

# Posture of EUCOM and TRANSCOM in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for FY24 and the Future Years Defense Program

April 27, 2023

## U.S. Senate - Committee on Armed Services

### MEMBERS PRESENT:

**Jack Reed (D-RI) [presiding]**  
**Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)**  
**Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)**  
**Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)**  
**Mazie Hirono (D-HI)**  
**Tim Kaine (D-VA)**  
**Angus King (I-ME)**  
**Joe Manchin III (D-WV)**  
**Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)**  
**Jacky Rosen (D-NV)**

**Mark Kelly (D-AZ)**  
**Roger Wicker (R-MS)**  
**Deb Fischer (R-NE)**  
**Tom Cotton (R-AR)**  
**Mike Rounds (R-SD)**  
**Joni Ernst (R-IOWA)**  
**Kevin Cramer (R-ND)**  
**Rick Scott (R-FL)**  
**Ted Budd (R-NC)**  
**Eric Schmitt (R-MO)**

### WITNESSES:

**General Christopher Cavoli, USA** - Commander, United States European Command/ North Atlantic Treaty Organization Supreme Allied Commander Europe

**General Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, USAF** - Commander, United States Transportation Command

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**CHAIRMAN REED:** Senator Wicker is on his way, but indicated we should begin. Good morning. The committee meets today to receive testimony from General Christopher Cavoli, Commander of United States European Command and NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and General Jacqueline Van Ovost, Commander of United States Transportation Command.

Thank you for your service to the nation, and I thank the men and women serving under your commands at this critical time. The security challenges of European Command or EUCOM have never been clearer. For more than a year, Russia has waged a brutal, unprovoked war on Ukraine, inflicting terrible suffering on the people of Ukraine and threatening European stability.

Ukrainians have fought with incredible courage and skill to repel Russia's vicious assault, defending the same values and freedoms that we cherish. Ukraine has achieved some very notable successes, but there is hard fighting ahead and more to be done. Throughout this conflict, the NATO alliance has shown remarkable unity and resolve.

A formidable coalition of our allies has joined together to provide military and humanitarian support to Ukraine and impose severe cost on Russia's economy. If Putin thought his war would drive a wedge between NATO and members, and within the international community, he was badly mistaken.

NATO unity has never been stronger, and many European nations are taking steps to invest greater proportions of their budgets and institutional energies to improve their military capabilities. Indeed, in a triumphant moment for NATO, Finland recently joined the alliance. This was an utter rejection of Russia's strategic goals, and I know the Finns will contribute significantly to the alliance.

And I hope we will soon welcome Sweden as well.

President Biden deserves great credit for marshaling these efforts. His Administration continues to provide critical military equipment and training to Ukraine, including combat vehicles like Abrams tanks, Strykers, and Bradleys, as well as weapons like HIMARS, Howitzers, Patriot air defense systems, and various types of ammunition.

This equipment, in concert with contributions and training from across the

alliance, has provided an important mix of capabilities to bolster Ukrainian effectiveness on the battlefield. Let there be no doubt the United States will continue to help Ukraine succeed on the battlefield. America's assistance to Ukraine is also an investment our own national security interest. Beyond repelling Putin, we know **China** is watching closely and we must succeed.

General Cavoli, the NATO alliance has made important progress in its ability to generate and maintain the collective force posture, operations, and investments necessary to deter Russian aggression against its members, and the United States has played a key role in those efforts. At the same time, the security environment in Europe has experienced a tectonic shift.

I would like to know your views on plans for U.S.

military activities and investment in the Ukraine area of responsibility in light of these changes. General Van Ovost, TRANSCOM is also playing a crucial role in our support to Ukraine.

American troops continue to operate forward logistics centers to receive, identify, and transport the majority of security aid intended for Ukraine and across, and from the international community.

This has been an enormous task, executed with impressive skill on little notice. I would appreciate an update on these efforts and any lessons learned that you may have to share. Keeping an eye to the future and the pacing threat of **China**, an important reality we are learning is that any potential adversary is going to attack our logistic support system.

This idea of contested logistics will include obvious threats to our forward basis, as well as the aircraft and ship that resupply those bases. But it could also include cyber-attacks against information technology systems that support our deployments, both government and commercial, and possible kinetic attacks against ports and airfields supporting our deployments.

I am concerned that our thinking about logistics during conflict has too often defaulted to our uncontested military dominance since World War II. We have always owned the sea and air lines of communication, and have only had to worry about logistics efficiency, not effectiveness.

General Van Ovost, I would like to know what steps TRANSCOM is taking to

prepare for such threats to our logistics, and how the military services can alter their acquisition programs to take these concerns into account.

Thank you again to our witnesses and I look forward to your testimonies. As a reminder for my colleagues, at the conclusion of the open session of this hearing, we will recess for the joint session of Congress.

We will then reconvene for the closed session at 12:30 p.m. in room SVC-217. We are committed to allowing all of our colleagues to ask questions, so if the assembly time arrives, we will continue in the open session until everyone has an opportunity to do so. And in lieu of Senator Wicker's arrival shortly, I will ask General Cavoli to begin.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Reed, to Ranking Member Wicker, of course, as well, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege to testify before you today, and in many cases to see you again. On behalf of the men, women, and the families of USEUCOM first of all, I thank you for your steadfast support to their mission, to their safety, and to their well-being.

I would also like to recognize and thank my Command Senior Enlisted Leader, CSM Rob Abernathy, sitting behind me here, who accompanied me here today. He is representing our noncommissioned officers, our enlisted soldiers, and our families who remain America's asymmetric advantage against any adversary.

So, thank you, Rob, for being here. I am very pleased to appear today beside my good friend and colleague, Jackie Van Ovest, whose U.S. Transportation Command is unlike anything else on the globe and who works miracles every day. Thank you, Jackie, to your whole command.

So, this is, as the chairman noted, an unprecedented illegal, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine dramatically shifted perceptions of European stability and our broader global security. It galvanized European governments' resolve. Last year's NATO summit in Madrid was a turning point for the alliance.

Nations committed to a new strategic concept that put collective territorial defense at the top of the alliance task list for the first time in 35 years. And for the first time since the Cold War, set into motion a series of efforts that will profoundly change the military structure and activities of NATO. We have been

creating new plans.

That is, allied command operations has been creating new plans for the General defense of the alliance, and these will drive higher levels of readiness and more targeted national defense investments, especially on the part of our allies.

Nations agreed to accelerate defense spending increases, to establish enhanced force posture on the Eastern flank of NATO, to turn unprecedented numbers of troops and weapons over to NATO command and control, and critically, to bring two new members into the alliance.

Happy to note, as the chairman did, that Finland has already joined and we hope soon to see of Sweden as a member as well.

Over time, these efforts inside the alliance will lead to significantly increased European military capabilities and will continue to deter aggression against the alliance.

That deterrent posture has allowed us to work intensively in the past year or so to assist Ukraine. In the past year, thanks to your support, U.S. donations of arms, ammunition, equipment, vehicles, and supplies have enabled Ukraine to halt Russia's invasion.

We have not been alone in this effort. The DOD and USEUCOM lead an international effort represented by the 50 plus member UDCG, Ukraine Donors Contact Group. We have an effort together to identify transport and deliver equipment and ammunition to Ukraine, along with the training to use that equipment in combat.

This material support and the training provided by international donors has been huge and fundamental to the Ukrainian military's success so far. Over the winter, our coalition has enabled the Ukrainian military to generate the military capabilities necessary to defend and regain parts of their sovereign territory, and we are confident our Ukrainian partners are good stewards of donated aid.

Our embassy team in Kyiv, led by Brigadier General Garrick Harmon and the security assistance group Ukraine, located in Germany, worked diligently to monitor and keep a close eye on all lethal aid to ensure it is getting to and staying in the right hands. Although we remain optimistic for Ukraine's future and sovereignty, this war is far from over.

Russia will remain an acute threat to Euro-Atlantic security, and the National Defense Strategy rightly calls our attention to that. But Russia is not the only problem in Europe. The People's Republic of **China** continues to increase its access and influence in our theater, and its activities pose risks to U.S. allied and partner interests.

The **PRC** uses foreign direct investment, government backed business ventures, and loans to gain access to technology and to gain control over vital European infrastructure and transportation routes.

Finally, Europe continues to face transnational challenges as well. Such as violent extremist organizations, uncontrolled immigration, organized crime, and even climate change. EUCOM trains and cooperates with allies and partners to help counter those challenges as well. Our strategic approach fortifies our allies and our partners.

It strengthens alliance interoperability and enhances our collective combat capability, which deters our adversaries. And as always, should deterrence fail, USEUCOM, alongside our allies and partners, is ready to fight and win.

Your continued support for our efforts, the authorities and the funding you give us, are critical to our ability to do this. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for having me here today. I look forward to your questions.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, General Cavoli.

General Van Ovost, your statement, please.

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, distinguished members of the committee, good morning. It is my honor to join you today with my Senior Enlisted Leader, Fleet Master Chief Donald Myrick, to represent the men and women of United States Transportation Command as we defend the nation, take care of our people, and succeed through teamwork.

I am extremely proud of our team of logistics professionals who lead the joint deployment and distribution enterprise, continually exceed expectations, and ensure hope, deterrence, and victory are assured as we contribute to our nation's defense.

From competition to crisis, the entire enterprise proudly delivers for our nation,

our allies, and our partners. We know our success in the European theater and beyond would not be possible without the steadfast support of this committee and the whole of Congress.

To maintain the unrivaled strategic advantage, to project and sustain the Joint Force over global distances through natural disasters, pandemics, conflicts, peace and war, while defending our homeland, we must preserve our logistical dominance.

Our organic fleet, along with our commercial transportation partners, must continue to present credible deterrence and requires proactive efforts to recapitalize and modernize. My highest concerns lie in reductions in capacity and readiness in both sealift and air refueling.

We are a generation late in recapitalizing already sealift fleet to meet our national objectives.

The average age of our 44 roll on, roll off ships we use to surge from the Continental United States is 44 years old. In fact, 17 of the 44 ships are 50 years or older.

TRANSCOM supports the Navy's strategy to acquire used sealift vessels from the commercial market, and further request to provide Secretary of Defense discretionary authority to purchase foreign built used ships under favorable market conditions without limitation on number.

I greatly appreciate your support for stabilized funding towards our sealift recapitalization effort, and I am heartened by the current progress on the first five ships. We have also taken steps to address the department's shortfall in meeting wartime fuel delivery demands and the vulnerable position of continued reliance on the use of foreign flagged, foreign crude tanker vessels.

We are working with MARAD to implement the tanker security program, which will provide assured access to U.S.

flag tankers and begin to reduce risk in sealift tanker capacity. In addition to the tanker security program, we fully support the Maritime Security Program, the Jones Act, and cargo preference that all work together to ensure we have the necessary U.S. flag capability and U.S. mariners during peacetime, and ready to move sensitive defense materials during a national emergency.

In every domain, American workers are critical to the Joint Force transportation and logistics. In particular, maritime stakeholders have been experiencing challenges with recruiting and retaining mariners. We support MARAD and industry efforts to identify strategies that address the Mariners shortage and ensure their readiness.

In the air, the air refueling fleet is the backbone of rapid global mobility and is our most stressed capability.

TRANSCOM supports the Air Force's continued efforts towards focused modernization of the fleet, uninterrupted tanker recapitalization, and accelerated pursuit of the next generation air refueling system to ensure our capacity and readiness remains credible to cover simultaneous global requirements.

Future operations will also require high degrees of battlespace awareness and leveraging data to align scarce mobility resources with the greatest strategic needs.

Integration into battle networks, resourcing cryptographic modernization, cybersecurity, and ensuring resilient positioning, navigation, and timing are among my top priorities.

Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act expires at the end of this year, which provides essential and irreplaceable insights on the activities of critical foreign targets. The loss of this authority, or renewal and diminished or unusable form would profoundly damage the department's ability to see and mitigate some of the most profound threats against the United States and our allies and partners.

Therefore, reauthorization is a matter of utmost priority. Just as we are engaged globally in our flagship transformational effort, the global household goods contract will bring accountability that does not exist in the current program of dispersed vendors. We owe it to our members and their families to ensure that they have the very best relocation experience that we can provide.

I am honored to join General Cavoli today, where we are in lockstep to provide critical aid to enable Ukraine's national defense that in turn delivers success for the United States, our allies, and our nation. I would like to thank you once



again for your leadership and for the support you provide our workforce, and I look forward to your questions.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, General Van Ovost. Senator Wicker has suggested that we proceed with questioning, and when he is called upon, he will have opportunity to submit his statement and also ask his questions.

So let me begin. Both General Ovost – Van Ovost and General Cavoli have absolutely critical positions. In fact, General Cavoli, the Ukrainian situation is the most pressing military situation in the world at the moment.

Unfortunately, here in the Senate, we have reached an impasse in terms of the promotion of noncontroversial General officers on a routine basis, usually by unanimous consent. Could you indicate what effects this will have on your operational capacity, but also on the morale and personal dynamics of families?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Yes, in an operational sense, if I have officers who are scheduled to retire, General officers who are scheduled to retire and do so, but I don't have somebody to replace them, I will suffer a gap in that. Some of those are in fairly critical positions right now.

For example, the Chairman's military representative to the Military Committee, General John Diedrich, is scheduled to retire this summer. His replacement hasn't been confirmed so we would have a gap in the Chairman's representation at that rank at the military committee and NATO, which in my U.S. role is a vital connection between me and the Chairman to influence activities in NATO, and in my role as SACE, of course, it is very useful to have a line to the U.S. military representative. So that is one example, sir.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Well, thank you. And General Ovost, your perceptions?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Thank you, Chairman. Besides any operational impacts from not being able to rotate General officers into positions of significant responsibility, the United States Transportation Command is responsible for moving 311,000 families every year around the globe.

It is important to continue these movements so that the children can be enrolled in schools, they can find adequate housing, and ensure that they are ready to succeed in their new responsibilities.

So, these delays add additional stress to our military families who already sacrifice enough.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, General Ovost – Van Ovost. General Cavoli, there has been some discussion about the relative contributions of NATO countries and other countries to this fight.

If we look simply at the dimension of military equipment, military supplies, that is one measure. But overall, in terms of accepting refugees, in terms of supporting those refugees, the Kiel Institute has analyzed that total input and indicates that the U.S. would rank 12th in terms of the amount of GDP, the 11 preceding countries are European countries.

It raises the question of how important these contributions are to the battlefield, even though they don't represent military equipment or military advice.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Mr. Chairman, thanks for the opportunity to comment on this topic. So, first of all, the United States can and should be extremely proud of the quantity of aid that we have given and the leadership role we have taken. I think that is absolutely imperative to note up front.

And in gross numbers, I think it is very fair by whichever mode of calculation we arrive at a gross number, that the U.S. clearly is the leader. In terms of proportion, though, you are right. I mean, more than half a dozen allies have given greater – a greater share their GDP in military aid to the Ukrainians.

I can't speak to all the other types of aid, but maybe I can give a little bit of – a couple of illustrations.

514 tanks have been given by the West to the Ukrainians in the past few months. None of them have come from the United States yet. Our Abrams won't get there until later in the year. 16 mid-level or high-level air defense systems have been given.

Two of those were given by the United States. So, there are some genuine donations. More than a third of our allies have given over half of their capacity in a given category to the Ukrainians. I would be reluctant to be really precise in public, but I would be delighted to be precise in closed session later today, if you would like, sir.

And then finally, in nonmilitary ways, there is a lot going on. Our allies have treated or are treating about 2,400 wounded, grievously wounded Ukrainians in their hospitals, largely in their national defense systems – national health systems. We have treated four at – so there are some genuine contributions being made, sir.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Well, thank you very much, General.

Let me recognize Senator Wicker. Thank you very much, both.

**SENATOR WICKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I do ask unanimous consent that my opening statement be included after yours in the record.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Without objection. [The information referred to follows:]  
[COMMITTEE INSERT]

**SENATOR WICKER:** And I thank the chairman for bringing up the point about burden sharing. And I think it is helpful to reemphasize the 5 million Ukrainian refugees that are being cared for by Europeans at some considerable cost, 1.5 million in Poland, 920,000 in Germany, 177,000 in the Baltic states, 500,000 in the Czech Republic.

And so, I am glad to see the chair bring that up in his first round of questioning. I think one thing that could really harm public opinion here in the United States would be if we found that there was some corruption and siphoning off of money or weapons sold or donated by the United States.

And I had a chance to ask you about that earlier. But would you give us your take and any assurance that you could give us that our friends who are actually carrying the fight in Ukraine are mindful of this possibility and how serious it would be if it were to occur?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thank you, Senator. Of course.

First of all, just with the General statement, my colleagues, my interlocutors in Ukraine assure me that they understand how important this issue is to the American people, and I believe it is sincerely so.

But as usual, military people put into action systems to try to verify things. So, we are doing enhanced end-use monitoring. And if you would permit me, I

would like to describe that for you for a second.

**SENATOR WICKER:** Please do, yes.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** The first thing we do is, whenever we receive U.S. equipment that is going to go into the country, it comes through one of a couple of ports of entry. The main one is in Southeastern Poland, and a number of the members have visited there.

At that location, we inventory everything by serial number so that we know exactly what is going into the country. A couple of months ago, about six months ago, we gave the Ukrainian military a NATO standard logistics tracking software system called LOGFAS. It is what we use to track our own system.

So, we ingest all of that inventory into LOGFAS, and then the Ukrainians use that to track and to distribute their equipment around the country, and we have access to that in real time. So that helps us to a certain degree.

But then, of course, once you get inside the country, we have a responsibility to go lay eyes on things and check them.

And that enhanced end use monitoring is done by the defense attaché office in Kyiv, led by Brigadier General Garrick Harmon. They go out to sites and they inspect.

They went to Odessa yesterday to inspect and to inventory, and they will go to another location next week as well.

When they can't get to a location, they have barcodes placed on things and Ukrainians self-report by clicking on the barcode, and then we ingest that information into LOGFAS so we can track it as well.

**SENATOR WICKER:** Perhaps you could supplement that answer on the record, but you have confidence that there are safeguards for our weapons and donations.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Yes, I do, Senator.

**SENATOR WICKER:** General Van Ovost, you – we are not where we need to be at all in the **Pacific**, if conflict breaks out there, aren't we?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Senator, we are not yet fully set in posture in the Indo-Pacific, I would agree.

**SENATOR WICKER:** And you mentioned on page 15 of your testimony, in particular the importance of the tanker security program. And in your verbal testimony, you mentioned the importance of the Jones Act.

Now, we are aware that in some circumstances the consumers pay more because of the Jones Act. But in a previous conversation with you, you were, I believe, very compelling in explaining why the Jones Act is so important to our national security in case conflict breaks out. So, if I might, Mr. Chairman, let General Van Ovost expand on that.

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Certainly, Senator. Thank you.

The United States, we only have 85 U.S. flagged, U.S.

crewed ships in international trade right now. We have less than 2 percent of the foreign trade that passes using U.S. flagged U.S. crewed ships.

In other words, 98 percent foreign flagged. Is not enough for our national security. So, we have actually already reserve force because there is not enough U.S.

flagged U.S. crewed shipping.

So, it is very important that we have maritime security program, tanker security program, cargo preference laws, and the Jones Act to ensure that we keep U.S. flagged US crewed vessels available for our national security needs.

**SENATOR WICKER:** And what if we didn't have those?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Senator, if we didn't have those, we perhaps would have to grow our organic fleet of sealift ships requiring 100 percent of the burden being on the U.S. military.

**SENATOR WICKER:** Thank you very much. Appreciate that.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman – Ranking Member. Senator Fischer, please.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** Shaheen.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Shaheen, I am –

**SENATOR SHAHEEN:** You know, I know we all look alike, but – [Laughter.]

**CHAIRMAN REED:** No, Roger does not look at all like –

**SENATOR WICKER:** Like a chairman perhaps – [Laughter.]

**CHAIRMAN REED:** No, it is just – I apologize. It is early, and my coffee has not yet taken hold. Forgive me.

Senator Shaheen of New Hampshire.

**SENATOR SHAHEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, General Cavoli and General Van Ovost for being here this morning and for your service. General Van Ovost, I would like to begin with you because in your opening statement, you talked about the stressed capacity of our air refueling and the importance of that.

And I know you have been to – we have been delighted to host you at the former Peace Air Force base where Pease Air National Guard 157th Air Refueling Wing has KC-46 tankers to do refueling.

But can you talk about, when you talked about the stress capacity, how important the KC-46 is, and what else we need to do in order to address our needs?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Senator, thank you. As I mentioned, our ability to project and sustain the force, the foundation of that is our air refueling capability.

It makes us a global superpower. So, it is really critical that we continue to recapitalize the KC-135s and KC-10s with KC-46. So, I appreciate this committee's support in continuing that recap and thinking about the next generation air refueling.

As far as the KC-46, it brings new capabilities to the fight, capabilities we have not had previously. That aircraft is what I call connected to the battlespace. It can see battlespace maneuvers and it can assist the Joint Force in ways that we

haven't even fully explored yet.

So, it is very – it is a force multiplier. It can do probe and drogue as well as boom refueling, and it can receive and it can take on gas in flight. So, it is a multi-capable airplane and we intend to use it that way to augment the Joint Force.

**SENATOR SHAHEEN:** Thank you. You also talked about the importance of Section 702 in terms of intelligence gathering. Senator Budd and I were with a number of other Senators in Latin America a couple of weeks ago, and at every stop we heard about the importance of reauthorizing 702.

Can you and General Cavoli both speak to what that allows us to do when we don't have people on the ground in terms of collecting information that we need?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Yes, Senator. Signals intelligence is critical to my ability to understand the threats around the world, where they are moving to, what their intentions are, and how we can mitigate those threat.

So that is for the open session. I am happy to expound in a classified section.

**SENATOR SHAHEEN:** Thank you.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Senator, of course, a full answer is best done in closed session, but I can assure you that an enormous amount of the intelligence that I rely on in the current crisis is derived from the authorities under 702.

**SENATOR SHAHEEN:** Thank you. Thank you both. I think, General Cavoli, this question is probably for you because we see Iran continuing to supply Russia with critical support in this war against Ukraine.

There are reports now that Iran is providing artillery and ammunition to Ukraine as well as drones. Is – has that been confirmed and how are we working with our counterparts in CENTCOM to track and respond to that Iranian equipment? And also, are we seeing other countries provide weapons and ammunition to Russia as well?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** First, more broadly, Senator, we see other countries considering it. We see precious few actually doing it right now, and we are gratified by that.

But it is because of significant efforts on the part of the United States and our allies to discourage them.

And you have seen some of that in the open press. We can discuss some more in closed session. With regard to the Iranian threat specifically, we have seen and the Ukrainians have reported to us the presence of Iranian drones especially.

That has been pretty well covered in open sources but I can go into some details in closed session with you if you would like. I am in significant contact with my good friend and colleague Eric Kurilla in Central Command, and some of the things we are thinking about in terms of handling this situation, I can address with you in closed session as well, if you will permit me.

**SENATOR SHAHEEN:** Well, thank you. And you may want to address this in closed session, but do we think they have an unlimited supply of the weapons that they are providing to Russia, or are we seeing challenges within their industrial base?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** They have a significant supply, but it is certainly not unlimited, ma'am.

**SENATOR SHAHEEN:** Thank you. And I have only a little time left, but could both of you speak to the importance of the air defender exercises that NATO is going to be doing?

Again, I am pleased that the 157th from New Hampshire is going to participate in those. But how important are those? I understand it is the biggest exercise, that air exercise NATO has done.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** If I could start, as the commander of allied command operations, Senator, extremely important.

Air defense is one of the things that most of the nations in the alliance are challenged on in terms of capacity.

And then the integration is something that has to be done and repetitively exercised constantly because systems change and the technology gets updated and the soft, and then you have got to bring it back together. These are absolutely vital exercises.



**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** And our teams are fully engaged.

This is a critical exercise for us, for interoperability with our allies and partners, growing their capabilities, including command and control.

**SENATOR SHAHEEN:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Senator Fischer, please.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Cavoli, what do you assess to be the impact of Russia's assertions that it would deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, along with its handling over Iskander mobile short range ballistic missiles to the Belarusian forces?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Senator, thank you for the question.

As a military matter, I do not think that it is a particularly concerning development. And we can go into the specifics of that in closed session, of course.

Therefore, I think it is mainly a gesture, and –

**SENATOR FISCHER:** Do you think it is more saber rattling again?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** I do. I think it is a gesture and it is a gesture that we will handle through our policy means, etcetera. And I have less to comment on in that regard.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** Okay, thank you. Also, can you discuss what your demands are for both manned and unmanned ISR?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Yes, absolutely, Senator. Of course, like all the combatant commanders, ISR is what we depend on, especially during peacetime, to maintain situational awareness. There is a demand for ISR, both manned and unmanned, aerial ISR, that far exceeds the supply across the Department of Defense, and we are grateful when we get our share of it.

Right now, it is extremely important for a variety of reasons. We can't do everything with other means. It is our ability to collect and analyze depends on using a layered approach with a variety of systems, and we depend on those.

We are grateful for the advances that the services are making, from the Army with its new Artemis system, which has been doing great work in Europe for the last couple of years, to the Air Force's advances, and to the Navy's P-8 program, all a very valuable, ma'am.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** And how do you believe the threats are going to change in EUCCOM in the coming decades? In your crystal ball, what do you see?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Do you mean in General, Senator?

**SENATOR FISCHER:** In General.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Well, I think Russia is quite likely to remain the core security challenge in Europe for some years to come. Their military has suffered significant losses in this conflict, but they have mainly been in the ground domain.

The air force, the tactical air force has lost about 80 fighters and fighter bombers, but they have more than 1,000 of them left. The long-range aviation has not been touched. The navy has barely been touched, lost a ship or two. The strategic nuclear forces, the cyber, the space have not been touched.

So, I think Russia will continue to be the core security challenge. But there are others. **China** is gaining influence and **China** continues to press for influence. And then there is always instability in the Balkans. You know, we are not done with that. So, I think perhaps we will see more of the same, Senator.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** You brought up where Russia hasn't touched many of their capabilities currently. And so, they have those in reserve for the next decade. When we look at munitions that are being used, especially in the conflict in Ukraine, and the amount of munitions that are being expended, do you think that we need to increase our production capacity here in this country? And would you encourage our allies to do the same?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Absolutely, Senator, to both. Our allies are very aware of the shortfalls that they have in munitions in certain cases, where they do exist.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** You were talking about the number of tanks and the – our allies have already shared with the Ukrainians.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Right. And so inside NATO, in my other role as the Supreme Allied Commander, I have been responsible to deliver a new set of operational plans. And we turned them in on the 14th of April.

They are very specific regional plans for collective defense, and they have a level of specificity that is going to drive a force structure requirement, which will be the first time in 35 years that the alliance has a plans based force structure requirement. This will guide national defense investments across the alliance.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** Thank you. General Van Ovost, you talked a little bit about the sealift and being able to fuel, have that fueling capability. And you mentioned, you know, working with MARAD. Can you kind of focus in, especially on the MARAD point there, on how important that is?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Sure, Senator. We have a great relationship with the Maritime Administration who oversees our ready reserve force, those ships that are in reduced operating status. And when we need to activate them, they wake up and they come to TRANSCOM and we fight them.

So, it is really important that we keep that relationship going, and especially when it comes to our mariners, because the same mariners that crew ships that do foreign import and export, they are also the same mariners that are on our great haul ships. So, it is really important that we continue to support them.

**SENATOR FISCHER:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, Senator Fischer.

Senator Hirono, please.

**SENATOR HIRONO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for being here. General Cavoli, **China** is sending a special representative, an envoy to Ukraine and other countries for talks on regulating the Ukrainian crisis.

Not sure what that means.

And the special envoy has been selected and Ukraine is sending a special envoy to **China**. Do you consider this a significant development, and what does that portend?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thank you, Senator. I am not sure we know yet the

significance of the development, but what we do know is that **China** should begin by condemning Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. That should be the first step in my mind to any productive role for **China** in the conflict or its resolution, ma'am.

**SENATOR HIRONO:** I think that – yes, well, this also signifies **China's** engagement in Europe. And so, I think that it remains to be seen, but to me, it is possibly a positive sign that perhaps there will be an end to this terrible conflict. General Van Ovest, we have spoken at length about Red Hill and your plan for the fuel currently stored there.

I understand there is a plan for where the fuel will go once de-fueling begins. And with over half the required repairs at Red Hill complete, de-fueling remains on track to be completed in June of 2024. Is your plan for fuel distribution in the **Pacific** complete?

**GENERAL VAN OVEST:** Senator, we are lockstep with **INDOPACOM** and the Navy Task Force Commander on the de-fueling of Red Hill. We have assets ready to support and we are on track to meet all of their needs.

The posture in the **Indo-Pacific** is still under assessment. We are in our role as the global bulk fuel manager for the Department of Defense. We are looking very closely at the posture requirements, the requirements to ensure that we can buy fuel or store fuel, and also what needs to be afloat and what should be in in various areas.

So, we are still doing that assessment. We are working with **INDOPACOM** on the Section 333 report that should highlight the key aspects of that posture.

**SENATOR HIRONO:** So, as you are assessing how you are going to complete the safe de-fueling of the 100 million gallons or so that is that Red Hill, if you require anything further at this time to ensure that de-fueling happens in the way that we would want it to happen, will you let me and this committee know.

General Cavoli, in war, it is often the most vulnerable who pay the highest cost, the elderly, women, girls. And while it is vital that we continue to provide Ukraine with the military equipment it needs to continue to bulwark democracy in Europe, our support of the civilian population also speaks to our country's values and stands in sharp contrast with Russia and other malign actors.

What is the EUCOM doing to support and protect the people of Ukraine? And how is EUCOM working with Ukraine and other U.S. Government agencies to monitor human rights abuses by Russia?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thank you, Senator. First of all, we support NATO's and other European efforts in this regard.

The first one, of course, was the acceptance by our allies of large numbers of refugees who were in the main – women and children. They have very successfully done that, and they did it spontaneously.

Our initial thought was we were going to have to help significantly, but the societies absorbed them. As they have done so, we have worked with them carefully through non-DOD entities, but advised by EUCOM – to make sure that rights are established. And then as we talk to our Ukrainian colleagues, we do keep our gender advisers and everybody involved as we develop plans with them.

The Ukrainians are remarkably sensitive to civilian casualties, of course, because those are Ukrainian civilians who will be inadvertently wounded in their operations. And we routinely, in exercises here, even junior Ukrainian servicemen, saying, hey, wait a minute, you know, I know people in that town.

What are we going to do about this? So, it is a complex question, ma'am, but those are some of the things that we are doing to help. We do provide support to those organizations that are attempting to figure out war crimes as well, although we have not put people on the ground to do that.

**SENATOR HIRONO:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator Cotton, please.

**SENATOR COTTON:** Thank you both for your service and your appearance today. General Cavoli, you testified earlier that 31 Abrams tanks would arrive in Ukraine later in the year. Estimates I have seen say that we are still about eight months away from that. Is that correct?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** No, Senator. The first thing we are going to do is put a training set in –

**SENATOR COTTON:** That starts next month in Grafenwoehr, correct?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** That is correct. And then the next set, the dates are moving right now. We are trying to accelerate as much as we can be –

**SENATOR COTTON:** The same tanks at Grafenwoehr are going to be the tanks that go to Ukraine?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** The first set will not. Those will be training tanks that we keep and then will send a different set in. We did the same thing with Bradleys earlier this year, sir.

**SENATOR COTTON:** Okay. General Van Ovost, have you received an order to transport that second set of tanks to Ukraine yet?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Senator, I worked very closely with European Command to meet all of their requirements in a priority manner. Certainly, we are in coordination on the tanks, as well as all the other significant equipment.

**SENATOR COTTON:** Is that a, no?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** We anticipate the movement. So, from an order perspective, we are ready to move it.

**SENATOR COTTON:** Sounds like a no. General Cavoli, you look like you have something to say here.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Yes. My command has not issued a specific date for movement for those yet. As soon as we have the exact sourcing pinned down with the timeline, we will issue the actual order for the aircraft.

**SENATOR COTTON:** Why has your command not issued that order?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** You know, can I take that for the record, Mr. Cotton, because I would like to give you the exact –the exact status of it.

**SENATOR COTTON:** I mean, we our country has thousands of main battle tanks. It would seem like it's not that hard to find 31 and get them there.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Senator, some of the reasons for that I could cover in closed session, but if I could –

**SENATOR COTTON:** I guess. But I mean, I think the main reason for that is

the main reasons why we didn't even agree to supply the tanks for a year, which is that President Biden didn't want to supply them.

And again, I think we could supply them faster than eight or nine months if there was the political will. It is not a decision for you or General Van Ovost to make. I think it is just reflected from the political decision to continue to drag our feet in what we are supplying to Ukraine. It is just a repeated story we have seen over and over again throughout the course of this war.

I want to get to one of the potential reasons for that as well. You talked earlier about submitting new OPLANs for NATO. It came to my attention earlier this year that we have not changed our OPLANs or our warfighting requirements in EUCOM for Russia. Is that correct?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Senator, I am in consultation with the Secretary of Defense on that question right now. The question that has been posed to me and we are working our answer with the staff.

I believe I have a date with the Secretary of Defense later this month or next month to discuss in detail and to come to a conclusion on what timeline we will or will not adjust for the answers.

**SENATOR COTTON:** So that is a no then. Once again, that is a no, we haven't changed our requirements in the OPLAN to fight Russia.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Could we discuss exactly what we have done with OPLANs in closed session, sir?

**SENATOR COTTON:** Again, we can, but I think the question has been answered now. And the reason I highlighted is the committee is continuously told that, by the Administration, not by uniformed military officers, that we can't provide this, that, or the other weapon to Ukraine because we need it for our own requirements.

I understand that, special requirements in the **Western Pacific** against **China**, but if we still have the same requirements in place to fight Russia in April of 2023 that we had in February of 2022, after we have seen the performance of their military in Ukraine and after the known degradation of their military in Ukraine, then I think that is just a pretext that the Administration is using for not supplying more capabilities to Ukraine.

We can get into more detail in closed setting, but I think it is very troubling that the Administration is still stuck in the pre-Ukraine war mindset of what it would take for us to adequately deter or defeat Russia in a conflict in EUCOM.

One final point I want to raise is the flying of our MQ-9 drones in the Black Sea. Russia dangerously downed one a few weeks back. The reports I have seen and what I have heard from my sources is that we have now altered our flight patterns in the Black Sea, that we are no longer flying in the same airspace where we were flying before that negligent incident with the Russian aircraft. Is that correct?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Yes, Senator. So, it was not just negligent. It was not competent. The Russian pilot bumped into the MQ-9, which is not something pilots typically do on purpose. Again, on ISR operations, especially in the Black Sea, I would be delighted to answer you in detail in closed session.

**SENATOR COTTON:** Well, I asked the Secretary of Defense this recently, and he repeatedly said, we will fly the paths we felt necessary to collect intelligence information.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** And those have been his instructions to me.

**SENATOR COTTON:** I understand that. But again, that is not a – that is not a no, when I was asking him that.

That is – to me, that is him saying we are not flying where we were anymore because we don't want to be provocative, which again, is a political decision, is not a military decision. And this is not some secret.

I mean, Russia knows where we are flying these aircraft like anybody here could find out we are flying them for the most part just by going on open-source information. And the fact that – if we are flying those aircraft in certain airspace in the Black Sea before that incident, because that is where we thought we needed to get intelligence, and now we are saying we can get that intelligence by flying them somewhere else, well we shouldn't have been flying there in the first place.

But if we needed to get in there to get that intelligence in the first place, then we should be back there, otherwise we are simply ceding that airspace to Russia. So, my time has expired. I guess we will address more of these in closed setting.



**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator Gillibrand, please.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** General Cavoli, last year we passed the Justice for Victims of War Crimes Act, improving the Department of Justice's ability to prosecute war crimes committed in Ukraine. However, prosecutors, whether in the U.S. or in an international tribunal, cannot proceed with cases without evidence.

How is EUCOM working with Ukraine and with our allies to preserve evidence of war crimes? If your personnel discover evidence of a war crime through classified systems, are you ensuring that the evidence is flagged for declassification and eventual used by prosecutors?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Senator, thank you. So, we don't have the lead on this question, on this initiative, obviously. But we do support it, as requested. And when we find evidence of war crimes, whether in open sources or any other way, we do refer those and we do keep track of them. Yes, ma'am.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** Thank you. The war in Ukraine has allowed the world to observe wartime operations in the cyber and space domains. As a combatant commander in the theater where this conflict is occurring, what have you learned from the conflict about the employment of military forces in the cyber and space domains?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** We have learned a ton, both in terms of adversary capability and capacity, Senator, as well as our defensive needs. We are working hard to improve where we need to improve.

Most of all, we are working to help our allies defend their networks and to help our partners who are vulnerable also to defend their networks. And we have a very tight cooperation with Paul Nakasone and his U.S. Cyber Command to do this.

There are some specific things, of course, that at a classified level would be interesting to talk about. But in General, we have seen a significant employment of cyber, both inside the conflict zone and outside the conflict zone, on the part of our adversaries, ma'am.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** General Van Ovost, TRANSCOM is turning over responsibility for service members' permanent change of station moves to a

private contractor. How will the department ensure the service members' experience actually improves under this contract? How does the department intend to respond if military families' experience worsen rather than improve?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Senator, thanks for the question.

We are focused on delivering the quality, service, transparency, and accountability that is not existent in the current series of contracts.

So, we are partnering with Home Safe, and we have a measured phasing plan with 28 separate metrics monthly that we will be reviewing for which we own the data. So, we are going to continue to watch them as they bring along the capacity, as they begin right after peak season, September 23.

And we have a spouses group where we are getting feedback from, actively seeking from them their experiences. So, and our first sample rate is going to be about 50 percent. So, we are going to definitely be understanding how they are bringing on the capacity and are they delivering on the quality that we desire.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** Thank you. Part of your strategy for TRANSCOM has involved the increased use of commercial contracts for defense missions rather than military aircraft and crews.

Can you discuss how you are ensuring that these contracts are implementing appropriate and aggressive cybersecurity protocols? How are you including cybersecurity in these contracts, and how are you verifying that these contractors are not endangering the security of our military personnel or allies?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Senator, cyber is a consistent discussion point amongst us and our transportation service providers. We are collaborating with industry. We have contract cybersecurity standards to safeguard defense information in those contracts. They annually assess them and we review those assessments.

And we are working throughout the department with Paul Nakasone on sharing and collaboration initiatives with our industry partners. And I appreciate Congress's support of the no cost cybersecurity offerings offered in the Cyber Collaboration Center and the defense industrial based cyber security program.

Our transportation service providers are taking advantage of these, and we are assessing them almost constantly.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** General Cavoli, following up on Senator Shaheen's question and Senator Hirono's question about Iran and **China**, can you talk a little bit more about what the impact of Iranian involvement and **Chinese** involvement in the conflict create, and what recommendations you have to the Administration?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Yes, ma'am. So, the first complication is diplomatic and political, right. The fact that they don't condemn. The fact that in some cases they affirm Russia's position. Second, **China** – Iran, as we noted a few minutes ago, has provided some material support, specifically drones.

Those have had an effect. Those do two things.

First, when they succeed, they strike targets. And second, they have to be countered. And sometimes they are countered with air defense missiles.

And as Chairman Milley and Secretary Austin have made very plain, the primary requirement the Ukrainians have right now is ground based air defense to control their skies. So, it is a cost imposition strategy that should go after with that. **Chinese** aid has been non-material and it has not had a direct physical effect on the battlefield yet, ma'am.

**SENATOR GILLIBRAND:** Are there any other impact non-material?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** In closed session, I could discuss one specific one, ma'am.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Gillibrand.

Senator Rounds, please.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to both of you for your service to our country and to your families as well. And thank you also for your teams that are with you today, and their families as well for their service to our country.

I just want to follow up a little bit. The line of questioning that Senator Cotton began here is one that I think I would like to understand a little bit more clearly.

There – I believe there were 31 Abrams tanks that were committed to by our country to Ukraine's defense. Are those – in that 31, do those include the training tanks that are already in, you know, in Europe today?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Senator, there will be 31 Abrams as of right now, donated to Ukraine. The training set will be a separate set.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** Okay. And so, you have got some there in Europe right now. Do you have the 31 identified as being already in Europe or are they in the United States?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Senator, if I could, I would like to take that for the record so I can give you the exact location.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** I don't need the exact location. I was just curious if they were within your area of operation today in Europe.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Senator, again, I would want to give you an accurate answer, and I don't have it off the top of my head, sir.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** It would seem to me that if we have committed for those tanks to be made available, what is the length of time from when you are notified that it is time to deliver them? How long does that take – and perhaps this is a better question for General Van Ovest – how long does it take to actually deliver the Abrams tanks once you have been notified or requested to deliver them?

**GENERAL VAN OVEST:** Senator, we have multiple avenues to deliver Abrams tanks, by air or by sea. So, we consistently look not just at Abrams tanks, but the significant amount of aid that is being provided to Ukraine.

We source that from around the globe, not necessarily just out of CONUS or just out of Europe. And as we determine where the sources are going to be, we match it to the best resource to move it to meet the timelines as needed by the priorities set out by the European zone.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** So, you are prepared to make that move as expeditiously as possible once you have been given the orders to transport the tanks?

**GENERAL VAN OVEST:** Yes, Senator.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** Where would those tanks be located at today if you were to do them? Can you share that in an open session?

**GENERAL VAN OVEST:** Senator, again, I don't know where all the tanks are and which ones would be viable for this donation. I would leave that up to Army

Materiel Command and –

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** So, it hasn't gotten that far yet.

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Not to my awareness, has gotten that far.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** All right. Thank you. And, General, once again, the orders, or at least your authorizations to move tanks over. You will play a part in that, but you have not been given the authorizations yet to do that at this time?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Right. When the exact tanks are identified and their location. So, they could come from stocks in Europe, as General Van Ovost just pointed out.

They could be reconstructed.

When I have got the set identified, then I place an order with General Van Ovost, and it usually goes fairly quickly, sir. They can be moved by air or better by sealift.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** I think it is fair to say that we probably have the best logistics capabilities of any country in the world, and that is a testament not just to the men and women that serve within that, but also because we do a good job of planning.

I think the reason why I am following up on this, and I recognize this is not a line of questioning that you really want to go down, but I think it is important to point out that this is not a case of where we just simply can't deliver 31 Abrams tanks.

Bottom line is that this has been a policy decision that they are not prepared to deliver 31 Abrams tanks at this time. It is not within your authorization. General, would that be a correct statement on my part?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Senator, there is an intention to deliver the 31 tanks. I think there are some technical things that we have to go through in terms of exactly which tanks, that we are working on.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** But the bottom line is, is if we needed those tanks, it shouldn't take eight months for the United States Army to be able to access 31 Abrams tanks.

If we needed them tomorrow, we would get them very, very quickly. If you needed them, you could get them.

Or if you were authorized to get them, you could get them. This is not a case of us not being able to get them.

It is a matter that somebody has got to make a decision on when they want those tanks delivered. Is that a fair statement, General?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, I think the key is exactly which tanks and which capabilities, and their levels of classification that the Army has to wade through on that question for releasability, sir.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** Fair to say, though, sir, that should never take nine months. If you needed those tanks, you could get those tanks.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, if I needed those tanks for the U.S. Army, I certainly could.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** Yes, okay. That is very helpful.

Thank you, General. I recognize this was not the line of questioning that I wanted to go down today, but this, I think, is important to understand that those decisions need to be made and that this is not within your area of operation.

You are ready to go. You can get it done, but someone has got to tell you, it is time to go. And I want to thank you for those very frank answers. I also, I am mindful that my time is expiring, but I just have to also say, I want to take home just to thank you and your staff for resolving an issue that the South Dakota Army National Guard's 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment had in getting its meals paid for while deployed in support of Atlantic resolve.

It takes a total force to defend the nation. The Guard is a key component to that force, but sometimes the pieces just simply don't fit together very well. And I want to thank you for going the extra mile to take care of these soldiers, even while tending to the strategic issues that you are responsible for. And I want to just publicly say thank you for getting involved and getting that fixed for these young soldiers.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Senator, my command was wrong in that case. And we appreciate your care for your constituents, and for bringing it to our attention, and we are rectifying it.

**SENATOR ROUNDS:** Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr.

Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Rounds. Senator Kelly, please.

**SENATOR KELLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for being here today. I have a question for each of you. First, I want to start with General Van Ovost on the tanker recapitalization plan.

The Air Force has modified this approach in order to accelerate the next generation air refueling system, NGAS.

And having a modern and survivable tanker plan is critical to any future fight. It is also part of strategic deterrence.

And as you know, the Arizona National Guard provides a significant amount of support for rapid mobilization, worldwide deployment, airlift, aeromedical evacuation, and sustained aerial refueling operations for both our Air Forces and the Navy, and partner nation air forces. The 161st air refueling wing fleet is now more than 50 years old, and it remains in really high demand.

So, General, what can you share about the Air Force's plan to recapitalize Arizona's National Guard tanker mission, as well as the other Air National Guard units supporting this mission across the country?

And what I am getting at is what is the plan here, and for Arizona specifically to get either a KC-Y bridge recapitalization tanker, or to continue with the KC-46 until NGAS comes online?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Senator, thanks for that question.

You know, our ability to project and sustain the Joint Force without fail is a deterrent to our aggressors, and it assures our allies and partners we will be there, and air refueling is the backbone to that. Along those lines, thank you for your support.

The total force, we could not do our job in in logistics and mobility without the total force, the strength of the total force. I use them every day, so I thank them for their service. As far as the recapitalization, as we work with the Secretary of the Air Force, the Air Force staff, they are committed to a continuous recapitalization program, because when we get the last KC-46 on the current contract, 179th aircraft, we will still have 287, 67-year-old KC-135s.

So, they have committed to a very targeted modernization program for the KC-135, which need to last us out into the 2040s, to ensure the safety of the airplanes and the survivability of those airplanes out into the future.

Meanwhile, they have committed to a continuous recapitalization program with capabilities that are relevant to the KC-46 Block 1, because as they accelerate next generation air fueling system to the left to the mid- 2030s, we will have a gap of six or seven years there where we won't have any production of airplanes.

So, I look forward to their plan. They are doing an analysis of alternatives. I look forward to their plan to continue to seed and recapitalize with all of our air refueling units, because in the end, all of those KC-135 need to be recapitalized.

**SENATOR KELLY:** Okay. Can I get your commitment to work with me to ensure that the Guard will receive modernized tankers in a timely fashion comparable with active-duty units?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Yes, Senator. I will work with you and the Air Force on that.

**SENATOR KELLY:** Thank you. Thank you. General Cavoli, good seeing you again. Saw – we met in Munich and I just got back in Kyiv a couple of weeks ago, met with President Zelensky for over an hour. We had a very productive talk about what he thinks he needs to defeat Russia. And I am more than ever committed to support Ukraine.

We can't let Russia win this thing. You know, last week, Congress was notified of a presidential drawdown authority for more HIMARS, 155-millimeter artillery rounds, and a series of other equipment.

And but just for me to get to the point here, in your military assessment, is the equipment of the U.S. and our partners providing enough to pave the way for a decisive victory against the Russians by Ukraine?



**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thank you, Senator. And thank you for the notes on your recent trip to Kyiv as well. They were very helpful to me. So, we went into a planning process with our Ukrainian colleagues last winter, and we developed with them a number of courses of action, wargaming them carefully.

And when we came down to the key courses of action for an offensive, we calculated the amount of equipment and the various types that they required, and we have fulfilled that. We have nearly gotten everything into Ukraine, and I am confident they have what they need for the offensive that we have planned with them. And I can go into significant detail in a closed session with you, sir.

**SENATOR KELLY:** Okay. We will pick it up then. Thank you. Thank you, General.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, thank you.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Kelly. Senator Ernst, please.

**SENATOR ERNST:** Thank you, gentlemen, very much for – or excuse me, ma'am. Thank you, sir, General Cavoli, for being here today. And General Van Ovost, thank you very much, ma'am, for coming in front of the committee today.

I am going to start with you, General Cavoli. And a number of my colleagues have raised the issue of Ukraine and Russia, and what we hear in the news, and this has been a hot button topic with the Administration as well, is that we are afraid of escalation. As the war continues to go on, we will escalate, Russia will escalate.

So, General Cavoli, how do you assess the prospect, or excuse me, the prospect of Russia escalating to a point of a nuclear weapons use in this conflict? Can you talk in open session just broadly about what you see, what you have heard, and what would that be that tipping point for Vladimir Putin?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thank you, Senator. It is nice to see you again. And of course, this is a complicated and difficult question. There are an enormous variety of things that go into successful deterrence and successful escalation management. It is something we work on every single day.

I am in constant communication with the department as well as my subordinate commands, as well as our allies in terms of what we are doing, where we are

located, what is happening inside of Ukraine, what is happening outside of Ukraine.

To include with my fellow combatant commanders, many of whom have Russian presence in their AORs as well, successful so far, right. We have managed to control every incident to the extent possible, and I think that is due to a lot of hard work and learning as we go along.

With regard to nuclear escalation specifically, ma'am, it is very difficult to talk about in an open session, but I have traveled back to the United States to deliver testimony, so I obviously have a certain degree of confidence that we, the United States and the alliance are in a good, strong position in deterring such things.

**SENATOR ERNST:** Yes, thank you very much. I appreciate that. And we hope that we continue on a strong path of deterrence in that area. And with the other assessments out there of President Zelensky's wishes to not only expel the Russians from Eastern Ukraine, but also to retake Crimea, what is your assessment of their ability to retake Crimea, and what would the posture be coming from the United States and our partners and allies?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thanks. The question of retaking any specific piece of ground, you know, depends on a variety of things. Crimea is pretty tough. Crimea has got a mountainous center.

But, of course, Crimea is pretty hard to keep resupplied if you are the adversary as well. So, it really depends on the situation at the time. If Crimea were empty of Russian soldiers, it would be easy. If Crimea were defended at a certain level, it would be harder, and it is hard to see where things go.

What we do know is that any such question would be answered sequentially with the activities – after the activities that the Ukrainians are planning to undertake in the next months. So, it is hard to say from here.

**SENATOR ERNST:** Yes. Thank you very much. And as we look to the future, and I know we don't know when this conflict will end, we hope it would be soon, but General Cavoli, would NATO's military requirements in EUCOM increase if there is a political decision to extend a security commitment to Ukraine?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** So, our posture, the U.S. posture has shifted over time, of course, ma'am. In the initial phases, we went up about 103,000 uniform. We

have adjusted that over time. We are about 82,000 in uniform right now, and that depends on what we see going in the AOR.

And it is a constant back and forth with the department and the situation. If we were to extend some form of security guarantee to Ukraine, it would clearly depend on exactly what the nature of the security guarantee was. It would also depend, importantly, on what approach our allies took to that.

Our allies are increasing their defense commitments.

Many of our Eastern flank allies, such as Poland, have made massive investments, 3.94 percent of GDP right now, which exceeds U.S. expenditures on defense.

So, it depends on what role they would take as well, and that would certainly be our choice, our preference to have them lead in such a situation.

**SENATOR ERNST:** And I see that my time is expiring, but part of that equation as well, I would like to discuss further at another time, but our continued participation in the State Partnership program, especially with a number of our European partners.

Obviously, Iowa is partnered with Kosovo. There is a lot of concern with some of those nations as well with Russian influence. So, I think they can be an extremely important part of that solution.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Ma'am, I am the biggest fan of the State partnership program.

**SENATOR ERNST:** Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr.

Chair.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you very much, Senator Ernst.

Senator Blumenthal.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for being here and for your extraordinarily service to our nation.

And to each of your teams, some of them behind you, my thanks as well.

General Cavoli, I have been to Ukraine three times over roughly the last year, plus. I have also, by the way, visited the training area in Grafenwoehr, and I have been just immensely impressed not only by President Zelensky on the three occasions that I have spent time with him and everyday Ukrainians, but his military team, and our team training Ukrainians.

Their dedication, their bonding, in fact, in providing the hands-on skill they need to operate the Bradley and Stryker vehicles. And I think it is a great tribute to our military that we have committed in the way that we have, not just at the 30,000-foot level, but literally person to person, hands on in the way that we have.

I am deeply troubled as I view the assets they have and the assets that we could provide. You know, you have just testified in response to Senator Kelly that your belief is that they have what they need to be successful in the counteroffensive this spring in the South and in the East. Is that correct?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** That is correct, Senator.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** Our mantra is that we never want to see a fair fight. Do they have what they need to have an unfair advantage in this offensive going forward?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, they have to be better than the Russian force they face, and there are great weaknesses in the Russian force they face right now. Those weaknesses are temporary and the Russians will improve their posture and their capabilities over time. But time and the enemies, the Ukrainians' enemies' capabilities is an important factor in this.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** But don't they need more?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** I believe that they will have what they need.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** Sorry to interrupt – don't they need more air defense? Couldn't they use planes? What about more of the armored vehicles, even more tanks? Where would you assess the platforms that we can do more to provide to give them greater strength at this critical moment, because I assume you agree that if this counteroffensive is unsuccessful, it will be a significant setback for the Ukrainians.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, yes, of course, there are things we continue to give them and that we will need to continue to give them over time. I may have mischaracterized things. We haven't delivered a force, and then that is it.

We continue to build with them and we have plans to continue to build with them over the summer and into the autumn. And then eventually we intend to help them restructure their entire military.

In the short term, ground-based air defense remains important. We have made some important advances in the last couple of months. I could be very specific about them in closed session, of course, sir, but I feel pretty comfortable about where we are and I am comfortable about where we are going in the next couple of months, sir.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** What about –

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** An army can always use more.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** Understood. What about planes?

What is your assessment?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, they have just received a bunch of MiG-29s from two of our allies. They have begun to employ some of those MiG-29s. They have a few dozen aircraft right now. They are conducting offensive as well as defensive operations with them right now. I think they are key to controlling their own airspace right now.

However, it is ground based air defense, as you pointed out a minute ago, sir.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** The Washington Post reported yesterday that leaked United States intelligence indicated that the Russians can fund the war in Ukraine for at least another year. Do you agree with that assessment?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, I can't talk specifically to the undisclosed – to the unauthorized disclosures. Clearly, there are investigations going on and everything like that.

However, it is important to note that, as General Milley has said on a number of occasions, the Russians have strategic depth, they have manpower, and they are not to be underestimated in terms of their ability to endure.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** So, you don't disagree with the conclusion that they could fund the war for another year, which again heightens the importance of the counter offensive.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** As completely separate from what may or may not be in any documents –

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** Yes –

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Yes, no, I think they can fund for another year, sir.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** And one last question, sir, just following up on Senator Cotton's question.

You may not be aware, but four of us wrote to the Secretary of Defense on March 21 asking that our warfighting requirements in Europe be updated to reflect the degradation of Russian forces, 200,000 or more of their troops killed, significant damage to their armored vehicles, and so forth, because obviously it is a different force than it was when those warfighting requirements were devised.

Putting aside the timing, wouldn't you agree in your professional capacity that those warfighting requirements do have to be updated?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Absolutely. When we can assess the exact status, Senator, of the capabilities, the capacity, and the disposition of whatever Russian army emerges from this, absolutely, we will update that stuff.

And I am in contact, as I mentioned to Senator Cotton a moment ago, with the department about this. I would point out one or two things, though. You know, the Russian army inside Ukraine today is bigger than it was at the beginning of the conflict. So, we have to make sure we got the right-side picture, and that is what I am working on.

Separately, sir, I thank you for your visits to Grafenwoehr, your kind words about our soldiers and our NCOs who are absolutely putting the ball over the left field fence every day. All components, all three components every day, and I invite all members to please come visit those soldiers at Grafenwoehr and see what they are doing for our country.

**SENATOR BLUMENTHAL:** Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

Senator Scott, please.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** Thank you, Chairman. Thank each of you for being here. Thank you for what you do.

The – I just had the opportunity to go to Greece and Cyprus a couple weeks ago, and that was with Admiral Sciretta and some other sailors. And you really have to admire what people are doing. Could you talk about – General, can you talk about the importance of Cyprus and the importance of making sure we continue to allow them to get the military equipment that they need?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** So, the Eastern Mediterranean in General, Senator, thank you for bringing it up, it is a complicated area and it is an area that has seen greatly increased competition, as well as Russian naval presence in the past few years.

You know, the establishment of the naval base in Tartus has been an important part of that. In my NATO role, we devote a lot of attention to that, and we have a couple of operations, maritime operations and air operations, that help us with that.

And in my U.S. role, Naval Forces Europe, work extensively down there. One of our requirements is to be able to project power into the Eastern-Med, and Cyprus is ideally located to do that, as you know, and does figure into some of our thoughts in that regard. We keep a strong military to military relationship with Cyprus, sir.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** And Cyprus – it is in our best interest if Cyprus continues to buy American equipment rather than rely on **Chinese** and our Russian equipment.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, American equipment sharing and equipment set with another nation creates a strategic bond as well as a practical bond that is very useful.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** Yes. I want to thank you and everybody in Europe for all their efforts to make sure Ukraine wins.

You ever talking to just somebody that is not very political and doesn't really think about geopolitics? What would you tell them is a reason why we ought to be involved in the Ukraine more with – as, and all the help we give them? How – what would your pitch be?

I mean, just think about it for a second. Americans are saying, we have spent – you know, I think we have committed, you know, \$100 billion plus to this, and that is clearly a lot of money. So how would you – what would you say to people?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, thank you for the incredibly important question, right. The first thing I would tell just one of my cousins or something like that is that America does not like bullies and having bullies around does not help America.

And that step one, and Russia is a bully, and we need to deal with that. We need to help those who stand up to bullies to deal with that. Second, the United States doesn't let adversaries control things that are valuable to us, and that part of Europe is valuable to us, and so is Europe in General.

And if Ukraine loses, then more at Europe is at stake, and we don't let that happen. And then finally, I would say just in a self-interest sense, you know, when I was a lieutenant and came in the Army in the 1980s, we had more than 300,000 U.S. servicepeople stationed overseas because of Russia, because of the Soviet threat, and we don't need to return to that. We don't need to return to that.

And so, Ukraine deserves help so we don't have to.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** General, the – when you look at, and like on this chart, do you see where your troops are, your servicemen and women are stationed, is there any logic to moving more people out of places like Italy and Germany, and closer to where there is more risk?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thanks, Senator. Yes, of course, there is. And we have done that as the risk has gone up.

We have shifted forces on temporary deployments out to the East, and all of the reinforcement just about that have come in have gone out to the East.

Moreover, in the past year, the department has announced the intent to station some new organizations in Europe, the Fifth Corps headquarters forward is in



Poland.

A new special logistics base has gone straight into Poland.

We have shifted a combat aviation brigade on rotation out to Poland.

We have a permanent rotation – we have an enduring rotational presence in each of the three Baltics. We have a division headquarters and a brigade combat team in Romania. So, we have done a significant shift to the East.

The forces that are left in places like Italy and Germany are well positioned for deployment to reinforce the correct location. The Got Good Readiness facilities, training facilities, and they have good infrastructure for deployment. So, they give us flexibility as we go forward, sir.

**SENATOR SCOTT:** Thank both of you.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator King, please.

**SENATOR KING:** Senator Scott, when people ask me that question, why are we there, my short answer is Google Sudetenland, 1938. Hitler could have been stopped and 55 million lives could have been saved.

To me, that is the most compelling argument. If Putin is successful in Ukraine, then we are going to be facing threats in the Baltics, Poland. He has said that he wants to rebuild the Soviet Union. General, I just want you to know that the concern about tanks is bipartisan. I am very frustrated that those tanks, they ought to be sitting in Chechlo, Poland right now, ready as soon as the training is done.

This counteroffensive that everybody is talking about, it is the longest wind up for a punch in the history of the world, is going to be trench warfare and it is going to involve tanks. That is why the tank was invented at the end of World War I. If our tanks don't get there until August or September, it may well be too late.

And so, I just want to urge you to urge – I know it is – you have done, you both have done an amazing job of logistics and working with the Ukrainians and integrating and supplying them with what they need. But this tank story is not satisfactory. The decision has been made, okay. Then let's get ready to execute it

and cut through whatever the red tape is. I know we have got to do the training, but the tanks should be sitting there in the Polish border ready to go when those – when that training is done.

So, I just hope you will take back that this is a bipartisan concern on this committee that, you know, coming in at the end, after the counter offensive is just – that will be looked on as a tragic mistake. I learned five years ago that the Russians have a doctrine called escalate to deescalate.

That they will use tactical nuclear weapons if they believe that they are about to have some kind of catastrophic loss on the battlefield. You were asked earlier, but I want to put a finer point on the question, isn't it at least within the realm of the thinkable, that Putin would use tactical nuclear weapons if indeed he felt that Crimea was at risk, or if there is a significant breakthrough by the Ukrainians in the South and East?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thanks, Senator. It has certainly been mentioned by members of the Russian government as well as by observers on the Russian political scene, that is the potential or the possibility for using nuclear weapons.

**SENATOR KING:** And this is part of their military doctrine, going back before this invasion.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Yes, sir. The exact conditions under which they would do that, I think, are not completely known and might not be completely known to them. They might look good on paper, but then when the moment comes, it might be harder to decide.

We have some insights into it, Senator, that I would be, of course, eager to share with you in closed session.

But again, as I said a few moments ago, our deterrence, our escalation management so far, as well as our deterrence, have held very well so far, and I feel comfortable where we are right now.

**SENATOR KING:** Deterrence is the key. They have to understand that there will be a response that would be very costly to them. Deterrence is the heart of our, as you know, of our entire military strategy. Iron Dome.

Wouldn't Iron Dome help? Why don't we have Iron Dome in Ukraine?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, Iron Dome clearly could help.

And the things that we have provide help also.

**SENATOR KING:** Oh, I agree. But Iron Dome seems to be particularly calibrated to the kind of low-level attacks that are coming in by drones and missiles.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Yes, I can't speak to exactly why Iron Dome in particular is not there, sir. If I could defer that to the working group that develops those solutions.

**SENATOR KING:** I would – if you could take that for the record, I would really like to know. Because we certainly help to fund the development of Iron Dome, and it just seems to me that it fits in this situation.

And we have moved Patriots in, and as you mentioned earlier, air defense is one of the most crucial things that the Ukrainians need. So, I would like if you could take for the record some thoughts on how we could move forward with Iron Dome.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** I sure will, Senator King. Thanks.

**SENATOR KING:** And you have talked about **China**. It seems to me **China** can play either a useful role or a destructive role, and the jury is out on which direction.

We have seen some hopeful diplomatic moves in the last 24 hours, but if they start supplying significant material to the Russians, that also could tip the balance in the wrong direction. Would you agree to that?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** I absolutely agree with that, Senator.

**SENATOR KING:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator King. Senator – I believe Senator Budd.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And again, thank you both for your service. And it is great to have a former deputy commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division before the committee, so thank you for your service, especially in North Carolina. General Cavoli, I have a few questions I would like to ask about our foreign military sales process.

And I have asked these questions, similar questions of other geographic combatant commanders, and I am hoping to finish this up with you. I would appreciate on the first part, just yes or no on each one.

And then at the end, I will have an opportunity for you to expand, if you would. So is the current foreign military sales process, is it fast and flexible enough to meet our foreign partners' security needs in your area of responsibility?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** No, Senator.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Does the transfer of U.S. defense articles build our partners' capacity to provide for their own defense?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Absolutely, Senator.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Does the FMS increase the interoperability between the U.S. military and those countries we sell defense articles to?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Absolutely, Senator. It is one of the most important aspects of our foreign military sales.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Thank you. Given the outstanding performance of U.S. defense systems in Ukraine versus the lackluster performance of Russian systems, are you seeing an increase in FMS requests from our European allies and partners?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Without a doubt, Senator, there is an enormous appetite around the world for U.S. armaments right now.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Thank you. And what particular systems are in demand right now?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, the ones that have been on display. The HIMARS system, the GMLRS rockets, radar systems, the Patriot missile system is in high demand. But I would point out that just about all U.S. armaments are looked upon around the world with great desire. There is great appetite for them.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Thank you, General. And from your view, how are these FMS challenges impacting strategic competition with **China** and Russia on the European continent?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Well, sir, in Europe specifically, they don't impact too much because the **Chinese** and the Russians aren't selling too much war materiel inside Europe. Clearly not to NATO, for example.

And in fact, our European allies with our assistance are in the process of divesting their Soviet era stuff.

However, as you may know, I used to be the Commander of U.S. Army Europe and Africa.

In places like Africa, it is very difficult for us to compete if it takes us a long time to deliver a set of Humvees to a nation, but it takes **China**, you know, six months to put them on a boat and roll them in there. It gets hard to compete in that regard.

So, speed is, I think, your point, speed in foreign military sales is an essential part of delivering the influence that we seek when we conduct those sells.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Thank you, General. General Van Ovest, in North Carolina, we couldn't be more proud of the military ocean terminal, Sunny Point, and I had a chance to visit recently, and the 596 Transportation Brigade, the unit who ever sees it.

In the past, there have been concerns about staffing and funding shortages at Sunny Point and the nation's other terminals. Can you please provide an update on those issues and what resources, if any, are needed to ensure these critical transportation nodes are prepared to support the nation's needs?

**GENERAL VAN OVEST:** Thank you, Senator. And thank you for visiting MOTSU. It is a critical ammunition outlook location for America. And so, as we look at both MOTSU, and MOTCO in California, we are working closely with the Army and the Department of Defense to ensure that they have the resources they need so that we can protect and keep the capabilities there.

As you probably know, infrastructure. I think about that, especially with contested logistics, that there – that those would be, you know, a point of interest for our aggressors to try to slow down. So, from a cyber perspective and infrastructure perspective, the berthing perspective, we want to make sure that they are working well.

And the 596, I couldn't be prouder of the work that they have done to support General Cavoli and the outload to Ukraine. That is a really critical point for us. And their readiness, again, when I think about day-to-day readiness and readiness to the future, the number one thing you can do for us to ensure our readiness is to pass an on- time budget, because that cedes both time and money to the enemy.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Thank you, General. Chairman, just a question. I didn't see the time reset. Do I have time for one more question? Thank you. General Van Ovost, do you have any concerns about cyber-attacks that could slow down the flow of forces or material in crises or conflict? And if so, what is TRANSCOM doing about it?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Senator, cyber is one of the major concerns that we have because we have a large, what we call surface attack area, across the logistics network from end to end.

So, we are looking very closely at cyber hardening practices, not just in the U.S., not just under Department of Defense systems, but our civilian systems within the defense industrial base, and with our allies and partners.

So, it is critical that we stay focused on that, and we have.

The other thing is our ability to command and control.

We must have secure command and control, secure communications, and updated cryptographic materials so that we can maintain a consistent flow of logistics at a time and place of our choosing.

**SENATOR BUDD:** Again, thank you both. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Budd. Senator Peters, please.

**SENATOR PETERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thanks to both of you for your service to our country. General Cavoli, nowhere in the world is the power of our alliances clearly more evident than what we are seeing in NATO right now.

And through the National Guard's bureaus State Partnership program, the Michigan National Guard has supported the alliance through our partnership with Latvia for now nearly 30 years.

One of the advantages of these State partnership programs is that it provides NATO an opportunity to utilize CONUS based facilities for training purposes. A complaint that I have heard from other combatant commanders is the lack of suitable training facilities in their AOR, and how that is going to – how oftentimes a complement or complicates partner force training. So, my question for you is, what is your current capacity for training in your AOR?

And given the renewed focus on our NATO allies, on defense issues, would you benefit from having a CONUS location that could be used for training similar to what the Latvians have been doing in Northern Michigan for many, many years?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thanks, Senator. And, you know, again, as I mentioned a couple of moments ago to one of the other members, the State partnership program is just invaluable to us in USEUCOM. I think the other geographic combatant commanders share my opinion.

Inside Europe, we have plenty of training capacity right now for the U.S. forces as well as for our allies.

There is quite a bit in Western Europe of training capacity, training facility capacity, that existed for larger armed forces during the Cold War. In our Eastern European allies, however, there are some things that we need to get done.

As you know, Latvia has been building quite a bit, has been improving quite a bit. Throughout the Baltics, it is necessary. It is necessary for a couple of reasons, not just for the host nation, but because in order to reinforce that host nation with NATO forces at a time of need, those forces would need to continue to train in place in the country to maintain the readiness necessary.

So, all three of our Baltic, as well as our Polish allies, are working hard on their training areas in that regard. Latvia's activities in the United States have been very useful to Latvia. They have other ones throughout Europe, and I think a good mix is a useful thing.

It is a useful thing, especially because it is useful for countries like Latvia to get a chance to go back to the states and to interact with their State partners on their State partner's home ground and see the way our systems work there as well. As a matter of strict capacity, not as necessary, but as a matter of benefit,

it has been huge.

**SENATOR PETERS:** Great. Thank you. My next question for you, sir, is in your opening statements, you mentioned EUCOM's efforts to conduct activities in the information environment, in cyberspace, and electromagnetic spectrum to counter Russian aggression and other malign activities in Europe.

So, my question is, as the Joint Force moves towards data centric concepts to synchronize common operation pictures for the Joint Force, are you comfortable with DOD's current platforms for crowd management and the capacity to display an accurate common operations picture for not only our Joint Forces, but for our allies and our partners as well?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thanks for the question, sir. I don't think you would find any of my combatant commander colleagues who is anything but eager for the advances that we are working on inside the department right now, specifically the JADC2, the joint all domain command and control system, which is intended to link any sensor to the best shooter as quickly as possible.

In my case, being the Commander of European Command, as well as the Allied Command Operations Commander, it is imperative that that JADC2 be combined JADC2 so that we can share it with our allies.

In the allied space, no, sir, I am not satisfied. We have work to do. And I am eager for the efforts of the department to continue to bear fruit.

**SENATOR PETERS:** Thank you. General Van Ovost, during your testimony to the House Armed Services committee and with me in our discussion in my office, you highlighted the ongoing challenges with contested logistics and the task to conduct air refueling missions within that contested and degraded environment.

So, given these challenges and persistent threats, how are you working with the services to prioritize and really replicate training scenarios similar to potential threats from **China**, Russia, North Korea, and Iran?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Thank you, Senator, for that question. Contested logistics is first and foremost in our minds on all of our development, our requirements development, and our exercise development out into the future, especially in things like air refueling, which is my most stressed ability.



We are working to try to first understand ourselves.

We are using, what we just talked about here, with JADC2 to understand where our data is, the ITV, to understand what is going on, what is in motion.

And we are beginning to develop predictive analytics, to understand what needs to be moved in a predictive manner so we can marry up our scarce resources with the highest priority, something that we are doing today with Ukraine, being agile enough to change out our priorities.

So, I think about the exercise, as we lay down the exercise, we are trying to get after those gaps, giving them hard problems to solve, you know, loss of command and control, loss of precision navigation and timing, trying to get understanding of commander's intent all the way down to the tactical echelon.

And we are doing this not just in Europe, but across all of the continents. And with heavy, heavy emphasis in the **Indo-Pacific**.

**SENATOR PETERS:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Peters. Senator Schmitt, please.

**SENATOR SCHMITT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In 2014, after Russia moved into Crimea, NATO countries agreed to raise defense spending to at least 2 percent of their GDP by 2024.

Last year, eight years after that pledge, only seven of the 30 NATO countries met that goal. Prosperous nations like France and Germany still lag well behind that goal.

And I know there has been some discussion about when we are delivering tanks, but we are talking about over the course of that period of time, billions and billions and billions of dollars from NATO countries that seemingly refuse to ante up to protect themselves and Europe.

And so, General, I want to ask you a question. If those additional billions of dollars would have been designated for defense, wouldn't that have gone a long way in deterring Russian aggression?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, thanks for the question. You know, first of all, you would have to look pretty far to find somebody who was a bigger advocate than

me of all our allies spending 2 percent. In fact, in my confirmation hearings, I made clear that I consider 2 percent to be a floor.

**SENATOR SCHMITT:** Right.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** There are shopping lists that have to be filled out there. There are readiness requirements that have to be filled out. And they are going to require money, and I believe 2 percent is a floor, not a ceiling.

Where we are right now – so in 2014, we had an average spending of 1.4 percent of GDP, sir, across the alliance.

Now we are at 1.8 percent, which is still short. We have got 10 allies, with the addition of Finland this year.

We have got 10 allies who currently spend 2 percent or more. We have got 11 allies who have a credible plan to get there, some of them enshrined in law, to get there by '24, which was the goal. But that leaves 10.

**SENATOR SCHMITT:** Yes. And I just, I have to tell –

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** I encourage them to do –

**SENATOR SCHMITT:** Yes. And I know you are in kind of a unique position with your role, but I have to tell you, you know, in the United States, I think it is like 54 percent of the share of the GDP of all those NATO countries, and we provide 70 percent of the funding. I think the American taxpayer is getting a little weary, essentially, of subsidizing these Western democratic socialist states.

So, when they are not investing in their military to defend their backyard, they are using that money on social programs that we may or may not agree with. But yet the United States continues to have to hold the bag. And we are having legitimate questions today about delivery of weapons systems.

But I would argue that if they were actually meeting what they should be doing on their own continent, Russian aggression would have either been deterred or, you know, Ukraine would have what they need. And I want to ask about one country in particular, France.

You know, President Macron recently visited communist dictator Xi and said that it is not in Europe's interest to strongly support Taiwan and stand allied

with the United States. I find this comment, by the way, totally insane.

Do you have a sense that France is on their way to meeting their NATO obligations, this amount of funding?

Because that is a pretty bold statement for the president of a country that kind of refuses to live up to their own commitments.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Senator, I, of course, you know, read the coverage of those comments and everything. And I think I will leave commentary on them to my civilian leadership.

**SENATOR SCHMITT:** Fair enough.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** I am a huge advocate of burden sharing, sir, and I believe the plans that we are working in NATO will create the blueprint to get to that.

**SENATOR SCHMITT:** Well, that is probably a question more for Secretary Blinken. General Van Oost, I want to ask you, after the disastrous withdrawal of Afghanistan – from Afghanistan by President Biden, what was left behind was \$48 million worth of ammunition, 80 aircraft, 23,000 Humvees, 250,000 automatic rifles, 95 drones, 42,000 pieces – 42,000 pieces of night vision, surveillance, biometric, and positioning equipment.

I mean, this is unbelievable. And of course, you were charged with scrambling and saving over 19,000 people from perhaps one of the most embarrassing moments in American foreign policy history. My question to you is, where did all that equipment go? Where is it? Do we know?

**GENERAL VAN OOST:** Senator, I am not familiar with where the equipment is, but I can tell you that the Afghanistan retrograde presented a really unprecedented situation. We had a rapidly evolving security deterioration there on the ground, and I am proud of how the U.S. service members were able to evacuate and take care of our Afghan citizens.

**SENATOR SCHMITT:** No, I agree, and I applaud you for that. And in fact, a serviceman from Missouri, Jared Schmitz, lost his life that day. And I don't think we talk about it enough. I mean, and I believe this would be bipartisan.

What happened there is inexcusable. And I just mentioned the equipment, not

the loss of life, to compound all of that. And I know you were charged with that. And just finally – well, I am out of time. I just – appreciate what you do, but the idea that we left all of that behind and lost those lives, and there is not a word of it.

In fact, I guess the most recent report was trying to blame a previous Administration and inject politics into this, which was just an abject failure by this Administration and we ought to – we ought to get to the bottom of it and make sure it never happens again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Schmitt. Senator Kaine. Excuse me. All right, Senator Rosen. Thank you.

**SENATOR ROSEN:** Thank you, Chairman Reed. I appreciate you holding this hearing. I would also like to thank Generals Cavalier and Van Ovost for testifying today, and for your service to our country. We really appreciate you.

And General Cavoli, I want to talk a little bit about Ukraine, obviously, with both of you and a potential Ukrainian counteroffensive, because Russia has committed significant manpower and equipment to launch offenses in Ukraine this past winter.

We know that. Their gains have been limited and their losses, we also know, have seemed to be significant.

Nonetheless, the defense of these towns has not come without cost to Ukraine.

And so, my colleagues have been asking about sending equipment to Ukraine. Talking about the counter-offensive, you have been speaking about that. And I just want to build upon that for a moment.

So, let's just include drones in the conversation, right. So, what is your assessment of the use and effectiveness in the Ukrainian conflict of the short-range drones, the one-way attack anti-tank munitions that are being used right now?

And can you also speak to what lessons we have learned about these kinds of weapons for our own force going on in the future and our defense industrial base?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thank you, Senator. That has been one of the most interesting developments in this conflict.

We – it was prefigured a little bit during the Azerbaijan, Armenia war two years ago, when Azerbaijan used unmanned aerial vehicles extremely effectively. Both sides are using them very extensively.

Both sides are using surveillance drones, as well as armed drones, as well as one way attack drones. They meet varying degrees of success. They can be shot down. They can be shot down with small arms.

They can be shot down with standard machine guns.

They can mostly be shot down with missiles as well. They can also be stopped with electromagnetic interference, and we see that going both ways.

And those – that is providing a very good learning experience for us as we consult with the Ukrainians, and we are incorporating those through our services and through our commands – we are incorporating those lessons to stay ahead of that EMI interference, especially.

Some of them have been proven very effective and – as weapons, and some of them have proven pretty effective. We have been in an area of improvement, a cycle with regard to U.S. supplied drones, ma'am.

**SENATOR ROSEN:** Well, that is great. And I am glad to – see, I like to follow up with you on being sure we have enough R&D and enough dollars in programs there for public partnerships, wherever that is, with Department of Defense, to expand these UAS programs. They are really important.

And that leads me into my next question about defense innovation, because in 2021, NATO launched the Defense Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic. We call it DIANA. And the goal of DIANA is to sharpen our technological edge by working with the private sector to integrate emerging dual use technologies and rapidly scale these innovations, because things are happening right as we speak, right on the battlefield.

Lives are being lost and maybe these can help save that. And so, the U.S. Government doesn't have the authority to contribute to R&D initiatives which received funding from other nations, so we would need to provide specific

authority to allow the U.S. to make contributions to NATO DIANA by this October for us to have the opportunity to be a full participant.

So, General Cavoli, again, would you support Congress providing the authority for us to contribute to DIANA and really be that innovator? And can you speak of the value for us to be part of this group with the entire NATO alliance?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** As you know, Senator, DIANA is emerging right now. So, so far, they have got about 54 initiatives that they are working on, but the budget is fairly small. Defense innovation and then procurement is national business for the most part in NATO, but especially for allies without significant defense budget bases, it is useful to collaborate. I think the U.S. collaboration with them is great, and I would advocate such authority, ma'am.

**SENATOR ROSEN:** Well, thank you. And I am going to build on that, too, because we know things are happening technologically faster than we can keep up oftentimes.

And so, as the war in Ukraine obviously has progressed, we have seen proliferation of the relatively cheap, easy to use, all the commercial drones that are out there. You can just buy them off – I mean, an internet website, right, for both intelligence, reconnaissance, for surveillance and kinetic missions.

Can you maybe expand on us working again in whatever sectors we can here, public, private, to deliver advanced capabilities using some of these technologies that are emerging in the private sector?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Yes, ma'am, absolutely. I would advocate any way for us to innovate quicker and adopt things more quickly. You know, with regard to the commercial drones, they have been very, very present on the battlefield in Ukraine. They tend to have a fairly limited lifespan, however.

It is harder to find commercial drones that are adequately hardened against electromagnetic interference, for example. But they have been enormously effective at the lowest levels for squads and things like that, to spot things.

**SENATOR ROSEN:** Well, thank you. I appreciate it. We will follow up with you on all of these. Thank you, Mr.

Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator Kaine, please.

**SENATOR KAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to each of our witnesses for your service, I so appreciate it.

General Cavoli, I want to sort of flag an issue that I don't really want you to answer.

It may be inappropriate. It could be appropriate in the follow up session that we will have that will be classified, but here is a concern. In my time on the committee, and particularly in the last couple of years, I have sometimes been struck by blue skies scenarios being painted that turn out not to be accurate.

A blue-sky case scenario about the capacity of the Afghan security force in the aftermath of the withdrawal turned out to be vastly overstated, and there was somewhat of an overestimation of the likelihood of Russia being dominant in the early days of the Ukraine investigation.

Thank goodness that proved not to be true. But in each instance, sort of what we were being told, the capacity of – our intelligence about the capacity of another military turned out to be overstated.

The reason I am just flagging this now in the EUCOM domain is I have been part of three classified briefings about Ukraine one – two, and one in Foreign Relations on January 25th, two in SAS on February 2nd and March 2nd, where certain predictions or assessments were made about Ukrainian capacities' potential for the counteroffensive.

When the leaked documents have come out, I have not looked at those documents, but I followed the public accounts of it, a lot of the accounts of the documents suggest internally in the Pentagon, maybe more skepticism than we were being messaged in the meetings that we had.

And again, I don't think the right time is to talk about this now, but I hope during the next session that we have, we may dig into that a little bit because I want to make sure that the assessments being given to this committee are, you know, the best current information so that we are not led to believe one thing, when there may be a lot of folks in the Pentagon thinking something else.

And so, I just, I will leave that there, if I could, but I do think it is something we

ought to discuss in the classified setting.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** I look forward to that, sir.

**SENATOR KAINE:** Great. General Van Ovost, I have got a couple for you. In the **INDOPACOM**, our ability to access logistics support is going to be absolutely critical. And there are some challenges because of distances across water that are not necessarily challenges elsewhere.

How is TRANSCOM considering supporting the Joint Force in a contested logistics environment like the **INDOPACOM**?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Thank you, Senator. So, when you think of every day, you know, we are postured to operate on a global scale, but our adversaries are growing in their capabilities to disrupt, degrade, or deny our ability and our freedom of maneuver that we haven't so enjoyed around the globe.

In fact, as I think about European Command, in Europe, we enjoy very robust ground lines of communications and we are able to use essentially all of them, frankly, without impedance. As I think about the **Indo-Pacific**, we are going to be using more of fast sealift and air than we would be in ground like we are seeing.

So, we have to change our tactics, techniques, and procedures. We are working with the services on their concepts to ensure that we can integrate and end across the entire deployment distribution enterprise, so we can deliver where and when Admiral Aquilino needs it.

**SENATOR KAINE:** And then one other question in that space, global bulk fuel. And again, in the **INDOPACOM**, that can be particularly challenging. What are you doing to do planning around fuel accessibility to **INDOPACOM** missions?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Senator, U.S. Transportation Command has been designated the single manager for global bulk fuel in this latest unified command plan that just came out. And so, what we are doing is we are taking a new approach of synchronizing end to end fuel so that we can assuredly deliver where and when we need it in a contested environment.

So, we are taking the very best of what DLA energy does to combine it with what we do for global command and control and prioritization and managing in this



new environment. So, we are relooking in the posture of the fuel in the Pacific. That includes not only the stations, the places we are going to keep it both on land and on the water, as well as how we are going to maneuver fuel around that area.

And let me just to add to that, you know, we have robust fuel capability in the European theater, as we did in the Central Command Theater. And so, this is, you know, a concern we have right now.

We are getting right after it with our tanker security program, with movement of fuel, and also with our ability to really look and give feasibility assess – a real feasibility assessment on the ability to do that war fight to the INDOPACOM Commander.

And I could not do it without your support for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, which allows us the additional funds to do exercising interoperability, and to lay out the logistics posture that we are going to need in the future.

**SENATOR KAINE:** Thank you both very much. I yield back.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Kaine. Senator Duckworth, please.

**SENATOR DUCKWORTH:** Thank you. Good morning to our witnesses. General Van Ovost, thank you for your discussion last week highlighting all the great TRANSCOM – all the great work TRANSCOM is doing at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois.

TRANSCOM is a linchpin of projecting and sustaining the force, key to our strategic deterrent. I also recognize that Joint Force sustainment is a whole of Government and whole of nation effort.

TRANSCOM must coordinate and balance equities across multiple Government agencies, numerous industry partners, and diverse allies and partners in order to project and sustain combat power.

General Van Ovost, I don't think enough people realize how complex your mission really is and how critical that message is, and how critical the people in TRANSCOM are to tackle every day – their everyday mission.

Can you speak just one example to the efforts that your Command is supporting right now, both at headquarters at Scott Air Force Base and around the world, just to paint a picture of how complex your mission is?

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Thank you, ma'am. We have discussed our key priority of supporting a European command in supporting Ukraine and their defense. But beyond that, we have we have supported down the State Department with Sudan, with the with the support for moving the diplomats out of Sudan in this recent crisis.

We were inside 24 hours of the devastating a series of earthquakes in Turkey. Our ability to launch out within 24 hours, the urban search and rescue teams with the dogs and the cement breaking equipment to get to their rescue, as well as deliver a 100-bed field hospital.

We are doing extensive exercises around the globe in almost every continent to increase the interoperability with our allies and partners, and to ensure access basing and overflight and agreements that is going to keep our freedom maneuver into the future.

We are also, of course, doing the global bulk fuel mission. And of course, I can't forget our families. We are moving 311,000 families a year all around the globe to achieve our mission.

**SENATOR DUCKWORTH:** Thank you. Your witness testimonies both underscore your combatant command's effort to exercise the Joint Force. In EUCOM Exercise Defender Europe 24, General Cavoli and General Van Ovost.

Defender Europe 24 assembled a division level formation on NATO's Eastern flank for the first time since the Cold War, and I quote your testimony, "TRANSCOM is regularly wargaming with partners and stakeholders to identify and close operational gaps, to strengthen deterrence, and develop new concepts to prevail." If both of you could answer this question, can you explain how your combatant commands exercise with each other and other combatant commands? What is the relationship between geographic and functional combatant commands as the Joint Force looks to exercise, experiment, and integrate new tools and capabilities? I know I am very macro today.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thank you, Senator. That is a great question because it

gives me an opportunity to talk the moment about TRANSCOM. So geographic combat commands are responsible for delivering military results in a specific AOR.

There are other commands that are in charge of a specific function, usually globally. General Van Ovost oversee obviously does transportation. Everything in USEUCOM depends on the reinforcement that Jackie's forces can provide from CONUS.

It is remarkable. We exercise it literally every day, ma'am, for routine movements, for rotational force movements, as well as for exercises. I said in my opening statement, there is literally nothing in the world like U.S. Transportation Command.

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Thanks, ma'am. We are participating in extensive series of exercises across the joint portfolio that allow us to increase our capabilities to test new concepts, and frankly, old concepts like convoy operations with not only the United States and our allies and partners.

And I appreciate the comments from General Cavoli.

Functional combatant commanders do bring extensive experience in our specific areas of space, strategic nuclear deterrence, and in transportation, and it is an honor to work with them.

**SENATOR DUCKWORTH:** Thank you. General Van Ovost, we had a good conversation about aeromedical evacuations, and I would like to expand on that a little bit, especially as it applies in a contested environment and the vast distances of our nation's Joint Force that we might be facing in the future, especially in the **Indo-Pacific** region.

Can you speak to efforts currently underway at U.S.

TRANSCOM to bolster the critical aeromedical evacuation capability? And also, what are you doing to provide our wounded service members rapid access to medical care?

Because we talked about maybe they have to go someplace in between, especially when you are in a place like the **South Pacific**.

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** Thank you, man. This is a critical question. You know, we performed brilliantly over decades, with the golden –

**SENATOR DUCKWORTH:** I know.

**GENERAL VAN OVOST:** – and countless people saved, ma'am, yourself included. But, you know, in a near-peer, a global power contest, we expect high casualty rates. In fact, I expect to be able to have to move the same amount of patients I moved in 2022, the entire year, on a weekly basis.

So, we have got to do something differently, and here is what we are going to do. We are working with other partner nations to try to understand what capabilities that they have, both in theater and their movement capabilities.

We are working with the services on a multimodal platform to move patients in mass form. We are working on innovative capabilities for patient movement items, and we are also looking at ability to have smaller crews of people work on larger numbers of patients via using wireless and talking to doctors that are on the ground while we are in the air.

So, we want to bring all of this together to try to reduce the risk. And to your point on allies and partners, where there is capacity with allies and partners, we are looking into agreements to try and ensure that they will be able to support us as an interim location until we can get them back to the United States.

**SENATOR DUCKWORTH:** Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Duckworth. Senator Manchin, please.

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** Thank you, Senator. Thank you all for your service, everybody here. I appreciate it very much. General Cavoli, I just had the pleasure of being able to go to Ukraine and speak with Zelensky, and I was with Senator Kelly and Senator Murkowski.

It was a great trip. We learned an awful lot about them, and we talked directly to them. Our main concern was transparency. For every dollar that we are sending in, for every bullet that we are sending, they are making sure it is being accounted for and used properly. And that was our biggest concern.

We took it to everybody we talked to in Poland. And also, you know, we went to

the staging area in Poland and they told us that after it leaves there, that the tracking is not as good from once they leave it in Poland, put in the theater.

So, we are trying to work with our Ambassador there, Brink. She has, and with a little bit of help there, some personnel, she will be able to track it much better, but they are staying on top of it. I left very satisfied knowing that we have good grasp, and they, knowing how sensitive this is, because the naysayers that we have, and you have them everywhere to a certain extent, but they are a minority.

I don't want to give them any credence whatsoever or credibility that something happened wrong. We shouldn't be sending equipment, we shouldn't be supporting, and we shouldn't be financing it. How do you feel about that?

And you are, I am sure, tracking the same thing.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thank you, Senator. And thank you for your recent trip, and thanks to your staff for sharing your after-action review of your trip. It also was very useful to us. So, I feel confident that there has not been specific illicit transfer or pilfering of material.

I believe we are aware of one case reported to us by the Ukrainians of a couple of automatic rifles that were attempted to be diverted and those guys have been arrested there. So by and large, this is an extremely strong effort that we are putting out.

We recognize how challenging it is. However, a couple of things about the way we do it. So, when things go to the staging base in Uchanka, Poland there, we inventory all of that at that point.

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** Right. I saw the clipboard. I saw those pasties on the board.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** And we ingest it into a computer software system that we have given to the Ukrainians that we maintain access to. So, we can track their tracking of it.

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** Where they are putting the equipment.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Exactly. And, you know, so it – we track it.

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** Let me just say – I know our time is limited. I want to say

a couple of things here. I truly believe that we are not telling our story. With the amount of support that we are putting in and all of our allies, there is always going to be a hiccup.

Something is going to go wrong. We haven't built a base of how well we are regulating and staying on top of this and monitoring and the transparency. And Zelensky said it once to me in an hour and a half we were there. He said that 10, 15 times. Bring a hundred people and observe what we are doing.

We are happy to share. Do whatever you want. And if you see something wrong, let me know, because we are looking for it, too. We are not telling that from our side of it and it is not being – and I just think that we need to get ahead of this because that way – there is an old saying, tell your story before they tell one on you.

As soon as they see something wrong, they are going to blow it out of proportion. And there is so much good support that we are giving him and so much value fighting that they are doing, I just don't want to lose that.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell part of the story, sir. Our defense attaché office has been diligently going –

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** Tell the press – tell your press people to start putting things out. We are happy to work with them. We are happy to coordinate with you all to put out what we saw firsthand. Any confidence we had, I put a statement out. I am happy to continue that.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Thanks, Senator.

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** Let me throw this at you, too. I am concerned now about our Baltic allies and Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Romania, and Slovenia. They are all kind of tied into this TurkStream, okay.

The same as the Nord Stream is tied into Europe. They are tied in TurkStream. We know exactly what Putin will do. He used energy as a weapon. Are we doing anything so that they don't get caught in the same thing that our allies did up in Europe?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir. Thanks. So, of course, the closure of Nord Stream and

the weaning off of Russian gas through much of Europe has been an incredible success story of the last year. It is not universal, however, as you point out.

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** We have got a lot of vulnerability down here and he will have the same playbook.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** And exactly, sir, it is the exact same playbook. So, we worked with them to wean off it. We are not the lead agency on that. I defer to the Secretary of State or the Department of State for specifics on what exactly they are doing. But we are operationally not dependent –

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** Okay. I will reach out to them because being chair – I am chairman of their Energy committee –

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Yes, sir.

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** We want to do everything we can to basically back them up so they don't get caught exactly like how our European allies did.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** It strategically would be very welcomed by EUCOM and NATO.

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** Can you briefly comment on developments regarding Turkey's relationship with NATO? I just can't believe that here they are holding up the Swedes, okay. Made it very difficult for the Finns and they are playing footsie with the Russians. It makes no sense to me at all.

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Sir, clearly there is a lot of policy wrapped in there and I will defer to my civilian leaders on those questions. I would point out, sir, that there is a sharp difference between our military relationships and our other relationships when it comes to some countries.

And I was just down in Antakya with the minister of defense in the Turkish charter a couple of days ago, looking at the humanitarian assistance that we have provided through the U.S. and NATO for the earthquake. And I would just point out there is a pretty distinct difference between our military relationship –

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** Well, they – I am so sorry, Mr.

Chairman. But they didn't they acquired the S-400 from the Russians?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Oh, yes, sir.

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** And cancelled the F-35?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** That is exactly right.

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** Yes. So, you are saying I need to take this in a different direction? I got you –

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** The policy issues, sir –

**SENATOR MANCHIN:** I got it, sir. I got it. I will too. Thank you both and thank all of you for your service.

I appreciate it more than you know.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** Thank you, Senator Manchin. General Cavoli, General Van Ovost, thank you for your testimony. I look forward to the closed session, in which will reconvene at 12:30 p.m. in SVC-217, after the address by the South Korean President, I am sure one of the issues that might come up is the Abrams tank.

I understand that there are some significant issues involving transferring Abrams tanks to any place in the world, one of which I think can be publicly discussed here is that it operates on something closer to jet fuel than diesel, which makes the creation of independent supply lines by the Ukrainians essential to use.

There is also the issue of training, and the fact that our European allies, I believe, just brought thousands of tanks which are more familiar to the Ukrainian forces, which obviates the training issues related to the Abrams tank.

So, I think all those issues have to be explored in the closed session. I think also, General Van Ovost, a real serious discussion about contested logistics, particularly in the **Pacific**, would be appropriate. So let me see if there is anything else. No, I believe that – oh, one other point, General Cavoli is that there has been discussion about reevaluating, which you are, our plans for Europe, looking at the depletion of Russian forces.

But I think you are also considering the fact that many of our NATO forces have depleted themselves of equipment, and other factors that have to be included in



the evaluation. So, it is not simply looking at Russia and saying, well, they are much weaker now than they were. Is that correct?

**GENERAL CAVOLI:** Absolutely. And it is very difficult to speak about it in open session for operational security reasons.

**CHAIRMAN REED:** I understand. Well, I think we have got a lot to talk about. So, I will adjourn this open hearing and look forward to seeing you at 12:30 p.m. in SVC-217. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 10:20 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]