

**Testimony to the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

**United States Deputy Chief of Mission to NATO Douglas Jones**

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Chairman Hastings, Co-Chairman Wicker, distinguished Commissioners, and Members of Congress, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the United States Mission to NATO. This field hearing is a timely contribution to the discussion on the future of the transatlantic relationship and NATO's role in deterring and defending Alliance territory and people. I commend you for your leadership in bringing this discussion into the Baltic Sea region where our complex and competitive relationship with Russia plays out on a daily basis.

For more than 70 years, NATO has stood at the center of the transatlantic relationship. It has done its two primary jobs well: deterring conflict and preparing to win war if necessary. The Alliance has stood the test of time and continues to be the political and military bulwark against the most dangerous and complex threats facing the Transatlantic region. The United States is more secure when Europe is strong and free. For that reason, the U.S. commitment to NATO and to the security of our Allies is iron-clad.

I am pleased to report to you that our Alliance remains strong and unified. The fundamentals of NATO are sound, and NATO has responded admirably to a quickly changing security environment. Important adaptations for the Alliance at consecutive

NATO Summits in Wales, Warsaw and Brussels have served to realign NATO's defensive posture, capability and planning in light of evolving threats. But much more will be required of Allies to meet security challenges going forward, many of which stem from Russian attempts to undermine our Alliance and our security.

The challenge posed by Russia in the Baltic Sea region is serious and concerning. Russia is pursuing a comprehensive strategy aimed at undermining NATO Allies and partners through sowing doubt in our populations by interfering in sovereign democratic procedures, creating security dilemmas on our borders and globally, eroding the international security architecture with violations of long-standing treaties, all while pursuing a robust military modernization to include nuclear, space, and cyber capabilities. Collectively, these steps represent an assertive and provocative Russia that is determined to fracture our Alliance. We know that Russia seeks to use its instruments of power to prevent NATO from performing its collective defense responsibilities.

The Baltic Sea region is at the heart of this Russian strategy, where the Kaliningrad Oblast has become among the most militarized corners of the planet. Moscow's military build-up is buttressing its anti-access/area denial capabilities that would seek to prevent reinforcement and military maneuver along the eastern flank of the Alliance. It is also using Kaliningrad as a home base for nuclear-capable Iskander missiles in the heart of the Alliance. Russian military jets periodically engage in unsafe and unprofessional intercepts of U.S. and Allied flights in the skies over the Baltic Sea. In the maritime domain, we increasingly see similar dangerous maneuvering from

Russian naval vessels in the Baltic Sea waters. Russian jamming of Allied and partner GPS signals during last year's NATO exercise Trident Juncture was just the latest example of how Russia's behavior puts lives at risk and creates tremendous tension that could have severe ramifications.

Beyond the conventional threat, Russia also uses hybrid tactics and schemes intended to fall below the threshold of conflict but nonetheless create effects that provide Russia political and military advantages. We have seen Russia coerce neighbors through the disruption of energy exports, mount sophisticated cyber operations, and use a chemical nerve agent in an assassination attempt on an Ally's territory. These hybrid actions are all meant to exploit ambiguity and conceal the instigator's role.

Russia treats the Baltic Sea region as its own backyard, yet we must recall that six NATO countries – and two key partners in Finland and Sweden – border the Baltic Sea. The overall security picture in the Baltic Sea region is clearly one in which the United States and NATO must play an important role. And while the focus of today's discussion is the region specifically, these trends are also playing out in the Black Sea region, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the high North Atlantic. It is our responsibility to connect those dots, grow our resilience and ensure, beyond any doubt, that our defenses are adequate.

In response to these increasing threats, NATO took concrete steps in 2016 and 2018 to strengthen deterrence and defense in the Baltic region. Foremost, NATO created an enhanced Forward Presence consisting of multinational battlegroups in Poland and the

Baltic states with contributions from across the Alliance. These battlegroups are a visible and capable demonstration of NATO's foundational principle that an attack on one is an attack on all. NATO also continued its Baltic Air Policing mission designed to augment the air security of the region and show that Russian intimidation against any Ally would not succeed in peeling them away from the Alliance. NATO also developed a new strategy for responding to hybrid threats and established a mechanism to deploy Counter Hybrid Support Teams to support Allies in responding to this new, amorphous threat. NATO continues to strengthen its cyber defense, through the establishment of a new Cyberspace Operations Center and an Intelligence Division. By agreeing that cyber is now an operational domain, NATO has ensured that it incorporates cyber into all its operations. NATO has worked in building relations and expertise in cyber and hybrid through Centers of Excellence in Finland and Estonia. NATO also took steps to substantially increase high-end warfighting readiness at the 2018 Brussels Summit at which Heads of State and Government agreed to place an additional 30 mechanized battalions, 30 kinetic air squadrons, and 30 combatant vessels at a level of "ready to employ" within 30 days. And NATO is bolstering its relationship with key Enhanced Opportunity Partners Finland and Sweden through exercises and capability development. Finland and Sweden are regular participants at NATO defense and foreign ministerials – a sign of our enduring, close and reliable relationships. NATO is working quickly to update and modernize our warfighting concepts and approaches with the development of a new Joint Air Power strategy, enhancements to our maritime posture, and a new NATO space policy which was agreed only last week at the Defense Ministerial. NATO is also

responding to Russia's violations of international law. At the end of 2018, NATO Allies uniformly declared that Russia is in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty because of its development and deployment of the SSC-8 ground-launched intermediate-range cruise missile. NATO Allies supported the U.S. decision to suspend its obligations under and ultimately to withdraw from the Treaty if Russia does not return to full and verifiable compliance. Since Russia has so far given no sign it intends to return to compliance, our military and defense advisors have been hard at work preparing for a world without the INF Treaty, developing options and recommendations for how the Alliance will adjust with respect to intelligence, capability development, planning and exercising.

The United States continues to do its part in each of these areas, thanks in large part to the sustained support of Congress. Our commitment to Baltic security has been demonstrated through the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) which exceeds six billion dollars in 2019. EDI is an unmistakable signal of U.S. resolve to ensure the readiness, responsiveness, and resilience of our forces in Europe. Most clear is the commitment we have shown through deployments right here in Poland with heel-to-toe rotations for the eFP battlegroup located in Orzysz, not far from the Suwalki Gap. Further, the recent joint declaration of the United States and Poland regarding the plan to increase the number of rotational U.S. forces stationed in Poland will complement a comprehensive and credible warfighting presence in Europe. It will also directly enhance the readiness and capacity of an increasingly professional and capable Polish military, accruing

multiple benefits to the Alliance and our strategic approach to Russian aggression. I am grateful for the opportunity to be joined by Lt. Gen. Twitty who will be able to account for all of these military activities from his perspective at European Command.

In addition to the many adaptations I have underscored earlier, to be an Alliance “fit for purpose” we must first and foremost ensure we have the resources necessary to sustain a credible deterrent and the requisite defense capabilities. For the United States, your support in Congress has assured that we will lead by example with defense investments that keep our military prepared. But this approach is not shared by all Allies. In fact, sustaining our Alliance military dominance will only be possible if all Allies meet their commitments under the Wales Defense Investment Pledge to spend 2% of their GDP on national defense. This is the foundation and minimum requirement we need to sustain our warfighting edge, whether it is through capability development, readiness, or operational deployments.

The United States continues to call on our Allies to make the appropriate investments, or we will either not be prepared or we will begin to operate as an unbalanced and bifurcated Alliance. I’d echo the sentiments of former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates who openly expressed concerns about a two-tier Alliance, one tier made up of those Allies willing and able to pay the price and bear the burdens of Alliance commitments, and another tier of Allies who enjoy the benefits of NATO membership – be they security guarantees or headquarters billets – but do not share the risks and the costs. Continued underinvestment in defense by some Allies will not be durable in the

modern security environment and it will only serve to increase the precarious situation we find in the Baltic Sea region.

Mr. Chairman, I will finish where I started. This year we celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alliance in Washington, D.C. That was a tremendous milestone. But it was not the only anniversary. Allies also celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NATO's enlargement to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in 1999. The vision and wisdom that led to that decision, and thus the entire reason we are able to convene here in Gdansk today, must continue to guide us with new pressures mounting. We are making progress, but so much more remains to be done. The state of the Alliance is strong, but we must continue to adapt to ensure our collective security for the next 70 years.