

“The NATO Summit in Chicago”
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Testimony by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense James Townsend
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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 will host in Chicago in May. I will describe for the Committee what we hope to achieve at the Summit from the Defense point of view and its relevance for US national security. I particularly look forward to hearing the Committee’s views on the Summit and the priorities you have for its outcomes.

NATO heads of state and government come together at a summit every few years not only to approve important pieces of alliance business, but also to renew at the highest level the commitment Allies have made to one another in the North Atlantic Treaty. This commitment to come to one another’s defense as expressed in Article 5 of the Treaty is a solemn one that has only been invoked once – after the United States was attacked on September 11, 2001.

This commitment was critical during the Cold War to help deter the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact from attacking the United States and our Allies. Even with the end of the Cold War, this Article 5 commitment remains the core of the Alliance. NATO serves as the organizing framework to ensure that we have Allies willing and able to fight alongside us in conflict, and provides an integrated military structure that puts the military teeth behind Alliance political decisions to take action. In addition to ensuring the interoperability of our Allies, NATO serves as a hub and integrator of a network of global security partners.

The NATO air and maritime operation in Libya illustrates this point. The operation began as a coalition of the willing involving the United States, the United Kingdom and France. However, when NATO answered the UN’s call to protect the Libyan people, it was able to take on the mission and execute it successfully. Had NATO not been there, or had NATO been too weak an institution to take on such an operation, the coalition would have had to carry on alone.

Keeping NATO strong both politically and militarily is critical to ensuring NATO is ready when it is needed. This has been true for the past 20 years, when the

turbulence of the international system has demanded that NATO respond nearly continuously to crises throughout the globe. Today, for example, NATO forces are in Afghanistan, in the Balkans, countering pirates in the waters off Somalia, and have concluded operations in Libya. Looking out into the future, challenges to the United States and our Allies can come from ballistic missile proliferation, cyber attack, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, as well as from the instability we see in North Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere. We must be ready to meet emerging threats, and we would prefer to meet these challenges together with Allies, and not alone.

So the strategic context for the Summit, and for our work at NATO every day, is how can we keep NATO and the Allies ready and able to meet the challenges of today and in the future? This is especially complex today as the European economic crisis compels Allies to cut defense spending and force structure in order to reduce their debt and decrease government spending.

Allies too have different views and priorities regarding perceptions of the threat and the traditions of their own military forces. Not every Ally sees the world and their role in it the way we do. But one thing we all agree on is that we need the Alliance to be unified and strong. Allies look to the United States to lead the way in keeping NATO strong, capable, and credible.

That is where we come to the Summit. At Chicago, Heads of State and Government will agree or approve work that we committed to at the last Summit at Lisbon eighteen months ago.

At Chicago this work will focus on three areas: an agreement on a strategic plan for Afghanistan, military capabilities, and NATO partnerships. The United States has three Summit objectives:

- Charting a clear path for the completion of transition and reaffirming NATO's commitment to the long-term security of Afghanistan;
- Maintaining NATO's core defense capabilities during this period of austerity and building a force ready for future challenges; and,
- Deepening the engagement of NATO's partner nations in Alliance operations and activities.

Afghanistan. While the past few months have been tumultuous in Afghanistan, U.S. forces, and those of our Allies and ISAF partners, have shown deep resolve and dedication to the transition strategy laid out at the 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon. ISAF troops continue to perform exceptionally well, particularly in the

process of training and partnering with the Afghan National Security Forces, in our effort to ensure that the Afghans are ready to assume full responsibility for security in Afghanistan by the end of 2014. While ISAF troops will stand ready to conduct combat operations as required right up until the end of 2014, the fact is that Afghan forces are growing ever stronger and more professional. This was clearly demonstrated a few weeks ago when ANSF troops successfully repelled enemy attacks in and around Kabul.

Our strategy is working. What we do from now until the end of 2014 – whether on the ground in Afghanistan, back here in Washington or in Chicago next month – must build responsibly on what ISAF has accomplished to date. Our efforts must safeguard NATO’s primary objective in Afghanistan: to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda and ensure Afghanistan never again serves as a safe-haven for terrorists. I have no doubt that our resolve will be tested in the coming months, but I also have no doubt that the U.S. and our ISAF partners will remain focused on our Lisbon commitments. The Strategic Partnership Agreement that President Obama and President Karzai signed just days ago, provides a clear demonstration of our commitment to the long-term stability and security of Afghanistan.

The upcoming NATO Summit presents us with an important opportunity to send a unified message that we are on track to achieve our Lisbon goals. We view the Chicago Summit as a critical milestone in our effort in Afghanistan, as leaders come together to determine the next phase of transition and the future of our support for Afghanistan and its security forces. All of these steps will help define how we can responsibly conclude the war in Afghanistan while achieving our objectives and building a long-term partnership with the Afghan people.

Alliance Military Capabilities. One of the greatest challenges that NATO faces today is the need to maintain critical combat capabilities during this period of economic austerity, as defense investment decisions made now will affect the availability of defense capabilities five to ten years from now.

To help nations under financial pressure keep up their military strength and build for the future, NATO is putting together a capabilities package for approval at Chicago that provides an organizing framework to advance a range of capability initiatives, both old and new, to get us through the next 10 years with our capabilities intact and our forces strong. It protects a core of capabilities from further cuts and provides tools to help nations acquire military capabilities more affordably.

The major elements of the capabilities package are as follows:

- **Smart Defense:** Introduced by NATO Secretary General Rasmussen, Smart Defense is a concept by which NATO members can enhance security capabilities more efficiently through greater multinational coordination, collaboration, and coherence. The U.S. supports the Smart Defense approach, and will participate in many of the multinational initiatives, but Smart Defense must not be used as a means to justify further cuts to Allies' defense budgets. There can be no substitute for nations providing adequate resources and investment in their own domestic and our collective security. In addition to applying resources most efficiently in an austere fiscal environment, Smart Defense should also ensure investments are made in the right capabilities when economic conditions improve.
- **Missile Defense.** In Lisbon, NATO Allies took the unprecedented step of declaring that NATO would develop a territorial ballistic missile defense capability, taking on this critical mission in the face of the real and emerging ballistic missile threat to NATO European territories and populations. Since then, we have worked closely with our NATO Allies to turn this ambition into a real capability. In Chicago, we expect to further that goal by taking steps to advance the implementation of our missile defense system.
- **Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS).** At the 2010 NATO Lisbon Summit, Heads of State and Government identified AGS as one of the Alliance's top 10 critical capabilities. Recent operations in Libya highlighted Alliance shortfalls in surveillance and reconnaissance. The Alliance Ground Surveillance system will provide Alliance members with a significantly enhanced ability to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations and all of the associated tasks.
- **Training.** I would like to highlight the improvements in training that I believe will be critical to implementing the Chicago capabilities package. This commitment is reflected in the changes the United States is making to its force posture in Europe. The NATO Response Force will continue to be the engine for transformation within the Alliance. Only through a robust exercise program can we develop and validate new doctrine, provide visible assurance of Alliance commitment to collective security, and institutionalize the interoperability we have developed over the past 10 years in places like Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Libya. The United States is refining plans to

rotate U.S.-based ground units to Europe twice during each NATO Response Force cycle to participate in NATO Response Force training and exercises. In addition, these units will be available to participate in full-spectrum training with individual Allies as well as multinational formations.

- **Baltic Air Policing.** In the Baltic Region the United States is a key contributor to NATO's Baltic Air Policing Mission, which deploys fighter aircraft that are ready to launch at a moment's notice. The United States joined with all 27 other NATO Allies in February to ensure a continuing presence of fighters for NATO Air Policing of Baltic skies. NATO Air Policing helps assure the security of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in a way that is cost effective, allowing them to focus resources on other critical NATO priorities. We anticipate that for their part, the Baltic nations will increase their Host Nation Support for nations that deploy fighter aircraft. This mission demonstrates our commitment to the collective defense of all NATO members and is also a superb example of defense burden sharing through Smart Defense.

This capabilities package provides the ways and means to ensure Alliance forces are capable and effective. While tools such as Smart Defense will help us achieve these goals, all Allies must maintain a base consisting of essential operational capabilities. These core capabilities must be protected from further cuts to ensure that we will have the forces we need over the next ten years and that we have a sure foundation upon which to build NATO Forces in 2020 and beyond. One of the ways they will reaffirm NATO's determination to maintain modern, flexible, credible capabilities is by approving the Deterrence and Defense Posture Review which will identify the appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities NATO needs to meet today's challenges and tomorrow's emerging threats.

Partnerships. NATO is working more closely than ever with non-NATO partners to address global challenges. We saw the value of our partnerships in Libya, when our European partners as well as countries in the Middle East and North Africa helped the Alliance to protect the Libyan people, and we continue to benefit from our partners' contributions in Afghanistan, with 22 countries standing shoulder-to-shoulder with NATO. In Chicago we look to broaden and deepen our network of partnerships worldwide.

This Summit is an opportunity to carry forward the critical work our Alliance is conducting. At Chicago, we will underscore NATO's accomplishments in Afghanistan, Libya, and the Balkans – successes delivered despite financial crisis. But as we confront current challenges, we must also invest in the future. NATO relies on individual Allies for the bulk of the capabilities needed for future operations, but we must find a way to ensure NATO will be able to maintain critical capabilities in this period of austerity. We can ensure the greatness of this Alliance into the next decade in spite of fiscal and security challenges; but we must invest the extra effort to work collectively and to support those institutions that facilitate our multinational cooperation.

I look forward to your questions.