

U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Senator Richard G. Lugar
Opening Statement for Nominations Hearing for Susan Burk and Ivo Daalder
April 22, 2009

I join in welcoming the nominees and their families.

Next year, most of the world's governments will attend the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in New York. If confirmed, Ms. Burk would be responsible for fashioning the U.S. strategy for the conference and leading our delegation there. It is crucial that our representatives are prepared to lead at the conference.

A successful strategy should highlight through advocacy and example the progress made by the United States in recent years and our intent to provide leadership on non-proliferation in the future. I would highlight several items that should be part of the U.S. posture at the conference.

First, the United States has made great strides in reducing levels of deployed nuclear weapons. Our arsenal has been cut back dramatically under the START and Moscow Treaties. The United States and Russia have begun work to extend the START Treaty to ensure that the foundation of our bilateral arms control cooperation will remain strong. Successful negotiations toward a follow-on agreement to START would send an important signal of our intentions to continue to reduce our nuclear arsenals.

Second, through the Nunn-Lugar Program and its partners, the U.S. has assisted in destroying more than 7,000 nuclear warheads and their delivery systems in the former Soviet Union and continues to eliminate nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, materials, and infrastructure. We should explain that the United States is willing to go anywhere at any time to help partners secure and eliminate weapons of mass destruction.

Third, the United States must continue to lead the international community toward the creation of an international nuclear fuel bank that would eliminate the need for individual countries to construct enrichment and reprocessing facilities that have dual use capabilities.

Fourth, the United States should engage the international community in developing a verification regime for the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty.

Fifth, the United States must lead in increasing resources for IAEA detection and inspection capabilities, and we must work with other nations to increase the consequences for countries breaking their NPT commitments.

I look forward to working with the Administration as they construct their policy and prepare for the meetings in New York next spring.

The diplomatic challenges posed by the NPT Review Conference are similar to those we face at NATO. The NATO alliance remains the most successful alliance in history. But if NATO is to continue to be the preeminent security alliance and serve the defense interests of its membership, it must evolve, expand, and improve.

The President recently attended the 60th Anniversary of the Washington Treaty in Strasbourg, France and welcomed Albania and Croatia as NATO's newest members. Their accession into the alliance expands the zone of peace and security on the continent and marks the culmination of an eight year process of democratic, military, and free market transformation. Potential NATO membership motivates emerging democracies to make advances in areas such as the rule of law and civil society. Unfortunately the alliance has thus far failed to extend a Membership Action Plan to Georgia and Ukraine. This sends the wrong signal to Moscow and the international community.

If confirmed by the Senate, Mr. Daalder would succeed three talented and successful U.S. diplomats. Ambassadors Nick Burns, Toria Nuland, and Kurt Volker faced difficult circumstances in their efforts to increase European defense budgets; enhance contributions to Afghanistan; remove operational conditions on European military forces; and focus on emerging threats to NATO's members. Mr. Daalder would be responsible for advancing these priorities and providing leadership in addressing new security areas, such as energy independence. Unfortunately, some NATO members resist multilateral energy security policies, preferring a go-it-alone strategy that leaves their neighbors in precarious positions. U.S. leadership is crucial if these dangers are to be reversed.

I look forward to examining the views of Ms. Burk and Mr. Daalder on these and many other challenges.

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