

OPENING STATEMENT
SENATOR RICHARD G. LUGAR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
BUSINESS MEETING ON THE WASHINGTON TREATY
April 30, 2003

Today the Committee comes together to vote on NATO enlargement. During the last few weeks, we have held five hearings on the future of the Atlantic Alliance and its role in maintaining U.S. national security. Next week we plan to take this measure to the Senate floor. The deliberations of this Committee indicate strong Senate support for welcoming Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania into the NATO alliance. I am confident that the Senate will pass the Protocols of Accession for all seven candidates.

Even as the Committee works to fulfill this legislative duty, our review of NATO has had an additional purpose. This Committee and the Senate must consider what role NATO can and should play in the global war on terrorism. NATO has to decide if it wants to participate in the security challenge of our time. If we do not prevent major terrorist attacks involving weapons of mass destruction, the Alliance will have failed in the most fundamental sense of defending our nations and our way of life.

This reality demands that as we expand NATO, we also retool it, so that it can be a mechanism of burden sharing and mutual security in the war on terrorism. America is at war, and we feel more vulnerable than at any time since the end of the Cold War and perhaps since World War II. We need allies to confront this threat effectively, and those alliances cannot be circumscribed by geographic boundaries.

Many observers will point to the split over Iraq as a sign that NATO is failing or irrelevant. I disagree. The United States has more at stake and more in common with Europe than with any other part of the world. These common interests and shared values will sustain the Alliance if governments realize the incredible resource that NATO represents. As the leader of NATO, we have no intention of shirking our commitment to Europe.

But as we attempt to mend the Alliance's political divisions over Iraq, we must go one step further and ask if NATO had been united on Iraq, could it have provided an effective command structure for the military operation that is underway now? And would allies beyond those currently engaged in Iraq, have been willing and able to field forces that would have been significant to the outcome of the war? In other words, achieving political unity within the alliance, while important to international opinion, does not guarantee that NATO will be meaningful as a fighting alliance in the war on terror.

In our Committee hearings on NATO, we have heard encouraging testimony that our allies are taking promised steps to strengthen their capabilities in such areas as heavy airlift and sealift and precision-guided munitions. We also have heard that the seven candidates for

membership are developing niche military capabilities that will be useful in meeting NATO's new military demands. But much work is left to be done to transform NATO into a bulwark against terrorism. An early test will be NATO's contribution to peacekeeping and humanitarian duties in the aftermath of combat in Iraq. A strong commitment by NATO nations to this role would be an important step in healing the Alliance divisions and reaffirming its relevance for the long run.

The Resolution of Ratification that we are considering today includes nine declarations and three conditions. I will review each of these provisions for the benefit of the Committee:

Declaration 1 reaffirms that membership in NATO remains a vital national security interest of the United States.

Declaration 2 lays out the strategic rationale for NATO enlargement.

Declaration 3 emphasizes that upon completion of the accession process, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia will have all the rights, privileges, obligations, responsibilities, and protections of full NATO members.

Declaration 4 emphasizes the importance of European integration.

Declaration 5 reiterates NATO's "open door" policy, and declares that the seven new countries will not be the last invited to join the Alliance.

Declaration 6 expresses the Senate's support for the Partnership for Peace.

Declaration 7 expresses support for the NATO-Russia Council established at the Prague Summit, but reinforces the Senate's view that Russia does not have a veto or vote on NATO policy.

Declaration 8 declares that the seven candidate countries have implemented mechanisms for the compensation of victims of the Holocaust and of Communism.

Declaration 9 states that the Committee has maintained the constitutional role of the United States Senate in the treaty-making process.

Condition 1 requires the President to reaffirm understandings on the costs, benefits, and military implications of NATO enlargement.

Condition 2 requires the President to submit a report to the Congressional Intelligence Committees on the progress of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia in meeting NATO security sector and security vetting standards.

Finally, Condition 3 requires the President to certify to Congress that each of the governments of the seven candidate countries is fully cooperating with the U.S. efforts to obtain the fullest accounting of captured and missing U.S. personnel from previous conflicts and the Cold War.

I want to thank Senator Biden for his important contributions to constructing a resolution of ratification that protects the prerogatives of the Senate, has the strong support of the Administration, and reflects the future of the NATO Alliance. It is my intention to work closely with Senator Biden and others to conclude a unanimous consent agreement that will allow the Senate to consider NATO expansion next week. I am hopeful that a vote in favor of all seven candidates to join the Alliance can take place prior to President Bush's scheduled trip to Europe at the end of the month.

Before turning to Senator Biden for his comments, I would like to point out that Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, Paul Kelly; Ken Myers of my staff; and Mike Haltzel of Senator Biden's staff stand ready to discuss the resolution's terms and provide background into the negotiations that led to the language contained in the resolution.

###