

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

Subcommittee on Seapower

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF UNITED
STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND AND UNITED STATES
AFRICA COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE
AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 AND
THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Thursday, April 3, 2025

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1 TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF UNITED STATES
2 EUROPEAN COMMAND AND UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND IN REVIEW
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5

6 THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025
7

8 U.S. Senate

9 Committee on Armed Services

10 Washington, D.C.
11

12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:31 a.m. in
13 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger
14 Wicker, Chairman of the committee, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Senators Wicker
16 [presiding], Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Scott,
17 Tuberville, Budd, Schmitt, Banks, Sheehy, Reed, Shaheen,
18 Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Peters, Kelly,
19 and Slotkin.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER F. WICKER, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM MISSISSIPPI

3 Chairman Wicker: Good morning. The Committee will
4 come to order. And today, we welcome General Christopher
5 Cavoli, the Commander of U.S. European Command, and General
6 Michael Langley, the Commander of U.S. Africa Command. I
7 thank them both for being with us today.

8 First of all, we meet today in the wake of the
9 difficult news that we have been learning more about over
10 the last few days. We've been saddened by the death of four
11 American service members, and we now know the names of them
12 all. They passed away in a tragic training accident in
13 Lithuania. And so, we recognize them and send out our best
14 to their families and friends.

15 But this morning we talk about two very important areas
16 of responsibility. The European continent is now entering
17 its third year of war as Russia continues, its brutal
18 assault against Ukraine. There's no question who started
19 this war. Despite the physical and psychological exhaustion
20 and material constraints from the conflict, Ukrainian
21 military and people have heroically and successfully
22 continued to resist Russian efforts to subjugate them.

23 The war serves as a brutal reminder that Vladimir Putin
24 has chosen to become an enemy of the West and to throw away

1 Russia's future. The Department of Defense is right to
2 label China as our pacing threat. Nonetheless, Russia and
3 its thousands of varied nuclear weapons continue to pose an
4 existential danger to the United States and to our allies.
5 Moscow's military aggression sows uncertainty and threatens
6 vital U.S. interests every day as Europe remains by far our
7 largest trading partner and source of investment in the
8 United States.

9 The war in Ukraine has exposed the Russian Army's
10 weakness, but it also has shown that Russia can adapt to
11 changing circumstances and can endure heavy cost. The
12 Russian industrial base aided by China, North Korea, and
13 Iran has demonstrated its ability to sustain Putin's army.
14 Russia would likely use any pause in fighting to
15 reconstitute its military. I say all this to make a simple
16 point: We cannot wish away the Russian threat.

17 Despite Russia's aggression, there are some who believe
18 now is the time to reduce drastically our military footprint
19 in Europe. This is a viewpoint with which I disagree. I'm
20 troubled at this deeply misguided and dangerous view is held
21 by some mid-level bureaucrats within the Defense Department.
22 They've been working to pursue a U.S. retreat from Europe,
23 and they've often been doing so without coordinating with
24 the Secretary of Defense and the National Security Council.

1 As I have said, Russia is now mobilized for permanent
2 war, withdrawing now would doom any hope of lasting peace in
3 Europe. Right now, we have a unique opportunity in Europe.
4 President Trump's leadership and the Russian threat have
5 jolted Europe awake. Many nations have begun rebuilding
6 their militaries. Our allies on the eastern plank, Poland,
7 the Baltic states, and Romania are all spending much more
8 than we are, much more than we are. The United Kingdom and
9 France are awakening. Even Germany shows signs of stirring.

10 NATO should be led by the United States, but Europe
11 should shoulder most of the military burden. We can achieve
12 that by combining the right incentives with low cost
13 assistance from the United States, including a drastically
14 overhauled foreign military sales system. To build that
15 NATO, we must maintain our current posture, which will serve
16 as a bridge to the planned buildup of combat power by our
17 European NATO allies. After three years of war, we probably
18 should make some posture adjustments, including moving
19 forces east. But we must maintain a strong military posture
20 in Europe overall.

21 Failing to do so, risks tempting Russian adventurism
22 before our European allies have been able to ramp up their
23 forces fully and their capabilities. The Chinese Communist
24 Party views its competition against the United States as a

1 global project. To China, the continents of Europe, Asia,
2 South America, and Africa are all critical in Xi Jinping's
3 unprecedented global military expansion. In particular,
4 Beijing has been active on the African continent.

5 In Djibouti, China's naval base has grown
6 substantially. It's now capable of hosting China's most
7 advanced naval vessels and serving as an intelligence
8 collection outpost against American and allied forces in the
9 entire region. China is also actively pursuing a naval base
10 in Africa's western coast, the Atlantic coast, which would
11 provide an enduring foothold along the Atlantic Ocean.

12 According to General Langley, this would "Change the
13 whole calculus of the geostrategic campaign plans of
14 protecting the American homeland." Russia also has designs
15 on the African continent. Its destabilizing strategy is to
16 trade security assistance for access to Africa's abundant
17 natural resources. This would help fund Vladimir Putin's
18 malign activities around the world. At the center of
19 Putin's Africa strategy is Libya, which serves as Russia's
20 key logistical node and enables its activities across the
21 continent.

22 I look forward to General Langley's assessment of
23 Africa's importance to Vladimir Putin's strategic
24 objectives, as well as his description of what's being done

1 to counter Russian efforts, particularly in Libya. We
2 cannot ignore the enduring threat posed by ISIS and Al-Qaeda
3 in Africa. Without sustained pressure, these vicious
4 terrorists will reconstitute and continue to threaten
5 America. President Trump was absolutely right to approve
6 strikes against ISIS leadership targets in Somalia in recent
7 weeks.

8 Our adversaries view their fight against America as a
9 global fight. We see their efforts playing out across
10 Europe and Africa in particular. Now is not the time for an
11 American withdrawal from these theaters. We cannot allow
12 the Chinese Communist Party and its partners in Moscow,
13 Tehran, and Pyongyang, to overcome us strategically or to
14 erode the ability to protect American interests around the
15 world.

16 So, we have a lot of important topics to talk about
17 today. I look forward to hearing our witnesses address
18 these and many other concerns during this hearing along with
19 my friend, the Ranking Member whom I recognize right now.
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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE
2 ISLAND

3 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
4 And let me begin by adding my condolences to the families of
5 those soldiers who perished in Lithuania.

6 General Cavoli, General Langley, welcome. Thank you
7 both for appearing today. I'd also like to take a moment to
8 recognize that this will be the final hearing before the
9 committee for each of you, before your well-deserved
10 retirements.

11 Chairman Wicker: No.

12 Senator Reed: Yes. Well, we could change that. Well,
13 for four decades, you have stepped forward time after time
14 to lead American service members, including in combat and
15 through historically difficult challenges. You have made
16 the United States safer. You have made our forces in Europe
17 and Africa stronger. On behalf of this committee, thank you
18 for your distinguished service to our nation.
19 Congratulations to you and your families on your pending
20 retirements.

21 For more than three years, EUCOM has been the backbone
22 of the international effort to support Ukraine in its war of
23 survival against Russia. EUCOM has enabled the Ukrainians
24 to succeed on the battlefield while sending an unmistakable

1 message to America's adversaries around the globe. However,
2 in recent months, the position of the United States has
3 reversed. The Trump administration has repeatedly shown
4 disrespect and contempt for NATO and our European allies.

5 The Trump administration has begun negotiating with
6 Vladimir Putin, but has surrendered much of us strongest
7 leverage for nothing in return. As the administration seeks
8 to negotiate an end to the war, I would point out that
9 Russia is not in a strong position. Putin has sustained
10 staggering costs in Ukraine, including more than 200,000
11 soldiers killed, and hundreds of billions of dollars of
12 military equipment and weapons destroyed. Russia has even
13 turned to North Korea for reinforcements.

14 In addition, Russia's closest ally in the war, Iran is
15 weaker than it has been in decades due to recent Israeli and
16 U.S. actions. In contrast, the Ukrainian military continues
17 to hold its ground and to display impressive innovation on
18 the battlefield, and the Ukrainian people remain resolute in
19 the face of daily Russian brutality.

20 I would argue that there's never a time to appease
21 Putin, but it is certainly not now. The Russians do not
22 seem interested in actually negotiating or ending this war,
23 and the Ukrainians should not be forced to make a deal that
24 disadvantages them. General Cavoli, you have testified in

1 the past that Russia is, "A chronic and growing threat to
2 U.S. interest."

3 I would appreciate your assessment of the war in
4 Ukraine and your views on future U.S. military activities
5 and investments needed in the EUCOM area to uphold our
6 steadfast commitment to collective defense and America's
7 security.

8 In Africa, our adversaries are focused on building
9 trade relationships while seizing influence from us.
10 China's military ambitions on the continent are no secret,
11 from their growing presence in Djibouti to the more than 100
12 seaports that have been constructed, financed, or operated
13 by Chinese state-owned enterprises, and could be used as
14 dual use for future military contingencies.

15 Russia has expanded its military engagement in Africa,
16 also, including by restructuring the Wagner group's
17 operations under an umbrella organization called Africa
18 Corps, a historic irony of great proportions. They want to
19 expand the reach of the Russian private military enterprise
20 across the entire continent. Russia is also investing
21 heavily in disinformation campaigns across the continent to
22 spread anti-Western movements, undermine democracy, and
23 promote Russian backed authoritarian leaders, especially in
24 regions like West Africa.

1 It would seem that America's competitors recognize that
2 to neglect Africa is to invite long-term strategic peril.
3 General Langley given these challenges, AFRICOM must
4 continue to explore new methods to maintain U.S. security
5 interest in the region. To do so, it is important that your
6 command receives the resources it needs to maintain
7 engagement and increase situational awareness across the
8 continent. I would appreciate your thoughts on the wide-
9 ranging set of challenges and what your command needs to
10 best address these challenges.

11 As we know, economic and political stability is
12 essential for any partner nation anywhere in the world. For
13 decades, we have relied upon our state department diplomats
14 and the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID
15 to develop deep lasting relationships that can outlast China
16 and Russia's economic coercion. Indeed, until recently,
17 AFRICOM had a senior USAID officer within the command who
18 served as the senior development advisor and reported
19 directly to the commander.

20 I'm deeply concerned that our soft power leadership in
21 Europe and Africa has been badly crippled over the past
22 several months. General Cavoli, General Langley, I would
23 like to hear your perspectives on the critical importance of
24 diplomacy and developmental tools to achieve our national

1 security objectives and how our competitors have sought to
2 capitalize on the withdrawal of USAID from your regions.

3 Finally, I would highlight recent press reports that
4 suggest President Trump may soon remake the entire U.S.
5 combatant command structure, including dismantling AFRICOM,
6 and merging it under EUCOM. This would be a mistake and I
7 believe a harmful decision. Gentlemen, please provide your
8 assessment of the harms of the U.S. vital interest if we
9 reduce our engagements in Europe and Africa, and the
10 opportunity that we provide for competitors like Russia and
11 China.

12 Thank you again for your service, for your leadership,
13 for your sacrifice, and thank your families also. Thank
14 you, Mr. Chairman.

15 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed. Which one
16 of you wants to go first?

17 General Cavoli: General Langley has volunteered me,
18 Chairman. Thank you.

19 Chairman Wicker: You are recognized.
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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL CHRISTOPHER G. CAVOLI, USA
2 COMMANDER, UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND AND SUPREME ALLIED
3 COMMANDER EUROPE

4 General Cavoli: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed,
5 distinguished members of this committee, it's an honor to be
6 here today along with Sergeant Major Rob Abernethy, to
7 represent the men and women of U.S. European Command, and
8 it's a privilege to be here sitting beside my friend,
9 General Mike Langley.

10 Chairman, thank you and Ranking Member Reed, thank you
11 for your condolences regarding our soldiers who were
12 tragically lost. They have all been recovered. I would
13 like to take a moment to salute the American leadership
14 there, from General Donahue, to General Taylor, to General
15 Norrie, all of whom have done a fantastic job. I would also
16 like publicly to thank our Lithuanian allies and our Polish
17 allies who left no stone unturned to help us recover those
18 soldiers and who bent over backwards to give us every single
19 thing we needed.

20 The Minister of Defense of Lithuania was on site every
21 single day to make sure that her country was giving us what
22 we could. We did a repatriation ceremony today, bringing
23 the soldiers out, the streets were lined with Lithuanian
24 citizens expressing goodwill and alliance with us. And I

1 would commend that video clip to any member of this
2 committee or any American, and I thank them.

3 Before I begin, let me thank the committee, of course,
4 for all your support to our service members and our mission
5 over the years that I have served here. So we continue to
6 face a very historic time in the European theater, Russia's
7 war in Ukraine now in its fourth year, has revealed Russia
8 to be a chronic threat, and we see in the future it will be
9 a growing threat, one that is willing to use military force
10 to achieve its geopolitical goals, and is today actively
11 waging a campaign of destabilization across Europe and
12 beyond.

13 Further exacerbating this threat from Russia are the
14 deepening partnerships among our adversaries, Iran, the
15 Communist Chinese Party, the DPRK, and Russia itself, and
16 these are increasingly posing a global risk. But U.S. EUCOM
17 and the NATO alliance have arisen to the challenge. NATO
18 deterrence has held, war has not spilled into NATO
19 territory. With support from a broad international
20 coalition, U.S. European Command led the charge in helping
21 Ukraine. We established Security Assistance Group Ukraine
22 now commanded by Lieutenant General Curtis Buzzard, and for
23 38 months of this war, SAG U.S. has delivered critical
24 munitions arms and equipment from the U.S. and our allies to

1 the Ukrainians.

2 These efforts has been indispensable in enabling the
3 Ukrainian armed forces, and they have empowered them to
4 mount a courageous defense. And now NATO has taken up this
5 task as well, establishing in record time in organization to
6 take over much of SAG-U's mission. The threat of war has
7 also led the NATO alliance to embark upon an historic
8 campaign to fundamentally overhaul and modernize its
9 military capabilities.

10 After years of underinvestment, too many years, our
11 allies are finally optimizing the alliance for high-end war
12 fighting. And within NATO, we now have the plans, the
13 command and control, and increasingly the forces, and we
14 have the focus to meet that mission. And while there's
15 still much to do, our allies are investing at a rate we
16 haven't seen since the end of the Cold War, a 40 percent
17 increase in spending since February of 2022.

18 And throughout this intense and challenging
19 transformation, the presence of U.S. EUCOM forces has been
20 essential to the alliance's modernization efforts. We've
21 converged U.S. headquarters with NATO command structures,
22 we've increased combined training and exercises, and we've
23 been accelerating European modernization and readiness.
24 Through U.S. leadership, we are laying the groundwork for

1 European leadership, and thus for more years of peace and
2 prosperity for the United States of America.

3 It's a long road ahead and a sustained vigilance and
4 pressure will be required, but we will get there. This has
5 been to protect vital U.S. interest. Our strengthened
6 allies will increase our strength and our deep
7 relationships, give us the access, the basing, and the
8 intelligence necessary to do this. The first line of
9 defense of our homeland begins in EUCOM, where our naval
10 forces prevent Russian submarines from breaking out into the
11 Atlantic.

12 U.S. ballistic missile defense of Israel starts with
13 EUCOM ships positioned in the Eastern Mediterranean, and
14 it's our job in EUCOM safely to evacuate Americans from the
15 Levant. We are America's force forward in the world.

16 So as the Chairman and the Ranking Member noted, ladies
17 and gentlemen, this is my last annual testimony to you, as
18 I'm closing 38 years of service this summer. It's been
19 really the honor of a lifetime to serve with our brilliant
20 service members during these historic times. I continue to
21 be inspired by their commitment to our nation's forward
22 defense.

23 And I thank you the Congress for your unwavering
24 support to our servicemen and women, to their wellbeing, and

1 to their vital mission. America is the greatest country in
2 the world, and it is in large part because of our armed
3 forces, which are the finest in the world. I look forward
4 to your questions.

5 [The prepared statement of General Cavoli follows:]

6 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very, very much, General.

2 General Langley.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL MICHAEL E. LANGLEY, USMC
2 COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND

3 General Langley: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed,
4 distinguished committee members, it's an honor to appear
5 here today representing the outstanding service members,
6 civilians, and families of United States Africa Command.

7 As I get closer to the end of my tenure of command, I
8 remain in awe of the character and capabilities of the men
9 and women willing to serve our nation. Our team of
10 soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, guardians, and civilians
11 perform valiantly, and I'm honored and proud to serve with
12 them. Point be known, America remains in good hands. I'm
13 proud to testify with my good friend, General Cavoli, the
14 Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, and the commander of
15 United States European Command. I like to extend my
16 gratitude for his steadfast cooperation.

17 As you know, EUCOM and AFRICOM share service
18 components, and every day our teams are coordinating to
19 solve some of our nation's toughest security issues. Also,
20 joining me today is a key member of the AFRICOM team, my
21 command, senior enlisted Sergeant Major Michael Woods,
22 United States Marine Corps. His 32 years of experience
23 provide me with the critical insight needed to understand
24 the operating environment. And he shows our partners what

1 true non-commissioned officer leadership looks like. I'm
2 lucky to serve with him.

3 Now, everything we do at the United States Africa
4 Command has one overarching goal in mind, achieving peace
5 through strength. Now, this requires three things, a clear
6 understanding of national security threats, a robust and
7 dependable network of like-minded allies and partners, and
8 appropriate resourcing to match military requirements. Now,
9 as I've said in previous testimony, Africa remains a nexus
10 theater from which United States cannot shift its gaze. It
11 is home to terrorists who take advantage of conditions in
12 Africa to grow and export their ideology.

13 ISIS controls their global network from Somalia. It is
14 where the Chinese Communist Party actively works to change
15 the international rules base order as a stepping stone to
16 become the global hegemon. And it's where the Russian
17 Federation seizes opportunities created by chaos and
18 instability.

19 Now, to protect our homeland and United States
20 interests, we must deter these nations and their malign
21 actors from their goals on the African continent. Many of
22 our security and economic interests overlap with those of
23 our African and European partners. Successful outcomes
24 enabled by burden sharing are beneficial for all. And as a

1 posture limited theater AFRICOM, we establish strength and
2 work towards peace by enhancing the security capabilities of
3 our African partners, through a robust system of alliances,
4 exercises, training events, security cooperation, and
5 foreign military sales programs are the backbone, our
6 military activities on the continent. Through these
7 activities, our forces lead by example with a warrior ethos
8 and stand by our partners and enhanced trusts in the United
9 States military.

10 So, the United States Africa Command seeks to match
11 these capabilities with the current and emerging threats to
12 ensure the security of our forces while advancing American
13 interests. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
14 aircraft crisis response forces, counter unmanned aero
15 system technology, and integrated air missile defense
16 platforms are critical to accomplish our mission.

17 Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome your advocacy in
18 ensuring that the necessary tools are in AFRICOM's hands.
19 Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be here today,
20 and I look forward to your questions.

21 [The prepared statement of General Langley follows:]

22 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Chairman Wicker: Well, thank you both for your
2 excellent testimony. We're going to try to stay strictly to
3 the five-minute rule in our question and answer. I,
4 probably, Senator Reed, am going to take a second round
5 myself, but we'll stick to the five minutes going forward.

6 General Cavoli, how long have you been watching Russia
7 closely?

8 General Cavoli: Chairman, I began my Russia specialty
9 in 1995 when I spent a year at the Defense Language
10 Institute learning to speak and read and write the language.
11 And I've paid attention to it and worked in jobs associated
12 with it ever since. So, 30 years.

13 Chairman Wicker: You're not only conversational, but
14 fluent in Russian. Is that correct?

15 General Cavoli: I have always maintained that rating.

16 Chairman Wicker: Yes. Well give us your assessment
17 now. First of all, of what we have learned, what our
18 military has learned during this two and a half years of
19 conflict in Ukraine. What have we learned about Russia's
20 military? Where are they now? And Ukraine's military
21 capability and where they are now?

22 General Cavoli: Chairman, we've learned an awful lot.
23 First of all, I should point out that early on in the
24 conflict all of the services and the joint force established

1 a variety of cells and organizations deliberately to study
2 the lessons of the conflict. And we've had everything from
3 publications about it to seminars on it at a classified and
4 unclassified level. And we have learned an awful lot.

5 Some of the things that we have gained as a military
6 are well, they're technical, they're procedural, and they're
7 sort of large-scale operations focused. So technically, for
8 example we have learned an awful lot about Russian measures
9 and countermeasures and how to counter countermeasures, a
10 lot of technical stuff. We've seen a lot of growth in both
11 the Russian capability and the Ukrainian capability in
12 electromagnetic warfare, electronic warfare. And we have
13 learned from that, and we have modified many of our
14 procedures. I think you're familiar with the U.S. Army's
15 transformation and contact initiative that is really based
16 on lessons learned from Ukraine.

17 As a short example, our use of drones has changed
18 deeply across the joint force. Before this conflict in the
19 U.S. Army, for example, we had very few but large drones
20 associated with large units. Now, we're proliferating
21 smaller drones to smaller units and having a larger number
22 of drones in lower and lower hands. Fundamental change in
23 the way we are doing business. There are many, many other
24 technical and tactical lessons we've learned.

1 At a meta level, sir, I would say some of the big
2 lessons we've learned are about scale. The scale of this
3 conflict is just awe inspiring. Thousands of tanks
4 destroyed on both sides. The Russians have lost more than
5 4,000 tanks, which is the inventory almost of the United
6 States Tank course. So, the need for replacement, for depth
7 of magazine, for resilience, all these are lessons that
8 we're learning, and I believe the services are programming
9 it as the years go forward. So, we've learned a lot.

10 Chairman Wicker: Before you continue on, in February
11 of '22, we would not have dreamed of such a loss from Russia
12 of tanks, would we?

13 General Cavoli: We would not have. I did not
14 anticipate the war to go this long, and I did not anticipate
15 Ukraine to be able to destroy so much of Russia's war
16 fighting capability.

17 Chairman Wicker: I hope I didn't break your train of
18 thought. So, continue.

19 General Cavoli: No. So, as we watch the Russians, we
20 see that their level of skill in some technical areas is
21 very high and is evolving during the course of the war, but
22 it's mainly isolated in specific pockets. It does not
23 appear to be generalizable across the force. And overall,
24 the quality of their force, especially their ground force,

1 has been decreasing throughout the conflict. On the
2 Ukrainian side, we see sort of the opposite. We see a
3 military that started pretty much from an almost cold start.
4 We had been helping them before the war, but not at the
5 scale we began to after the war, and they've evolved and
6 developed very, very quickly.

7 So we've learned a lot about institutional adaptation
8 from watching both sides as well.

9 Chairman Wicker: If we or our NATO allies had to face
10 Russia ourselves in a conflict because of what we learned,
11 would we be exponentially better off today because of the
12 lessons we've learned in the last two and a half years?

13 General Cavoli: Oh, oh, yes, Chairman.

14 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Say a word or
15 two in a half a minute, about the Russian economy.

16 General Cavoli: So, the Russian economy has been both
17 bolstered and distorted by this war. Specifically, the
18 Russian government has had to turbocharge their defense
19 sector. And in so doing, they have created a very strong
20 inflationary pressures throughout the economy, but
21 especially in the civil sector. They've responded to that
22 with high interest rates to hold inflation down.

23 The central banker, Elvira Nabiullina, has the
24 overnight rate. The prime rate is over 21 percent right

1 now. That is choking off the viability of the civil
2 economy. So, one has a huge oversized defense sector, but
3 an anemic civil sector. And that defense sector, as you
4 know, Chairman, is not a productive center -- not a
5 productive economy for the nation. It's productive for the
6 fighting of the war, but beyond that, it is pretty much
7 swamped things out.

8 It appears that it will be very difficult to unwind
9 such an imbalance, and we'll need to consider that as we go
10 forward.

11 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, sir. We'll continue this
12 conversation. Senator Reed.

13 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and
14 thank you gentlemen. General Langley, the presence of the
15 United States on the African continent is not significantly
16 military. Matter of fact, we don't have any troops there at
17 all, but we do have, until recently, a state department and
18 USAID presence. Can you indicate to us how valuable that
19 presence has been to you?

20 General Langley: Senator Reed, as you know heretofore,
21 we had a whole of government approach and some of the --
22 some of the challenges on the African continent and we used
23 that in past years. Now you know, given that USAID and
24 number of capabilities are being folded under the State

1 Department we continue to look at ways to be able to
2 leverage that in U.S. government pressure on especially our
3 competitors, and achieving our strategic goals.

4 Senator Reed: Thank you. General Cavoli, could you
5 give the committee a brief assessment of the battlefield?
6 We hear a lot about Ukraine's challenges, but as I
7 understand it, they are still holding significant territory.
8 They are taking the fight to the Russians and innovating on
9 the battlefield daily.

10 General Cavoli: Sure, Senator Reed. All of the above
11 is true. So, if we take just a moment and go down the front
12 line of troops, if you don't mind?

13 Senator Reed: Yes, sir.

14 General Cavoli: So, if we start in the northern part
15 of the battlefield, the active battlefield area, that's the
16 place where Ukraine, last summer pushed an advance into
17 Russia in an area called Kursk. And they took a large part
18 of Kursk. This is where the Russians introduced North
19 Korean troops to help push the Ukrainians back out. They
20 set an original goal of the end of September to have the
21 Ukrainians out of Kursk. The Ukrainians today are still in
22 Kursk. There is a sizable force holding a diminished, but
23 sizable chunk of ground inside Russia in Kursk Oblast right
24 now. And they're holding on very good defensive terrain.

1 South of there in Belgorod, the Ukrainians a couple of
2 weeks ago pushed a smaller counteroffensive back into
3 Russia. So, we still have a back and forth going up in that
4 area. If we come down inside of Ukraine to some of the big
5 battlefields up in Luhansk and Sevastopol, first of all
6 there's the city just west of the old Bakhmut called Chasiv
7 Yar. The Ukrainians and the Russians have been fighting
8 over this city and the city the south of Toretsk for about
9 eight months now.

10 In recent weeks, the Russian offensives have sort of
11 petered out. They had been decreasing in scale, moving from
12 company size to platoon size. Now basically small groups of
13 infantry men trying to rush forward under artillery fire.
14 And they have failed to gain ground in the last couple of
15 weeks. In fact, the Ukrainians have taken a little bit of
16 ground back from them.

17 If we come farther south from that, we get to Pokrovsk
18 in Donetsk province where the Russians continue to tie to
19 take Pokrovsk. They are stalled out on their axis, trying
20 to encircle it. They got pretty close, but the Ukrainians
21 have held the Russians back. That's on the ground.

22 The Russians seem to be suffering from a paucity of
23 armored vehicles and a lack of manpower. The Ukrainians on
24 their side have assumed very strong defensive positions well

1 dug in and appear to have solved some of their manpower
2 problems that were so acute last autumn. They've increased
3 the pool of people available for mobilization. They've
4 increased the pool of people available for voluntary
5 recruitment, and they've done a good job squeezing people
6 out of headquarters to the front.

7 If we look in other domains both sides are relying on
8 long range attack. The Russians largely with cruise
9 missiles and glide bombs. And the Ukrainians are relying
10 mainly on one-way attack drones, as well as some
11 indigenously produced cruise missile systems, one in
12 particular that I've got in mind that we could talk about in
13 closed sessions, sir. I hope that helped.

14 Senator Reed: It does, sir. If the administration
15 withholds war material, spare parts, and particularly
16 intelligence advice, what would be the effect on the
17 Ukrainian forces?

18 General Cavoli: First of all, it would obviously have
19 a rapid and deleterious effect on their ability to fight,
20 Senator. The Ukrainians depend on us, principally,
21 uniquely, I should say, for their high-end anti-aircraft
22 systems. So, the things that shoot down the ballistic
23 missiles and the long-range attack missiles that the
24 Russians throw at them almost daily, that is mainly supplied

1 by the United States. That would have an obvious effect.

2 If the Ukrainians were not able to receive intelligence
3 from us, they would struggle to target, especially in-depth
4 operational level targets, such as command post, logistics
5 areas and things like that, which require a specific way to
6 -- you've got to have very good intelligence to do that, and
7 they would struggle to do that.

8 I do have to note that the Ukrainians have developed
9 alternative sources. Many of our allies have stepped up
10 their ability to produce things for the Ukrainians. Czechia
11 this month is delivering more than 70,000 rounds of 155.
12 So, there are some real advances. There's some
13 diversification of their supply sources, but undoubtedly,
14 the Ukrainians are very dependent on our assistance.

15 Senator Reed: Thank you, sir.

16 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed. Senator
17 Fischer.

18 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General
19 Langley and General Cavoli, thank you both for your many
20 years of service to this country. General Cavoli, you
21 service as both the commander of the U.S. European Command
22 and also as the Supreme Allied Commander of Europe. That
23 means you are responsible for the overall command of NATO
24 military operations and forces, including the United States

1 nuclear forces that are deployed to those NATO countries.

2 NATO is a nuclear alliance. Our deterrent strategy has
3 worked for over 75 years. Having an American serve as
4 Supreme Allied Commander of Europe has been a key part of
5 that strategy. General, can you, at this level of
6 classification, walk us through how command and control of
7 U.S. nuclear forces in Europe works today, including your
8 role?

9 General Cavoli: Absolutely, Senator. So, to keep it
10 at a very open level, the United States has always offered a
11 certain amount of nuclear force to NATO to be employed by
12 SACEUR. So, we have some nuclear weapons that in a conflict
13 upon the agreement of the United States, and the rest of the
14 nations would be turned over to SACEUR to be delivered by a
15 variety of nations who are involved in this program, all of
16 them NATO nations.

17 That all happens under the command and control of
18 SACEUR. If SACEUR were not an American officer, we would
19 have to find some other way to do that, and it would
20 certainly not be as integrated with the rest of SACEUR's
21 operations as it is now. So yeah, I basically, as the
22 American Commander, have those weapons in my possession, and
23 at the time of need as instructed, I would pass them to
24 myself as the Supreme Allied Commander to employ in

1 accordance with the 32 nations.

2 Senator Fischer: It sounds to me like the way the
3 command works right now, we don't have a middleman involved
4 in this. It would be you as an American commander in
5 consultation with the President, the commander-in-chief, who
6 could, I believe, more easily and also with more knowledge,
7 make decisions affecting the use of our nuclear weapons.
8 Would you say that's a correct assumption on my part?

9 General Cavoli: Yes, ma'am. That's correct. Because
10 I am able to rehearse these procedures both in the American
11 system. I work very closely with General Cotton, for
12 instance, from U.S. STRATCOM. We can rehearse those
13 procedures on a U.S. basis. We rehearse the delivery
14 procedures on a NATO basis. And I, and key American
15 elements of my staff at the NATO headquarters, at Supreme
16 Allied Headquarters Europe, we are able to be the link in
17 that chain that makes it seamless.

18 Senator Fischer: Thank you. The GIUK gaps, sir, it's
19 always been a critical maritime choke point, but it has
20 recently grown in its strategic importance to NATO. In
21 light of the increase we're seeing with the submarine
22 Russian submarine patrols in the Atlantic, what do you see
23 general as the largest challenges with respect to the GIUK
24 gap?

1 General Cavoli: The biggest challenge is there, ma'am
2 at an unclassified level, just the quantity of stuff we
3 have, the quantity of equipment and the quantity of forces
4 we have available to monitor the underwater activity there
5 and to counter it. It's important to understand that the
6 U.S. has a unique role here. We have capabilities that our
7 allies do not have. They have capabilities in numbers that
8 we need to augment ours. So, we work very closely together,
9 but the U.S. component of those efforts is absolutely
10 fundamental.

11 Senator Fischer: Thank you, General. General Langley,
12 as we're considering Africa under your command, we have seen
13 I believe an increase with the Chinese presence on the
14 continent. Economic developments, military activities,
15 investments on the continent. What would you see as the
16 greatest concern to us security and also to regional
17 stability in the area with regard to the actions that we are
18 observing with the Chinese?

19 General Langley: Senator, I see three lines of
20 operations by the CCP. One from geostrategic and their
21 basing initiatives. As you well know in Doraleh in Djibouti
22 is their first start, and as the Chairman talked about in
23 his assessment. Then also other basing initiatives across
24 the continent of Africa.

1 Then their geopolitical line of effort in trying to
2 dislodge the overall leadership in their quest to be the
3 regional hegemon as we start to look at their activities in
4 the UN and trying to get geopolitical advantage over the
5 west.

6 And then also geo-economic. They treasure critical
7 minerals. They need those critical minerals not only for
8 their defense and industrial base, but also for their
9 greater industrial base. Those lines of efforts is what
10 we're watching closely because they want to be the global
11 hegemon.

12 Senator Fischer: Thank you very much.

13 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Fisher. Senator
14 Shaheen.

15 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
16 you to General Cavoli and General Langley for being here
17 this morning and for your many years of service to the
18 country.

19 I want to follow up on Senator Reed's question about
20 USAID's presence in Africa, or lack thereof now that this
21 administration has closed down virtually all of the
22 operations in Africa. This is the fastest growing continent
23 in the world. It is a place where we're seeing increasing
24 incursion by the Chinese, as you pointed out. So as we have

1 withdrawn our presence from countries in Africa, are you
2 seeing additional Chinese presence come in to take over some
3 of those services and programs that the United States has
4 providing?

5 For example, in Rwanda, we had a program to help with
6 women and children, and the challenges of childbirth. My
7 understanding is that now that we have left that program,
8 that the Chinese have come in to take it over, are you
9 seeing that in places?

10 General Langley: Senator, I am seeing that. You know,
11 there's a number of programs that we see that the Chinese
12 Communist Party is trying to replicate. They can't do what
13 we do. They can't do what we do. And PEPFAR we've extended
14 the life span of a number of Africans by 20 years. They're
15 trying to replicate that. They're trying to match what we
16 do. So that's what we're seeing as we start to fold in the
17 capabilities of USAID under State Department, China's trying
18 to exploit that scene.

19 Senator Shaheen: And do you agree that it would be a
20 huge loss if we don't continue many of those programs?

21 General Langley: Senator, I won't speak to the policy
22 part of that, but it is a need. Those capabilities are
23 needed for the U.S. to maintain a strategic advantage over
24 the Chinese Communist party because we do it best. And the

1 Africans, they speak that they do prefer the United States.

2 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. General Cavoli, I want to
3 follow up on Senator Fischer's question about the role of
4 the SACEUR in NATO and in Europe, and the importance of that
5 role in terms of nuclear weapon command and control. And
6 partly because what we're hearing is rumors from the
7 administration that they're thinking about eliminating that
8 dual-hat responsibility.

9 I'm not going to ask you to comment on the policy point
10 there, but how concerned would you be about the lack of
11 control of nuclear weapons? Especially, should Article 5 be
12 invoked?

13 General Cavoli: We would want those under the command
14 of a U.S. officer, ma'am clearly.

15 Senator Shaheen: And Senator Reed and Senator Wicker
16 both asked you a number of questions about Ukraine and where
17 the war is now, and you were very forthcoming about that.
18 As we look at potential negotiations on trying to end that
19 war, what is the best leverage that we can have with Putin
20 and Russia in terms of positioning Ukraine to be able to
21 come to a negotiating table with a position of strength?

22 General Cavoli: Senator, I'd hate to try to insert
23 myself into the negotiation process, which I'm not a part
24 of, but I do think --

1 Senator Shaheen: Right, I meant really asking for your
2 military --

3 General Cavoli: So, continuing to assist Ukraine on
4 the battlefield daily, I think is very important.
5 Continuing to enlist not just the material assistance, but
6 the unity of our allies in this effort to support Ukraine, I
7 think is also an important function to be done. I'll leave
8 it to the administration to determine how to achieve
9 leverage against the other side.

10 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. And as we talked briefly
11 on the way in about the situation in the Western Balkans,
12 and particularly in Serbia and in Bosnia Herzegovina, while
13 Mr. Dodik has left the Republic of Srpska for the time being
14 and is in Russia, can you speak to the ability of the EUCOM
15 mission there to be able to take over, should there be any
16 outbreak of violence? And then also if you could address K4
17 and Kosovo and Serbia as well.

18 General Cavoli: Sure, Senator. So, with regard to
19 Bosnia, yeah, good and bad that Mr. Dodik has left the scene
20 for a little bit. We're working through that day by day.
21 As you know, the operation Althea, the EU mission, the
22 operational, the one step above commander of that is for the
23 EU is my Vice Chief of Staff, a French three star named
24 Hubert Cottereau. So, we talk about -- his office is about

1 10 feet from mine. We talk about this every single week.
2 We feel comfortable with the level of forces they have
3 available now. I'm grateful to France, especially for
4 responding quickly with unpreviously committed forces to
5 help. Last summer, they sent the Charles de Gaulle and two
6 parachute battalions to show force in the area.

7 So, I think we're in a pretty good place there. I
8 think Hubert and the EU know the various ways things could
9 spiral up there and we can handle that. From the U.S. EUCOM
10 side, I do meter in and out training forces. Our forces to
11 train who while not operational, certainly have a
12 stabilizing effect as they go in and out.

13 Kosovo, as you know, K4 remains on the ground. 4,300
14 soldiers on the ground right now, of whom less than 600 are
15 American. That is a place where our Italian and allies have
16 really been carrying a lot of the weight. We have had
17 reserve forces deployed in there to handle the elevated
18 tensions for about a year now. We are expanding the size of
19 the permanent force in order to relieve those forces, those
20 reserve forces. And I believe we'll come to agreement on
21 that very quickly and get that source.

22 The key nations really involved there are Italy,
23 Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Hungary, who have been
24 extremely responsive with their reserve forces.

1 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. Thank you very much.

2 General Cavoli: Thank you, ma'am.

3 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Let me
4 observe. I'm doing a poor job of enforcing the five-minute
5 rule, but General Langley, let me just follow up for a
6 moment. As we dial back, USAID in Africa, China's not
7 dialing back the Belt and Road Initiative anywhere in
8 Africa, are they?

9 General Langley: Chairman, China's responding by
10 trying to replicate what capabilities USAID was very
11 successful across a number of years. They're trying to
12 replicate that, whether it's in health diplomacy or any
13 development type programs. They're trying to use that as
14 extension of the Belt Road Initiative to gain favor by the
15 African countries.

16 Chairman Wicker: And would you say it's not
17 principally altruistic on the part of the Chinese
18 Communists?

19 General Langley: Chairman, I'd say that they've made
20 some missteps in the last couple of weeks, especially in
21 Zambia with that spillage into the river that affects 5
22 million people. So, they're getting a horrible start using
23 the track analogy.

24 Chairman Wicker: But they do it in their own self-

1 interest, the Chinese?

2 General Langley: Absolutely.

3 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. And Senator
4 Cotton, you are now recognized with the apology of the
5 chair.

6 Senator Cotton: Gentlemen, welcome. Thank you for
7 your service to the country. I know you'll be sad not to
8 get to come here and testify in front of the committee
9 anymore after today.

10 General Cavoli in his first term, president Trump
11 withdrew the United States from the Intermediate Range
12 Nuclear Forces Treaty. Finally, after years of Russian
13 cheating with impunity, that's allowed our military to
14 develop longer range missiles. The Army has been developing
15 the long-range hypersonic weapon, a ground launch missile
16 that has a range of up to -- well, it has a long range, I'll
17 put it that way.

18 It appears that the Army's first multi-domain task
19 force in the Pacific is slated to get this weapon first. Do
20 you see a role for the long-range hypersonic weapon in
21 EUCOM?

22 General Cavoli: I do, Senator Cotton. I think it
23 would be very useful. I think coming out of the INF Treaty
24 was a very important move, and it's one that we now should

1 capitalize on in all the relevant theaters. The Army's
2 multi-domain task force, Long Range Fires Battalion is the
3 real key component. It's got several systems in, as I think
4 you know, and there is a move to -- there is a request out
5 there to place one of those in Europe that I could get into
6 in closed session in detail with you if you'd like, sir.

7 Senator Cotton: Okay. Thank you. General Langley,
8 the Trump administration has conducted multiple airstrikes
9 against Al-Shabaab targets since taking office. What's your
10 current assessment of the threat that Al-Shabaab poses to
11 our national interest and specifically to the U.S. Homeland?

12 General Langley: Senator, Al-Shabaab is especially a
13 heightened terrorist threat, namely because they're
14 colluding with the Houthis across from Yemen. And so we're
15 watching that closely. The President and Secretary of
16 Defense has given expanded authorities. I can talk about
17 those details as far as expanded authorities, but I will say
18 we're hitting them hard. I have now had the capability to
19 hit them harder.

20 Senator Cotton: Al-Shabaab is in the Horn of Africa on
21 the East Coast. There's obviously other terrorists
22 operating throughout Africa associated with Al-Qaeda or as
23 an Islamic state. What's your assessment of the threats
24 that all those terrorists on the African continent pose, and

1 again, specifically pose to the U.S. Homeland?

2 General Langley: Senator, left unchecked they will
3 have a direct threat on the homeland, whether it's just
4 their networks or even their ideology. We remember 1
5 January, 2025 what happened in New Orleans. Still there are
6 some that have been indoctrinated by this by false ideology
7 of Islam.

8 Senator Cotton: General Cavoli, coming back to you
9 outside of your AOR, but I think perhaps with some follow-on
10 effects, the Assad tyranny fell late last year that has
11 imperiled Russia's access to its naval base in Syria. There
12 have been reports that Russia is looking to replace that
13 base elsewhere in the Mediterranean including potentially in
14 Libya. How do you assess the situation in the Mediterranean
15 and Russia's access to the Mediterranean since the fall of
16 Assad?

17 General Cavoli: Senator, they've suffered a big loss.
18 They've suffered the ability to maintain sustained maritime
19 operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. It's much more
20 difficult for them now. They are searching -- and I'll let
21 Mike talk about this if I'd like to, sir -- they're
22 searching for alternative basing to replace Tartus, which
23 they've mainly lost on the North shore of Africa. They've
24 failed so far to achieve a long-term agreement for a major

1 base. So this will be significant.

2 It's significant not only because we have a reduced
3 presence of submarines, Russian submarines in the Eastern
4 Mediterranean now. It's also surface vessels that find it
5 harder to do sustained operations. And finally, it's much
6 more difficult for Russia to sustain the operations, both
7 overt and covert operations that they're doing in Africa
8 without those bases. And the Alliance and U.S. EUCOM are
9 both taking actions to try to make sure we keep them boxed.

10 Senator Cotton: General Langley, anything to add?

11 General Langley: Yes, Senator. I watch Maghreb
12 closely. Russia does have initiatives because that is NATO
13 Southern Flank from, from Morocco to Algeria and even
14 Tunisia and Libya. I engage with them closely for shared
15 objectives of denying the militarization of NATO Southern
16 Flank.

17 Senator Cotton: Thank you, gentlemen.

18 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator
19 Hirono.

20 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My thanks to
21 both of you for your decades of service. I did want to
22 mention the concerns that our European allies must have
23 regarding what happened with Signal Gate. So, U.S.
24 officials, including Vice President Vance and Secretary of

1 Defense Hegseth -- this is for General Cavoli -- uses Signal
2 to communicate classified Yemen strike plans, putting the
3 lives of our service members at risk. And in addition to
4 sharing classified material on an unsecured network, the
5 Vice President and Secretary of Defense spoke contemptuously
6 about our European allies.

7 I think both of you very much know how important our
8 allies are and how important it is for us to continue to
9 strengthen our relationships with our allies. So it
10 certainly doesn't help where we have our leaders in an
11 unconscionable way of being contemptuous of them. General
12 Cavoli, do you think sharing operation plans on unclassified
13 systems puts our war fighters at risk?

14 General Cavoli: Ma'am, we have protocols to handle
15 classified information. We'd adhere to them to the extent
16 that we're capable. When there's a failure in that, we of
17 course investigate

18 Senator Hirono: Answer is yes?

19 General Cavoli: Yeah.

20 Senator Hirono: Have you heard from our European
21 allies, have any of them indicated to you their concerns
22 about the security breach on our part?

23 General Cavoli: No, not directly. I've not had
24 anybody ask me about that, or talk to me about that, ma'am.

1 Senator Hirono: What do you think they are thinking
2 regarding the security breach?

3 General Cavoli: Ma'am, it's hard for me to put myself
4 into their heads.

5 Senator Hirono: Is it reassuring to them?

6 General Cavoli: It's hard. It's hard. I can't, you
7 know, characterize their thoughts, ma'am.

8 Senator Hirono: So, none of them actually said to you,
9 what is going on in the United States?

10 General Cavoli: No. If one did, I would of course
11 tell you.

12 Senator Hirono: That's pretty surprising. Don't we
13 share intel with our European allies?

14 General Cavoli: Of course, it's one of the most
15 important parts of our alliance and our bilateral
16 relationships.

17 Senator Hirono: Do you think that the security breach
18 that occurred with Signal Gate is reassuring to our allies
19 in terms of their willingness to share security information
20 with us?

21 General Cavoli: Senator, again, it's hard for me to
22 characterize as somebody else's thoughts. But I have not
23 had anybody pull back any of our intelligence sharing
24 agreements, ma'am.

1 Senator Hirono: I find that surprising, but
2 nonetheless, I hope so. There have been recent news reports
3 that the Pentagon is considering combining AFRICOM and EUCOM
4 into one command. For both of you, what is your best
5 military advice on the strategic, operational, and resource
6 implications of such a merger. General Langley?

7 General Langley: Senator, I won't speculate on the
8 evolving policy, but I will say this, I'll just give
9 comparison of the relevance of AFRICOM and our mission.
10 Back in 2007, when we were stood up, we looked at the
11 challenges across the globe, and especially the challenge of
12 terrorism. At that time, the global presence of terrorism
13 on African incontinent was 2 percent. Senator, today it's
14 43 percent.

15 And then even adding on to a dual strategic type of
16 perspective of our great power competitions both Russia
17 Federation and the Chinese Communist Party activities on
18 African continent is grand. So my responsibilities are
19 great. So, for combined commander, it'd be a daunting task
20 for integration.

21 Senator Hirono: So, would you agree that -- General
22 Cavoli, that the challenges as General Langley put it have
23 increased in Africa not decreased, and making it even more
24 important that this combatant command continues?

1 General Cavoli: Ma'am, the challenges in Africa have
2 increased exponentially over the last 10 years. Not just
3 the terrorism that was there during the previous period of
4 the last 20 years, but the increasing activity of Russia and
5 China. Yeah, there are a lot of problems there, ma'am. And
6 I'm satisfied with the problems I have in EUCOM.

7 Senator Hirono: Would you like to share your thoughts
8 on yet another potential that's being contemplated -- change
9 being contemplated by the administration and that is to give
10 up our role as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander?

11 General Cavoli: Yes, ma'am. I think that would bring
12 some challenges in terms of nuclear commanding control. It
13 would put us in a position where, in an Article V situation,
14 we could have for the first time since the First World War,
15 large numbers of American troops under non-U.S. command.
16 So, I think those are things that would have to be
17 considered carefully.

18 Senator Hirono: Giving up this command, in fact, could
19 really endanger our national security. That's what I hear
20 you saying. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator
22 Rounds.

23 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me begin
24 by just thanking both of you for your service to our country

1 and to your families. We sometimes forget about the
2 sacrifice they make when you are away. And we most
3 certainly appreciate all of that. And once again we
4 appreciate what you have done and continue to do for this
5 country.

6 General Cavoli, our missile defense systems protect not
7 just the U.S. homeland, but our deployed forces overseas,
8 for example, in Europe and in the Middle East. Does EUCOM
9 make use of any of the systems which require the use of the
10 3.1 to 3.45 gigahertz band of the spectrum to fully operate?
11 And I'm just curious.

12 This is something that I've asked every four-star
13 uniformed officer as they've come before us, because there
14 has been an attempt most recently to take away the exclusive
15 use by the Department of Defense for the use of that part of
16 the spectrum, and literally to sell it for commercial
17 purposes, huge amounts of activity with regard to some of
18 the best physics in the world per radar and so forth were
19 found in there.

20 Can you share a little bit about what EUCOM does and
21 whether or not would impact any of our capabilities in
22 Europe?

23 General Cavoli: Yeah, we sure do use it, Senator. We
24 use it principally in our Air and Missile Defense Systems,

1 as you pointed out, which are part the system that protects
2 the United States Homeland from ballistic missile attacks.
3 So more than that I could go into in classified session, but
4 it is a source that would have to be worked out if we lost
5 access to that bandwidth. Yeah.

6 Senator Rounds: Are you familiar with some of the
7 physics involved and why we picked that particular part for
8 our radars and so forth?

9 General Cavoli: I would never volunteer just how
10 familiar I am with physics, but yes, a little bit.

11 Senator Rounds: Just to with regard to that, I mean,
12 there is a reason why that particular part of the spectrum
13 is being so closely protected by the Department of Defense.
14 Is that fair to say?

15 General Cavoli: There is.

16 Senator Rounds: Thank you. General Cavoli also, can
17 you describe how the Ukrainian armed forces, as well as
18 their defense industrial base have evolved over time and
19 just a little bit in terms of what you've observed?

20 General Cavoli: Wow, sure, Senator. So, in 2014 I was
21 a one-star commanding our training enterprise in Germany and
22 throughout Europe. And in 2015, I was given the task to help
23 to set up a training center in Western Ukraine for the
24 Ukrainians as a response to the invasion and the annexation

1 of Crimea that had taken place in 2014.

2 At the time, they were, boy, a hand-to-mouth army that
3 was tied in a tight fight in their Eastern area, and had
4 suffered from 30 years of post-Soviet neglect. They were in
5 tough shape. Between then and 2022, they managed while
6 maintaining a fight in the East, they managed to convert
7 themselves into the force that was able to stop Russia.

8 This came with a number of important decisions from the
9 United States, specifically an increase in aid and the
10 initiation of lethal aid, the donation of javelins, I
11 believe it was in about 2016 or 2017, we gave that. Since
12 then, you know the trajectory sir, that they went from being
13 basically minutemen with javelins stopping a Russian
14 invasion to being an organized force that is increasingly
15 able to generate force in a reliable and predictable
16 fashion.

17 Very difficult to do, especially on the fly. It's
18 taken a couple of years to get it going, and they've
19 developed a defense industry that is producing many of their
20 own munitions right now. In fact, I would say they're the
21 world leaders in one-way attack drone technology.

22 Senator Rounds: Interesting. As you've watched this
23 and observed this, you've watched what Russia has done as
24 well. What would be your assessment of how Russia would

1 react to a conflict between the United States and China?

2 General Cavoli: I think clearly, whatever the United
3 States does in the world Russia will find a way or will look
4 for a way to turn the situation to its advantage and to
5 seize opportunity. So, depending on the exact parameters of
6 a conflict with China, exactly what the conditions were, I
7 would expect Russia to try to take advantage of that either
8 in the information domain or even physically.

9 Senator Rounds: Would it be fair to say that if we
10 found ourselves in a theater conflict in the Pacific Rim
11 region, highly, highly strong possibility that we would also
12 find ourselves in a conflict in the European theater as
13 well?

14 General Cavoli: Or other theaters as well, yes.

15 Senator Rounds: Thank you. General Langley, I did
16 have questions for you, but I will put them in the record.
17 I thank you for your service as well. Thank you, Mr.
18 Chairman.

19 [The information referred to follows:]

20 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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24

1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Rounds.
2 Senator King.

3 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Based upon the
4 testimony this morning, I'd like to move, we extend the
5 terms of these two generals for another four years.

6 Chairman Wicker: Without objection.

7 Senator King: Sorry, fellas.

8 [Laughter.]

9 Senator King: The bad news is you get to tell your
10 families. I have to point out, Mr. Chairman, that in the
11 hour that we've been sitting here, investors in the United
12 States stock market have lost two and a half trillion
13 dollars. And I think that's something that should be noted.

14 General Cavoli, it appears that the Russians and
15 President Putin are engaged in what they consider a kind of
16 waiting game, a grinding down in the conflict in Ukraine.
17 Are the Ukrainians destined to lose?

18 General Cavoli: No, Senator. Thank you for the
19 question, because I think it's an important one. There's
20 nothing inevitable in war, and the Ukrainians are in very
21 strong defensive positions right now, and are improving
22 weekly their ability to generate force and to reinforce
23 those positions. It is hard sitting here right now to
24 envision a major Ukrainian offensive that clears everybody

1 you know, out of every square inch of Ukraine. But
2 likewise, it's very hard to envision Ukraine collapsing and
3 losing that conflict. I do not think there's an
4 inevitability to a Ukrainian loss.

5 Senator King: And a follow up question, and you
6 touched on this in answers to Senator Rounds. Describe the
7 Ukrainian's evolution of their force over the course of this
8 conflict. My sense is they've really gone, as you I think
9 you mentioned, minute men with a rifle to a really serious
10 modern military force.

11 General Cavoli: Yeah, absolutely, Senator. So in the
12 beginning, they had a certain number of organized brigades
13 in the East. But what really kicked in was sort of
14 volunteers who spontaneously came in, organized under
15 officer leadership General Syrskyi North of Kiev, was key in
16 stopping that advance toward Hostomel, and then back out
17 pushing the Russians out of Budjak.

18 They evolved from that. They consolidated that into
19 Soviet style brigades, which they were used to with Soviet
20 equipment. And then coming through late '22 and '23, we
21 could see that that equipment, and especially their
22 artillery ammunition of a Soviet caliber was going to be
23 exhausted. And so, we had to help them convert to a largely
24 western equipped and almost exclusively western artillery

1 equipped force, which is pretty complicated. We operate off
2 of a different aiming circle.

3 Senator King: They've been effective in making that
4 transition?

5 General Cavoli: It's amazing to do that under fire,
6 under the pressure, one of the world's largest armies. It's
7 a fantastic feat.

8 Senator King: Let me change the subject entirely for a
9 minute. Please discuss Russian and Chinese activities in
10 the Arctic and the risks in the Arctic. It strikes me that
11 this is a looming threat area that we should be addressing.
12 And I should mention, the reason it's becoming so important
13 is the melting of the Arctic ice, which has something to do
14 with climate change.

15 70 percent of the Arctic ice has disappeared in the
16 last 40 years. So, talk to me about the strategic
17 importance of the Arctic.

18 General Cavoli: Absolutely, Senator. So, from the
19 U.S. perspective, the most important thing to understand is
20 the shortest distance from Russian airfields to the United
21 States is over the polar cap.

22 Senator King: And they are building up those
23 airfields, are they not?

24 General Cavoli: They were before the war at a fast

1 pace. It's slowed down a little bit during the war, but
2 they're still opening airfields and repairing existing ones.
3 The other thing that comes out of the Arctic, sir, the
4 Northern fleet in Murmansk comes up, sails down through the
5 GIUK gap and breaks out, or tries to break out into the
6 Atlantic from which they can hold key U.S. targets at risk
7 with sub launch cruise missiles among other weapons.

8 Senator King: So we should be paying particular
9 attention to the Arctic as a new domain, if you will, of
10 potential conflict?

11 General Cavoli: And I think we are. The U.S. Northern
12 command, so General Guillot, has the primary U.S.
13 responsibility for it, but of course, strategic command also
14 has activities up there. EUCOM has activities up there,
15 because so much of the Arctic is in my AOR and NATO, of
16 course, you know, almost all of the nations in the Arctic
17 Council are NATO nations. The only one that's not is
18 Russia.

19 So, we've recently been sponsoring tabletop exercises
20 to make sure we understand the details of command and
21 control and coordination of operations there.

22 Senator King: Thank you. General Langley, I'm out of
23 time, but I'm very concerned about the rise of ISIS in the
24 Sahel. That is a serious issue that we need to attend to,

1 that we're talking about great power competition, China,
2 Russia, we can't forget about terrorism. Is that correct?

3 General Langley: Senator, that's correct. And the
4 rise of ISIS by numbers in Sahel really more focused on the
5 Isis elements in Somalia, because of their networks and
6 Sahel they're growing in number, but not so much in
7 capability. But we are still engaged, especially in coastal
8 West Africa of like-minded countries to deter that from the
9 outside in.

10 Senator King: Thank you.

11 Chairman Wicker: Thank you for that yes or no question,
12 Senator King.

13 Senator King: Yeah, exactly.

14 Chairman Wicker: Senator Ernst.

15 Senator Ernst: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And first
16 I want to express my condolences as well to the families of
17 the four fallen, and as they begin their dignified transfer
18 process, our hearts are with their family members as well as
19 the entire 3rd ID family. So, General Cavoli, thank you for
20 your respects to those family members.

21 Let's just start and talk a little bit about leadership
22 because it has been brought up many times over the situation
23 that I believe is being contemplated between SACEUR and
24 European command. And you have expressed that you believe

1 it is important to have American leadership in those
2 positions. Is that true, General Cavoli?

3 General Cavoli: Ma'am, that, of course, would be a
4 policy decision. I merely laid out the advantages and
5 disadvantages of it from a military perspective.

6 Senator Ernst: Thank you.

7 General Cavoli: From a military perspective,
8 problematic.

9 Senator Ernst: Thank you. I do believe it is
10 important, and I'll paraphrase a little bit, but the army
11 definition of a leader is someone who inspires others to
12 follow towards a common goal or objective for the good of
13 the unit or the organization. And I would say, again, this
14 is just me speaking Senator Ernst but I do think it is very
15 important that America remains engaged on the world stage,
16 and that we exhibit that type of leadership in order to
17 secure our own national defense. Would you also believe
18 that General Cavoli?

19 General Cavoli: I do agree with that, and I see it
20 every day that our allies crave our leadership and are
21 stronger with it, and they're stronger for us.

22 Senator Ernst: Thank you. And General Langley, I
23 shared a quote with you yesterday. It is, "An American
24 soldier is a hero standing still." And I looked it up. It

1 is General Patton that gave us that quote. Because you
2 mentioned something about the convening, really the
3 convening ability of our United States military. Can you
4 speak to that please?

5 General Langley: Yes, Senator. You know, as the
6 Chinese Communist Party and even the Russian Federation, are
7 trying to encroach upon what we do as far as influence and
8 cooperation with our African partners, they pale in
9 comparison. You know, as evidenced by what we do in our
10 conferences that we hold, or moreover, the exercises we
11 have. Whether it's Obangame Express all those countries, a
12 number of countries in the 40 plus are always wanting to be
13 part of it.

14 Same thing as far as our express series, and we get our
15 maritime members because of the illicit activities that
16 China is doing in IEU fishing. All those qualities and
17 shared objectives gives us a convening power and influence
18 on African continent. There's no better type partner that
19 the Africans can have than the United States.

20 Senator Ernst: No, thank you for that. And I remember
21 a story that was shared with me a number of years ago by a
22 special operator that was in charge of a small tactical
23 unit. And they were brought into that situation because
24 they were many warring factions in this particular area.

1 The French were there, few other nations were there as well,
2 but none of them could get along, and they couldn't come
3 together in a cohesive, collaborative engagement.

4 It took the Americans coming into that situation and
5 providing leadership and guidance. And when that happened,
6 all of those different factions were able to come together.
7 So, talking about Americans being a convening authority, I
8 think is exceptional. It is true.

9 So again, I'll just stress how important I think it is
10 that the United States remain engaged on the world stage and
11 provide that leadership. We don't have to provide all the
12 boots on the ground, but certainly I think American
13 leadership is valuable.

14 General Cavoli, I'll go back to you in reference to the
15 war in Ukraine and Russia. Again, another story that I will
16 share with you. When I deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom
17 as a transportation company commander, we occupied a base in
18 Kuwait. We ran convoys through Kuwait and Southern Iraq.
19 On this sub camp in Kuwait, half was occupied by Americans.

20 Can you imagine who would occupy the other half of that
21 camp? You don't have to know this. The other half of the
22 camp was occupied by Ukrainian soldiers.

23 Why were the Ukrainians there? They were not part of
24 NATO, correct? Can you guess why they were there?

1 General Cavoli: Probably because we asked them to be
2 there, and they responded positively because of our
3 leadership position in the world.

4 Senator Ernst: Absolutely. And I share that story
5 because so many people don't realize that the Ukrainians
6 were there for us when we needed them. Those men in -- it
7 was all men, actually -- the Ukrainian men that were there,
8 their soldiers, they were route clearing engineers. I was a
9 transportation company commander. I'm very grateful that
10 the Ukrainians were there for us. I can't imagine how many
11 American lives might have been saved by those Ukrainian
12 soldiers.

13 So, again, I apologize for going over, but I just
14 wanted to stress that we do not operate in a vacuum no
15 matter where we are. Our country is safer because we
16 exhibit leadership and we have the convening power to bring
17 many nations together. And I thank you, gentlemen for all
18 that you do for our great nation in so many different ways.
19 God bless you both. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20 Chairman Wicker: And thank you very much, Senator
21 Ernst. Senator Kelly.

22 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 I'd like to associate myself with Senator Ernst's
24 remarks and echo them. When I was in Ukraine just a few

1 weeks ago, one of the messages I heard from their Head of
2 Intelligence, General Budanov and others, is if we stick
3 with them, they will stick with us. Wherever we need them
4 to be, they will be there. And when you consider that
5 they're literally fighting for their survival and fighting
6 for their lives to express to me how important our
7 relationship was and what it means to them going forward, I
8 think we have a friend we can always rely on.

9 But I am concerned about over the last few weeks the
10 politics around this conflict have gotten us off track.
11 And, but I'm curious, General Cavoli, from your perspective
12 you know, friction between President Zelensky and President
13 Trump. How do you feel our Ukrainian allies are handling
14 this right now, and what concerns do you hear directly from
15 them about our ability to support them?

16 I just had members of the Ukrainian Parliament in my
17 office, and we were talking specifics. We're talking about
18 ATACMS rounds, HIMARS, PAC-3 rounds for Patriots, AIM-120s,
19 155 millimeter artillery rounds, GPS, these systems.

20 Can you just give me a summary about where you think we
21 are with our support and what do they need to continue this
22 fight?

23 General Cavoli: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Kelly.
24 With me, my interlocutors who are principally general

1 officers or members of the Ministry of Defense, they're
2 resolute. They're resolute, they're focused on a task, they
3 have a defense to execute. And they talk to me about the
4 practical aspects of that. You're correct, they do continue
5 to depend on our support. Our support is in a wide variety
6 of munitions especially, but also the provision of
7 intelligence. They're very eager to maintain those.

8 And there are certain specific ones that I could talk
9 about in closed session that are especially valuable. I
10 did, however, earlier in open session mention air defense
11 missiles is one of the most important because we're
12 basically the sole provider of those for them.

13 Senator Kelly: All right. Thank you.

14 And I want to move to General Langley for a second
15 here. Good to see you again, too, General. AFRICOM has
16 continued to experience conflict arising from the uptick in
17 violent extremist organizations. As our focus continues
18 towards large scale combat operations in INDOPACOM in
19 Europe, I'm concerned that our defense modernization and
20 optimization will trend towards those theaters, but away
21 from other issues that we can't ignore, the real threat of
22 terrorism and gray zone operations, especially in AFRICOM.

23 It's critical that we don't lose sight of this real
24 threat. And you previously highlighted, General, your need

1 for more ISR capability, calling ISR an active deterrent in
2 Africa, yet we have limited platforms to go around. SOCOM
3 has begun purchasing the OA-1K Skyraider aircraft, which I
4 think could fill a requirement that you seem to have.

5 Can you talk a little bit about the importance of an
6 armed ISR platform, like the OA-1K, especially one with a
7 dual use capability that could fill the close air support
8 gap?

9 General Langley: Senator, thank you. I'll speak to
10 the capabilities of various ISR platforms in Africa,
11 especially as far as our ongoing operations across Somalia
12 and in support of the Somalia National Army. So, I'll just
13 speak to the capabilities, the need for that armed ISR
14 across since it makes sense and do responsible type
15 targeting across the region. That's all too important.

16 So, I'll speak to the capabilities that every combatant
17 commander needs more ISR in support of our operations.

18 Senator Kelly: And do you feel the OA-1K could fill a
19 gap that you have in AFRICOM?

20 General Langley: Senator, I'll take any additional ISR
21 and any enhanced technologies that would add to the
22 credibility and our lethality of our forces.

23 Senator Kelly: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman.

1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Kelly. There is a
2 vote going on, and we actually have a series of three votes.
3 The hearing will continue and I'll pass the gavel to various
4 members, but the hearing will not recess for the votes.
5 Senator Scott, you're recognized.

6 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman. Thank both of you
7 for what you do. Thank you for the men and women that work
8 for you and serve with you. And I want to recognize, honor
9 the four brave American heroes who lost their lives serving
10 the country in Lithuania. So that has to be a tough day
11 when that happens and talking to their families.

12 So General Cavoli, can you talk a little bit about the
13 importance of what Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania are
14 doing in contrast to historically at least maybe Germany's
15 finally going to show up and do their part. But can you
16 talk about the importance of what they're doing along the
17 Eastern Flank and then in contrast to what the lack of
18 investment that Germany's made in the past and the
19 importance of what these countries on the Eastern Flank are
20 doing?

21 General Cavoli: Sure, Senator. It's a great
22 opportunity to talk about some of our allies, some of our
23 newer allies, right? These are not plank owners. These are
24 post-Warsaw Pact allies of the United States. Poland.

1 Poland's at 4.7 percent of GDP, right? As a benchmark, we
2 are at about 3.4 percent. So this is a country that has had
3 very rapid economic growth sustained over the last 15 years,
4 and is committing it to correct an imbalance in their
5 defensive capability.

6 They're buying vast quantities of U.S. equipment, by
7 the way, but more important, they're integrating it with the
8 alliance, and they're making it available to the Alliance
9 for Collective Defense, which is fantastic. They are
10 rapidly becoming the bulwark of our ground defenses on the
11 Eastern Flank. And their Officer Corps is stepping up to
12 the task as well.

13 If we come up through Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia,
14 every single one of those countries has come above 2
15 percent. Estonia is headed over 3 percent. Two of the
16 three countries have reintroduced at least limited
17 conscription. They're building defensive fortifications,
18 and they have extremely well integrated national defense
19 plans with our NATO defense plans. Very, very active. I
20 spend quite a bit of time there working with them on their
21 plans.

22 Finland. Of course, Finland never looked away from its
23 national defense requirements throughout years and years and
24 years since the Winter War of 1939. And they have happily

1 and seamlessly and quickly integrated their defense plans
2 into our NATO defense plans. And in fact, they're
3 contributing a three-star land component command to handle
4 the potential ground fight in the high North for us. So
5 very grateful to those countries.

6 Senator Scott: You want to talk about Germany?

7 General Cavoli: Germany has performed as an ally for
8 many decades, sir. During the Cold War we know how strong
9 they were. They, like many other nations in the alliance
10 took a holiday from readiness and for sizing, and they're
11 trying to correct that. It's a complicated situation
12 politically, but I believe that Herr Merz, Friedrich Merz,
13 has been able to negotiate as part of a future coalition.
14 He'll be the future chancellor.

15 He is been able to negotiate at long last in agreement
16 to be able to use deficit spending to be able to finance
17 more rapid growth. And we look forward to having that
18 happen. They have very solid plans for expansion and for
19 modernization. We just need to see it get going.

20 Senator Scott: If you were placing troops in, you
21 know, around the NATO alliance American troops without any
22 past, where would you move troops, if you didn't have to
23 worry about existing physical structures, things like that?

24 General Cavoli: Ultimately, what we would like to see

1 is sufficiently robust national forces to be the basis of
2 the defense of any part of the Eastern Flank. In some
3 places that's hard to see because just the nations are not
4 large enough, the Baltic nations, for instance.

5 The second thing we'd like to see in those places is a
6 reinforcement by a multinational alliance force. We have
7 that in the three Baltic countries. We would like to use
8 U.S. forces to be able to deploy rapidly from on the
9 continent responsibly to the point of need. One of the
10 differences between the Cold War and now is we were very
11 sure where the battlefield would be during the Cold War.
12 Now we have, you know, 2300 kilometers of expanse.

13 The U.S. forces bring capabilities that nobody else has
14 and can move the fastest. So I need them in locations where
15 they can be trained, ready, and where they have the
16 infrastructure and the political agreements, the
17 international agreements to be able to deploy quickly from.

18 Senator Scott. All right, thank you. Thank both of
19 you for your service.

20 General Cavoli: Thank you, sir.

21 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator
22 Tuberville.

23 Senator Tuberville: Good morning. Thank you,
24 gentlemen for your service and good luck after retirement,

1 but you're not done yet.

2 General Langley, AFRICOM has historically suffered from
3 short pause and manpower and ISR and security and all those
4 things. Sounded like from your testimony that Africa's in
5 trouble, 40 percent rise in terrorism. What's your most
6 pressing need that you can tell us for what we can help you
7 with?

8 General Langley: Senator, thanks for that question.
9 My number one operational priority is protection of a force.
10 And so, as I stipulated in my opening statement, I focused
11 on matching capabilities to the threat. We matched
12 capabilities to the threat first calls for integrated air
13 missile defense, and it calls for ISR and other platforms
14 would add to the capacity and capability of protecting the
15 force.

16 In closed session I would be able to elaborate with
17 more specificity. But all combat commanders always ask for
18 those aforementioned type platforms.

19 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. Thank you. General Cavoli,
20 how much closer today is Ukraine from this time last year
21 winning this war against Russia?

22 General Cavoli: They're in a much better position not
23 to lose it, Senator Tuberville. They have shored up their
24 defenses. They've assumed very strong defenses, and they've

1 improved their forced generation capability. So they're in
2 a much better position than they were. You know, depending
3 on what the objective is, of course, which has always been
4 the question in this chamber as well as others it would be
5 hard for them to accomplish some things. But they're doing
6 a good job of what they're trying to do now, which is hold
7 their line.

8 Senator Tuberville: But they're trying to win, right?

9 General Cavoli: They're trying to win. They want to
10 start by making sure Russia doesn't win.

11 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. Status of the F-16s that
12 we've sent? I know it's not classified because Russia
13 obviously knows what's happened to them.

14 General Cavoli: No, there are a number of F-16s in
15 there. There are a number of pilots in there. There are
16 more F-16s prepared to be deployed in there. There are more
17 pilots in the training pipeline. Sir, I can give you the
18 numbers in closed session. They are active, the planes are
19 active and they fly every day. They've defeated a large
20 number of cruise missile threats, and they've delivered an
21 awful lot of offensive attacks as well.

22 Specifically, bombing attacks in the east. None of the
23 F-16s has been from the U.S. though. They've mainly been
24 from Northern European countries, Netherlands, Denmark.

1 Senator Tuberville: Status for Patriot systems that
2 we've had there for several years?

3 General Cavoli: Yeah. They are up and running, sir.
4 I can tell you exactly in closed session. But that has
5 been, in my mind, a success story. Frankly, I was just a
6 little bit dubious in the beginning. It's a complicated
7 system. We train guys for a long, long time to be able to
8 operate it.

9 The Ukrainians put their really, their best people
10 against it and took to it like a fish to water. And in
11 fact, we learned from some of their employment techniques
12 right now.

13 Senator Tuberville: How effective have the long-range
14 missiles that we've allowed Ukrainians to shoot into Russia.
15 How effective has that been?

16 General Cavoli: Very.

17 Senator Tuberville: In all areas?

18 General Cavoli: Yeah. They've been extremely
19 effective. Sir, I could go into this in private session,
20 but the, the United States makes some very good weaponry and
21 it's the ones we've donated have been very effective. In
22 closed session I'd be happy to talk to you about a few of
23 the things they've done with it.

24 Senator Tuberville: So where do you think the --

1 what's the status of Kursk as we speak today? After they've
2 gone in, and obviously there's been a lot of battles, a lot
3 of people killed, a lot of prisoners taken. Where does that
4 stand?

5 General Cavoli: There is a Ukrainian force that is
6 holding on inside Kursk Oblast inside Russia. They've got
7 quite a bit of terrain. I'd give it to you in closed
8 session, sir and how many troops, but they've got a sizable
9 force there, and they maintain a well defended piece of
10 terrain there. They've also augmented it with some terrain.
11 They recently captured just a few kilometers in Belgorod
12 just south of there.

13 Senator Tuberville: So, they gave up some. Now,
14 they're taking it back. Is that what you're saying?

15 General Cavoli: That's correct. They've taken a
16 little back farther south.

17 Senator Tuberville: Thank you --

18 General Cavoli: Thank you, sir.

19 Senator Tuberville: -- for your service, gentlemen.
20 Thank you.

21 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Tuberville.

22 General Cavoli, the Russians are nowhere near capable
23 of making a big push right now. Are they?

24 General Cavoli: That is my assessment, Chairman.

1 Chairman Wicker: And what nationality are the pilots
2 of those F16s?

3 General Cavoli: They're Ukrainian.

4 Chairman Wicker: And where were they trained?

5 General Cavoli: They were trained in a variety of
6 places. Some in Romania, some in the Netherlands, some in
7 Arizona.

8 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. I think we have
9 Senator Slotkin now.

10 Senator Slotkin: Thank you, Chairman. Generals, thank
11 you for being here and for your really significant service
12 to the country. We appreciate you. I'm sure you're not
13 crying any tears that this may be your last hearing in front
14 of the, this committee, but we're happy to have you.

15 And General Cavoli, I can't think of a general more
16 associated with American's response to the invasion of
17 Ukraine than you, given the role as SACEUR, that you've been
18 playing for these last number of years. Just to establish a
19 baseline, you said the Aspen Security Forum that supporting
20 Ukraine is vital for American security. Can you confirm
21 that you still believe that that is correct?

22 General Cavoli: I do believe that. Yes, ma'am.

23 Senator Slotkin: And you also said that, you know,
24 Russia, no matter what, no matter how this war concludes,

1 was still going to be a big problem. Do you believe that
2 after Russia invaded Georgia, then Crimea, then Eastern
3 Ukraine, that if some sort of deal was reached with Vladimir
4 Putin, especially one that advantaged him, that he'd be done
5 with invading neighboring countries, that he would be done
6 with adventurism in Europe?

7 General Cavoli: I do not ma'am. My professional
8 assessment based on years of study is that this is part of a
9 broader pattern in Russian history, and certainly in current
10 Russian activity. How the U.S. oriented against that is not
11 my call.

12 Senator Slotkin: Of course.

13 General Cavoli: But that is my assessment of their
14 threat?

15 Senator Slotkin: Based on your experience on the
16 ground and having to negotiate again, military to military
17 with the Russians and others, do you believe that the
18 Russians are a trustworthy negotiating partner?

19 General Cavoli: I believe they are -- I believe they
20 are a very deliberate negotiating partner. I believe they
21 are very strategic in their negotiations, even over small
22 tactical things that I've been involved in over the years.
23 And I believe they're highly proficient at it, and they will
24 always chase their interests.

1 Senator Slotkin: Can we talk about how the
2 relationship between Russia and China has evolved over the
3 course of this war? Is it safe to say that since the war in
4 Ukraine, Russia has become the biggest provider to China of
5 military technology and equipment?

6 General Cavoli: They have certainly increased the
7 amount they provide. I'm not a China expert, so I'm not
8 sure who exactly the biggest is. And in closed session, we
9 can talk a little bit about what exactly they've been
10 providing. One of the things in reverse though, Senator,
11 frequently I get asked you know, what sort of support is
12 China providing Russia?

13 And I think one of the most pernicious types of support
14 they provide is moral support to Russia. Because it
15 justifies violation of another country's sovereignty, which
16 I think is highly problematic, were it to become widespread.

17 Senator Slotkin: Yeah. I mean, just in open source,
18 we can find that Moscow is helping Beijing develop
19 submarine, aeronautic, and missile technologies in exchange
20 for China's, as you say, moral support for Russia's war,
21 maybe other things beyond moral support. And even though
22 this administration has had very little to say about China's
23 military role and about this partnership as they try and
24 negotiate with Russia, and despite the Pentagon's new

1 national defense strategy, which says that they're focused
2 on China, we really don't see a lot of visibility on this
3 pernicious topic, which is an alliance stronger than ever,
4 or relationship, at least stronger than ever between China
5 and Russia. Is Russia helping China develop military
6 capabilities that could impact the United States?

7 General Cavoli: You know, again, in closed session we
8 could talk about it, but they're certainly cooperating not
9 for the benefit of the United States.

10 Senator Slotkin: Right. But I mean, China, I mean,
11 they can have other interests in other countries, but I
12 think we are a primary focus for the Chinese military. I
13 don't think that's a classified statement in any way. Do
14 you believe that the Chinese are watching what we do in
15 Europe, in Ukraine, and with Russia, and learning lessons
16 that they may use, when it comes to potentially taking over
17 Taiwan?

18 General Cavoli: They are.

19 Senator Slotkin: What are the lessons then that you
20 think they're learning from this, watching us in this
21 conflict as we now quickly move to negotiate with Putin, put
22 a lot of trust in him, in the person that invaded a
23 democracy? Do you think it makes them more likely or less
24 likely to go ahead and try and take Taiwan?

1 General Cavoli: Ma'am, I think they're learning
2 lessons at every echelon, one of them being the policy
3 making and decision-making echelon, I'll leave that to
4 others to comment on.

5 But at the military level, operationally and
6 tactically, they're studying the conflict very, very hard in
7 ways that we know they would apply to any potential conflict
8 in Taiwan.

9 Senator Slotkin: Again, thank you for your service,
10 your long service, both of you and I yield back to whoever
11 is acting as Chairman.

12 Senator Banks [presiding]: Thank you. I recognize
13 myself for five minutes. Germany is the biggest economy in
14 Europe, twice the GDP of Russia, but it's also been the
15 biggest free rider in NATO for decades. They've finally
16 reached 2 percent of GDP on defense by some metrics, but
17 they're still not a very capable force. Germany promised in
18 2023 to deploy an armored brigade to Lithuania, and that
19 brigade isn't going to be fully operational until 2027. It
20 takes the nation that once fielded hundreds of divisions,
21 four years to move a single brigade just a few hundred miles
22 away from Germany.

23 General Cavoli, the Europeans are finally starting to
24 spend more on their defense, but how long is it going to

1 take before their spending turns into real capability?

2 General Cavoli: Thanks, Senator. This is a very
3 important question because we have been waiting a long time
4 to get the levels of defense spending we're starting to see.
5 Now there's got to be something to buy. So we have a lot of
6 countries, 23 nations budgeting over 2 percent this year.
7 Several going over 3 percent, I believe the number six are
8 over 3 percent this year.

9 Now it's a matter of converting it into hardware and
10 organizations. And our industrial base, both in Russia and
11 on this side of the Atlantic is struggling to produce the
12 relevant equipment and the quantities needed. So basically
13 there's more money available than stuff right now, sir. I
14 think the --

15 Senator Banks: Why?

16 General Cavoli: Well, our defense industrial basis on
17 both sides of the Atlantic consolidated and atrophied under
18 lack of orders. And then there are some bureaucratic
19 problems in governments in terms of acquiring stuff so that
20 it goes slowly. But I think this question of the elasticity
21 of our defense industrial base, again, on both sides of the
22 Atlantic, is one of the great strategic questions of the
23 next 10, 15 years.

24 Senator Banks: Got it. The German defense minister

1 last year said that Germany needed to move towards spending
2 3 percent of its GDP or more on defense. Do you think the
3 Germans are serious about spending that much on their
4 military?

5 General Cavoli: Yeah, I think they are, Senator. And
6 the reason I say that is because Friedrich Merz was just
7 elected as the next chancellor in Germany. And very
8 rapidly, he, you know, sort of outlined the next coalition
9 that he's going to be leading. And they came to an
10 agreement to do a massive increase in defense spending far
11 beyond the, you know, 100 billion euros they talked about a
12 couple of years ago.

13 And the way they got there was by releasing the so-
14 called debt break that prevented Germany from assuming
15 deficit spending. So they have exempted defense spending
16 from the debt break. This is an historic breakthrough for
17 them, and it is the thing that's going to allow them to
18 apply their rather prodigious economic resources to defense.
19 They have a very strong plan to modernize and to expand.
20 It's exactly in accordance with what I need as the Supreme
21 Allied Commander, and I'm very eager to see this coalition.

22 Senator Banks: You feel like they're collaborating
23 with you on that plan?

24 General Cavoli: Absolutely, sir.

1 Senator Banks: Good. How much would it strengthen
2 your hand if all of our NATO allies increase their spending
3 on defense up to 3 percent?

4 General Cavoli: Sir, I don't think you've ever met a
5 general who wants less defense spending among the force
6 providers. It would help a great deal.

7 Senator Banks: But it would strengthen your hand? It
8 would help?

9 General Cavoli: Absolutely. And we're eager to see it
10 come to pass, and we're especially eager to see it turn into
11 real capability, which is going to require some improvements
12 in our industrial capacity.

13 Senator Banks: It's clear that the United States
14 should redeploy more of its units in Europe to the Pacific,
15 but I also want to make sure that we do that in the right
16 way. General, what U.S. capabilities are our European
17 allies least capable of replacing right now?

18 General Cavoli: Yeah, they're least capable of
19 replacing high-end Air and Missile defense on a large basis.
20 They depend on us for significant intelligence collection,
21 processing, exploitation, and dissemination. They depend on
22 us for deep, long range fires. They depend on us for aerial
23 command and control for large scale campaigns. They depend
24 on us for the backbone of certain parts of command and

1 control.

2 Those are really the key things. There are a few
3 things else that I'd like to go into closed session, sir.

4 Senator Banks: What capabilities are European allies
5 most -- where are they most prepared to take over from us?

6 General Cavoli: Well, right now they do a variety of
7 things without us, right? So today I have, I believe it's
8 17 or 20 European ships, NATO ships turned over to my
9 command, as SACEUR. Normally military forces are held by
10 the nations, and then they turn it over to me for particular
11 operations. I have zero U.S. ships working for me as SACEUR
12 right now.

13 I have only 40 individual human beings, marines, who
14 are participating in the operation to monitor the Baltic
15 Sea. We call it Baltic Sentry. Everything is being done by
16 our European allies in those cases. So they have a variety
17 of things they can do for us in any one of those areas.

18 One of the most important things they do provide is
19 intelligence. While we have exquisite capability collect,
20 they have very deep understanding of their regions, and they
21 have some capabilities that we struggle to match in that
22 regard. And, you know, those intel sharing relationships,
23 sir, are based on a broader relationship that we cultivate
24 very carefully.

1 Senator Banks: Thank you.

2 General Cavoli: Thank you, sir.

3 Senator Banks. Senator Peters.

4 Senator Peters: Thank you. And I want to thank both
5 of you for being here today, and certainly I've appreciated
6 your participation in these hearings over the years. And
7 thank you for your service.

8 General Cavoli, I want to begin by expressing my
9 deepest respect for the soldiers that were lost in Lithuania
10 last week. One of those soldiers that was lost was from my
11 state of Michigan. And I just want folks to know that their
12 service and their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

13 General Langley, Exercise Northern Strike in Michigan
14 helps train thousands of service members from over 20
15 countries at the National All Domain War Fighting Center.
16 It's also known as NADWC. It's composed of Camp Grilling
17 Training Center, and over 17,000 square miles of special use
18 military airspace at the Alpena Training Center. NADWC
19 provides realistic joint force training with our global
20 allies and our partners.

21 In fact, Liberia has been a part of this exercise for
22 the past several years. My question for you is, what role
23 do exercises like Northern Strike play in advancing
24 AFRICOM's strategic goals on the continent?

1 General Langley: Senator, thanks for that question.

2 You know, our joint exercise program is indicative of the
3 influence that we have, positive influence in building
4 institutional capacity for our African partners, and then
5 the whole portfolio, and then the exercise that you, you
6 mentioned as well adds to their institutional capacity.

7 That's why we're the preferred partner.

8 As we go forward, and they address their challenges in,
9 in building security cooperation or the ability to address
10 the multiple layered threats that these countries face, they
11 choose the United States. I know that the Chinese Communist
12 Party and even the Russian Federation through their throes
13 of efforts of trying to replicate it. But they always come
14 back to the United States to be the preferred partner for
15 building institutional capacity. So for the exercise there
16 and what Liberia does they chose right.

17 Senator Peters: Well, that's good. And I want to kind
18 of pick up on that as in terms of the competition we have
19 with both Russia and the CCP and their influence operations
20 in Africa.

21 As you know, China employs strategic narratives to
22 justify and enhance their presence in Sub-Saharan Africa.
23 Through partnerships with African journalist training
24 programs, the CCP integrates its perspective into local

1 media. It directly engages in more than 60 African
2 political parties. But their most influential impact I
3 think you would agree, has been the Belt and Road
4 initiative, which has significantly impacted Africa's
5 economic landscape through substantial investments,
6 particularly infrastructure investments.

7 In 2023, African countries experienced a 47 percent
8 increase in Chinese construction contracts, and 114 percent
9 surge in investments compared to the previous year, which
10 totals about 21.7 billion, a substantial amount. So my
11 question for you sir is, can you expand upon the growing
12 presence that China has in Africa politically, economically,
13 and militarily, and how that is a threat to our very
14 important strategic interest on the continent?

15 General Langley: Yes, Senator. Thanks for that
16 question. China's trying to set the globe now. They want
17 to be the global hegemon now. Chairman Xi has put out a
18 2049 plan, but they want to get there earlier. So therein
19 lies the importance that we engage and show assurance
20 actions. But we just can't just harbor the facts. We
21 harbor the facts, but we don't own the narrative. And
22 that's being drowned out by the CCP and their campaign plans
23 to be able to influence civil society, influence the
24 militaries.

1 They can't replicate what we do, whether it be their
2 trying to copy what we're doing in our IMET, or our
3 International Military Education Training. It doesn't
4 compare. And we match our efforts, whether it's Title 22
5 funding or Title 10 funding. Whether it be security, the
6 state partnership program, or the SFABs, Security Force
7 Assistance Brigades.

8 They build institutional capacity like none other. Our
9 African partners know that. So whatever is in the
10 information space, we do need to meet it with a comparable
11 narrative. Thanks, sir.

12 Senator Peters: Thank you. And once again, thank you
13 to both of you for your service.

14 Senator Schmitt [presiding]: Thank you. Thank you.
15 I'll call myself now. From Truman and Eisenhower through
16 Reagan and Gates, U.S. leaders no matter how committed, NATO
17 have made some interesting comments I think are worth
18 highlighting here. General Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied
19 Commander, noted that, "If in 10 years -- by the way, in
20 1951 -- if in 10 years all American troops stationed in
21 Europe for national defense purposes have not been returned
22 to the United States, then this whole project will have
23 failed."

24 Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State, said, "The United

1 States must lead, but it must not carry." President Kennedy
2 said, "We want to make sure that NATO is not a fair-weather
3 organization. The burden of freedom must be shared equally
4 among its members." LBJ had similar thoughts, and his
5 administration demanded offset agreements from West Germany
6 to cover the costs of U.S. troops there.

7 President Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Nixon noted,
8 "United States will participate in the defense and
9 development of allies and friends, but America cannot and
10 will not conceive all plans, design all programs, execute
11 all decisions, and undertake all the defense of free nations
12 of the world."

13 Casper Weinberger said, "Our European allies must
14 recognize that security cannot be achieved by words alone.
15 It must be backed by commitment and capability." Robert
16 Gates, in his farewell speech to NATO, said, "There will be
17 a dwindling appetite to expand increasingly precious funds
18 on behalf of nations that are apparently unwilling to devote
19 the necessary resources to be serious and capable partners
20 in their own defense." Even Secretary Mattis said,
21 "Americans cannot care more for your children's future
22 security than you do."

23 While some of my colleagues have been wring their hands
24 over the possibility that the United States might step away

1 from its role as a Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, I can
2 tell you who isn't all that worried about it. It's the
3 American people. Quite frankly, they probably thought that
4 ended when Dwight D. Eisenhower was no longer the Supreme
5 Allied Commander. And speaking of General Eisenhower, I
6 read that quote, "If in 10 years all American troops in
7 Europe for military purposes have not returned to the United
8 States, then this whole project will have failed."

9 That's 70 years ago. Over 70 years ago. Time and time
10 again, the United States is expected to shoulder Europe's
11 defense while rich European countries sit back, issue
12 statements, and undeliver. Some of my colleagues point out
13 that since the war in Ukraine began, Europe has collectively
14 spent as much on European defense as the United States, as
15 if that's some great triumph. To me, it just shows how
16 upside down this whole arrangement is. How is it even
17 remotely impressive that the nations defending their own
18 continent are only barely keeping pace with the country
19 across the Atlantic?

20 If Europe really believes it's facing an existential
21 threat from Russia, it should be spending not just as much
22 as we have, but magnitudes, magnitudes more than we do. 10
23 times, 100 times. That's what a commitment would look like.
24 And please stop telling me that comparing spending in Europe

1 is even, that's laughably narrow. When you compare U.S.
2 defense spending in Europe to Europe's, you ignore
3 everything else America does worldwide, much of which
4 directly benefits Europe.

5 Who ensures freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, when
6 European trade flows there daily? We do. Who contains
7 China's growing dominance across the Indo-Pacific,
8 stabilizing global markets and maritime routes that Europe
9 depends on? We do. Without U.S. global power projection,
10 the European way of life wouldn't exist as we know it. And
11 still, they won't even take primary responsibility for their
12 own backyard.

13 If Russia really is a continent-wide threat, as
14 European leaders say, then where is the urgency? Where is
15 the mobilization? With few exceptions, Poland and the
16 Baltic states, Europe is not acting like it's facing down a
17 generational threat, not even close. And I'm getting tired
18 of being asked to go home to Missouri and explain to working
19 Americans, the people I represent, why they should send more
20 money, more troops, more of their sons and daughters to
21 defend a continent that refuses to defend itself.

22 Why should we care more about Moscow than people in
23 Paris who are two hours away by plane? It doesn't make
24 sense, and it's time to stop pretending that it does. For

1 80 years, we've told Europe to get serious about their own
2 defense. They have blown us off. They haven't listened.
3 Maybe they never will, as long as we keep doing the job for
4 them.

5 So yes, maybe we should have a conversation about the
6 Supreme Allied Commander role. Maybe having an American
7 general in that seat furthers this ruse. We should have the
8 debate, not simply dismiss it. Let's have an honest
9 conversation about it. American priorities in Europe, what
10 they should be. Let's stop confusing symbolism with
11 strategy. And while we're at it, maybe let's stop waving
12 foreign flags in the house floor when Americans can barely
13 afford groceries.

14 Some of my colleagues seem to think that defending
15 Ukraine matters more than defending our own border. I
16 disagree and so do the American people. It's time to have a
17 serious realignment, let Europe grow up and carry its own
18 weight. America's job is not to babysit the world. It's to
19 protect our people and our interests. Full stop.

20 General Cavoli, I had a bunch of questions for you, but
21 I had to say what I had to say. So I guess since I'm the
22 Chairman, I'll ask one question right now. Greenland. Can
23 you just talk about the strategic importance and why that
24 matters to the United States of America?

1 General Cavoli: Sure. I'll talk about it from my
2 perspective as --

3 Senator Schmitt: Yeah, not from a policy perspective,
4 from a military perspective.

5 General Cavoli: But from a military perspective,
6 Senator, I'll limit my comments to my field of expertise,
7 which is the European Theater, right? EUCOM AOR, and the
8 SACEUR AOR. The key there is, it forms the western border
9 of the Greenland Iceland UK gap, which is that body of water
10 through which Russian submarines from the northern fleet in
11 Murmansk come up, and then down through that gap. And once
12 they get past that gap, they break out into the Atlantic.
13 It becomes very tough to track them. It's a vast expanse.
14 There are some acoustic things about the underwater
15 geography that make it pretty tough. From those positions
16 that they can achieve, they can hold the U.S. homeland at
17 risk. Several important targets with land attack cruise
18 missiles.

19 Greenland is the western boundary of that gap. So my
20 access to it, their airspace and water space, bounding
21 Greenland is absolutely critical for the United States.

22 Senator Schmitt: Senator Blumenthal.

23 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Senator Schmitt. First
24 of all, thank you both for your service, and I join many of

1 my colleagues in regretting your retirement. You both have
2 been frank, informative, dedicated, and really models of
3 public service. And I wish you well on behalf of all us.

4 General Cavoli, we've talked over the years about
5 Vladimir Putin's murderous invasion of Ukraine. There's no
6 question who the aggressor is here, and there's no question
7 in my mind that the aggression, this murderous bloody
8 assault is continuing with undiminished force against
9 Ukraine. As you note very powerfully in your testimony,
10 Russia is building its military strength. The Kremlin
11 learns quickly and historically that it restructures forces
12 as necessary. It's already reconstituting itself. It's
13 tapping additional manpower and preparing to continue this
14 assault, and at the same time, slow walking and playing us
15 in supposed negotiations.

16 I'm not going to ask you to comment on the
17 negotiations. I recognize that your mission is military in
18 nature, but I would ask you how you would characterize
19 Russia's ability to recoup its material and personnel losses
20 in Ukraine. Will it succeed in rebuilding after its losses?
21 And what kind of threat does that represent to American
22 security interests?

23 General Cavoli: Sure, Senator. Thank you. So if we
24 divide Russia's rebuilding capability into two big blocks,

1 personnel and equipment, I believe the personnel, they'll be
2 able to build as quickly as they want to. They continue to
3 maintain a conscription. You saw that just last week the
4 Russian government announced its annual conscription drive.
5 It increased by 10,000 over last year, 160,000 this year.
6 With those numbers, they will be able to constitute the four
7 size that they choose fairly quickly.

8 Be a little tougher, take them a little bit more time
9 to organize it into the sort of organizations that they have
10 said they want to build after the war. They want to have an
11 army of about 1.5 million they've announced. They want to
12 put a lot of it on the border of NATO and Northeastern
13 Europe. It'll take them a little bit of time to do that,
14 but we're talking a couple of years.

15 Equipment, that depends on how much more they lose
16 inside Ukraine, sir. They've lost a vast amount of
17 equipment inside Ukraine. They started the war with
18 someplace near 13,000 tanks on active and in storage. And
19 they're starting to approach near the end of that, near the
20 end of the useful tanks in storage. So depending on how
21 much more they lose, that will really determine how quickly
22 they can regenerate.

23 They have expanded their capability to produce some
24 things, artillery shells, cruise missiles tremendously. And

1 they're producing some things such as one-way attack drones
2 in prodigious numbers that they weren't even producing at
3 all before the war.

4 Senator Blumenthal: And I would characterize that
5 capability as offensive. In other words, they're not
6 defending against a possible invasion from Ukraine. They
7 are preparing for continuing offensive actions against
8 Ukraine and possibly NATO allies if they are successful in
9 Ukraine.

10 General Cavoli: And I would add to that, Senator, that
11 this is not just in the ground domain. They have long range
12 aviation that practices daily, moving out and doing strikes
13 across North America. They have their strategic ballistic
14 missile fleet that their road mobiles that are constantly
15 out there, and they have their submarine fleet that's
16 constantly out there. So it's not just in those domains.
17 And then there is of course, the cyber domain in which, you
18 know, they're very active. We can talk about in closed
19 session, sir.

20 Senator Blumenthal: Just one last question, General.
21 Because I've heard from some of the critics of our military
22 aid to Ukraine that there are significant numbers of weapons
23 embezzled, stolen, missing from the aid that we are
24 providing Ukraine. On every one of the visits -- I've been

1 to Ukraine six times now -- I've talked to our military and
2 logistics folks in Poland, and they are tracking virtually
3 every bullet that we have provided to Ukraine. And there's
4 no evidence whatsoever of this kind of misconduct or
5 misappropriation of our aid to Ukraine. Would you agree?

6 General Cavoli: Yeah, I do agree with that, Senator.
7 There will be a challenge locating all of it later. You
8 know, all of us have been in combat, realize that it's
9 pretty easy to misplace things and to lose track of things.
10 But we've seen no deliberate effort to transfer, sell, or
11 steal weaponry. The Ukrainians are using it to defend their
12 country.

13 Senator Blumenthal: My hope is that Russia will take
14 seriously the efforts to peace and stop stonewalling and
15 slow walking negotiation. But right now, they seem to be
16 playing us and playing for time. And I want to thank you
17 again for your incredible service, both of you to our great
18 country. Thank you.

19 General Cavoli: Thank you, sir.

20 Chairman Wicker [presiding]: Thank you very much,
21 Senator Blumenthal. General Langley, let me ask a few more
22 questions here as we hopefully recess. Africa is a mineral
23 rich, resource rich continent. Is that correct?

24 General Langley: Yes, Chairman.

1 Chairman Wicker: Oh, okay. And you can leave the
2 microphone on. Are there success stories for the citizens
3 of African countries when these larger more prosperous
4 nations or companies from more prosperous areas come in and
5 exploit these minerals? What I'm asking is, does it ever
6 redound to the benefit of the citizens there in Africa?

7 General Langley: Chairman, there's very few cases.
8 When the Chinese Communist Party is outed on them pulling
9 out raw materials, not benefiting the, the populations of
10 the host country, they've been trying to come up with ways
11 how they can stay there and process only at the protests of
12 the people of these African countries that host these
13 mineral resources.

14 Chairman Wicker: So is there any exception? Can you
15 point to any success story where the people of one country
16 or one or two countries have actually benefited
17 substantially?

18 General Langley: Not on China's behalf. Not on
19 China's behalf. Just what happened in Zambia when they had
20 the spillage into the river that services 5 million people.
21 There are just these mining concessions. It just doesn't
22 turn out real well for the African countries.

23 Chairman Wicker: And do the countries that are
24 receiving entreaties from the Belt and Road Initiative, are

1 they more and more mindful of that now and therefore
2 reluctant?

3 General Langley: Yes. And that's where you know, we
4 need to be able to do information operations to illuminate
5 some of the irregularities and some of the malign type
6 activities of the Chinese in the African countries.

7 Chairman Wicker: Information and narratives are power
8 then, aren't they?

9 General Langley: Absolutely. And as I said a few
10 minutes ago, and I always will tout this, that we own the
11 facts. We own the facts. We know exactly what the Chinese
12 Communist party's doing, and to some degree what the Russian
13 Federation is doing and their propaganda operations. But we
14 don't own the narrative. Both of them own the narrative.

15 Chairman Wicker: We sure don't. One more thing for
16 you General Langley, the approach that we have had with
17 USAID and the other things like the President's initiative
18 on aids. How does our U.S. approach compare and contrast to
19 the approach of Russia in Africa and also communist China IN
20 Africa?

21 General Langley: Well, Chairman, we've always had the
22 lead. So what you're seeing in those two competitors or
23 challengers, they're following in our wake. They see what
24 works as far as our influence and deepening partnerships

1 through those soft powers, whether it be health diplomacy or
2 whether it be in development type programs. So, they're
3 following in our wake, trying to replicate what we do best.

4 And I think the African countries know this. And so,
5 this is where as we start to look at going forward, State
6 Department starts to reset these programs looking at what
7 worked and what didn't work, and doubling down on what does
8 work. I think we have enough capital built up in these
9 countries for them to ensure their stabilization and also
10 prosperity. The other two competitors are just trying to
11 replicate what we do best.

12 Chairman Wicker: I can imagine a situation, though, in
13 which the ruling elite of a country is receiving gratuities
14 on the side that in order to the benefit of the strong man
15 leader and not to the populace of the country. Does that
16 sort of corruption and bribery go on with regard to the Belt
17 and Road?

18 General Langley: Absolutely, Chairman. You know, I
19 see this, and I don't mind calling them out, but Captain
20 Traore in Burkina Faso. You know, as they know that both,
21 you know, whether it's their gold reserves, all those
22 proceeds are just in exchange to protect the Junta regime.
23 There's a number of those examples across. Even in Sudan,
24 what's going on with the Rapid Support Forces and Al-Burhan

1 of the Sudan forces. When you get down to it, is all about
2 the revenue that can be drawn out of that. And there are
3 nefarious actors in the CCP or in sometimes Russia, are
4 complicit in those activities.

5 Chairman Wicker: Well, you can't imagine how
6 frustrating it seems to me that this mineral rich continent
7 has not been able to move to a utilization of the resources
8 to benefit the people there after all this time. It's a
9 puzzle that we haven't unwound.

10 Let me see if I can move to General Cavoli, and then I,
11 I hope we can leave. You are aware of various voices coming
12 from inside government here in the United States, as well as
13 in the media that have spoken with approval about the
14 Russian organized referendums in 2022 in so-called
15 overwhelming Russian speaking provinces.

16 General Cavoli, tell us what you know and what you
17 understand about the freedom of those organized referendums
18 and the accuracy of them as a measure of public opinion.

19 General Cavoli: Sure, Mr. Chairman. I don't think I'm
20 familiar with the voices in Washington that are talking
21 about this, but I do remember them very well. They were
22 referendums in Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson
23 provinces. They were in September, 2022.

24 They were roundly condemned by nations throughout the

1 world and by international organizations. The Organization
2 for Security and Cooperation in Europe called them
3 illegitimate. The United Nations called them illegal. I
4 think, I think the only country in the world that accepted
5 the result of those referenda other than Russia was North
6 Korea.

7 So they have widely been considered not to be
8 legitimate for a variety of reasons about the way they took
9 place and taking place during a conflict by an occupying
10 power.

11 Chairman Wicker: So if members of Congress want to be
12 informed by what happened in these referenda, if our
13 negotiators in this peace process want to be informed by
14 these referenda, what lesson should we take from the
15 legitimacy of those of votes?

16 General Cavoli: Sir, I think that anybody who wants to
17 know about it, it's pretty well-established history. It's
18 pretty easy to find. I could certainly help direct your
19 colleagues or anybody you want to sources on it. What
20 conclusions can we draw? We can draw the conclusion that,
21 you know, the Russian Federation was intent on absorbing
22 those provinces and attempted to put a gloss of legitimacy
23 over it by holding a referenda that had, you know, results
24 like 99 percent in favor.

1 Chairman Wicker: Rigged results, correct?

2 General Cavoli: That was the widespread conclusion at
3 the time in 2022. Yes, sir.

4 Chairman Wicker: And also, since you are a student of
5 the Russian language yourself, is the fact that the Russian
6 language is spoken in part of Ukraine, is that demonstrative
7 of their loyalty with regard to their nationality?

8 General Cavoli: Well, we see linguistic minorities in
9 countries all over the world, sir. There certainly is a
10 dominant Russian language population in Eastern Ukraine. We
11 see a Russian language population in Eastern Estonia. So
12 it's not --

13 Chairman Wicker: And they consider themselves loyal
14 Estonians, do they not?

15 General Cavoli: Yeah. It really doesn't have much to
16 do with sovereignty at all. I mean, we have large
17 populations in our country that don't speak English.

18 Chairman Wicker: That's the point I was trying to
19 make. Senator Reed, we will be going into a closed session.
20 Do you have any questions for the open session?

21 Senator Reed: I have a few questions, and thank you,
22 Mr. Chairman. General Cavoli, in your military opinion,
23 does the U.S. agreement with Denmark to facilitate access
24 and basing needs in Greenland meet current military

1 requirements?

2 General Cavoli: Sir, I can only talk about the part of
3 the military requirements that affect me. So our principle
4 presence on Greenland, the United States personal presence
5 on Greenland is the base at Pituffik in Northwestern
6 Greenland. That is not under my operation or administrative
7 control. That's a space force base. And I don't know if
8 it's adequate for them or not.

9 From my perspective as both the Supreme Allied
10 Commander and the U.S. European Commander, I have all the
11 access and basing I need to prosecute the operations that
12 we've talked about in the high North during this, during
13 this Conference.

14 Senator Reed: So is that from your perspective,
15 European Greenland, just to get the facts right, is within
16 your area of operations?

17 General Cavoli: Greenland is within my area of
18 operations as the Supreme Allied Commander. And it is
19 within my area of operations as the U.S. European Command.

20 Senator Reed: And you feel at this juncture, we have
21 all the capacity we need to confront the threats going
22 forward?

23 General Cavoli: Yeah. Again senator, my part of that
24 is what I can comment on. That's from the coast of

1 Greenland eastward, and northward to counter Russian threats
2 coming out of there. I can't really speak for NORTHCOM's
3 interest or anything like that.

4 Senator Reed: Thank you. If AFRICOM is dissolved and
5 merged into EUCOM, you would've a responsibility for more
6 than 50 countries. Do you have the capacity, the expertise,
7 the infrastructure to do that?

8 General Cavoli: I would have the responsibility for 50
9 more countries. Yeah.

10 Senator Reed: Exactly right.

11 General Cavoli: It would be a stretch, Senator. I
12 mean, that's a wide span of control. I think that the
13 organization, if it were, you know, aggregated, would
14 possess the expertise and the capacity, because when AFRICOM
15 was created in 2007, it was mainly created by cleaving it
16 out of the EUCOM headquarters and establishing it separate,
17 actually in some cases in the exact same buildings.

18 So my assumption would be that a lot of that capacity
19 would have to come back to EUCOM in order to be able
20 adequately to handle the threats and the problems that
21 General Langley has talked about today. It would have to be
22 studied very, very closely, of course.

23 Senator Reed: Thank you. I have one question for
24 General Langley, it's just a comment. We've talked a lot

1 about the German contributions and it's increasing, thank
2 goodness, but I think we miss some of the history here. For
3 many, many decades, Germany was divided so that it's not the
4 same country now that it was in the 1960s, et cetera, in
5 terms of its economic capacity.

6 And the second point that strikes me is that for many,
7 many years after World War II, there was a great reluctance
8 upon Germany and indeed most other countries in the world,
9 to see them create a powerful military force. We had seen
10 that before, right after World War I. And so I think that
11 has to be factored into their, one, their reluctance to
12 expand on defense. But now I think it's a turnaround and
13 they're putting a great deal of resources as they should.

14 Final question, General Langley. Have you had specific
15 comments from any of your counterparts about the withdrawal
16 of USAID from Africa? Have they commented to you, like, why
17 are you doing this, or?

18 General Langley: Ranking Member, thanks for that
19 question. I went to the meeting security conference about a
20 month ago, or greater than a month ago. And, you know,
21 after I got my direction from the Secretary of Defense what
22 my priorities were especially with counter terrorism and
23 also to deter China and their military activities on the
24 continent, it kind of refined my mission.

1 Then I had to come up with my narrative to engage these
2 countries to be very transparent and straight talk, of that
3 we're going through the pause and we're in a reflection
4 period of assessing what has worked in the past and what's
5 going to work in the future, and what's going in the future
6 will be more targeted to what their needs are but they also
7 need to be able to build towards a sense of independent
8 operations.

9 You know, I expressed this and talked to Cote d'Ivoire
10 their MOD and even in Ghana the new President-elect you
11 know, President Mahama. They understood that and also
12 carried on that narrative. They appreciated me being
13 transparent. Carried on that narrative when I went to
14 Morocco as well, when we delivered the helicopters and they
15 understand it.

16 And so, it's more of a burden sharing type message and
17 also a regimented message of getting towards the host nation
18 coming to the point of independent operations.

19 Senator Reed: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 Chairman Wicker: And thank you, Mr. Ranking Member.
21 This concludes the open portion of today's hearing. I'd
22 like to thank our witnesses for their testimony, for the
23 information of members and staff. Questions for the record
24 are due to the committee within two business days of the

1 conclusion of this hearing. We will commence the closed
2 portion of this hearing in Senate Security at the hour of
3 12:10, 10 minutes past noon. And until then, we are
4 recessed.

5 [Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]