinformation. You want in your written statement that Russia cyber and disinformation campaigns continue to threaten Euro Atlantic security. We know that Russia has interfered in US elections since at least 2016.

And it's likely that Putin will ramp up disinformation campaigns as we move towards November's presidential election is Russia's disinformation machine trying to undermine us support for Ukraine.

Celeste Wallander

Russia's disinformation campaign machine is working not just in the United States to undermine support but throughout Europe and indeed globally. And it is being magnified and picked up by disinformation operations in places like advanced by China as

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

Well as Russia's different disinformation machine trying to undermine us support for NATO.

Celeste Wallander

Russia's disinformation machine has been ramped up to undermine support for NATO to try to raise doubts in Europe and in the United States about the value of the Alliance to American security. So

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

Would you say that when Republicans echo these sentiments trying to undermine support for Ukraine, trying to undermine support for NATO, they're sent they're essentially echoing Russian propaganda.

Celeste Wallander

I think it is extremely important to make sure that the American people know when they are being influenced by Russian disinformation. And exposing that disinformation is something that we work on in the interagency not not just DOD, but we work with state and with other agencies of the US government. So Americans understand very clearly where that disinformation is coming from.

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

Well, the Kremlin has made it very clear and a recently released trove of documents that they know exactly what they're doing and trying to get Republicans to support their cause. I'm also concerned about China's increasing willingness to conduct interesting disinformation and electoral interference campaigns against the US General Cobolli How is China coordinating with Russia to spread disinformation throughout the US and Europe?

Christopher Cavoli

Congressman, China coordinates both in general terms that is sort of echoing and sort of spontaneously echoing they echo each other's mess It was in that regard. And we also believe that there's some specific coordination and closed session. I think we could discuss the specifics of that. But your general point, I think is absolutely correct.

This is a concerted effort. And it's not a single nation doing it.

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

No, I mean, just I want to be clear, so everyone understands. Russia has a clear policy of trying to get conservative elements in the United States to trumpet their propaganda, and they're coordinating with China on this propaganda. So some members of Congress are becoming mouthpieces for Russian and essentially Chinese propaganda in the United States. I want to turn to a few lessons learned from Ukraine.

The conflict is providing an important insight into ways that electronic warfare and drones are used on the battlefield. And obviously, we have to learn from from these examples. I mean, we've seen \$5,000, drones take out \$5 million tanks with ease. So general kavali, what are some of the lessons that DOD is learning from the use and counter use of drones and electronic warfare in Ukraine?

And how are we quickly adopting those lessons for our own troops?

Christopher Cavoli

The Department of Defense and the services individually, are very closely studying, you know, what's going on in Ukraine through a variety of overt and not overt means, Congressman, we're studying it very closely at a technical level, as well as at a tactical level. Drones do seem to be a feature of this war that is unexpectedly significant. I personally think that it's we have

to be a little bit careful over drawing conclusions about it. Many of the drones involved are not very destructive, especially the small commercially available ones or homemade types.

And we don't yet see them being able to use drones being able to replace concentrated artillery fire, for example, but it's a great supplement to what's going on with regard to electronic warfare. A lot of it we're familiar with, you know, we've, you know, waged electronic warfare in the past, and we know how to defend against it. But the quantity of it and the ubiquity of it across the battlefield. So is working on a lot of technical solutions, Congressman,

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

So generally, if I go and visit some of your troops training in the field, are they going to be training in an environment with a lot of drones and a lot of electronic warfare? Are they going to have a fear? So can drones flying around? Yes, I

Christopher Cavoli

Think throughout the army right now, especially in the Marine Corps, the ground forces, you would find a great deal of experimentation, as well as rapid fielding of small drones. So across the force, both electronic warfare and drones are difficult to train with because of civil restrictions in airspace and things like that, and spectrum management. But we managed to and we're very enthusiastic about it. gentleman's

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Time has expired. Chair now recognizes Jim from Florida, Mr. Waltz.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to talk today about NATO contributions to its own defense. And you both stated in your opening statements, kind of patting ourselves on the back that we're going from the pathetic number of 11 out of 3031 member nations contributing its bare minimum of 2% to its national defense that, wow, we're going to 20 now, and we're on the right path. I think, frankly, that is the tyranny of low expectations.

And it has infected our national security apparatus for many, many decades, including the many years that the our European look we can we can be friends and allies and have tough conversations. But if we don't start imposing real consequences, and we don't start using the leverage we have, we literally cannot afford to subsidize European defense any longer. And what we often talk about, I mean, we're talking about the frontline European nations, they're contributing the Baltics, Poland. But when we're talking about France, when we're talking about Germany, when we're talking about Spain, when we're talking about Italy, they're not.

And all of those heads of state will be here in Washington for the Washington summit this summer. Dr. Wallander, how are we as a matter of policy, going to go from 11 to 31 contributing the minimum, the bare minimum? Not half, not a third, because we're continuously and you're asking us to go to the American people again and again, and we'll be having the same conversation at this posture hearing, Mr. Chairman, next year. Your American people dig deeper in your pockets because European politicians can't and won't get their people to dig deeper in their pockets a good deal for them.

It's a bad deal for the American people. This is pathetic. Half. Half is what we're congratulating ourselves for.

Do you think that's a good deal for the American people? Dr. Wallander?

Celeste Wallander

No, I fully agree with you it should be 32. And we press

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

What is your the administration's plan aside from asking to get them to do it. So

Celeste Wallander

The plan has already yielded improvement. And I we can share with you the updated numbers. There are, as of today 18 NATO allies who meet 2%, which is 14 too few. We expect around several more by the time of the summit to announce publicly that they have met to present and we expect several allies

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

That they've heard about 2% or that they're on some kind of future that

Celeste Wallander

They have reached 2% expect the number to be larger by the summit. We

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

Have Chancellor Schultz and his famous speech and 2022 just after the invasion, promised to enshrine the 2% in law, the German chancellor, he did not. In fact, they voted it down. In their parliament, the Italian Prime Minister Maloney promised in 2023, Italian defense spending would increase saying quote, Freedom has a price. At default, Italian defense spending is actually declining.

Span Spanish Prime Minister promises by 2029 2% it has to double its defense budget, it's not you know who is doubling their defense budget. In relation to the threat Japan is their Prime Minister is here. They're living up to their shared burden commitment. The European nations are not, Mr. Chairman.

It's not only the defense spending. What they are giving is in horrible condition. I'd like to enter into the record Ukraine rejects German Leopard tanks due to their poor condition.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Without objection.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

In this article, by Reuters, the tanks currently stranded in Poland constitute the second part of a large scale supply of German leper tanks by the way, these are the ones that they leveraged to give us to, to contribute Rs, the tanks were retired from active service more than a decade ago. So were our European allies are under giving. What they are giving is often late. What you see in the charts are often commitments and promises.

We saw that in Afghanistan for years and then what they are giving late and too few is often in poor condition. Dr. Wallander, how are we going to get to 32? Will you commit to get us to 32 within the next three years, is that possible?

Celeste Wallander

We will commit to work with those allies who have not met their commitment their required commitment that they agreed to it Vilnius and get to 32. One, by one

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentleman's time has expired, although he makes an outstanding point gentlelady from New Jersey, Miss Cheryl is recognized.

Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-N.J.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And it's really I think, as we've heard today, necessary that we get a vote on the floor of the bipartisan supplemental, we have been waiting now for far too long, and every day that we wait, Ukraine suffers and those fighting for Ukraine suffer. And it's estimated that since Poons, illegal invasion of Ukraine, our allies and partners have actually committed around \$44.3. billion to direct security assistance to Ukraine.

In fact, as a percentage of GDP, the United States only ranks at 16 among all of the countries in NATO. So our NATO allies have also made significant plans and commitments to improve the Alliance's collective defence and deterrence through

defense spending, improved capabilities and nested strategies. So we see many are in fact doing their part for the collective security of NATO and ensuring Ukraine maintains their right of self determination. But Ukraine is running low on ammunition for essential artillery, air defense systems, and all while Russia is receiving shells from North Korea and Iran.

So the speaker has got to bring this vote to the floor. Time is of the essence has been of the essence. And we must pass the supplemental it is time for him to show true leadership despite his own political concerns, and to really stop playing politics with this and start ensuring that Ukraine can effectively fight because our allies in part nerves have stepped up in the absence of us support but the United States is failing as a leader of the free world and a vanguard of democratic democracies worldwide, and our adversaries around the world are taking note. So Dr. Wallander, can you share your assessment of what the inaction of this legislative body will mean not only for the survival of Ukraine, but also the dangerous precedent that this would set for the status of the United States as a leader for democracy to our allies, partners, potential partners, and importantly to our adversaries.

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congress. We are we are very, we are viewed with and greatly positively by Europeans for our leadership in Ukraine defense contact group. But unfortunately, the fact that we have been unable to provide capabilities to Ukraine since December when the previous supplemental funds were used up, has created a challenge in our leadership of that group. Fortunately, Europe has stepped up in the four months since we have been able been unable to provide capabilities and have announced billions of dollars of additional security assistance.

That's not enough as general kavali has made clear, but we have worked with Europeans and they have stopped kept us however they've stopped kept us in the anticipation that we will get that supplemental, and we will get that capability for all the reasons that general kavali pointed out, they are unable to provide especially the ammunition, the artillery, ammunition and the air defense interceptors that Ukraine requires. So we need to be able to do our part because we haven't been doing our part in this collective support of European security through supporting Ukraine.

Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-N.J.)

Thank you in general, covellite, can you share your assessment of Ukraine's ability to defend their territory and airspace without this vital US security assistance?

Christopher Cavoli

Sure, Congresswoman, their ability to defend their terrain that they currently hold, and their airspace, would fade rapidly, will fade rapidly without the without the supplemental without continued US support. And it will continue to fade until such time as somebody else is able to provide those munitions to the Ukrainians. As Dr. Wallander just pointed out, that production level is not in sight right now. We think it's at least months away.

And that is why this is such an important time right now. That's why this is such an important time.

Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-N.J.)

Thank you. And I have to say personally, to see members of the Ukrainian military in my district seeking medical help who have lost their legs who have lost their eyesight, who have been on the battlefield for hours and lost a leg because they simply didn't have an armored vehicle to come pick them up is devastating. And to think that as a foreign adversary to the United States of America attacks a democracy that we might stand in the wings and not fully support this is if offensive offensive to this nation's traditional support for democracy around the world. Thank you.

I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentlelady yields back you're not recognize gentlelady from Michigan. Ms. McClain.

Rep. Lisa McClain (R-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I would agree with my colleague that we need to stop playing politics and I would agree with you Dr. Wallander, but maybe not in the same perspective. As you say we haven't been doing our part I take a little bit of offense to that. I want to talk about this article.

US urges Ukraine to stop attacking Russian oil refineries. The report says in this piece, the US government sources are said to be concerned with Ukraine, targeting of Russian oil production facilities. Listen to this because it could drive up gas prices. I quote ahead of a knife edge presidential election where prices at the gas pump are bound to be a contentious topic.

This report seems to show that while the White House has incessantly demanded Congress pass additional Ukrainian funding, they are tying the hands of the Ukrainians for political purposes. And I agree we need to stop playing politics. If the president truly cared about defeating Russia, he would be acting as a leader and not as a political hack worried about his next election? Mr. Chairman, this President has shown time and time again, that politics are more important than our own national security.

He is now giving Russia the green light to continue to destroy Ukraine. Six months ago, this president said October 10. In his October 10 speech, he said we stand with Israel, Israel and we will make sure Israel has what it needs to take care of its citizens and defendants Self. Now, the President has been threatening Israel if they don't stop defending themselves on Iran, the President has chosen to side with their Iranian regime over all of our allies in the region.

Region. This decision has made the Middle East less safe, but American servicemembers at risk and given the regime room to provide deadly drones and munitions to Russia for your their war in Ukraine. Again, the same word this President is demanding Congress provide more American tax dollars to right I take offense that we haven't done our part, our southern border, the president chooses to play politics with our nation's security by opening the floodgates to illegal immigrants simply because President Trump had the border secured. I want to remind my colleagues what President Obama's Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said about the then Vice President Biden in in 2014.

I quote, I think he's been wrong on nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades. A well respected Secretary of Defense, a man who has held in high regard on members on both sides of the aisle, has said Our president is always wrong when it comes to our national security. Mr. Chairman, I think it is imperative that this Committee investigate whether President Biden is playing politics with the lives of Ukrainians and our NATO allies, and the rest of this the rest of the Western world. I ask unanimous consent to include the article in the record.

Without objection, so ordered. And with that, I yield the balance of my time to Mr. Waltz,

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

Dr. Wallander. We have statistics here that that our allies have contributed 44 billion indirect security assistance to Ukraine. And we've talked about the accounting differences in the Pentagon that have yielded 6 billion 300 billion.

What's the common accounting standard? Does NATO have a common accounting standard for how its valuing its assistance?

Celeste Wallander

NATO does not have a NATO doesn't organize or or advanced that security assistance.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

So it's conceivable that it could be overvalued as our equipment costs over values

Celeste Wallander

Provided by the countries providing the value of the equipment. So they

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

Could be using. I mean, we've got what 30 different countries, they could be using 30 different standards.

Celeste Wallander

I cannot speak to their national standards. These are democracy,

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

But we're just stated on the record in front of the American people they're doing their fair share, we have figures saying they've contributed 44 billion, but you don't know how they're coming up to that 44 billion.

Celeste Wallander

Those are the figures that they report to their Parliament's.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

So they're grading their own homework.

Celeste Wallander

Fair? Yes. Those are our allies. And when they report numbers, we take them so

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

We just take it at face value.

Celeste Wallander

We take them seriously.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.)

Mr. Chairman, I think we should look at legislation to understand what our allies are actually contributing as a replacement value as a new value is at some value that they valued. Because they think it's valuable. We just maybe they want to appear to be doing more than they are.

I think this is a serious issue and I find it concerning Dr. Wallander, we don't have a common standard for a number that we're putting out to the American

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

People. Jim has time has expired Chair now recognizes gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Escobar.

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-Texas)

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. And I'd like to thank our witnesses, thank you for your service to our country. We are definitely in living through very precarious times. And it is disheartening to see politics coming from this day as in this Committee at a time when we really need to be united around our common goals and united for our common vision for the globe.

One of the the areas of great concern that I keep hearing about on cable TV and coming from members of Congress is and I heard it today from the day as from one of our colleagues that we are, in effect sending bags of cash to Ukraine that that it is Congress that's that that is being asked to approve money for Ukraine when in fact, you know, the truth is we are approving funding to replenish stocks and munitions. I think it's really important for the American people to understand what supplemental funding goes to specifically, you know, not specifically in numerating, everything that that it is funding. But can you please explain to the American people what the supplemental funding request from the President would fund for Ukraine? Dr. Hollander.

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congresswoman. So there's three three buckets to understand. First is presidential drawdown authority and the associated replenishment author appropriation to replenish US stocks, the authority allows for pulling capabilities from US stocks, based on an assessment that readiness requirements are maintained. And then the contracts are made to replenish the stocks for the American military forces to be able, therefore, to move on to new new production, new capabilities, in many cases, more modern, new advanced versions of existing stocks.

The second is

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-Texas)

You can who is your guilting, I'm sorry, I don't mean to interrupt. But this is an important point who is building the replenishment of the stocks,

Celeste Wallander

Who the that money goes to American defense contractors to supply the American military with the most up to date capable requirements that the combatant commanders have identified a need in their stocks. So

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-Texas)

That funding is being invested in American jobs, American companies across 40 states of the United States. Thank you. I

Celeste Wallander

Didn't mean to interrupt. And then the second bucket, the Ukraine security assistance initiative, is direct procurement, from defense American defense industrial companies in those 40 states. So going for paying for contracts and capabilities, that then on a longer term are delivered to Ukraine for building that future force for defense and deterrence. But again, that is not money that goes to Ukraine, that is money that goes to American defense contractors, to American workers in those in those companies.

All that money stays in America and the American economy. And the third bucket goes to support EUCOM its operations, its presence, its activities in support of Ukraine. So they learned how to use that equipment. So they're trained, so they know how to repair it, so that they are able to feel it.

And also to support all the work that general Cavalese team is doing in support of Ukraine.

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-Texas)

Thank you so much. I think it is so important. Every time a member of Congress talks about sending money to Ukraine, and uses that term. I think it's so important that we remind the American public where that money is actually going to the jobs it creates in our own country in our own states.

Otherwise, this is part of I'm concerned, it's part of the Russian disinformation effort to mislead the American public about that funding very, very quickly. The House has been frozen for months on this request. It's up to one man, the Speaker of the House or colleagues on the Republican side who will sign a discharge petition. Only 30 seconds left.

If we were to approve that supplemental request in the next week or two, how quickly would help get to Ukraine.

Celeste Wallander

With we would be able to with EUCOM. Support and transcom support begin immediately within within a week or two to provide the ammunition the artillery ammunition to provide interceptors to Ukraine. And

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-Texas)

I think it's important to underscore today, the Ukrainian defense is being outshot five to one that will change pretty quickly if the House remains frozen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentlelady yields back Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida Mr. Mill's for five minutes.

Rep. Cory Mills (R-Fla.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, my colleagues have said a lot and I just want to kind of make sure that we're referencing those comments. You know, our few of them said that all we need is a little democracy. Well, I wish that there was significantly important a vote by the Senate and Chuck Schumer to bring HR to secure the border act.

We've got hundreds of 1000s of Americans who are dying, fentanyl overdoses, child and human sex trafficking, not to mention 178 plus countries that are crossing our border, and over 400 plus known individuals on terrorist watch lists that are coming across. But oh, wait. That's not the priority. Let's secure Ukraine's borders.

You know, it's just politics as usual. I want to also go back to something one of my colleagues had talked about, which is in 1947, NATO was created for the ideas of Stalin's Soviet Union expansionism. And the idea was that we were so in fear of the idea the Soviet Union would continue its encroachment. And yet the countries that are most at risk of this Germany, France, Italy, others, for how many years wouldn't even pay 2% of their actual dues.

And Americans left holding the bag at 3.47% in addition to the 114 plus billion dollars that's already been allocated with Ukraine, who on multiple occasions hasn't presented a military strategic plan that would show how they win this war or even what is the definition of what winning the war means. And so I have a big difficult problem with this not to mention the fact that the EU member states under David O'Sullivan, the EU sanctions chief has admitted that they have frozen assets from Russia exceeding \$206 billion US 100 90 billion euro that they now are netting profits on at three and a half billion dollars that should be utilized if they're so concerned with a lack of ammunition. You know, this this premise that we're gonna go ahead and spend the \$60 billion in America and that's somehow going to be great for the industrial base, they're still looking at ideas that you're adding money in that we don't have which increase our inflation and one of the things that we just talked about Dr. Wallander, you said that Russia's inflation is 13%. Is that correct?

That is yes. Can you tell me what America's is? No, I cannot. Would you want to take an ad like just a shot in the dark at what you think America's inflation that I prefer not to guess?

Yeah, try about 20 plus percent, and try \$34 trillion of 18% plus 2% reduction in minimum wage, so we can go ahead and put those figures together, not to mention roughly 27% increase in fuel costs, costing good allowances? Yeah, inflation is one of those things that we admit is bad for Russia and also bad for America. You also made a comment recently, you said that we have concerns on hitting civilian targets with oil terminals. Was that the same concerns that we had in the 2003 Iraq war?

Well, we were bombing oil terminals, and we were hitting areas there.

Celeste Wallander

That is the concern in our, in our discussions with Ukraine.

Rep. Cory Mills (R-Fla.)

Was that our concern when we were at war in Iraq?

Celeste Wallander

I do not know, sir, I was not in the US government at that time. I was because I

Rep. Cory Mills (R-Fla.)

Was actually deployed to that war, as well as for the additional seven years in Iraq, three years in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Pakistan, North Somalia, blown up twice, you know, six, all to do what to play interventionism. It's played in neocon NEO live ideas that we don't understand the evolution of warfare is beyond kinetics, and now into the ideas of resource economics, supply chain and non kinetic influence operations that have been only vastly more successful, but also safer, and not costly to the American people. You know, next year at 34 Plus trillion dollars, we're going to spend more in interest payments than the entire budget for our national defense annually. We need to start thinking about three priorities for a change America, Americans and American interest.

And if we're talking about building coalitions for allies, then we need to be putting the pressure that President Trump put on our NATO allies to say you need to be paying 2% of your GDP, which we agree now needs to be even more than that, when you're looking at Russia has increased to 6%. But instead, we're continuing to play politics. Let's bring this vote to the floor, even though it's not a bill, which has all the necessary things and hasn't addressed the corruption hasn't addressed the failure for 100% audit on Ukraine funding hasn't addressed what does success look like for Ukraine. And this idea that whatever happens in Ukraine is somehow going to happen in Taiwan.

It's a false premise. It's the same idea as the George W. Bush model. If we can find him over there.

We can find him here. Well, guess what, our borders are open. And we're allowing him to come in not to mention this great successful airlift operation of the 2021 botched withdrawal in Afghanistan that actually brought over 73% of the people on that aircraft that wasn't vetted, didn't have biometrics wasn't s IVs. It's funny how we cherry pick what has been official, but we don't address the facts.

I put America first I'm gonna continue to put America first but that I yield

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Back. gentleman yields back Chair now recognizes gentlelady from Virginia Miss McClellan.

Rep. Jenn McClellan (D-Va.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Dr. Wallander, in general Kouvola. For being here. Russia has sought to use irregular warfare and cyber weapons to bolster its aggressions in Ukraine and so division and undermine democracy among our European allies, and some would argue here. How is UCOM working to address this particular threat?

And what do you need from Congress to support those efforts?

Christopher Cavoli

Thank you, Congressman. UCOM has a very active strategic messaging apparatus. We have teams that analyze news and spot disinformation. And then we get the truth to usually a country's Public Affairs apparatus, and they promulgate the real story, a very simple example would be if we were having an exercise and somebody falsely posted a picture of a bicycle accident and said that an American truck ran over.

We spot that we get the truth to the country very quickly, they turn around and put it out. I think more to your point that we work very closely with nations at both aid and overt and a secret level to help them analyze the the information environment. And then to help them combat dis information and misinformation. We do that country by country under the supervision of the chief of mission and that kind of the US chief of mission in that country.

And we also do that regionally under under my authorities in supervision. It's a well funded program. We could always do more. But nevertheless, I think it's well funded by the Congress right now.

And it's very, very effective. Congressman, thank you.

Rep. Jenn McClellan (D-Va.)

Thank you. With Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, Finland and Sweden have now officially joined NATO and drastically increase both the fighting force and defense manufacturing capability of the Alliance. How is the United States working to swiftly integrate our new allies into the alliance? And how can we here in Congress better facilitate those efforts?

Christopher Cavoli

Thank you. First of all, NATO is primarily responsible for that integration, NATO has already pulled both of those countries into our regional plans. And we had been working with them for some months to prepare to do that. So that's going very quickly, as you're well aware, Congressman Doza, both of those countries have very advanced and sophisticated militaries that have a long Operational history with with the forces in NATO.

So their interoperability is already already sky high. So it's very, very easy pole. In that regard. The US proper us EUCOM has conducted exercises with them to make sure that our interoperability is high.

We have worked with them to gain access to their airspace to conduct intellia intelligence is surveillance and reconnaissance flights. Those have proven very successful. It's it's real estate that we didn't have too much access to previously. And in addition to that, we've made agreements with both both countries for the pre positioning of materiel in those countries.

So not only are we helping NATO to integrate them, but they are helping us to integrate into into places that we were previously unable to. Thank you.

Celeste Wallander

Thank you. I would just our are part of this, that God is to support the policies required to enable general Cobolli to advance all the exercises, the capabilities, the diplomatic relationships. And I would just say that Finland and Sweden will, at the heads of state and government at the summit be fully part of all the decisions on NATO's features and the obligations and responsibilities of all the Allies going forward.

Rep. Jenn McClellan (D-Va.)

Thank you. And I don't know if he'll fully have time to answer the next one. So if not, maybe if you could submit it for the record. But with Russia pulling out of the New START Treaty, which is an incredible blow to the system of nuclear arms Non Proliferation, that has been a guiding light of the post cold war era, what does that decision mean for prospects for future nuclear Non Proliferation efforts?

And how concerned should we be about what this signals concerning Russia's strategic weapons goals?

Celeste Wallander

I will submit a full answer. The top lines would be we are very concerned about the signal it sends to the international community that Russia does not respect or live up to its international obligations in the case of nuclear arms treaties, as well as the invasion and other instances. So but I will submit a full answer.

Rep. Jenn McClellan (D-Va.)

And as part of that, if you could discuss the risk of returning to a nuclear arms race, I'd appreciate it. And with that, I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentleman's time has expired. Chair now recognizes gentleman from Texas, Mr. Ballard.

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it. In 2014 NATO countries, as we all know, agreed to invest 2% of their GDP on defense, and that was a commitment that wasn't unfortunately followed through with expediency. There were a lot of words and not actions, and particularly, I feel what's egregious, and I think it was touched on by Mr. Waltz, or some of the larger European nation states, Spain, Canada, Italy, France hovered around 2%.

But, you know, the greatest thing egregious violator was Germany, a fourth largest economy in the world, and they weren't stepping up. So I have a two part question for journalists, general kavali had, let's work let's live in a different world 2014 That that commitment was met with expediency and our larger nation, nation states in NATO follow through the ones I just mentioned, with some timely decisiveness. Could the Ukrainian war have been deterred altogether. Do you think if that happens you

Christopher Cavoli

I'm sorry, Congressman, are you asking had nations especially larger allies been spending at or above the goal would Did

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

They if they had made their commitment with expediency, say in 2015 and 16, and said, You know what, particularly after Crimea, we're going to spend two and a half whatever percent and they follow through with it in Germany said, we're in a different world now. We're going to take the lead, and France followed as well. Italy, Spain, Canada, do you think that Vladimir Putin would have invaded any way in 2022?

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, I do. I do not think we were extending mutual or collective defense guarantees to Ukraine, you think it would have given

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

Some increased pause? Be sure it would have. Okay. So it would have been a good thing.

But the lack of action certainly encouraged it. If you say if you say you're going to do something, and then you don't do it, I think it's worse if you hadn't said anything, you would have better off not saying anything at all. And in NATO in 2014, a lot of our allies said they were going to do something, they didn't do it. And I think that was a breeding ground for an authoritarian land grabs, quite frankly.

One of the questions General, I noticed that when you look at the closer you get to the threat, which is Russia, the more the defense spending tends to go up. In fact, I don't think there's a country a NATO country that borders Ukraine, or Russia that has not met that 2% commitment. And the further you go away, it seems you know, the less spending, you get. Having said that, do you think it makes sense for us to move United States troops closer to the threat?

So my question is, should we, in your opinion, make the European Eastern European bases permanent?

Christopher Cavoli

First of all, Congressman, the United States has an is moving forces closer to the eastern flank. As you're aware, we've got an agreement signed a couple of years ago with Poland before this conflict began and Ukraine, signed with Poland to Poland provides significant infrastructure, and we will rotate forces through there, the additional forces that we surged to Europe during the immediate aftermath of Russia's invasion, those have all gone gone to the eastern flank, principally the Baltic countries, again, Poland and, and southeastern Europe and in Romania, and Bulgaria. So there is an effort, there's also an effort on the part of nations in the Alliance to go farther east. So in the immediate aftermath of the invasion, NATO, before I became the the Allied Command operations commander, took the decision to establish new battle groups on a standing basis, they rotate, but they're permanently there for additional one.

So there's a total of eight, but to design that they all can go up to brigade size at time of need, and a number of nations have elected to go up to brigade size earlier that so there is a definite shift eastward in the Alliance, sir. Thank

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

You, Dr. Walter. The unfortunately, I would you agree that the Western sanctions on Russia haven't worked economic sanctions.

Celeste Wallander

Western sanctions have imposed costs, and but they have not stopped Putin.

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

Okay. I think they've unfortunately, I mean, unfortunately, they've been a dismal failure, I would love to have had them work. But when you got nations like the Communist Chinese, you got Iran, North Korea, in some ways, even India, dealing with Russia, they they circumvented us. So we talked a lot about Western European reliance, some call it an addiction to Russian energy, you would be in favor of the United States doing all we can to wean their dependence, our Western European allies, in particular off of Russian energy,

Celeste Wallander

Yes, they've taken steps and they can do more, and we fully support that and actively work with them,

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

Because we have a lot of natural gas in this country. For instance, the number one customer for LNG is that we export is Europe. So I was perplexed, confused and otherwise befuddled when this administration and President Biden put a whatever you want to call it suspension, stopping pause on our LNG exports. Did you advise him to do that?

Celeste Wallander

That is not my area of responsibility. Okay. So

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

Would you agree that that was not a wise considering that it was really an essentially a gift to Putin?

Celeste Wallander

I cannot speak to that policy. It's outside the scope of DOD. But

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Texas)

You're very intelligent. You're a woman. I think that you have a Dr. In front of your name I do not want

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

To miss time has expired, and she is very intelligent. I agree with you. Gentleman from Nevada is recognized. Mr. Horsford.

Rep. Steven Horsford (D-Nev.)

Thank you, Chairman Rogers and to the Ranking Member for holding this important hearing. It has been over two years since we saw Russia launch a brutal invasion of Ukraine. But for many Ukrainians this conflict began a decade ago with Russia's continued occupation of Crimea. It has also been six months since President Biden released a national security supplemental That would reinvigorate the United States defense industrial base, while also providing much needed support for our closest allies and partners.

President Biden's supplemental request would provide billions and direct industrial investments in the United States, including over 4 million in my home state of Nevada alone. However, instead of putting this critical bill to a vote, the House majority has stalled and even worse, repeated Russian propaganda on the House floor. It was reported this week that US Central Command has sent a stash of Iranian munitions it captured from Houthi militants to Ukraine. Gen Kavali.

I understand that desperate times call for desperate measures. Can you provide examples on how Ukrainians are continuing to stay in the fight even as support from the United States has lagged. And can you expand on how crucial it is that Congress passed the National Security supplemental?

Christopher Cavoli

Yeah, absolutely, Congressman, the first and most clearest and present example is the self rationing of artillery rounds that the Ukrainians are using right now. So they know that they have a limited supply until we are able to begin supporting them again. And in the meantime, they have self restricted the amount of artillery they use. This has significant consequences on the battlefield.

Of course, they were already at a five to one deficit in artillery fires as compared to the Russians. And that will obviously increase dramatically in the absence of a of a supplemental, sir.

Rep. Steven Horsford (D-Nev.)

Thank you. Assistant Secretary Wallander. Several of our European allies continue to rely on Chinese made logistics networks, ports and 5g capabilities. I'm concerned that this leaves these countries vulnerable to economic pressure coming from the PRC?

How are you assessing the threat of over over reliance on Chinese infrastructure in Europe, especially in the telecommunication space? And how can we work with our allies and partners to give them an alternative?

Celeste Wallander

Thank you, Congressman. Yes, absolutely. reliance on Chinese provided technology, our capabilities and logistics, as you note, creates a vulnerability among NATO allies, European countries, it undermines their resilience, it creates challenges for them to be able to advance strong policies. Countries like Lithuania, who have taken a very principled stand on on China have fortunately already divested themselves of those dependencies.

And we use that as an example, when we talk to European countries to show how reducing or even eliminating those kinds of dependencies actually is a security step. Often it's framed as an economic benefit. And what we work with them is to understand the security risks that they undertake when they follow that path.

Christopher Cavoli

Congressman, it might be useful to note also, that USU comm designs, exercises or aspects of its exercise program, specifically to test infrastructure, and to flush out problems with its ownership. That gives us the opportunity to do everything from work on the networks, you know, the communications networks and infrastructure as well as the physical infrastructure in them and the manpower of a port, for instance. And then we work very closely with the Department of State and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, specifically Dr. Wallander to address our concerns with countries it's actually a very successful program. I think so far, but but it is a big task that we're trying to try to push back on.

Great.

Rep. Steven Horsford (D-Nev.)

And in my final time, general, what are the lessons that EUCOM has learned about the use of these autonomous capabilities in large scale combat operations? And has it changed the way we think about the use of unmanned capability specifically?

Christopher Cavoli

Not completely not, not yet. It hasn't changed everything, Congressman, we're watching it very closely, because there's clearly something there. But I would note that the principal decisions on the battlefield for both sides are made by legacy systems, its tanks and its artillery. All the drones and stuff have not have not yet produced that the one area two areas where I'd say are their most promising long range penetration from the air to substitute for ballistic missiles.

And what the Ukrainians have done in the Black Sea with unmanned systems. The

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentleman's time has expired. Chair now recognizes gentleman from Florida Mr. Jimenez

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.)

Again, Mr. Chairman, Dr. Wallen There we go. Let's go back to energy. It takes money to to perpetuate you know propagate a war what would you what is the leading The moneymaker for for Russia right now.

Celeste Wallander

It is oil exports and natural gas exports primarily to China.

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.)

Okay, so if the United States were to produce more oil and gas and drive down the cost on a worldwide basis, would that affect Russia's ability to perpetuate this war?

Celeste Wallander

On the margin? It would. But China is a energy hungry greedy country, and it's willing to pay it has long term contracts with Russia, and she does not want Putin to fail.

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.)

Alright, fair enough. Now, Russia has been has been targeting Ukrainians, energy, right. And sources of energy etc. Is that true?

Yes, that is true. Has Ukraine been targeting Russia's energy production?

Celeste Wallander

There are public reports that Ukraine has done. So.

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.)

We tried to stop them from doing that.

Celeste Wallander

The US has raised concerns with Ukraine, which is a sovereign country and can choose its own targets, but raised concerns about targeting civilian critical infrastructure.

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.)

Well, yeah, but the Russians have no problem in targeting Ukrainian energy production. Now, if the Ukrainians were able to disrupt Russian energy production, would that significantly alter their ability to to perpetuate this war?

Celeste Wallander

So far, the strikes that we have seen against the Russian energy sources have not significantly altered Russia's ability to prosecute the war.

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.)

That's so far. But if they're actually able to do it successfully, would that alter the the economics of this war?

Celeste Wallander

I am not an expert on energy infrastructure. But the evidence we've seen is that the Russians have been able to rapidly repair the facilities that were struck.

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.)

What would happen if we don't support? General, what would happen if we don't support Ukraine, and they actually run out of bullets?

Christopher Cavoli

In my military experience, Congressman, if somebody's shooting at you, and you can't shoot back, you lose, or you die.

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.)

Where's where's Ukraine now, in terms of its arm supplies and ability to fight back?

Christopher Cavoli

Sir, could we could could I tell you about that in closed session? Absolutely.

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.)

Okay. Thank you very much. Look, a lot of a lot of, you know, folks, even on my side of the aisle somehow equate the lack of the Biden administration, securing our border being a reason why we can't help Ukraine secure their border, the facts are that Ukrainians are spilling their blood to secure their border. And then the fact that our administration does not secure our border, shouldn't be the reason why we don't help people are trying to fight for their freedom.

As somebody who came over from a communist country some 60 years ago, somebody who's not a fan of Russia, I think that we need to support the Ukrainians all they're asking for is our aid. All they're asking for is bullets. And, and, and armaments. And, and for the life of me, I just don't understand why we don't support them.

And we should Some analysts believe that the F 16 could help Ukraine or do you share that general?

Christopher Cavoli

The F 16 will help you know, any aircraft will will help congressman, the it's it's a particularly difficult jump to go from the older Soviet era stuff. It aircraft that the Ukrainians had been flying, especially had been maintaining and supporting, it's tough to go from that to a modern fourth gen aircraft, like the F 16. As you know, we're working on it with them. There's an entire coalition of countries working on it with them.

But ultimately, it will be a valuable thing for them to have.

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.)

I understand that we're actually training them training them to to fly the F 16. And that there are some countries that are actually will be supplying F 16 to Ukraine is that both are correct. Okay. Why isn't the United States giving them F 60s?

Celeste Wallander

We are we are supporting the provision of sex scenes by European countries and the numbers that they are going to provide meet the requirements for the Ukrainians at this time.

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.)

Thank you. I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Chair now recognizes gentlelady from California, Miss Jacobs.

Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And first, I'd like to thank the Chair and Ranking Member for their bipartisan support of the security supplemental I think it's incredibly important that we get Ukraine the assistance that that it needs and also that we make sure that humanitarian assistance in that supplemental package is passed. I was just on the border of Chad and Sudan and saw the Sudanese refugees whose food is running out because we haven't yet passed that humanitarian assistance. General volley, I want to ask you in the Operation Atlantic resolved quarterly report to Congress, it stated that the security assistance group Ukraine reported that it had no information to suggest that the Ukrainian Armed Forces were using us provided weapons and equipment in a way other in any way other than intended.

Can you provide more details about the reporting mechanism utilized to monitor the usage of us provided weapons and equipment? And are there mechanisms in place for independent verification or assessment of these findings regarding the usage of US assistance?

Christopher Cavoli

Yeah, Congressman, thank thank you very much for the opportunity to talk about this important topic. First of all, it continues to be the case since the publication that report or since the the the authorship of that report that we we just don't have evidence that this is that there's widespread diversion or anything like that. Now, I have to admit that that's different. That's different from whether or not things get efficiently from the stockpiles to the soldiers hands in the in the squad on the front line.

But we do work on on logistical distribution with our our partners in Ukraine quite a bit. So things leave the United States accounted for by the service that provided it in the case of something from a PDA where we're giving something from our stockpile, according to the amount of money provided under the authority, and then receiving money to replenish that right. So that comes out that's accounted for by the, by the services. And I think we have a very, very good control over that.

When things hit the ground in Poland, either by truck, plane or train, they come into the hands of our soldiers in southeastern Poland, they get accounted for there. And I'm very confident we've had some missteps early on when we're rushing to get things done. But we've got systems in place. I know, we know what we've got on our hands, and that it's faithful to what was sent.

Then we consign it to the Ukrainians, and they signed for it item by item. So I know as it goes on to trucks that we've accounted for after it crosses the border gets harder for us. So we have we barcode things, and we have issued to Ukrainians. scanners, we have automated the process of tracking things as it goes forward, we share our database is with them, and they share theirs with us we can track it's really when you get down to the tactical edge that it starts getting a little bit harder, ma'am.

And it's complicated by the fact that we can't go to a lot of those places simply because of the level of danger. And we've restricted ourselves from from doing that. So in those cases, we do ask the Ukrainians to self report. And incredibly important part of this system, though, is contractors that we hire to provide for us an outside view on frontline units accountability, those contractors are paid for with supplemental money.

And when the supplemental, if it's not renewed, I won't be able to perform that level of fidelity outside third party verification of what the Ukrainians are claiming is their accountability. I hope that answered your question.

Celeste Wallander

I that That is my understanding of the system, and that we also then have a duty at DOD to report those findings in that that tracking to Congress.

Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-Calif.)

Thank you. I also wanted to ask about the joint rapid acquisition. So could you just talk about how we're working with Ukrainian defense manufacturers to most effectively use the assistance we're giving.

Celeste Wallander

We are working with the Ukrainians and a number of European countries to create reassurance about the size of contracts, because what we need is for potential investors in Ukrainian defense industries, to see not just the immediate need, but multi year requirements. So we are working with Ukraine on locations on what what is required on our embassy works with potential investors to support those capabilities in Ukraine, but and we are also sharing with them the lessons we have learned on rapid acquisition on multi year contracts to inform them from the lessons of our success with congressional support that we've experienced over the last two years.

Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentlelady yields back Chair now recognizes gentleman from Georgia. Mr. mckormick.

Rep. Rich McCormick (R-Ga.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's good to see both here today. I have some specific questions that actually arose from some of your statements earlier. First, I will address the Supreme Allied Commander which I think is the coolest title ever.

This is an important question when it comes to Ukraine which is I think is an incredibly strategically important country in the world. Is this war for the allies winnable?

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, it is in a couple of ways. The first if we go back to the first is if we go back to what Secretary Wallander was talking about earlier, denying the Russians a strategic victory or imposing a strategic defeat them, that in itself is is a victory, even if a temporary victory for the Alliance. So in that sense, it is winnable we can we can do that with our with our Ukrainian.

Rep. Rich McCormick (R-Ga.)

So I would agree. And here's my point on this, because I think this is really important. You mentioned the F 16. And what's being supplied is adequate.

I don't like that word adequate, because that doesn't go back to what we learned in command and staff and a War College, which is overwhelming force, Clausewitz in warfare. We have a GDP of around 25 to \$27 trillion, combined that with Europe, around \$45 trillion. Russia has \$1.77 trillion for a GDP. This shouldn't be a contest.

It shouldn't be. But we're slow rolling our support. Not just what we already committed, which has been slow rolling, getting our tanks over there, you know, airplanes over there, getting a munitions over there, the things we've already committed to. But also we continue to hold this up in Congress, which drives me crazy, because this is a winnable war.

This idea has been propagated on both sides of the House, that we can't win this war is insane. We outnumber them dramatically. But quite frankly, Ukraine with the GDP of only \$200 billion has been a little hold out against a first world country army, and sustained 50% casualties to their armor, and 350 50 casualties overall, with a third rate army that's very ill trained. That's success by measures.

And if we give them surge capabilities, which by the way, in Iraq and Afghanistan, I don't know if you do agree with me, General, but we didn't do very well until we had surge capabilities. And we are the big boy on the block. But we didn't succeed until we answer jobs. And we're the first world country when it comes to military capabilities.

How do we expect a third world country to succeed against a first world army? If we don't give them surge ops? In real time? We are not giving we can't give them adequate, we have to give them superiority.

That's my point. Nobody's talking about that right now. We have to give them what it takes to get this done. This is a winnable war.

Would you agree?

Christopher Cavoli

Yes, I agree. I agree, Congressman. And much of the conversation, much of my testimony today has been about the minimum about about avoiding defeat for Ukraine, which does not necessarily immediately lead to the accomplishment of our strategic interests. Yeah.

Rep. Rich McCormick (R-Ga.)

So when you talk about strategic interest, Secretary, would you agree that Ukraine is probably a top five country when it comes to resources, your time I'll send you send in your protein, grain, you have titanium, you have steel, you have cobalt, you have rare minerals, and including you some of the radioactive stuff that actually powers the world, all in this country that could be taken by Russia, and then that stuff can be moved over to China, North Korea, and Iran instead of our allies, it will have consequences for generations to come that people aren't really taking into account when they talk about the economic impact of this. I

Celeste Wallander

Think you've laid out the stakes extremely well, Congressman, I agree.

Rep. Rich McCormick (R-Ga.)

Great. So I think if we're going to fulfill our word, by the way, that's the third part of this, we actually gave a word not just in one time, but actually real time, NATO, as a unanimous vote, said we're going to support you during this. I think it's unwise to turn your back on the rest of the world. Reagan 40 years ago at the 80th, or the 40th anniversary of D Day from Normandy talked about the consequences of isolationism, how it's a failed policy, especially against an expansionist Marxist government, which is exactly what NATO was made for.

This is the time to stand. Now. I agree with both you this is a winnable war, and strategically important to the future of the world. We have a 50% increase necessary in food stores by 2050.

We have to secure our resources. This is strategically important. And it's important to us to fulfill our word to our allies overseas. And with that, I yield.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentleman yields back Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from the great state of Alabama. Miss Sue.

Rep. Terri Sewell (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to add my voice to the chorus thanking you Mr. Chair and our Ranking Member for your bipartisan support of the Ukraine supplemental package. As we've heard today, Congress must act. We must act to get Ukrainians the tools they need to defend their country.

It's a strategic ally of ours and to allow the the necessary tools not to be given is just unacceptable, frankly, you know, I had an opportunity last year general to visit Poland, on a bipartisan delegation to see firsthand the tracking and accountability systems that you all have put in place in order to make sure that we at the American people know that the resources that they're sending to Ukraine are being utilized. I get that you can't see once it's past the border. But overall, have you been pleased with that system? And what can we do to strengthen it?

Christopher Cavoli

Thank you, ma'am. To be clear, we don't go blind. When it goes across the border. We have folks in Kyiv, who inspect depots, we have folks in Kyiv, who venture out farther like to Odessa and places like that, to inspect depots, it's really what it gets down to frontlines that it gets a little bit tough for us and I explained how how we're doing that, Am I satisfied?

No, I'm not satisfied. I mean, you know, in the US Army, when you change over you know command of a unit, you you have to sign for every single screwdriver, every single screw in that unit, you have to account for it or you have to pay for it. That's where I'd like to be we're just fighting it's difficult to be there right now. I am satisfied under the conditions that we're doing a good job.

I'm not satisfied under the conditions that we're doing a perfect job or the even the best job we can and we strive to improve it every single

Rep. Terri Sewell (D-Ala.)

Course we strive to improve and I just want my call my constituents in Alabama to know that we are doing everything we can to be to be tracked to track it and to be accountable. One of our one of those NATO allies and anchor of stability in the region is Romania. And last year, the Alabama National Guard and Romania celebrated 30 years as partners through the State Partnership Program, which has enhanced both of our country's armed forces. As part of this program, the Red Tails at the 187 fighter wing in Montgomery, which I'm so honored to represent, partnered with the Romanian Air Force to share best practices related to the F 30.

The F 16 and F 35. Now as Romania modernizes its fleet. So general, can you speak to the benefit that the Alabama National Guard's partnership has on Romania's military readiness? And how does this partnership bolster our position in the region?

Christopher Cavoli

Ma'am, first of all, just just for all members, from all states, the state partnership program is just an incredibly valuable part of our strategy to be able to support the alliances and to create strategic bonds between the United States and given countries. In many cases, it pays off tenfold in terms of access in terms of basic terms of influence and things like that. It's extremely practical, but it's also just strategically valuable. I work very hard with Dan Hokanson on on making sure we that we've got exciting new developments in the state partnership program.

It's helping us consolidate the position of formerly neutral or neutral and wondering about it countries right now. My sergeant major Rob Abernathy here routinely engages with the soldiers from the various states and he routinely attends the state partnership conferences and everything like that. It's extremely important with regard to Alabama and Romania. Particularly huge success story, right?

So the Romanians are having a moment, their economy's doing well, and to going into their military, they beaten back a lot of corruption problems they had their military is surging right now it's going to become really an anchor of our alliances. In the southeast, they're spending well on defense, they're buying all US equipment, very high end stuff. But to use that equipment, you've got to you've got to have a mentor. It's not just a member of going and learning how to fly the F 35.

Or learning how to use this piece of equipment, you really got to understand how to employ it in an organization how to take care of it. And the Alabama National Guard has been fantastic in that regard in all domains, by the way on the ground as

well, working with multinational Corp southeasterly to put that together so I can't I can't thank Alabama enough, or the National Garden general enough for what what they do it has a material impact on the combat readiness of our alliances.

Rep. Terri Sewell (D-Ala.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make sure that we were supporting the state partnerships. It's really the Alabama Romanian partnership is a model to be followed. Thanks.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

It is chaired. I recognize Jim from Florida, Mr. Gates,

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

Dr. Wallander, you've testified that the goal in the war is Russia strategic failure. Right. So I want to drill down into what that specifically means.

Does Russia's strategic failure require repatriating Crimea back to Ukraine?

Celeste Wallander

That is for Ukraine to decide whether That is their absolute required achievement to define this war. You're a

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

Senior administration official in the Biden administration. I just want to note to you, just Russia's strategic failure require the repatriation of Crimea.

Celeste Wallander

To me, reinforcing the international law that borders cannot be changed by force is absolutely vital to teaching Putin a lesson. So ultimately, yes,

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

Yes to the the objective of the United States through your eyes granted, Ukraine can have their own objectives totally concede that. But in your eyes, as you testify to us until Crimea has been repatriated, we have not achieved what you say is the goal in the war, which is Russia's strategic failure

Celeste Wallander

That Russia does not gain territory through the use of force is a strategic is a strategic success for Ukraine. And but I

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

Just want to I know that that's very amorphous. I'm talking about a specific piece of geography Crimea. You're testifying that Russia's strategic failure has not been achieved until Crimea is back under Ukrainian control. I think that's what you've said, I just I want to draw the finest possible point.

I

Celeste Wallander

Appreciate that. I said that Russia will not succeed in seizing territory and having that recognize through the use of force.

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

Alright, so So now let's do the Donbass. Is your testimony the same that Russia strategic failure can only be accomplished through a repatriation of the Donbass region back to Ukraine?

Celeste Wallander

Russia's strategic failure requires that Russia not gained territory in Ukraine

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

Through the use of force. And they've done that in the Donbass. Right. We

Celeste Wallander

Do not recognize that and Ukraine does not recognize that so no, they occupied it. Really

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

Interested in how Ukraine has historically recognized the Donbass Have you ever heard the Donbass described as the ungoverned region by Ukrainian officials prior to the invasion? The

Celeste Wallander

Donbass you mean done yet skin Wuhan? Yeah. I personally have never heard that. Really.

I

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

Have I heard the Ukrainian Ambassador describe it as the ungoverned region before and now we're acting as though it's repatriation is necessary to achieve Russia's strategic failure. Do you think setting such a high bar like the repatriation of Crimea that's been under Russian control for some years now. And and the repatriation of the Donbass region? Do you think that's a really high bar for us us to achieve?

Celeste Wallander

I think that Russia is going to fail. I think the international community at large does not support this and they see a stake in an aggressor being able to invade a neighbor and, and slice off territory and claim it as its own.

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

Here's what I think. I think that we're never repatriating Crimea back to Ukraine. And I think that if you set that as the objective, then we perpetuate this new Forever War, that's going to have a lot of death and a lot of destruction. And it's for an unachievable goal.

And I worry, I worry that's driving our thinking up, you know, general, you said any aircraft will help. I mean, I take some exception with that. I want to quibble with that, right, like aircraft that can't fly, don't help, do they? Right.

Christopher Cavoli

There are crafted to can't fly and so

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

They wouldn't help. And then if you weren't able to properly operate an aircraft, and it were to create some sort of escalatory accident, that would be problematic to right. Okay, so just for the record, Mr. Chairman, I seek unanimous consent to enter an an April 5 publication from the defense post.com F 16. fighter jets no longer relevant, according to Ukrainian official, without objection, so ordered.

Do you have any reaction to that reporting?

Christopher Cavoli

Sure. That's that's not what the Ukrainian officials I talked to think that's not what they tell me.

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

Well, yeah, I guess, I guess, then we shouldn't represent that there's unanimity on that position. There are some things that we help with some of the things they want. Just real quick, guys, you guys are gonna have now leaving Cyprus and going to these operations in the eastern med in Gaza. And like, I think the Biden administration wants us to become the Port Authority in Gaza, presumably forever, but do we know yet where we're going to build this pier in Gaza?

Christopher Cavoli

So that's not my area of responsibility, sir. Okay.

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

So you're not supporting that at Cypress? Just because on page 15 of your No, no,

Christopher Cavoli

I'm, I'm supporting it. Yes, I do know. Do you know where it's going to be since I do know where the pier is going to go? But it's not my area of responsibility.

And I'd refer you to general Coriolis.

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.)

I'll check with him. Thanks for sharing. You're gonna written as Ranking Member.

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.)

It's a fascinating world we live in because I actually agree with Mr. Gates on something around Ukrainian policy, which I would not have thought of. And this is a really important point right now what we need to do is get money Ukraine so they can defend themselves. I'm 100% with you on that. I think all the arguments that we've heard today dance around that fundamental reality that giving Putin Ukraine is an enormous mistake, and not giving Ukraine the money right now to defend it.

That's giving Putin Ukraine. But we have got to get off of this Crimea trap that we walk right into, like you just did. Realistically, Crimea is not coming back to Ukraine. And we can absolutely win this war and absolutely make a difference.

Even in that reality. We do not have to have Crimea to make it 1,000% worth it to give Ukraine the money. Okay. We need a sovereign democratic Ukraine that can survive.

We have a sovereign democratic Ukraine that can survive right now. We do. All right. But if we are telling the world you must support us, Ukraine, taking it all back, that is an entirely different proposition.

And I have never liked I've heard this phrase over it. Nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine. Forgive me, that is a ridiculous thing for any US diplomat or person in US policy to set. Okay, we got partners all over the world.

And yes, we listened to them. But when we're footing the bill, when we are spending so much money over there, we have a say, and to act like we don't, I get it. I know why you don't want to act like you're bullying Ukraine into something. But let us walk down that road as Mr. Gates just walked you down that road and see that that initial instinct that saying, well, we're not we're gonna just make sure that Ukraine has the say, is a problem.

So I don't really want an answer to this. I just want everybody listening within the Biden administration, to walk down that road a little bit more effectively from this point forward, so that we don't wind up abandoning Ukraine, because we're defending something that is largely theoretical, basically. And we get ourselves in that trap. And I just wanted to get that on the record at this particular moment.

I yield back to the Chairman.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

I completely agree with the Ranking Member Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Panetta.

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member for your comments. Dr. General, thank you for being here. Appreciate your testimony today.

I also want to harken back to the gentleman from Georgia his testimony, I appreciate how he did sort of sum it up. And that, you know, last summer, we sort of had high hopes about potentially using the vernacular of winning. But unfortunately, now, we're sort of in a situation where we're definitely not as optimistic. And we're getting to the point where we're going to be very, very pessimistic.

I had a conversation with a couple of my colleagues who had just traveled to Ukraine last week. And their attitude was that the situation was tense, stable, but they're very, very worried about what's going to happen. Like I said, last summer, we had high hopes that you can really and troops could punch through Russian lines. But unfortunately, the counter offensive failed.

And we got to a point where we started to accept that Ukraine was settling into a stalemate. Now we're starting to worry it's going beyond that, especially with a potential for a big Russian push this summer that could punch through Ukrainian defenses and deep into the country. And what we're seeing is that Ukraine is suffering from quote unquote shell hunger, where Russia is firing five shells for every one Ukrainian shell that Ukrainian can that Ukraine can fire. In addition, Ukraine is low on air defenses to low on air defense interceptors low on cruise missiles or lower tanks to low on fighting vehicles.

It's not just leading to a stalemate, it could be leading to a loss. straightforward question. What can Congress be doing to that we change not just the vernacular, but we change the outcome.

Celeste Wallander

The what we need right now to prevent Russian success and Ukrainian defeat is passage of the supplemental. It is critical for the reasons general kavali has made clear, we are able to get to a longer term solution by working with Europe that is well underway. But none of that work that we've done for two years and investing in Ukraine's future will pay off unless we get them through the next few months.

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.)

General.

Christopher Cavoli

Congressman, I really don't have anything to add to what Dr. Wallander just said. I thought it was very well put. We've spoken at length today about what the critical steps are and why it's the US so a very valid question that I've heard from members of both in due in the hearing today and previously, sir, is why can't somebody else fill in this requirement? And on those two items, the artillery shells and ground based interceptors, we are really leading the world in the production of those right now for 155, especially for the NATO standard.

Nobody else is producing it in the quantity Nestor, they're trying to get there, but they're not there yet. So this supplemental at this time to get us to that day when others are going to be able to be producing to include Ukrainians producing their own, which is their and our goal together. I think that's really why this is a critical moment for this supplemental, sir.

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.)

Thanks to both you, General, obviously, what we've seen and I think you talked about this earlier in one of your answers, the war in Ukraine has been one of both advanced technology and conventional warfare. The Russians have been relying on to the age old tactics, including mines, tanks and layer defenses, but Ukrainians have actually been merging both advanced technology and conventional warfare. In some cases, Ukraine has been losing some of these technologies and high volumes to combat Russia's sheer number of firepower. What is your assessment of Ukraine's use of emerging technology to reduce some of the asymmetric advantages against Russia's military and war economy?

And how do you anticipate that this can be sustained?

Christopher Cavoli

It's quite innovative, Congressman, they, they successfully brought into their military in the very early stages, large, large number of engineers and scientists from what was a very highly developed Technical Education base. So their tertiary education system was very long on engineers and scientists. And those folks have made a big, big help inside the military, adapting technologies, both new military technologies and grafting it onto old systems or civilian technologies and finding a military use for them. very innovative, very useful, difficult to scale.

Great, difficult to scale.

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.)

Thanks again to both of you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Gentleman yields back. I would advise members and their staff that are watching that after Mr. Davis, we're going to recess and go to 20 to 12 for the classified portion of this hearing. But right now recognize the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Davis. Thanks so

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

Much, Mr. Chair. And to the witnesses here today. Dr. General Seymour Johnson, Air Force Base, as crown jewel in eastern North Carolina plays a crucial key role in our national security and defense. General Cobolli, can you explain the role that strike eagles in particular lay are playing in the European theater, and in particular, how the vesting, a fighter squadron at the base would impact operations in Ukraine.

Christopher Cavoli

So the striker league eagle is a very capable aircraft. It's one of the bits at the very top end of the fourth generation of aircraft, it carries a very large payload and can deliver it in very, very difficult, difficult places. So it has proven its worth over the year, sir. It is one of the aircraft that figures heavily in my plans in the plans at USU comm it is an aircraft that that will continue to be valuable for for some time, I do recognize that the Air Force is trying to replace them with more capable aircraft.

And it will be very important for us not to have a gap between, you know, the retirement of one and the arrival of the next with regard to the particular Squadron at Seymour. Seymour Johnson, I I don't know off the top of my head. And I would refer that question to the Department of the Air Force. And I'll get that to them if you'd like sir.

Absolutely.

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

And just to follow up here, how did F 15 e station in particular Lakenheath directly? Supporter indirectly support Ukraine right now.

Christopher Cavoli

They formed an invaluable part of our air policing in our air defense system. And that's proven very important in a couple of locations where it where it's been necessary to have an active missile and air defense. And I'd like to be more detailed about that in closed session if you can. And if you're not going to be at the closed session, sir, I'd be happy to answer you in a classified setting.

Elsewhere. There are other very important uses before.

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

Okay, thank you. I visited Ukraine a few weeks ago. And one of the takeaways for me. I'm sticking along this aircraft theme, so to speak.

And that is not just the aircraft that they're receiving Going through the training getting there getting pilots trained through the pipeline. Can you speak towards your knowledge of all? of are we able to help get to help the Ukrainians get through this process that that is meaningful in a way that's still going to help us meet all the demands? In terms of the national security demands here?

Christopher Cavoli

Sure, Congressman, the first, it's worth worth pointing out, I think that we're not the only ones training Ukrainian pilots and working on fourth generation aircraft for them. The CO lead of the coalition that OSD has put together with our allies are Denmark and the Netherlands and their children, the preponderance of it right now we are training some pilots in the US. And we're working on some of their maintenance programs and everything. And in the US, also, just a couple of notes.

A, an important feature of this, believe it or not, has been English language capability and English language training. If all the manuals and all the instructions and all the buttons are written in English, you at least got to know that much English by the way, it's also the international language of flight. And so it's just it just necessary to have some level of language skill. That's the first step.

The second step is to determine whether or not the pilot has sufficient basic pilot training, if the person isn't accomplished pilot already go straight to an F 16 transition. And that brings some challenges about own because there's a very different aircraft from what they've been flying in the Ukrainian Air Force. Otherwise, you go to basic flight training, and we do have some some aviators in basic flight training as well in a couple of different countries, and then they'll graduate to an F 16 transition. I hope that answer your question.

And

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

Just one follow up here in the few seconds left. Do we have the capability the capacity to train more Ukrainian powers? And your opinion? Yeah,

Christopher Cavoli

The limiting factor on how many we're training right now, sir, is Ukrainian pilot availability. The Ukrainians have carefully calculated how many pilots they can spare and still maintain an adequate level of combat activity inside Ukraine. And that's what's driving the actual the actual size of the pipeline, or how many are in the pipeline.

Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.)

Thank you. I yield back. Mr. gentleman

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.)

Yields back. The Committee will now stand in recess for five minutes as we move to room 2212 for the closed portion of this hearing.