

Statement of Julianne Smith
Nominee for Permanent Representative of the United States to NATO
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
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Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is an honor to be nominated to be the Permanent Representative of the United States to NATO. I want to extend my thanks to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for placing their trust in me for this critical position. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the President's pledge to revitalize and strengthen America's alliances.

I would like to start by thanking my family - my husband David and our two sons, Liam and Dylan - for their never-ending love and support. I am proud to be a woman working in the field of national security but my greatest joy comes from my family. I also want to thank my parents (who are watching from my home state of Michigan) and my sister for their guidance and encouragement.

I have worked on a wide range of national security challenges throughout my career but Europe has always been my passion. Ever since I received a scholarship to spend a year at the Sorbonne as an undergraduate, I have been fascinated by America's longstanding relationship with its closest Allies across the Atlantic. From my first job at a small think tank in Washington to my positions in the Pentagon and at the White House, I have worked to strengthen our relationship with Europe, navigate our differences, and identify innovative ways to address our shared challenges.

No institution has played a bigger role in the history of the Transatlantic relationship than the NATO Alliance. Since its creation in 1949, it has served as the bedrock of Transatlantic security, protecting our shared values and safeguarding each of its members against outside aggression. NATO's story is a remarkable one of solidarity and unity.

After the end of the Cold War, NATO's story became one of adaptation to a changing world. Over the last 30 years, NATO added 14 new members, developed new partnerships in the Middle East and Asia, agreed to operate in new warfighting domains such as cyber, and acquired new capabilities to respond to an array of emerging challenges, ranging from terrorism to emerging and disruptive technologies to climate change. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, the Alliance has bolstered its deterrence and defense posture, including through the deployment of multinational battle groups on its eastern flank.

Despite the fact that it makes decisions by consensus, NATO has repeatedly showcased its ability to take action quickly when it counts. It swiftly invoked Article 5 - the collective defense clause of the Washington Treaty - in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, for which the United States will always remain deeply grateful.

While NATO is rightly heralded as the most successful military alliance in history, the Alliance, now almost 75 years old, does have its share of challenges. Some Allies are still struggling to meet their commitments to increase defense spending, which they made after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014. Decision making remains too slow, and the weakening of democratic values in some member states is tearing at Alliance cohesion, causing some members to question whether all

Allies share the same values. Allies also are making slow progress in the hard and expensive work of improving their military capabilities, especially in new domains like cyber, space, and other emerging technologies.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with our NATO Allies and partners to address such shortfalls and prepare the Alliance to face future challenges. I will also look forward to working with Allies on the important task of drafting a new Strategic Concept, the roadmap that lays out NATO's future direction, which was last updated ten long years ago. That document must reflect the changing security environment of today, especially Russian aggression, threats we face in cyberspace, and the People's Republic of China's malign activities across the Euro-Atlantic region. I will work to ensure that none of those new challenges detract from the Alliance's core task of ensuring a strong deterrence and defense for all its members.

I believe that part of NATO's success rests with the strong bipartisan support one finds both here in Congress and among the American public. I was heartened to see the enthusiastic welcome Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg received when he addressed Congress in April of 2019. If confirmed, I will ensure that bipartisan support continues and would look forward to welcoming congressional delegations to NATO Headquarters.

It would be my great honor to represent the United States at NATO. I believe in this Alliance, the important role it plays in America's own defense, and in our critical leadership role in NATO.

I look forward to your questions and thank you for your consideration.