

**Statement on the  
Future of NATO  
by  
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before the  
Committee on Armed Services  
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Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The Alliance has had to rethink its nature and role over the last dozen years or so, impelled most forcefully, first, by the end of the Cold War and then by the start of the global war on terrorism.

The West's victory in the Cold War, though largely to the credit of NATO, caused many people to question whether NATO had a continuing reason for being. The global war on terrorism, I believe, has rather clearly answered the question in the affirmative.

The strategic essence of the war on terrorism is the danger to open societies posed by terrorist networks and their state sponsors around the globe. That danger is especially grave in light of the chemical, biological and nuclear weapons ambitions of leading state sponsors of terrorism.

To counter that danger, the United States and our allies need an ability to manage multiple contingencies simultaneously in widely separated areas of the world. Success in dissuading, deterring and defeating our enemies in the war on terrorism requires strategies, capabilities and command structures that allow for flexibility and quick action. We need a set of diverse tools for the job. As for the military tools, we need rapidly usable, long-range and lethal strike capabilities in response to good intelligence about unexpected events. In the war on terrorism, it is useful for the United States to have allies. NATO has contributed valuably to the war effort.

The September 11, 2001 attack on the United States resolved a debate within NATO as to whether regions beyond the North Atlantic arena are "out-of-area." NATO member states now realize that responding to threats emanating from beyond Europe *are* part of NATO's mission. The Alliance recently decided to support Germany and the Netherlands, for example, in their leadership in Afghanistan of the International Security Assistance Force – a mission that brings NATO well out of its traditional geographic domain.

I consider "international community" a loose term because the world's nations do not, alas, adhere in common to key philosophical principles. But NATO is accurately referred to as the Atlantic Community. The European and North American allies do, in

fact, share a commitment to democracy and individual liberty. Furthermore, our economies are thoroughly intertwined. In bad times, the United States has stood with Europe. And, as demonstrated in the aftermath of 9-11, Europe has stood with the United States. We have our intra-community disagreements, as I'll discuss further in my testimony, but the degree of harmony in the policies and interests of the NATO allies is rare among multinational organizations.

The North Atlantic Treaty serves as a foundation for transatlantic military cooperation. Among its members, NATO promotes common defense policies, common military doctrine and integrated force postures. NATO's success in military integration is found no where else in the world.

Over the last decade, NATO military forces brought peace to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. Under the NATO flag, European forces have helped Macedonia overcome ethnic conflict. In Afghanistan, fifty years of NATO joint planning, joint training, joint staffing and joint operations enabled allies and partners to help oust the Taliban regime and give freedom to the Afghan people swiftly and efficiently.

There is alliance-wide value in the forward presence in Europe of U.S. military forces. The bases that the United States uses in Europe have often facilitated the projection of American military forces to theaters of operation around the world. Our forward presence allows us to develop among American and European soldiers and units the interoperability and familiarity necessary for combined military missions.

We are now working to enlarge the Alliance to make NATO more responsive to the unpredictable and lethal threats confronting the Atlantic community.

***NATO Enlargement:*** NATO accession protocols have just been signed in Brussels for Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Our support for their integration into NATO is matched by their enthusiasm to contribute to our common security. These seven countries have already been acting *de facto* as Allies through participation in NATO's Balkans missions, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the Kabul peacekeeping force. Six have publicly declared themselves Coalition members in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Several have deployed troops to the Iraq theater. When they join the Alliance, these seven will strengthen transatlantic ties. They will bring with them their fresh appreciation of the value of freedom.

If NATO is to fulfill its security tasks, it must (as I have noted) be able to deploy forces with global reach that are agile, lethal and technologically superior to any challengers. For this purpose, NATO leaders at the Prague Summit last November launched a program to reform NATO's command and force structures.

***NATO Response Force:*** A key element of this reform program is the Allies' commitment to establish the NATO Response Force. If implemented to the standards proposed by the United States, the NATO Response Force will be able to deploy with advance notice measured in days, not months. Its elements will be able to execute the

entire spectrum of combat operations. Our goal is for the force to be fully operational by October 2006. We expect the force to become a catalyst for NATO transformation efforts.

***Command Structure Reform:*** At Prague, Heads of State and Government also approved an outline for a streamlined NATO command structure. Operational commands will be reduced in number from 23 to 16. This will make more efficient use of financial and manpower resources. More importantly, NATO commanders will have headquarters that are more mobile, joint, and interoperable. And the establishment of a new functional command, Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia, will provide a new engine to promote military transformation across the entire Alliance.

And now for a few words about problems facing the Alliance:

***Capability Shortfalls:*** NATO's first challenge is for Allies to remedy their military shortcomings. NATO will not be able to perform its military missions if it does not fix longstanding shortfalls in such areas as strategic lift, communications, nuclear, biological and chemical defense equipment, and precision guided munitions. Allies promised to redress these shortcomings through the Prague Capabilities Commitment, but NATO suffers from a long history of unfulfilled force goals. Continued failure in this regard will jeopardize the NATO Response Force. Allied contributions to NATO Response Force rotations must provide the capabilities envisioned at Prague if the NRF is to evolve from a paper concept to a fighting force.

***21<sup>st</sup> Century Consensus:*** A second important challenge is NATO's consensus rule. Will NATO be able to achieve consensus in the future, given policy differences among the allies and the increase in the number of allies? The dangers to allies posed by the nexus of terrorism, state sponsors of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction may not emerge from Europe or even from Europe's periphery, but from distant parts of the globe. In the future, it is unlikely that NATO will face threats over which all 19 or 26 members would have to go to war all together. As demonstrated in Afghanistan and Iraq, unanimity or consensus for action within NATO will not necessarily be the norm.

Some members of this Committee, when we discussed this issue last year, suggested that it may be time for NATO to modify its decision-making rules. Recent Iraq-related disagreements within the Alliance in which France and Germany put themselves at odds with virtually every other ally regarding the defense of Turkey have brought this question to the fore.

I wish to make two points to launch our discussion here of this issue. First, the consensus rule has proven valuable in certain important ways. It has been a means to force nations to make decisions. And it has tended to create pressure for unified positions, rather than encourage divisiveness and obstructionism.

Second, the absence of consensus does not (and should not) stop NATO members from acting militarily outside of NATO as their own interests may require. When NATO

members so act, they can benefit from the Alliance by cooperating with allies whose military capabilities are available or usable because of the interoperability, combined training, combined doctrine and the like attributable to Alliance activities.

***The Role of France:*** Now, as to the recent problem of France's regrettable conduct within NATO. French efforts to block steps to enhance Turkey's security against possible chemical, biological or other attacks by Saddam Hussein reflected a deliberate decision to block initiatives important to the Alliance. It raised questions not only about NATO's decision-making, but its ability to make good on its obligations to member states.

Fortunately, the majority of current Allies value NATO for the links it provides between Europe and North America. NATO enlargement and EU enlargement promise to reinforce in those institutions the ranks of those seeking close partnership with the United States. On issues of transatlantic concern, divisions appear more frequently within Europe than across the Atlantic.

***U.S. Force Presence in Europe:*** Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to close with a comment on the future of the U.S. force presence in Europe.

When the President asked Mr. Rumsfeld to serve as Secretary of Defense, he asked him to review our defense posture around the world. DoD's 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review called for reconfiguring the U.S. global military posture in light of changes in the international security environment.

We have been examining our posture and presence across the globe. This work is ongoing and aims to ensure that our military forces are appropriately structured, equipped, and deployed. We are rethinking our so-called footprint to take account of our key strategic concepts – for example, the need for strategic and operational flexibility, the unpredictability of future challenges, and the low probability that our forces will be used in the immediate vicinity of where they are based. We are thinking long-term. Our decisions about where we want to base, exercise and stage our forces are not being driven by transient considerations of current events.

Our approach is to establish a presence appropriate to each region and increase capabilities to act promptly and globally in response to crises. To do so, we aim to diversify access; develop more adaptable, expeditionary forces; promote greater Allied contributions; and strengthen command structures to support our national security strategy. Any changes will be designed to increase our flexibility and forward access. We recognize the sensitivity of any changes to U.S. force posture and will consult with Congress, Allies, NATO, and partners.

In all events, we expect that NATO will play a key role in U.S. national security policy for the foreseeable future.

Thank you.