

The NATO Summit in Chicago

Testimony

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Chairman Kerry, Ranking Member Lugar and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for inviting me here today to discuss the NATO Summit, which the United States is proud to be hosting in Chicago on May 20-21. I appreciate the Committee's support for this meeting, as well as its sustained recognition of the significance of this Alliance to transatlantic security. This will be the first NATO Summit on American soil in 13 years and the first ever outside of Washington. In addition to the opportunity to showcase one of our nation's great cities, our hosting of the Summit is a tangible symbol of the importance of NATO to the United States. It is also an opportunity to underscore to the American people the continued value of the Alliance to the security challenges we face today.

Indeed, NATO is vital to U.S. security. More than ever, the Alliance is the mechanism through which the U.S. confronts diverse and difficult threats to our security together with like-minded states who share our fundamental values of democracy, human rights and rule of law. Our experiences in the Cold War, in the Balkans and now in Afghanistan prove that our core interests are better protected by working together than by seeking to respond to threats alone as individual nations.

At NATO's last summit in Lisbon nearly 18 months ago, Allies unveiled a new Strategic Concept that defines NATO's focus in the 21st century. Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was appointed by NATO Secretary General Rasmussen to develop the basis for the Strategic Concept and consulted with this committee during that process. First and foremost, NATO remains committed to the Article 5 principle of collective defense. It is worth recalling that the first and only time in the history of the Alliance that Article 5 was invoked was after terrorists attacked the United States on September 11th, 2001. The very next day NATO invoked Article 5 in recognition of the principle that an attack against the U.S. represented an attack against all.

In addition to being a *collective* security alliance, NATO is also a *cooperative* security organization. Unlike an ad hoc coalition, NATO can respond rapidly and achieve its military goals by sharing burdens. In particular, NATO benefits from integrated structures and uses common funding to develop common capabilities.

It is in this context that Allies and partners will be meeting in Chicago next month. Building on the decisions taken in Lisbon, the President has three objectives for the Chicago Summit. The centerpiece will be the announcement of the next phase of transition in Afghanistan and a reaffirmation of NATO's enduring commitment to the Afghan people. Second, we will join Allies in a robust discussion of our most critical defense capability requirements in order to

ensure that the security that NATO provides is both comprehensive and cost effective. And finally, we must continue our efforts to develop NATO's role as a global hub for security partnerships.

Afghanistan: On Afghanistan, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) coalition – comprised of 90,000 U.S. troops serving alongside 36,000 troops from NATO Allies and 5,300 from partner countries – has made significant progress in preventing the country from serving as a safe haven for terrorists and ensuring that Afghans are able to provide for their own security, both of which are necessary conditions to fulfill the President's goal to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda. At Chicago, the U.S. anticipates three deliverables: an agreement on an interim milestone in 2013 when ISAF's mission will shift from combat to support for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF); an agreement on the size, cost and sustainment of the ANSF beyond 2014; and a roadmap for NATO's post-2014 role in Afghanistan.

At the NATO Summit in Lisbon, Allies, ISAF partners and the Afghan government agreed upon a transition strategy that would result in the Afghan government assuming full responsibility for security across the country by the end of 2014. This strategy is on track, as approximately 50 percent of the population lives in areas where Afghan forces are taking the lead. As transition progresses, the role of ISAF forces will evolve. In Chicago, leaders will establish a milestone in 2013 when ISAF's mission will shift from combat to support as the ANSF becomes more responsible for security. Throughout the transition period, ISAF forces – including American forces – will continue to be fully combat ready and will conduct combat operations as required. The United States, Allies and partners remain fully committed to this Lisbon framework, as well as to the principle of "in together, out together".

Leaders will also agree upon a plan for the future sustainment of the ANSF, which has been endorsed by the international community and the Government of Afghanistan and reflects what we believe will be necessary to keep Afghan security in Afghan hands. It is our goal that the international community will pledge one billion euro annually toward supporting the ANSF beyond 2014. We know this is not an easy pledge, particularly with some European governments facing difficult budget decisions as they work to recover from the economic crisis. Already, the British have stepped forward with a substantial commitment; we welcome early pledges from Estonia, Latvia and Luxembourg, as well. We are engaged in active diplomacy to encourage contributions. Secretary Clinton and Secretary Panetta were in Brussels last month for a series of NATO meetings and emphasized the importance of ANSF funding in every forum and in their bilateral meetings. We have also welcomed complementary efforts to encourage ANSF funding, such as the Danish-led Coalition of Committed Contributors initiative, which 23 nations have signed onto – including the U.S.

Finally, the Summit will make clear that NATO will not abandon Afghanistan after the ISAF mission concludes. In Chicago, the Alliance will reaffirm its enduring commitment beyond 2014 and define a new phase of cooperation with Afghanistan. Last week, President Obama and President Karzai signed the Strategic Partnership Agreement, which demonstrates U.S. commitment to the long-term stability and security of Afghanistan.

Capabilities: Turning to capabilities, NATO's ability to deploy an effective fighting force in the field makes the Alliance unique. However, its capacity to deter and respond to security challenges will only be as successful as its forces are able, effective, interoperable, and modern. Last year's military operation in Libya showed that the requirements for a strong, flexible, and deployable force remain vital. New threats require capable, flexible, and immediately available

forces. Even when major operations in the field have ended, it is essential for the Alliance to continue to exercise, plan, and maintain its forces.

In the current era of fiscal austerity, NATO can still maintain a strong defense, but doing so requires innovation, creativity, and efficiencies. The United States is modernizing its presence in Europe at the same time that our NATO Allies, and NATO as an institution, are engaged in similar steps. This is a clear opportunity for our European Allies to take on greater responsibility. The U.S. continues to encourage Allies to meet the two percent benchmark for defense spending and to contribute politically, financially, and operationally to the strength and security of the Alliance. However, it is important not only to focus on the total level of defense spending by Allies but also to consider how these limited resources are allocated and for what priorities.

NATO has made progress toward pooling more national resources, including through the defense capabilities package that the U.S. anticipates leaders will endorse in Chicago. Two key elements of this package will be the NATO Secretary General's "smart defense" initiative, which encourages Allies to prioritize core capabilities in the face of defense cuts, cooperate on enhancing collective capabilities, and specialize according to national strengths, and his "connected forces" initiative, which aims to increase Allied interoperability. The package will also track progress on acquiring the capabilities that leaders identified in Lisbon as NATO's most pressing needs. The Alliance's record in the last 18 months has been impressive and includes several flagship capabilities programs. Let me cite three examples:

- At the Lisbon Summit, NATO Allies agreed to develop a NATO missile defense capability to provide protection for all NATO European territory, populations, and forces. The United States is committed to doing its part by deploying all four phases of the European Phased Adaptive Approach; in fact, the first phase is already operational. Poland, Romania, Spain and Turkey have agreed to host critical elements. We would welcome additional Allied contributions. NATO remains equally committed to pursuing practical missile defense cooperation with Russia, which would enhance protection for all of us.

- A second key capability is intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) – the systems that provide NATO commanders with a comprehensive picture of the situation on the ground. Allies contributed more combat power in Libya than in previous operations (around 85 percent of all air-to-ground strike missions in Libya were conducted by European pilots, as compared to about 15 percent in the Kosovo air campaign in 1999). However, Libya demonstrated considerable shortfalls in European ISR capabilities as the U.S. provided one quarter of the ISR sorties, nearly half of the ISR aircraft, and the vast majority of analytical capability. This past February, NATO defense ministers agreed to fund the Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) program. The five drones that comprise this system will provide NATO with crucial information, including identifying potential threats, monitoring developing situations such as humanitarian crises, and distinguishing possible targets for air strikes.

- A third initiative is Baltic Air Policing. The 2004 enlargement of NATO forced the Alliance to examine burden-sharing among Allied militaries, as well as modernization programs that benefit the Alliance as a whole. In the Baltic states, for example, air policing is seen as a national defense imperative by three countries without national air forces. In February, NATO allies agreed to the continuous presence of fighters for NATO Air Policing of Baltic airspace. This helps assure the security of allies in a way that is cost effective, allowing them to invest resources into other important

NATO operations such as Afghanistan. For their part, the Baltic states are working to increase their financial support for this valuable programs.

In addition, the Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR) – which Allies will endorse in Chicago – will reaffirm NATO's determination to maintain modern, flexible, credible capabilities that are tailored to meet 21st century security challenges. The DDPR will identify the appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities that NATO needs to meet these challenges, as well as reaffirm NATO's commitment to making consensus decisions on Alliance posture issues. The DDPR will outline the priorities that NATO needs to address, and the actions we need to take, to ensure that we have the capabilities needed to fulfill the three core missions identified in the new strategic concept, namely: collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security.

Partnerships: Finally, the Chicago Summit will highlight NATO's success in working with a growing number of partners around the world. Effective partnerships allow the Alliance to extend its reach, act with greater legitimacy, share burdens, and benefit from the capabilities of others. Non-NATO partners deploy troops, invest significant financial resources, host exercises, and provide training. In Afghanistan, for example, 22 non-NATO countries are working alongside the 28 nations of NATO. Some partners (such as Austria, Finland, Georgia, Jordan, New Zealand and Sweden) contribute to NATO's efforts to train national forces to prepare them for NATO missions. Partners (including Australia, Finland, Japan, Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UAE) also give financial support to either the Afghan National Army Trust Fund or the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program. Furthermore, partners participate in discussions on wide-ranging security issues from counterterrorism to cyber security.

In turn, NATO has worked to give partners a voice in decisions for NATO-led operations in which they participate, opened Alliance training activities to partners, and developed flexible meeting formats to ensure effective cooperation. Allies want the Chicago Summit to showcase the value of our partners, especially those who provide significant political, financial, or operational support to the Alliance. All these countries have come to recognize that NATO is a hub for building security, as well as a forum for dialogue and for bringing countries together for collective action. In light of the dramatic events of the Arab Spring and NATO's success in Libya, we envision a particular focus on further engagement with partners in the wider Middle East and North Africa region.

NATO membership has been of great interest to this Committee since the first post-Cold War enlargement of the Alliance. Allies will not take decisions on further enlargement of NATO in Chicago, but they will nonetheless send a clear, positive message to aspirant countries in support of their membership goals. The U.S. has been clear that NATO's door remains open to European democracies that are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Georgia are all working closely with Allies to meet NATO membership criteria.

Macedonia has fulfilled key criteria required of NATO members and has contributed to regional and global security. The United States fully supports the UN process, led by Ambassador Nimetz, and regularly engages with both Greece and Macedonia to urge them to find a mutually acceptable solution to the name dispute in order to fulfill the decision taken at the NATO Summit in Bucharest and extend a membership offer to Macedonia.

The United States is assisting Montenegrin reform efforts by taking steps to embed a Defense Advisor in the Ministry of Defense. We are encouraging other Allies to consider similar capacity-building support. The recent agreement in

Bosnia and Herzegovina on registering defense properties is a significant step forward toward fulfilling the conditions laid out at the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Tallinn in April 2010. NATO should spare no effort in assisting the Bosnian government's implementation of this decision, which would allow them to submit their first Annual National Program this fall.

With regard to Georgia, U.S. security assistance and military engagement support the country's defense reforms, train and equip Georgian troops for participation in ISAF operations, and advance its NATO interoperability. In January, President Obama and President Saakashvili agreed to enhance this cooperation to advance Georgian military modernization, defense reform, and self defense capabilities. U.S. assistance programs provide additional support to ongoing democratic and economic reform efforts in Georgia, a critical part of Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, where they have made important strides. U.S. support for Georgia's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders remains steadfast, and our non-recognition of the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia will not change.

Finally, let me say a word about NATO's relationship with Russia. 2012 marks the 15th anniversary of the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the 10th anniversary of the NATO-Russia Council. The 1997 Founding Act expressed NATO and Russia's common commitment to end rivalry and build mutual and cooperative security arrangements. It also provided reassurance that NATO's open door to new members would not undermine Russia's security. Five years after signing this act, our leaders met in Rome to develop an expanded framework for our partnership, the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), in order to have a forum for discussing the full range of shared security concerns. We commemorated these anniversaries at a NATO-Russia Foreign Ministers meeting last month in Brussels.

NATO-Russia relations cannot be defined by any single issue. Indeed, the NRC is founded on our commitment to cooperate in areas of mutual interest and address issues of disagreement. The best example of cooperation is our joint efforts in Afghanistan. Russia's transit support for NATO Allies and our ISAF partners has been critical to the mission's success. For the U.S. alone, more than 42,000 containers of cargo have transited Russia under NRC arrangements, providing materiel for U.S. troops and our ISAF partners. Since 2006, NATO Allies and Russia have worked together to provide counternarcotics training to more than 2000 law enforcement officers from Afghanistan, Central Asia and Pakistan. In addition, the NRC Helicopter Maintenance Trust Fund helps address the challenges of keeping the Afghan Air Force's helicopter fleet operation-ready. Beyond Afghanistan, NATO continues practical security cooperation with Russia in key areas such as counter-terrorism and counter-piracy.

At the same time, NATO continues to seek cooperation with Russia on missile defense. By working together, we can enhance our individual capabilities to counter the ballistic missile threat. We can also show firsthand that NATO's missile defense efforts are not a threat to Russia. In late March, the NRC held its first theater missile defense exercises since 2008, an important step. While we strive for cooperation, we have also been frank in our discussions with Russia that we will continue to develop and deploy our missile defenses irrespective of the status of missile defense cooperation with Russia. Let me be clear: NATO is not a threat to Russia, nor is Russia a threat to NATO.

It is no secret that there are issues on which the Allies and Russia differ. Russia has been critical of NATO's operation in Libya. We also disagree fundamentally over the situation in Georgia. Since 2008, NATO has strongly supported Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and has continued to urge Russia to meet its commitments with respect to Georgia.

As we look to Chicago, these three summit priorities – defining the next phase of the transition in Afghanistan, outlining a vision for addressing 21st century challenges in a period of austerity, and expanding our partnerships – show just how much NATO has evolved since its founding six decades ago. The reasons for the Alliance’s continued success are clear: NATO has, over the last 63 years, proven to be an adaptable, durable, and cost-effective provider of security. President Obama made this point at the NATO Summit in Strasbourg-Kehl: “We cannot be content to merely celebrate the achievements of the 20th century, or enjoy the comforts of the 21st century; we must learn from the past to build on its success. We must renew our institutions, our alliances. We must seek the solutions to the challenges of this young century.” In Chicago, the United States will work with its allies and partners to ensure that the Alliance remains vibrant and capable for many more years to come. With that, I look forward to your questions.