

Brussels Forum

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Europe's Stake in U.S. Strategy

Mr. Ian Lesser: Good morning, everyone. Good morning. I'm Ian Lesser from GMF here in Brussels, and welcome back to day three of Brussels Forum. I hope you all had a very good evening last night. A couple of words of welcome and a little bit of housekeeping and a little bit of substance. This morning, we're very, very pleased to welcome the young professional leaders to the group with us here. We're delighted that they're joining us. We have set a speaker lineup for the mystery session that we decided on yesterday. And just to remind you, the mystery session that we choose--that you choose, I should say, is Soft Power Strikes Out, Hard Power Strikes Back. And the speakers that we will have for that a little later today is General John Allen, distinguished fellow at the Brookings Institution, Gitte Lillelund Bech, public affairs manager of advice, Masafumi Ishii, director general of the ministry of foreign affairs of Japan and Alex Rondos, EU special representative for the Horn of Africa. So that promises to be very, very exciting. One more word of housekeeping. If you have a borrowed SpotMe device and you're leaving today, please return it to us. I'm told that was the most important thing to say.

Before we introduce the next session, or actually by way of introduction for it, I just wanted to say a few words about the theme and a little bit about what GMF is planning to do this year around this theme. The theme, as you know, is Europe's Stake in American Strategy. And I would just make three points about this very briefly.

The first is that we started this Brussels forum with a discussion that was very much reflecting on history and there are many anniversaries. There is no shortage of debate about a U.S. pivot to Asia and there are many reasons to take that seriously. But I think that we should also remind ourselves that 2014 is also the 100th anniversary of a very, very important American pivot to Europe, which has been very consequential in security terms and obviously takes on new meaning in the context of what's happening these days. We may not have 400,000 troops in Europe anymore, but the U.S. is still a key European security actor and this next session is going to discuss where that presence and engagement is going. We're going to do a lot on that at GMF this year. We always do, but we're certainly going to reinforce our work on security issues because they're so important this year, as always.

The second point I'd make is that sitting here in Brussels, it's very obvious that 2014 is also a very

critical year of decision and leadership change in Brussels, in the EU institutions, in NATO and, of course, next week President Obama is going to visit Brussels for the first time since taking office. Crisis management will be on the agenda, but also some very big questions of strategy for the future. We, in our own work here in Brussels, but also throughout the GMF network in Washington and elsewhere, will be taking up some of those big issues in our writing and in our discussions and convening and I hope you can be part of those.

And finally, I would just remind us that public opinion is part of this equation. Many of you will be familiar with our transatlantic trends survey. For over a decade, we've been charting European and American attitudes towards critical issues, including security, questions of trust and leadership, attitudes towards defense budgets and other things. The next edition of the survey will come out in September. I hope you'll look out for it.

So those are just a few words perhaps to lead us into the next session and we're really delighted to have Anton La Guardia from The Economist here with us today to moderate it. Anton, it's all yours. Thank you.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you. Just take a seat. Have a seat, please. Good morning, everybody. So thank you very, very much for being here bright and early. I hope

and expect that we'll have a fantastic discussion this morning.

My name is Anton La Guardia. I work for the Economist. I am the Brussels correspondent here and I sometimes write the Charlemagne column. We have with us a terrific panel and we also have headsets because the Prime Minister of Montenegro will be speaking through an interpreter so make sure your headsets are working, you've got them switched on so you can hear what the Prime Minister has to say. If you don't understand when I'm talking, then I'm afraid there's nothing that can be done about that.

Fascinating sound, hundreds of plastic bags being opened at the same time. It's like being at my children's birthday parties, you know, when they're sort of opening the party bags. You don't get to keep these.

So with us today, we have General Philip Breedlove, SACEUR and we have the Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister of Belgium. We have the Prime Minister of Montenegro and we've got Congressman Mike Turner who sits on the Armed Services Committee.

I'm going to start with one question from each of you to start you and then I'm going to try to open it up as soon as I can to the audience because your questions will be much more interesting than mine.

And given that we have the General with us, I'd like to ask you really sort of give us a two-minute military briefing, sir. There was times we heard when there were 400,000 American troops in Europe. There are far fewer than those so tell us what the sort of, you know, what the order of battle is, as it were, not that we're in a battle, but sort of what the deployment is, how things have changed in recent years and perhaps, if you can, tell us something about how Russian forces have changed in capability in recent years.

Philip Breedlove: Sure. So I guess the easiest starting point for me will be what I remember from my own personal history. I came to my first European tour in 1983 as a fighter pilot in Spain and then as I came to continental Europe working with the Second Brigade Third Infantry division with the Army troops in Germany.

At that time, as you've heard, we had a little over 400,000 boots on the ground, not to include some of the other transitory forces and Marine and Navy forces, but actual Army and Air Force boots on the ground. At that time, two corps, four divisions and multiple, multiple, multiple brigades on the ground. At the time also, just by an order of comparison, about 10 fighter wing equivalents of U.S. forces on the ground.

Today, we have two brigades plus. It's two brigades plus because we have quite an aviation capability in

Europe as well and we have about two-and-a-half fighter wings of U.S. capability in Europe. So I think that, in big numbers, when I talk to our leadership in our country, we've come down about 75 percent in manning and about 80 percent in infrastructure in Europe since the days when Phil Breedlove arrived to fight here.

I would not want to be a judge of Russian capability, but what I think we can do in recent history is look at the incursion of Russia into Georgia and maybe take a look at how the incursion of Russia into Crimea has gone. The incursion of Russia into Georgia, by all of you who follow military, was probably not the smoothest. Lots of lessons learned. Lots of deficiencies identified and some capabilities that needed to either be built or very much refined. Large problems in deploying and using air forces, targeting, et cetera, et cetera.

By way of comparison, the incursion into Crimea went very much like clockwork, starting with almost a complete disconnection of the Crimean forces from their command and control via cable cuts, jamming and cyber attacks and then a complete envelopment by the Russian forces inside Crimea, albeit they were in green uniforms without patches, we all know exactly what was going on and that maneuver was done very skillfully, executed on a very precise agenda. And I think what you can draw from your own conclusion then is how far they

have come from what did not go well at all in Georgia, but was eventually accomplished, to something that went very, very smoothly in Crimea.

Anton La Guardia: And the fact that it went smoothly tells us about the capabilities or does it tell us that it was an unopposed entry?

Philip Breedlove: I think it's a little of both. I think it's a little of both. Part of the unopposed may have been it was executed so well that opposition would have been a mess.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. I'm going to jump across to the other side and ask Congressman a sort of point that really came up last night in one of our conversations where people were saying, you know, America has to sort of pivot to Asia, pivot to the Middle East and maybe now pivot to Europe. Is that something that sort of politically is--we heard a lot about this enchantment on both sides of the Atlantic. What is your sense of the political mood in America about Europe and the degree to which the U.S. should help Europe deal with this crisis?

Mike Turner: When you look at the issue of the political will, political mood, I think you have to look to the fact that we have been pursuing a false narrative. Secretary General Rasmussen here this weekend was very eloquent in saying Russia now perceives itself or presenting itself as an adversary

and so the question we have to ask ourselves is not how are we going to change Putin, but how is Putin going to change us. And one of those issues obviously has to be how we're going to look at NATO's responsibility, NATO as an organization that now has Putin redefining that narrative for us in a way where we can look both at the actions of the Russia in the past, I don't know, several years in a new light and begin to recommit ourselves to the alliance looking at having adversaries here.

Now the United States is not going to just go pack up a bunch of additional troops and equipment and move it back to Europe. I think also most people are not aware as the General was describing the extent of drawdown that has occurred, but there's going to have to be that dialogue and I think more seriously than it has been in the past several years of Europe stepping to the plate, how, you know, European nations budgets have been cut in the area of military, what are their responsibilities? How do we partner and what assets do we make certain that we make available to the General so that we look to, you know, a deterrent effect to Putin so that, as you just described there, there is a sense of both cost and capability on our side if Putin should continue in the manner in which he's going.

Anton La Guardia: The last strategic review talks about reducing the size of the Army, investing in



Special Forces and investing in technology. Is that the right mix for the current situation?

Mike Turner: It's not the right mix for what Putin is doing and how he's organizing himself and what threat he may now propose. Again, Special Forces are certainly important for agility and for quick action, but they're not going to stop anybody who's looking at crossing borders.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you. I'd like to ask Pieter De Crem, the Belgian Defense Minister, whether anything has really changed since Robert Gates delivered his scathing speech about European capabilities. I mean, he was full of praise for the number of countries that have participated in Libya, including your own, but also said, you know, the Europeans ran out of bombs, they needed us to backfill for them throughout. It was sort of a long litany of sort of lack of capability that Europeans had. Has that changed or, as I suspect, has it got worse as a result of the crisis?

Pieter De Crem: Well, Bob Gates held his speech not so far away from here. It was in the (inaudible) Library. What did we see in that period? It was when we ended the operation Unified Protector in Libya. And two things, first of all, that some member states of NATO were participating in the operations and some were not and I think that is something that is really unbearable for an operation, for an alliance as NATO, is one, and

that was the first lesson that we learned. Secondly, that not all member states of NATO of the alliance were really having all the capabilities to intervene. And there also we saw that a notion of interoperability of all the means that we can put together in the basket to call upon to serve that famous notion of a collective defense, that not everyone can, some do not want to, but also can or will be able to participate in a military operation to really defend or to be ready or able to defend that issue of collective defense.

And what I saw at that very time that some people considered NATO as being an alliance of comfort, but not an alliance of commitment. And I think that the political lesson that we had to learn from that was very important and so for, of course, there have been budget cuts and I would like to opt for a new kind of arithmetics within NATO that it's not only the input that is counting and not only the budget cuts that are sometimes counted in double digits instead of single digits, but what can one do with the investments that are still done and are those investments and capabilities, are they done to serve the purpose of interoperability? And I think that is one of the main political issues that we have to overcome, not to say the largest challenge in the upcoming years.

Anton La Guardia: I mean, you've set the challenge. Has there been any progress in addressing either how

much you put in or how that money that is available is spent?

Pieter De Crem: I think so. There has been the Connected Forces Initiative within NATO, which is a very important initiative, that was launched by Secretary General Rasmussen and then, of course, you have a lot of NATO members that are also a member of the European Union and you always have that feel of tension between the European Union and NATO.

But we also saw an evolution in the way how regional conflicts are solved. For instance, in Libya, European member states of NATO were called upon to participate in the action, but we could not do that action without support from our American friends. If we would not have had the possibility to have the air refueling capabilities that were granted, if we were not able to have the intelligence information that was given or offered by the United States of America, this operation would have lasted for 48 or 72 hours, so to say. And that's also a thing which is very important lessons learned and also perhaps in a larger scale in a projection, NATO has that (inaudible) performance to start a military operation and to end it up. That was a good lesson, military spoken, Libya was a first success, 100 percent, 100 percent achievement.

But then there was also the option that other ones, once the military job was over, that other ones would

do the other part of the job, which was building society, which was working with organizations to have an economic recovery and that did not work in Libya, also a lesson to be taking in account.

And if you are in Mali now, this is one of the reasons why we are in Mali and that our French friends, to the large responsibility, is that we did not cope with the second and the third chapter of the operation Unified Protector.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. Prime Minister Djukanovic, your country wants to join NATO. As you're hearing, there are many problems in this alliance. In 1999--I'm going to ask a very long question so everyone can put their earphones on. In 1999, your country was, you know, on the edge of the war with Serbia. Are you willing to join this alliance and take part in these operations, potentially in a crisis with Russia that no one knows where it's going to end up?

Milo Djukanovic: (Speaking Serbo-Croatian) (Through interpreter) And this is very important for stability and democratic prosperity of the region.

Anton La Guardia: But I guess I was asking you, is this--so speaking myself, being interpreted, I mean, it's also an alliance where you have to make a commitment and you have to be involved in collective security and that potentially faces the crisis,

countries of the Baltics, of eastern Europe are very worried. Is it something that you feel able to make a commitment to? Your country sees a lot of Russian tourists, for example. You know, it's a very beautiful coastline, I've seen it myself.

How do you, you know, this crisis that is developing, for you, represents what? Is it something that you want to be involved with? Are you saying maybe we don't want to come into this alliance quite yet?

Milo Djukanovic: (Through interpreter) I believe that we should remind everyone who are present here, Montenegro was absolutely adopted the rules of the game in alliance. We ourselves apply your Atlantic standards in our region. We are promoting that in the region and we took our share of responsibility and commitment for global stability. Montenegro has its mission and I also actively participate in numerous other missions, EU and the UN. So Montenegro is very ready not to just use the benefits from NATO security concept, but also to take over commitments for global security.

Anton La Guardia: Okay, thank you very much. I think we'll turn this over to your questions because I find that one learns as much from the questions as from the answers. There will be, up on the board, if you want to post your questions doing it the old fashioned way by raising your hand, but if you want to use technology, you can use your Spot Me devices and

questions will pop up. It'll all happen by magic. Although last night, we tried to do something with this and it didn't quite work out.

So who would like to ask a question? I've got one here and one there. Thank you. And if I could ask you to be as brief as possible, it'll be polite and courteous to other people who want to ask questions after you.

R. Andreas Kraemer: Andreas Kraemer. And it's a follow-on from what you said is that the invasion of Crimea was prepared by cable-cutting, jamming and cyber-attack, that you said. That speaks to a high level of engagement by very well-organized forces. Isn't that blowing apart the pretense that it was local militia protecting their population and speaks to the Russians being involved? Isn't that proof?

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. And then, Tara(ph) had a question back there.

Tara: Good morning. General Breedlove, just a month or so ago, I interviewed you and you talked to me about how you were increasing your contacts personally with the Russians. This was just before the Olympics. You were very encouraged. You said that the fact that they were going to ask for help, share plans about Sochi security was a sign that things were getting better. Do you feel betrayed by this? Would you change your characterization of your new communication outlets with

the Russian government and can you just talk a little bit about where you see things? You're in charge of assets in Europe. What are you going to do? Thanks.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. Let's take one more. There was one gentleman here.

Unidentified man: I'd like to ask the panel if it doesn't feel that one of Putin's purposes is to revitalize NATO. There's a nostalgia of a bipolar status that Russia has lost. Not just a purpose, you know, of trying to regain control of old territories, but being the main adversity. Now, I think that is Putin's weak spot because we are moving towards a multi-polar world and he's already a little bit in trouble with China within the Security Council. And I think this is a point also that should be taken into account by Europe. Europe should not just be absorbed into a sort of Atlantic role which increases the spiral, the bipolar spiral that is Putin's strategic gain.

Anton La Guardia: Okay. Thank you for that comment. General, would you like to pick up the couple of questions that were directed to you?

Philip Breedlove: Sure. The first answer is very short. I mean, absolutely. There are many, many indicators that directly indicate very deep and strong Russian action in this incursion into Crimea. And I will only caveat that by part of the plan, I believe,

was to try to create strategic ambiguity, which, by the way, many in the west and many in the press embraced. No one wanted to really lay down who these men in green and men in black were. We knew who they were all along.

But very quickly, Russia began to try to get a local face to the front of it. And some of the actions you've seen of late, as they have taken over military bases in Crimea, it's a thin veneer of locals in the front and a lot of men in green right behind as these happen. So I don't think that we should embrace this strategic ambiguity. I think it was a great tool in this disinformation campaign that we were way, way behind as we were enveloped by it.

Second, so I stand by the kind of conversations I was having with General Gerasimov before. They were good. Was I being deceived? I can't make that judgment. I don't know when and how his leadership made the decisions that they made so I would rather not pronounce on that at this moment. I think you heard Secretary Rasmussen say it very clearly earlier. We have been in a stage where we have tried to make a partner of Russia and we have continued to try to make a partner of Russia. And now it's very clear that Russia is acting much more like an adversary than a partner.

I will only add the following and that is there are lots of examples in history where nations at a



political level cannot communicate and nations at a political level have great strife in their relations. And during those times, sometimes--one, sometimes the only line of rational thought is military-to-military communication. I spoke to General Gerasimov just the day after this all happened. I will try to maintain that line of communication. We will insist from each other truth in what we speak. Sometimes we don't see the truth in the same way.

Anton La Guardia: Have you tried since then? Have you tried to speak to him since then?

Philip Breedlove: No, no. We haven't talked since that day. Have not.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you.

Unidentified woman: (Inaudible).

Philip Breedlove: Well, you've already seen that the United States, inside my European command, have moved F16s forward from Aviano into Poland. You've seen that we've moved F15s from Lakenheath into the Baltics. You've seen that we have moved some of our naval assets around to make sure that we remain engaged in the Black Sea. There are more things that we are considering. I'd rather not make those public right now.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. Minister, there was a question about how--the nature of the response and whether we're feeding the spiral that Putin wants. How do you see it?

Pieter De Crem: Well, could I say something about the question or the remark that was made concerning the paradox of the new bipolar world arriving again, Russia versus the West or Russia and some partners versus NATO? I think that we learn something from still the most important military operation that we are participating in, which is Afghanistan. And what I saw there is that, in fact, the future will not be a, how could I say, reinventing a bipolar world, but the multi-polar world in which NATO will play a giant role through new partnerships. A lot of positive effects have been learned from Afghanistan. But I see also, for instance, Minister Bildt here in our midst. We also saw that they were, in one way or another, participating as a partner in, how could I say, in Afghanistan and in other military operations also.

What I saw is that we had the opportunity to meet with--to see, through the corridor of Afghanistan, that other countries that we supported, of course, that we knew, but with whom we did not have any deep-going military relations--I'm talking about Australia, I'm talking about New Zealand and some others--through the experience of Afghanistan, became partners of us. And I think a future role of NATO is also developing in this multi-polar route, how could I say, the real project of partnerships. And I think once we have a new, how could I say, a new way of participating in Afghanistan, that

we should also seek for those new partnerships and they are also supplementary challenge for NATO, if you want to be also that security provider that we have been since the second world war, so to say.

Anton La Guardia: How does that thinking apply to the current crisis?

Pieter De Crem: Sorry?

Anton La Guardia: How does your thought about partnership apply to the current crisis?

Pieter De Crem: Well, applying to this current crisis is that, first of all, we have our own partners within NATO and that we also should really see that we can hold the line with all our partners so I'm going to say strengthening the partnership in our own house. Secondly, I'm completely supporting the approach that was made by General Breedlove. I think that we are now in this phase in which we are having a 21st-century phenomenon. We want to apply 21st-century solutions, but the, how could I say, the partners with whom we have to talk are applying 20th-century methods. That keeps on being a very big problem.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much.

Michael Turner: If I could comment here.

Anton La Guardia: Yes.

Michael Turner: You know, back to the issue of the false narrative, I mean, part of the question was what is Putin doing? Well, Putin is invading neighbors,

annexing territory to his own country, violating standing treaties concerning territorial integrity. The New York Times reports that perhaps he's violating the INF Treaty. We know that he is significantly investing in his military, both in modernization of his nuclear weapons and his conventional capabilities. All of those do require a response and our reevaluation of what we're doing. I think the Secretary General's comments are very important and I think certainly General Breedlove's understanding of what we have and what we need to do and what we're now facing is incredibly important for us.

Philip M. Breedlove: Could I just add to that?

Anton La Guardia: Yes, please.

Philip M. Breedlove: I think there's a couple of things that are very worrisome. One of them is more a military issue for Allied command operations, SACEUR to worry about. The other is a little bit more of a policy/political issue.

For the military side, what I think is worrisome is that Russia has used these series of snap exercises to sort of condition us and we saw several snap exercises executed in which large formation of forces were brought to readiness and exercised and then they stood down. Then, as we have all seen, a snap exercise, large formation brought to readiness and, boom, into Crimea we went with a highly ready, highly prepared force.

What does that mean for NATO in the future? What--how do we change our deployment? How do we change our readiness? How do we change our force structure such that we can be ready in the future now to respond to what we know is a tool to bring forces to high readiness, high preparedness, positioned correctly for rapid incursion across a border into a neighboring country? How does that change what we do with force structure and readiness in Europe? That is a military and a policy problem.

On the other side, we see what we think--and this is military people thinking so maybe not as sophisticated, but we think that what we see as a tool now of frozen conflicts being used as a veto to EU and NATO membership. In other words, if Russia is worried about a country moving towards the West, a way to solve that is an incursion, a frozen conflict and now no one wants to think about bringing that nation aboard into NATO because it might mean conflict with Russia. I think these two paradigms we have to now think about in our future.

Anton La Guardia: How much do you worry about Transnistria and Moldova while you raise a point of frozen conflicts?

Philip M. Breedlove: Well, they are clearly already a veto in those areas and they represent that next

place where Russian-speaking people may need to be incorporated.

Anton La Guardia: You raised the question about how should NATO respond to snap exercises. How has NATO responded to snap exercises we've seen and what do you think needs to change?

Philip M. Breedlove: Well, I think that, in the past, we have seen snap exercises as exercises and national prerogatives of a nation that we expected to respect borders and respect international mores, and now what we see is a snap exercise can be used to do exactly the opposite.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you. Let's open up to the question and we'll come back to the panel. There was one over there at the back and then there was one over here. Then we'll come to the gentleman over here and then we'll come to your side of the room afterwards.

Tim Judah: Hello?

Anton La Guardia: Yes.

Tim Judah: My name is Tim Judah. I'm the Balkans correspondent of The Economist and I have a couple of specific questions for Mr. Djukanovic. Following on a little bit from Anton's train of thought, London is sometimes denigrated as Londongrad because of the amount of Russian investments in London, which is thought sometimes to restrain, perhaps, British reaction, especially in this crisis and likewise

sometimes Montenegro, sometimes called Moscow on the Sea. It's not just tourists. There's quite a lot of Russian investment, of course, in Montenegro.

I have two real--two specific questions. As an EU candidate country, you're supposed to be aligning your foreign policy with the EU. Will you adopt and apply EU sanctions against Russia? That's the first question. And the second question is, are you coming under any pressure not to pursue your application to join NATO? Is the Russian ambassador--or are you getting calls from Moscow saying we really don't want you to do this? Thank you.

Anton La Guardia: Let's take that one first, and then we'll come back. Prime Minister.

Milo Djukanovic: (Through interpreter) One of prejudices that's alive and well is the prejudice about what Mr. Judah mentioned and that is that Montenegro is Moscow on the Sea. That's not true. Montenegro is a state that has--with its own experience with the application of strict democratic standards, promoted a new model of addressing the issues in the Balkans and it was the issue of independence and sovereignty. We had a very democratic standard made, sorry, referendum and became independent.

We see our future clearly in EU and NATO, and we are very confident that Montenegro, unlike any other state in Europe or any other EU country, is not closed

for investment. It's open for investments. We have Russian investments, but much fewer than what's been going as the talk of the town and what Mr. Judah mentioned.

Every day that we come closer to the EU membership the more tourists we see from the EU, the more investors we see from the EU. Some Russian investors now left Montenegro and their projects went somewhere else and now we have new investments coming from elsewhere. I don't see any danger of tourists from Russia and investors from Russia. Up to this moment, we have never had any direct pressure from any side to attempt to actually determine our course or our direction with Russian counterparts. I was very clear. Montenegro chose its path. Montenegro wants to become a member of the EU and NATO, while, at the same time, we don't want to mar or affect our good relations with them. So Montenegro will soon become a member of NATO. We believe we will have opportunity to give testimony that we are really serious about commitments.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. There was a question here and then there.

Christoph von Marschall: Christoph von Marschall. I'm the chief diplomatic correspondent of the German daily, Der Tagesspiegel. Sorry, I still want to continue or to follow up on the question which Anton asked to the Prime Minister of Montenegro. I think we



all understand the cultural ties, the historic ties between Montenegro--not only Montenegro--and Russia so this, as I said, it's a very tricky question which, sorry, I still have the feeling you are evading a little bit. I have a lot of empathy why are you evading it.

When it comes to NATO and when it comes to the situation we are in right now, we all hope that it doesn't come to the situation, but it is absolutely thinkable and possible that in a few months from now, if Russia continues on this path, we have Russian troops in front of NATO troops at one of the borders of NATO. In this case--Moldova, the Baltics and so on--in this case, it is really important that we all know where a future NATO member might stand. Are you willing--and are you willing to tell your citizens and NATO partners that if it comes to such a confrontation, which we hope will not arise, but do you then stand behind Article 5 for Romania? Do you stand behind Article 5 for the Baltic states or not? Again, I understand that this is psychologically very difficult for you to answer, much more difficult than for other NATO states. Thank you.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. There was a question here. Please, sir.

Unidentified man: Just want to frame this question a little bit. Congressman, you heard me yesterday on

the subject so I'm sorry if it's a little repetitive. Listening to the General here, military options appear very limited in the current theater of war. In other words, if Russia decides to move into East Ukraine tomorrow, we will read it as a headline. I'm not sure we're going to be able to do anything about it. There appears to be a--somewhat like blood pressure, which they say, you know, can kill you silently. There appears to be a false feeling of security that through surgically imposed sanctions we can achieve a lot against Russia. I personally believe that a thought process than we can take a template of sanctions imposed on Iran and impose it successfully on Russia will be disastrous because Russia is not Iran. It's a large economy and the interconnectedness of global financial markets could mean that the pain to Europe and America from Russian sanctions is going to be a multiple of what people think it is.

Here is my question, Congressman. This is pure hypothetical, absolutely. It might almost sound absurd, but I just want to focus the mind on this. Assume tomorrow that now that Duma has passed a bill in Russia allowing people access to the Russian Federation, that Mexico announces that it is applying for membership to the Russian Federation and that there is a possibility that you could have Russian fleets in Cancún and Acapulco on either side of America. What is our

reaction function going to be? What can we learn from simulating America's reaction function to that to what is happening today between Russia and Ukraine?

Anton La Guardia: I've heard of irredentism, but that's the long way away. You had a direct question to you and then there was a direct question to you. Let me just take Damon Wilson's question here and then we'll open it up. I'm sorry.

Damon Wilson: Thank you very much. Damon Wilson with the Atlantic Council. I just wanted to continue the theme. We've heard from you and many others that clearly what's playing out in terms of Putin's strategy is to disrupt NATO and EU enlargement, is to roll back this idea, this vision of a Europe whole, free and at peace. If we're thinking about a strategic response to what the Russian forces are trying to do in Ukraine, shouldn't there or isn't there more impetus among Allies nations to actually think about the credibility of the open door? I want to ask our colleagues, Congressman Turner, the Belgian Defense Minister, John Breedlove, from your perch, is there renewed life on NATO enlargement because of what's happening, and is there not more momentum behind both countries like Montenegro as well as Georgia?

Anton La Guardia: Okay. Thank you. Prime Minister.

Mr. Milo Djukanovic: (Through interpreter) Regrets if I was briefer than usual because I wanted to leave

others some space for discussion and that is, I might have left impression that, in Montenegro, there is a kind of ambiguous attitude or stance, position about that. Thank you for asking the question, but the history of the region is the history of good relations with Russia. That's without doubt. We are well aware of that and we are respectful of that. But all the same, I want to tell you with all confidence that we have no dilemma about our strategic prospects. We have full awareness of this tradition, of all the problems that we've had through decades and centuries in the Balkans. We are convinced that the good future of Montenegro and all other Western Balkan societies is in the EU and in NATO and we have no dilemma.

I want to remind you, we have to cover part of our commitments to promote Euroatlantic values and to cover our commitments in global actions, so we don't have any dilemma for future commitments. Further integration of Europe, further strengthening of Euroatlantic partnership is something that we look up to and we also advocate very cautious and wise policy the General spoke about. We should continue communication renewed partnership with Russia, having in mind the importance of this issue for the stability of Europe and for the future of the Euroatlantic community.

Anton La Guardia: Congressman, you had a question directed to you about--I suppose it was a question

about encirclement, right? I mean, how would America feel should it be encircled?

Michael Turner: If you look at the questions about Mexico and Damon Wilson's question, I'm actually going to combine them because I think that they're more appropriately dealt with together as to what our response here should be and certainly what our response in the future would be.

You know, people say there will not be a military response to Crimea and I think the answer there is prefaced on that no one's going to take troops to push Russia out. But I think there is going to be a military response. And we hear what General Breedlove is saying, the call for, a need for, reinvestment in our military capabilities and European military capabilities is very important, but also as Damon was describing, this issue of NATO.

NATO has cooled to enlargement, almost to the point where we've become a bureaucratic process as opposed to the leaning-forward organization that helped establish and strengthen democratic institutions. That partnership, I think, has waned and I think we need to lean forward into it again, recognizing its importance. I think a very appropriate response, in addition to what General Breedlove has been saying, would be to give MAP to Georgia, to put a full diplomatic press on the issue of resolving the conflict between Macedonia

and Greece, to look at perhaps, you know, and I see Holbrook's picture here, a Dayton II, if you will, to resolve the constitutional issues of Bosnia and Herzegovina and looking to, you know, offering membership to Montenegro so that the issues between the coastline are resolved and we look at recognizing Montenegro's accomplishments.

Those are the types of responses that I think also would have Putin looking at a world that's different than he had wanted or intended, but I think certainly it could be an outcome from his consequences.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. Would you like to pick up the point on open door or closed door on NATO?

Pieter De Crem: Well, in fact I'm supportive of approach that was made by Congressman Turner. I think it is the only way that we can really follow. We have the membership action plannings and that set of checks and balances and I think we can only follow the track as it was showed here by the Congressman.

Anton La Guardia: So, I mean, at Bucharest, as we know, NATO did not give a membership action plan to Georgia and Ukraine. You would give a membership action plan to Georgia and would you ever consider it for Ukraine?

Pieter De Crem: Well, let's say we are working in a situation which has completely changed and I think that

we really have to see how checks and balances, depending on those two cases, are evaluating. And I really have, at this very moment, that we have other problems to deal with.

Anton La Guardia: Okay. Thank you very much. Did anyone want to pick up? Do you want to come in on NATO membership?

Philip Breedlove: Well, I actually kind of did not want to, but I will since...

Anton La Guardia: Well, I'll take another question.

Philip Breedlove: I'll just say that what we do need to recognize is incredible contributions, in a military sense, from some of these nations. And as far as a military review of Georgia's participation in Afghanistan, Ukraine's participation and operation in Ocean Shield and others, these are nations that are clearly meeting the goals that we would set in a military sense for them.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you. We had a couple of questions at this end of the room. Let's come here, gentlemen here, and then there was one there and then one there. Okay.

John Chains (ph): I'm John Chains from Johns Hopkins in Washington. Congressman, the president is going to be here this week and he is going to give a speech and I wondered if you could share with us what you think he should say. In some ways, Crimea is a

catalyst, but I think that speech is going to be directed as much toward Washington or the rest of the country as it is here, in the sense of saying, what is it that we need to do with our stake in Europe, not just Europe's stake in the United States. And I think you are well aware that there are forces in the Congress in which you work that would say, we don't have a dog in this fight. And I wonder how you would coach the president to use this as an opportunity, also to get beyond some of the trust issues that's also on this agenda for this session, to restore the sense of this being a catalyst to renew a relationship which needs it.

Michael Turner: And it really does. If you don't mind, two things relatively quickly. The first is that I don't think people see that we don't have a dog in this fight. I wouldn't go that far. I think what you do see in Washington, and specifically in the Congress, is a feeling of the need, that Europe needs to stop sending its defense bill to the United States, that it needs to step to the plate as a full partner in defense spending. You know, Russia's economy is, what?, approximately the size of Italy, but yet, you know, the collective of our EU partners, our European partners, need to certainly look to recapitalizing, both in capabilities and in assets, regardless of the United States' commitment.



And I think you're absolutely right. The president's message is, though not just directed at Washington, I think it also needs to be directed here. The president needs to make it clear that he has a commitment to our allies, our Eastern European allies. People are nervous right now and they need a president to step up and say, you know, that the United States is an avid partner and we're going to remain one.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you. There are a couple more questions, here, one there and then one there. Go ahead, please.

Gustav Gressel (ph): Thank you very much. My name is Gustav Gressel, Austrian M.O.D. Sort of following the discussions of the recent dates, for me, it's a bit striking that people don't seem to recognize how the power balances--or the balances have shifted after the Cold War. I mean, now there is the funny or tragic situation that Europe, as a whole, as one of the biggest world economies, is afraid of the economic repercussions of sanctions against a second-rate economy, totally export-dependent and having a third-rate banking system. On the other hand, seeing the sort of the scaling down of forces in Europe compared to the area you have to defend now and the growth of distance you have to breach with your forces, I think we are on the other side totally underestimating the military challenge we have to face.

I mean, from Paris to the Baltic is the same distance as from Paris to the (inaudible). And if you see how long it takes to deploy forces there and to get there and considering that any Eastern European scenario would be much more challenging, I think we are afraid of the wrong dogs here. Thank you.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. And there was one more over there. Someone has the microphone. Yeah, please stand up so we can see you.

Nick Furenza (ph): Nick Furenza, Aviation Week's Defense Technology Edition. My question is actually related to the previous question. I mean, both General Breedlove and the Congressman were talking about the drawdown in capabilities. Of course, there are no more Russian forces in Eastern Europe so one of my questions was about the balance of what used to be called balance of forces. Also, we've seen a shift in NATO military capabilities from territorial defense to out-of-area operations. So my question really is, is NATO actually capable of extending the Article 5 guarantee to the Baltic states, let's say, if the Russians decided to step in to defend the rights, or what they feel are the rights, of ethnic Russians in the Baltic states and, most importantly, I mean, is the nuclear guarantees still credible for countries which are so exposed?

Anton La Guardia: Thank you. You had a couple of military questions there, General, and a political one maybe as well.

Philip Breedlove: Well, the first question to is NATO capable? The answer is absolutely yes. Absolutely yes. It's a matter of national will and the decision of the nations to move forward. And I believe there are those that are trying to describe a problem with our Article 5 commitment. I don't not see that. I think the secretary was very clear that we are committed absolutely to Article 5. And I do believe that if the nations, if a NATO ally, is attacked and Article 5 is invoked, you will see the political will that will put the might to the table.

The tougher question is, how do we--it goes back to my first problem that I described a few minutes ago. A snap exercise puts an incredible force at a border. The force that is at the Ukrainian border now to the east is very, very sizeable and very, very ready. You cannot defend against that if you are not there to defend against it. So I think we need to think about our allies, the positioning of our forces in the alliance and the readiness of those forces in the alliance, such that we can be there to defend against it, if required, especially in the Baltics and other places. Does that answer?

Anton La Guardia: Actually, could you just expand on that? What does that mean? Sorry, I'm here. What does that actually mean? Does it mean moving the NRF into the Baltics? I mean, what are you talking about?

Philip Breedlove: Again, I think what I will try to do is avoid any specifics. But I think the point was made earlier. Moving forces is not a trivial matter. And if you allow your opponent in the name of an exercise to move, position, provision and prepare, you now are behind where your opponent is. So I think what we need to do, again, as an alliance, is to look at what is it that has changed in this paradigm when we have what used to be a partner now acting more like an adversary who puts this force at-ready on our borders. And we have to be positioned differently and be more ready.

Anton La Guardia: And does NATO have forces at-ready, assuming it wants to move them closer?

Philip Breedlove: We have forces that we can put at-ready, yes.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you. And there was a political question about whether we're too scared of sanctions. Maybe I'll ask Pete De Crem.

Pieter De Crem: Well, I would like to say something on the political level. Is NATO capable to respond? Of course. And are we ready and we are capable for the full one hundred percent? And also on the political

level that is sometimes not enough underscored, we are completely--we are one hundred percent capable. And also Articles 4 and 5 for that capability, the best guarantees.

Concerning the sanctions, what I've seen on the sanctions is that the European Union has proposed some sanctions. Those sanctions, how could I say, must help negotiations and talks coming out to have a possible result. What I see is that some people say, if this turns out to be not sufficiency that we will have to go in a further direction of new sanctions.

Anton La Guardia: And the General wouldn't say precisely what he was thinking of, but, I mean, the idea that NATO needs to be exercising more closer up to the Eastern border, deploying forces preventably, perhaps, I mean, is that something that is feasible within NATO? Would it end up in a long discussion at the (inaudible) every time you wanted to move a brigade?

Pieter De Crem: Well, you take the words right out of my mind. I think that is really something that needs to be discussed at the level of the (inaudible).

Anton La Guardia: Okay. Thank you very much. Yes, a couple more questions on this side.

John Richardson: John Richardson, GMF. It's a question really for the General and for, I think, Minister De Crem. It would take some effort to get

considerable NATO forces onto the Ukrainian border with Russia. But a lot less effort to have, I think, NATO exercise on the border with Kaliningrad. Is that something which you think might give Mr. Putin pause for thought?

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. Anybody else on this side? You wanted to ask a question?

Mia Doorneart: Mia Doorneart, newspaper columnist in Belgium on international affairs. We heard a lot about the right of smaller countries to decide for themselves where they want to belong to. I fully support that. But when I write my column on that, I think immediately in my mailbox there will be questions, oh, yes, and what about the United States and Cuba? I'm not going as far as Mexico becoming a member of the Russian Federation, but how free is Cuba to choose whatever it wants to do? How about American sanctions and attitudes towards Cuba? So, Congressman, how would you answer that? And, Mr. De Crem, I'm sure you're familiar with the argument from the usual suspects in your commissions. How do you answer that?

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. Any more questions? We've got about six minutes left. So we're at the Twitter-length question. Anybody? A hundred and forty characters? One here.

Hanna Shelest: (Inaudible). Hanna Shelest, National Institute for Strategic Studies, Ukraine. Because you

were talking about possible new deployments and developments and everybody speaking only about eastern Ukraine and--I will provoke another question. What about Odesa and the current developments which we are witnessing in the daily news that the Transnistria can be really provoked and the entrance to one of the biggest Black Sea ports in Odesa? So do you consider that the possibility can be not where you expect it, meaning the eastern borders, but it can be much closer to the NATO borders? Because from Odessa to (inaudible) and the Romanian border is just two hours driving the car on the very bad road.

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. Any other questions? Sorry, was there somebody here? Yeah, please.

Theresa Fallon: Theresa Fallon, European Institute of Asian Studies. I know we're getting very focused on the issue of Crimea, but what about the larger geopolitical questions going on here and how does China fit into all of this when the bandwidth has taken up so much focus on Russia and we've seen an intensification of activity in the South China Sea by China? Thank you.

Anton La Guardia: Okay. Thank you very much. Anybody else? One more here.

Unidentified man: My question is for you, sir. How will it affect the budget for the military in the future? You think you see changes because apparently

there will be some cuts. How does it change the equation?

Anton La Guardia: Thank you very much. And there's one more right at the back there.

Keiro Kitagami: Yes. Keiro Kitagami. I'm from Japan. I had the wonderful pleasure of dealing with the Chinese on the Senkaku issues when I was the adviser to the prime minister. And I'd like to follow-up on the question. And the United States, you know, compared to the era of the Cold War, it's, of course, relatively lacking in resources. You have two basically--one theater in the East, one theater in the West now you have to deal with. The Russians, I think, are pursuing a traditional policy where they're trying to make a buffer zone against the Western countries. But you can't be meddling--you can't be intervening in each border. Do you think there's going to be a sphere of influence that emerges from this? It's a difficult question, I know, but I can't see...

Anton La Guardia: I'm going to cut you off. You've asked your question. One more here.

Nigar Goksel: Very quick question. Nigar Goksel from Turkey. I'm wondering if the new NATO cooperation blockage is every more important now. The Turkish bloc on cooperation between EU and NATO and whether this brings the Cyprus problem back onto the agenda, whether there'll be more pressure on Turkey or for the



resolution of the Cyprus problem in order to be able to adapt.

Anton La Guardia: Okay. Thank you very much. I'm going to ask the panel to be as brief as they can, pick up as many of the questions as they feel they want to respond to. Let's start with you.

Michael Turner: I wrapped together a bunch of these with respect to the budget and just real quickly, obviously, I think our doctrine and Washington's policy as respect to the Western hemisphere is established and clear so I won't reopen that one. But when you look at what are we going to do, what do we need to do, how do we go through this political process, going back to the issue of the false narrative.

What we have to understand is we've been reticent to declare that we have adversaries. I mean, David Hobbs is here from the NATO parliamentary assembly. I think he could tell you throughout all the parliaments, there's the debate of do we say that now, you know, it's uncomfortable for us to say that Russia is an adversary or China might be a potential adversary. I don't think we have to go that far to actually take action. It's not as if we have a lever that's the Cold War and a lever that's saying we have no adversary. There's a smorgasbord in between. And some of that is just declaring that we want to be ready if we have an adversary, if someone chooses to be our adversary. That

self-determination of the adversary, should there be an impetus for us to make certain that we're prepared, that we're investing, and that's what needs to happen in the area of cuts both in European defense, the United States defense. How do we make certain that we're prepared?

Anton La Guardia: Okay. Thank you. Prime Minister, I think--well, he...

Michael Turner: I answered that.

Anton La Guardia: He answered you? You're unsatisfied? Do you want to say more to Cuba?

Michael Turner: I think it's--I mean, it's longstanding doctrine. We don't have to--the United States is not reconsidering its doctrine.

Anton La Guardia: Okay. Thank you. Prime Minister, you didn't get a specific question to you, but on this question of the sanctity of borders and minorities living on, let's say, the wrong side of the border, how does the precedent of Crimea affect the Balkans?

Milo Djukanovic: (Through interpreter) The region where the job has not been finished. We mentioned Ambassador Holbrook, we mentioned Dayton, we mentioned the crisis in former Yugoslavia. But we are all aware that we still do have certain open issues in the region, dysfunctional Russia, Macedonia on its--and its frustration on Euroatlantic path and unsettled relations between Belgrade and Pristina. Lots of work

to be done, but still a far and recent history always warn us that the lack of democratic capacities for multi-culture and multi-ethnicity is always a warning. That is why we need to be very sensitive about the stability of that part of Europe.

And, yes, my response is that even though we see the flaws in modern European architecture, we need to be persistent towards further integrations and priorities should be divest in Balkans. In 2001 and 2014, we got (inaudible) thesis that the mission of NATO was down there. It is not and we have to reinforce partnership in the region of western Balkans. And that's why we believe that the role that Montenegro plays as an advocate for that is still very valid because rest of Balkans has not integrated yet. And we believe that NATO will understand it and we expect and looking forward to positive reaction from next summit.

Pieter De Crem: I would make a short to Mrs. Doorneart's proposals. In fact, I recommend her question--her columns to be read. This is kind of publicity for her columns. But, secondly, Mrs. Doorneart, you were talking about the usual suspects. I think we are always entering in an ideological debate and so forth concerning those usual suspects, given the comments that you mentioned on your columns. I think that, so far, there's not a majority to leave in our country and within the member-states to leave the

alliance and its purposes. And it means that it has on its counterpart to defend its own interest. And I think as far as we are working in that frame, we have all the guarantees that we will be able to defend ourselves in a magnificent system, which is transatlantic bound and in a political military very fashionable and very deliverable system. So that's my comment. That's always the same comment that I give on the question that you wrote.

Anton La Guardia: And you have a comment on the question of NATO-EU relations and whether it's going to affect the Turkish question and Cyprus question?

Pieter De Crem: Well, that deserves a debate on its own. And I do not see new evolutions coming now right behind from the corner. Let's say we discuss that on another session of Brussels Forum.

Anton La Guardia: Okay. Thanks. So we had a couple of questions about other contingencies, Odesa, Senkaku islands and much more.

Philip Breedlove: I will just hit a few of these very quickly. To the issue of Kaliningrad, I will be specific in this regard. I don't think that would be a good idea. I think there are lots of ways that we can position forces, ready forces and do some increased exercise, move exercises to the left that we had planned in the future, that we can use assure allies and better position our self should we need to be

better positioned. I think having an exercise on the border of Kaliningrad would be extremely escalatory and probably not helpful.

To the point of Odessa and Transnistria, let me just say we are very concerned about that. There is sufficient--there is absolutely sufficient force postured on the eastern border of Ukraine to run to Transnistria if the decision was made to do that. And that's very worrisome. So it is clearly--when we talk about threat in the military, we marry capability with intent. We know that capability absolutely exists to do that and cause that problem. We don't know about the intent. What we do see is some of the same rhetoric that was used when they went into Crimea. So if that is the first intention of--indication of intent, then that's very worrisome.

The last one that I would talk to--may not get to the question that was being answered, but let me just say that I see NATO and EU integration, in a military sense, very positively. You cannot get a better example of Operation--than Operation Ocean Shield of how we bring the military capability, military command and control, logistics trail, depth of military operations that NATO brings and marries it to the whole of government approach that allows us to connect a shore to policing functions, judicial functions, et cetera, that brought--essentially has brought an end to piracy

in Operation Ocean Shield. That's the strength of NATO-EU.

It's not about the military power in EU. We have the military power, capability in NATO. We need to use the tools that EU has that we don't have to solve those intransigent problems across the full spectrum of governmental approach.

Anton La Guardia: Do you want to pick up that last--we had it a couple of times--on the question of whether what happens in Ukraine is distracting attention or distracting capabilities should there be another contingency in Asia. It's not your command, I know.

Philip Breedlove: Yes, it isn't. Well, clearly, the South China Sea is a bit more naval and air-oriented. And right now, what we see in Europe is a bit more land-centric. There will be, if we were to have issues in two places at once, there will competition for these things that we call low-density high-demand artifacts, the intelligence capabilities, the unique precision capabilities, et cetera, et cetera, the stealth capabilities that we bring to the fight. So, clearly, if there were two issues at the same time, there would be competition for some of those low-density items, meaning we don't have many of them. But these two conflicts are relatively different in their approach. And so I don't see that as the issue.

Anton La Guardia: Okay. Well, thank you very much. We've run out of time. I'd like to thank our panel for an extremely interesting conversation.

Craig Kennedy: And I want to thank our moderator. That was very good, gentlemen. We'll take a 30-minute coffee break and then we're going to come back for the mystery session, which really continues this through other means. And we'll see you then.