

**“Russia’s Violations of Borders, Treaties, and Human Rights”**  
**Hearing of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**Opening Testimony**  
**Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael R. Carpenter**  
**June 7, 2016**

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and Members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to update you on the Department of Defense’s strong and balanced approach to deterring Russian aggression, defending the homeland and our treaty allies, and strengthening the resilience of our allies and partners to Russian coercion and intimidation.

Today’s Russia is increasingly revanchist abroad and repressive at home. It has demonstrated a blatant disregard for its international obligations and commitments, both to other countries and to its own citizens. Outside its borders, Russia has acted aggressively in violation of the most basic principles of the global order – sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders – to seek what Kremlin leaders call a “sphere of privileged interests” along Russia’s periphery. In Syria, Russia has intervened militarily to prop up a murderous dictator, allying itself with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and Lebanese Hizballah to prolong a bloody conflict that has gone on far too long. Russia’s nuclear sabre rattling raises troubling questions about Russian leader’s commitments to strategic stability, their respect for norms against the threat of use of nuclear weapons, and whether they respect the profound caution that nuclear-age leaders have shown with regard to the brandishing of nuclear weapons. This behavior is irresponsible and dangerous. Nuclear threats will neither intimidate NATO nor make Russia a more influential and respected player on the world stage.

With regard to arms control agreements, Russia’s record has been mixed: it has violated those agreements that pose impediments to its military modernization plans, such as the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty or the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. However, it has honored others, such as the New START Treaty, which limits Russian and U.S. deployed strategic nuclear weapons to historically low levels.

Across the board, Russia’s aggressive actions and flouting of international norms have been enabled by a military modernization campaign that has benefitted from windfall hydrocarbon revenues over the last 15 years, as well as from significant internal restructuring, reform, and technological advances. Russia seeks to be a qualitative, if not quantitative, peer to the United States across the land, sea, air, and space domains, as well as in cyberspace and the

electromagnetic spectrum. Russia is also projecting power in all directions: in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, the Arctic, and the Middle East.

Moscow's military modernization has resulted in the development of new capabilities that must be factored into U.S. plans, strategies, and our own capability development. Moscow's increasing willingness to use its military power for aggressive purposes requires reorienting the Department to counter the challenges posed by a revanchist Russia.

### **Russia's Disregard for International Principles**

Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 and its military intervention in Ukraine beginning in 2014 have not only threatened European security, but also violated the bedrock principles of the international order enshrined in such foundational documents as the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. Russia has likewise shown a brazen disregard for its own political commitments, such as the 2008 ceasefire between Russia and Georgia or the February 2015 Minsk agreement. More than a year since the Minsk agreement was signed, Russia still has not fulfilled the first three commitments listed in that document: ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons from proscribed zones, and unhindered access for OSCE monitors to the entire territory of the Donbas.

Russia's disregard for basic global norms, international legal obligations, and its own political commitments pose a challenge to the future of arms control and confidence building in Europe. In 2007, Moscow unilaterally ceased implementing the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, effectively withdrawing from the only legally-binding conventional arms limitation agreement in Europe. While Russia is currently in compliance with its obligations under the New START Treaty, it is violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) by producing and flight testing a ground launched cruise missile with a range between 500 and 5,500 kilometers.

We also have concerns about Russia's implementation of other agreements, such as the Open Skies Treaty, since Russia has placed restrictions on observation missions over its territory – to include the region of Kaliningrad, which borders two of our NATO Allies – that are not permitted under the treaty.

Finally, Russia has undermined confidence and transparency-building measures by increasing the number of large-scale snap exercises on its territory, which are exempt from reporting under the Vienna Document on transparency of military activities within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Russia's dangerous and unprofessional intercepts of U.S. aircraft and ships in the Baltic and Black Seas further undermine confidence and efforts to promote risk reduction.

### **Russia's Military Modernization**

Russia's ambitious 2010 State Armaments Program aims to replace 70 percent of Russia's military equipment by 2020, prioritizing investments in strategic nuclear forces, aerospace defense weapons, high-precision conventional weapons, and command and control systems. While this modernization effort has been slowed somewhat by Western sanctions and the recent fall in oil prices, this will likely delay but not derail Russia's modernization goals. Russian ground forces have already fielded more than 1,000 new or modernized armored personnel carriers, main battle tanks, and artillery systems, primarily in the Western, Central, and Southern military districts. Additionally, Russia has made significant advances in warfighting technology, especially in the areas of precision guided munitions, missile technology, and submarine warfare. In the Ukraine conflict, we have seen Russia deploy world-class electronic warfare capabilities, and Russia's cyber capabilities remain formidable. Finally, Russia's military modernization effort has also expanded its anti-access and area denial capabilities in an effort to assert control along Russia's periphery in the Baltic and Black Seas, the Arctic, the Asia-Pacific rim, and now in Syria as well.

As its military has modernized, Russia has also devoted considerable resources to developing asymmetric capabilities. As Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov wrote in 2013, "The focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other nonmilitary measures... All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special operations forces."

Nowhere have these asymmetric capabilities been more readily on display than in Ukraine, where Russia has deployed thousands of regular soldiers and established command and

control support over tens of thousands of additional separatist forces trained in Russia and equipped by Russia. Russia has honed its abilities to conduct information campaigns. In Ukraine, Russia maintains the fiction that its forces are not present at all, and that the sophisticated air defense systems and thermobaric weapons deployed on the battlefield are fielded by volunteers. Russia's \$300 million per year state-run international TV station, RT, is but one tool at Russia's disposal that is used to promote these myths, in addition to internet trolls, so-called patriotic hackers, and botnets.

### ***The Department of Defense's Strong and Balanced Approach to Russia***

In order to address the challenges of a revanchist Russia, the Department of Defense pursues a strong and balanced approach to countering Russian coercion and aggression. Our approach involves coordinating efforts across the force to strengthen our capabilities, posture, investments, and plans to respond to the transregional, multi-functional, and multi-domain threats we face from Russia. We aim to do all this without foreclosing the possibility of working with Russia when it is in our interest, for example on counter-proliferation or combatting violent extremism. We seek to ensure that the U.S. homeland and vital U.S. national interests abroad, including the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our NATO and other treaty allies, are secure. We seek to ensure a strong, united, and resolute NATO Alliance that is capable and postured to deter and if necessary defeat Russian aggression. We are also reinvigorating our alliances in East Asia. Finally, we seek to develop resilient partners capable of withstanding Russian pressure and coercion.

The most critical element of this approach is ensuring effective deterrence to support our most vital mission, defense of the homeland, which is reflected in the President's \$583 billion budget request for Fiscal Year 2017. While new technologies have allowed us to strengthen our capabilities dramatically in a number of areas, they have also created potential vulnerabilities that must be addressed. That is why we are taking actions to ensure our critical assets are protected through measures such as hardening and dispersal and by building greater resiliency into our command and control networks. We are also moving forward the development of new technologies to ensure we maintain a qualitative military edge over potential high-end adversaries. These include new unmanned systems, enhanced ground-based air and missile

defenses, new long-range anti-ship weapons, and innovation in technologies like the electromagnetic railgun, lasers, and new systems for electronic warfare, space, and cyberspace.

We are modernizing our nuclear forces because they are beyond their planned service lives or are reaching the point where they can no longer be extended. This recapitalization program includes a new long-range strategic bomber, ballistic-missile submarine, and air-launched cruise missile, as well as the Life Extension Program for the B61 gravity bomb.

We will also continue to strengthen our alliances and partnerships. I thank Congress for its continued support for the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). Since its inception in 2014, ERI has enabled the Department of Defense to strengthen our deterrence and assurance missions in Europe. We have expanded several major exercises, to include TRIDENT JUNCTURE, the largest NATO exercise in over 20 years, with participation from over 30 Allies and partners. We have focused on operational effectiveness within NATO by supporting the Readiness Action Plan, including contributions to the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, and NATO Force Integration Units along the Alliance's eastern flank. We are funding critical U.S. enablers, such as a Division Headquarters Mission Command Element, and enhanced allied and partner capacity and capability through additional training opportunities, such as the inaugural training deployment of F-22s to our European Command. The President's FY 2017 Budget proposes quadrupling funding for the European Reassurance Initiative, to more than \$3.4 billion. This will allow us to increase our force posture in Europe by augmenting two permanently stationed Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) with a third rotational armored BCT and a fourth BCT of prepositioned warfighting equipment.

With our non-NATO partners, our goal is to improve their capabilities and capacity to deal with conventional and unconventional threats. Again, ERI has helped us by funding upgrades to existing host-nation ranges and training sites to increase capacity for use by U.S. and Allied forces and to increase the quality of training events with key partners, such as Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova. Our capacity building efforts with non-NATO partners are exemplified by the security assistance funding that Congress has appropriated for Ukraine, which since the start of the crisis in 2014 has exceeded \$600 million. Our support to Ukraine has consisted of training programs to enhance Ukraine's internal defense capabilities; equipment to support the operational needs of its security forces; and advisors to advance the implementation of key

defense reforms. We have trained six companies from Ukraine's National Guard and are currently training its conventional armed forces as well as its Special Operations Forces. Over the coming years, we will continue working with our Ukrainian partners to build more capable and professional forces that can defend against outside aggression. While the scale of our assistance to Ukraine is unique, we are engaged in similar efforts with other non-NATO partners. For example, since Russia's invasion in 2008, Georgia has received over \$481 million in bilateral security assistance funding. Efforts such as these will continue to improve our partners' resilience against foreign pressure and coercion.

It is safe to say that Russia has taken notice of our efforts. However, despite its false accusations that the United States and our NATO Allies are in violation of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, our efforts are wholly defensive and proportionate in nature, and constitute a direct response to Russia's aggressive actions to undermine the security of its neighbors.

### **Conclusion**

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and Members of the Committee, we expect that Russia will continue to modernize its military, seek to expand its influence along on its periphery, and operate in aggressive ways. The Department of Defense will continue to ensure that the U.S. homeland and our vital national interests abroad are protected and that we support countries' rights to make their own security and economic choices, free from outside coercion and intimidation. As Secretary Carter has underscored, United States policy toward Russia is predicated on a strategic approach that is both strong and balanced. In concert with our allies and partners, we will continue countering Russian coercion and aggression with a posture that is defensive and proportional. In spite of Russia's actions, we will also continue to advance our strategic vision of a Europe whole, free and at peace.

Thank you very much and I look forward to your questions.