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**Opening Statement (As Prepared)**  
**Chairman Adam Smith**  
House Armed Services Committee Hearing:  
*“National Security Challenges and U.S. Military Activities  
in Europe”*  
March 30, 2022

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Good morning. I'd like to thank our witnesses for joining us today, Dr. Celeste Wallander, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, and General Tod Wolters, the Commander of U.S. European Command (EUCOM). We appreciate your service and leadership at this moment of challenge for global security. This is also the last time General Wolters will testify before the Armed Services Committee in his capacity as EUCOM commander, and General Wolters, thank you for your efforts over the past three years.

The Euro-Atlantic region is one of the most crucial theaters for U.S. national security, because it simultaneously encompasses one of the most robust collections of allies and partners and one of the adversaries most willing to take drastic action to upend the rules-based international order. Russia has underscored that point with a war of choice, launching an unprovoked further invasion of Ukraine that has produced enormous suffering. The United States, its allies, and partners have responded with a nearly unprecedented show of unity, leveraging our collective capabilities and resources – both military and nonmilitary – to support the Ukrainian people in their fight against this assault and raise the costs for Russia of aggression. We must continue to maintain that unity and do all that we can to assist Ukraine, while simultaneously balancing the risks to avoid triggering a direct conflict between NATO and Russia. We must also continue to leverage the power of those alliances and partnerships to address shared security concerns across the world: Our European allies and partners have recently taken major steps to address China's predatory investments in Europe and engage to provide security in the Indo-Pacific; and our relationships are powerful tools to counter Russian and Chinese malign activity and violent extremism. It is essential to build on those efforts.

Today, I am interested in our witnesses' assessment of the current situation in Ukraine and what actions the Department of Defense (DOD) and EUCOM are taking to assist our partners there. In particular, I am interested in DOD's efforts to ensure timely delivery of assistance: How have we structured our efforts to deliver, how are we approaching force protection, and what can be done better? What types of aid are we providing, and what more can we effectively and appropriately send? I also want to understand what DOD is doing to ensure the sustainability of this assistance, as we continue to draw on military stocks and production lines worldwide. Moreover, I would like to understand our witnesses' approach to current authorities governing the provision of assistance: How are they using these authorities, and are there statutory challenges that Congress needs to be aware of

as we go into this authorizing cycle?

I would also like to hear DOD's vision for U.S. and allied posture, in response to the fundamental changes to the security environment in Europe, and how that is reflected in DOD's budget request. What long-term posture in Europe is necessary to successfully ensure, as the President says, that United States and its allies can "defend every inch of NATO territory"? Do our witnesses envision long-term changes to U.S. posture, or does DOD plan to rely solely on advocacy for allied increases in posture for Europe? What decisions is the administration making regarding permanent and continuous rotational presence on NATO's eastern flank? Regarding the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), the Comptroller stated this week that, "[t]he European Deterrence Initiative in this budget very much continues the trajectory of previous budget. This budget was finalized before Putin's invasion of Ukraine. So, there is nothing in this budget that specifically was changed because it was too late to change it if we wanted to, to reflect the specifics of the invasion." I would like to hear how that fits into the larger picture regarding changes in force posture and future investments and planning for EDI. More broadly, I would like our witnesses to lay out what has been changed within the FY 2023 Budget Request and the National Defense Strategy following the invasion of Ukraine, and what concretely DOD will do differently than it would have done before.

On the level of policy, I would like to understand how our witnesses believe the invasion affects the security architecture of Europe, and how they are addressing the implications. Is the Department developing national security strategies for non-NATO partners such as Georgia, who are now extremely vulnerable, and for especially vulnerable areas in the alliance such as the Black Sea and the Baltic countries? How does the invasion change our witnesses' long-term assumptions, and how can we ensure continued unity among our allies and partners as we, in the President's words, "steel ourselves for the long fight ahead"? What measures is DOD using to balance the need to confront Russian aggression with the need to avoid unconsidered escalation, and how do you calibrate those policies amid dynamic developments in Ukraine?

Finally, it is essential that we understand how all of this connects to the budget request. We have so far received an overview of the budget request but are still awaiting key details that allow us to do oversight and authorize. The committee looks forward to reviewing the specifics of this request, including the statutorily required future-years plans for EDI, as we prepare for the FY 2023 NDAA cycle.

I look forward to your testimony.

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