

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 21, 2023

Secretary Lloyd J. Austin
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 22202

Dear Secretary Austin,

We are writing to request that the Department of Defense immediately undertake an urgent and comprehensive update to its warfighting requirements for confronting Russia in Europe. It is our understanding that the Department has not reassessed its European theater warfighting requirements since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and does not anticipate significantly changing them until FY2026. Maintaining outdated plans and assumptions represents a potential threat not only to our objectives in Europe, but also to our allocation of resources in dealing with our security interests elsewhere in the world.

Senior U.S. military leaders have publicly stated that Russia has suffered upwards of 200,000 casualties and lost significant portions of its most knowledgeable officer and noncommissioned officer corps. Open-source reports also indicate that Ukraine has destroyed half of Russia's operational tanks and a large proportion of its armored personnel carriers, among other critical capabilities.

Put simply, the Ukrainian Armed Forces have significantly degraded Russia's conventional forces over the past year. Simultaneously, Western sanctions have effectively constrained Moscow's ability to rebuild its battered conventional forces. Russia's military is not the same as it was in 2021, and shows no signs of returning to its pre-invasion state in the near term. Our European warfighting requirements should reflect this new reality—not in 2026, but now.

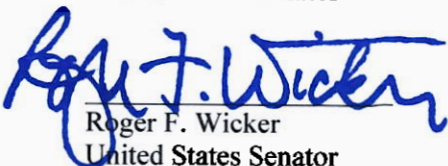
Failure to provide timely updates to our warfighting requirements in Europe is already having real-world consequences for decision-making related to security assistance. In recent public testimony, senior Pentagon officials often cited the need to maintain these outdated levels of equipment and munitions as one reason for not providing Ukraine with certain capabilities.

We urge the Department of Defense to quickly begin the process of updating its warfighting requirements for confronting Russia in Europe, and to brief Congress on the updated assessment no later than April 21. This is essential to maintaining the partnership between the Congress and the administration on additional security assistance to Ukraine.

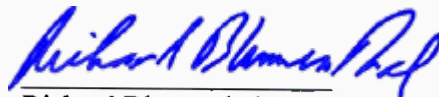
Sincerely,



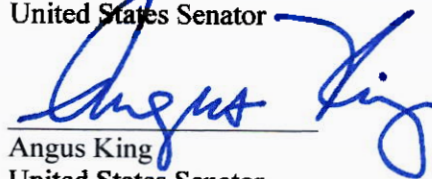
Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Angus King
United States Senator