

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell

“An Enlarged NATO: Mending Fences and Moving Forward on Iraq”

Written Statement

Senate Foreign Relations Committee

April 29, 2003

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to testify on the enlargement of NATO agreed in Prague last November, and on the future of the Alliance.

With respect to enlargement, Mr. Chairman, I strongly encourage the Senate to provide its advice and consent to the ratification of the Accession Protocols that will welcome into NATO seven new members -- Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

This enlargement is part of an ambitious agenda whose goal is to transform the Alliance.

And Mr. Chairman, before I continue, let me acknowledge your leadership and vision in this process of enlargement. I know that you and your staff have provided invaluable guidance to the entire executive branch team. We could not have asked for better cooperation and support.

The Background

The West's victory in the Cold War and the defeat of Soviet communism signaled a decisive turning point in modern history -- a victory for freedom and democracy. But the troubles and tragedies of the past decade have made clear that new threats are rising. We have seen these threats take many shapes, from ethnic cleansing in the Balkans to the terrorist attacks of September 11. To deal with these new threats, the United States has continued to rely on NATO and will do so in the future.

This great Alliance, which has kept the peace for more than fifty years, is more than a treaty for collective defense. It is the central organizing force in a great web of relationships that holds North America and Europe together. It represents a community of common values and shared commitment to democracy, free markets and the rule of law. This was never more evident than on September 12, 2001.

On that day the Alliance invoked Article V of the Washington Treaty and told the world that it regarded the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon as attacks on all of its members. From this historic decision we know that NATO has the will to combat terrorism and to address the new threats that face us. But the Alliance must also have the means. So it must transform, militarily and politically, to secure our collective defense on into the twenty-first century and to sustain the trans-Atlantic link. At the historic Prague Summit last November, NATO heads of state and government made decisions that have put us solidly on the path to transformation.

Their strong and unanimous endorsement of the U.S.-crafted transformation agenda of New Capabilities, New Members and New Relationships will help ensure that NATO remains relevant in the days and years ahead.

President Bush and I were particularly pleased that Senator Voinovich, of this committee, and Senator Frist, along with other members of Congress, were able to join us in Prague. There, our leaders agreed to expand NATO membership to include all of the new democracies in Europe who are prepared to undertake the responsibilities of leadership. Such an enlargement will help to strengthen NATO's partnerships to promote democracy, the rule of law, free markets and peace throughout Eurasia. Moreover, it will better equip the Alliance to respond collectively to the new dangers we face.

The Current Enlargement

The United States and other NATO Allies signed the Enlargement Protocols last month in Brussels. President Bush has transmitted them to the Senate. Your swift action on these Protocols will bring us a major step closer to realizing President Bush's vision for a "Europe free, whole and at peace."

This enlargement will revitalize NATO by expanding its geographic reach, enhancing its military capabilities and inducting seven countries committed to a strong trans-Atlantic link. It will serve U.S. interests by strengthening both NATO and our bilateral ties with these new Allies, who have already done a great deal to support our vision for NATO and collective security.

All seven of the invitees have demonstrated that they are in a position to further the principles of the Washington Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.

The countries invited at Prague have been working intensively in NATO's Membership Action Plan since 1999. In this process, they have focused not only on security and defense issues, but also on democratic and market reforms. During these intensive preparations, each invitee has received both support and feedback from NATO.

The United States has also had its own dialogue with the seven countries about their reforms. In addition to the day-to-day work of our Embassies, we sent an inter-agency team headed by Ambassador Nick Burns in February and October of last year to visit each of the countries to make specific reform recommendations and to evaluate progress.

The prospect of NATO membership helped to create in each country a political atmosphere that encouraged governments to adopt needed reforms. These reforms are in each country's own best interest. In many cases, they would have been difficult to bring about without the demands of NATO candidacy.

The record of each invitee government demonstrates powerfully its commitment to NATO. Reform areas included treatment of minorities, creation of a viable political

opposition, restoration of private property, willingness to confront the past, combating corruption, and support for NATO membership.

For example, Estonia and Latvia have taken important steps to protect the rights of their Russian-speaking minorities. Their governments have eased requirements for citizenship and adopted other measures which provide assurances that all of the people of those countries will be treated with dignity and respect.

All three of the Baltic States have acknowledged dark times in their histories. When Estonian Prime Minister Siim Kallas visited Washington last September, he publicly recognized Estonians' collaboration with the Nazis and participation in the murder of Jews during the Holocaust.

All seven invitees have also adopted sweeping measures to combat corruption. Parliaments in Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, tough anti-corruption legislation. These three states have also established special prosecutors to root out public corruption. The new Latvia government under Prime Minister Repse has instituted a major anti-corruption program.

Slovenia has taken important strides in reducing the state's involvement in private enterprise. And Slovenia already has one of the highest Transparency International ratings for clean government among NATO members.

The public support for NATO membership in each of the new member states is high. In Romania, it is above 80%. In Slovenia's referendum last month, 66% voted for NATO membership. A clear majority in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania supports membership.

Among the positive developments, there are disappointments. We remain troubled by reports of continuing gray arms sales. Bulgaria and Romania have extensive arms industries with longstanding ties to the Middle East. We have had considerable success in stopping transfers of arms to countries of concern. More important for the long term, we are working with these countries to help them improve their systems of export control and to tighten oversight of defense industries.

We must not forget as well that the seven invitees also bring tangible security assets to the Alliance. Enlargement will bring more than 200,000 additional troops into the Alliance -- as many as in 1999. It will extend NATO's reach from the Baltic to the Black Sea, both politically and geographically.

And the new members will make the Alliance stronger and they will bring fresh ideas and energy to it. I am pleased to report that all seven invitees are already de facto Allies in the war on terror. All of them have contributed to stabilization efforts in Afghanistan through Operation Enduring Freedom and the International Security Assistance Force.

Romania has sent its "Carpathian Hawks" battalion to Afghanistan and did so using its own airlift rather than asking the U.S. for a lift--a feat that several current Allies could

not have accomplished. That Romanian battalion is now patrolling and fighting beside U.S. soldiers in the most dangerous regions of Afghanistan.

All of the new members have expressed support for the United States' position on Iraq. In February 2003, immediately following my presentation to the U.N. Security Council on the threat posed by Saddam's regime, they jointly called for the international community to take decisive action against Iraq's continued violation of international law and defiance of the Security Council. They also issued a joint statement at the Prague Summit in November 2002, supporting the United States' position on Iraq.

Moreover, Mr. Chairman, all of the new invitees sent military liaison officers to CENTCOM headquarters in Tampa, ahead of possible operations in Iraq. Several of the invitees are providing military support to the international coalition.

A Slovak CBRN unit is now stationed in Kuwait, incorporated into a Czech unit. The Romanians are providing a similar unit. The Bulgarians provided us with the use of their airbase at Burgas. It is clear that the seven invitees are already demonstrating their military value to the Alliance.

The Shifting Landscape

This value has been particularly noticeable given current circumstances wherein some on both sides of the Atlantic are questioning the health of the Alliance and the solidity of the trans-Atlantic relationship.

Mr. Chairman, I do not want to minimize the challenges that the relationship faces today as we attempt to shape both it and the Alliance for a world no longer fenced off by the Cold War.

In February we had a bruising debate in NATO over providing assistance to Turkey. In the end we achieved our goal of providing support for Turkey's defense. We would have preferred to make that decision at 19, instead of at 18, but France would not permit it. The United States and many of its NATO partners found it regrettable that some members so readily discarded their obligations under Article IV to provide purely defensive assistance to Turkey in order to press their own agendas on Iraq.

Make no mistake. The disagreement was serious, and our delay to Turkey's request damaged the credibility of our Alliance. Likewise, outside of the Alliance we have come through another bruising battle, this one at the UN Security Council over Iraq. This battle included five current and one future member of NATO. This too has raised troubling voices about the long-term health of the Alliance.

But now that the war in Iraq is over and the defensive measures taken in Turkey are ended, we can look back at these disagreements and debates with dispassion and against the backdrop of almost half a century of solid cooperation.

Such cooperation is anything but a thing of the past. On April 16, for example, the Alliance agreed to assume the lead of ISAF IV in August. This action will bring added continuity to the vital mission of helping to stabilize Afghanistan, and take NATO beyond its traditional area of responsibility to address today's threats at one of their sources. This decision was taken unanimously by the NAC without the rancor that characterized debates over Article IV obligations to Turkey.

Lets be clear. One of the challenges we face is understanding the threat.

September 11 burned itself irrevocably into the mind of every American. To say international terrorism is just another threat is to defy the instinctual reality that every American knows in his or her heart and soul. Every American who watched the World Trade Towers burn, crumble and disintegrate, with thousands of people inside, and who watched the Pentagon in flames, knows what terrorism can bring to our homeland. That reality leads Americans to conclude that terrorism must be eradicated – especially the terrorism that seeks nuclear weapons, and other means of mass destruction.

Some in Europe see it differently. Some see terrorism as a regrettable but inevitable part of society and want to keep it at arms length and as low key as possible. It is our job to convince them otherwise. This is a threat we share and must combat together – indeed, can only combat together.

Of course there will be disagreements. But the United States must continue to lead NATO to ensure our collective security, as we have for more than 50 years

But we must not forget also that we are democracies in NATO. None of us follows blindly. We debate. We disagree. On those occasions when we disagree, we roll up our sleeves, put our heads together, and find a way to work things out. At the end of the day, that is our great strength. And that is why the trans-Atlantic link will not break. The glue of NATO is too strong and holds us too fast to let it break.

When I was in Europe at the beginning of this month, I stopped in Belgrade to deliver personally my condolences over the death of Serbia's Prime Minister Djindjic, brutally assassinated earlier this year. I was struck by the speed with which the government of President Marovic and the new Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Zivkovic is leading a renewed and vigorous political effort to rid the nation of its dangerous criminal elements, to hand over those wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal at the Hague, and to strengthen democracy in Serbia and Montenegro. I was impressed.

Later that day and the next, in Brussels, I was heartened by the discussions I had with 21 European ministers, as well as EU High Representative Javier Solana and NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson. A majority of these Allies had joined the coalition to disarm Iraq. Those Allies who did not have welcomed our success and are now exploring ways to support stabilization and reconstruction.

So I caution those who, yet again, will write about the demise of NATO. We heard this story after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. We heard it during the troubled times in the Balkans. I give naysayers of NATO credit for their persistence -- but they are persistently wrong. Any alliance that countries are knocking on the door to get into, is anything but dead.

After the heated debate over Turkey, Secretary General Robertson said the damage done to NATO was a hit above the waterline, not below. The same can be said about the fall-out on NATO from the debate in the UN Security Council over Iraq. Nevertheless, NATO must continue to adapt to changing circumstances. It must address the challenges central to this era: rogue states, terror, weapons of mass destruction.

Increasingly NATO members will have to be prepared to focus their energies beyond Europe -- a reality that will require that member nations possess military forces with the capability to go and fight beyond Europe. The Alliance will recover. We will persevere. We must.

The Future

It is essential that we recover and endure because there is much work which needs to be done and many allies who want to do it.

In Afghanistan we need to ensure the changeover in August goes as smoothly as possible. NATO will take over and run ISAF headquarters in Kabul, coordinate operational planning, appoint the ISAF commander and supervise the troop contribution process. This operation will constitute NATO's largest step to date beyond its traditionally Europe-focused role.

In southern Europe Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia will still demand our attention and our presence.

In Macedonia right now, the EU has made its first deployment of forces with over 300 troops. These troops and this deployment in no way contradict NATO; in fact, they reinforce the importance of the alliance and complement its work, as the commander of the EU force reports to NATO's Deputy SACEUR through NATO's Regional Command South.

And, as I have referred to, in Iraq we are exploring what NATO collectively can do to secure the peace. All members have said they are prepared to discuss a NATO role in Iraq. We have noted possible Alliance roles in stabilization, humanitarian assistance operations, and NATO assistance to coalition partners. These preliminary discussions, if they lead to concrete results, could be the next big step in NATO's transformation to an alliance willing and able to take on any role in any region where it feels it can make a contribution to the peace or meet a common threat.

In line with this new orientation, as SACEUR General Jones pointed out at the beginning of this month, NATO will undergo another sea-change when it stands up a highly ready Allied Response Force with global reach, as agreed last November.

So I believe there will be more than enough work to go around, and if NATO can play a role, it should.

We should not ask, what can NATO do to prove its relevance? We should ask, what can NATO do to advance the peace?

The essential elements of the Alliance remain firm: --

-- NATO's integrated military structure creates a reservoir of working, planning, and training together that is irreplaceable;

-- The Alliance itself can call upon this rich reservoir or, as seems increasingly likely, coalitions of the willing can be drawn from it. For example, the EU-led operation in Macedonia I referred to earlier draws on NATO assets and capabilities.

-- Moreover, NATO's Council provides a valuable forum for discussing matters of war and peace;

-- And fundamentally, NATO binds together nations who share the same beliefs and values. Nations who accept that vigorous debate is the hallmark of an alliance of democratic nations.

NATO is an alliance within which the seven future members invited at Prague, with the advice and consent of the Senate, will be able to join their colleagues and be welcomed to stand and be heard and not be told to sit and be silent.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot outline specific roles for NATO in the future. In some instances we will operate as an Alliance. In some as members of a coalition of the willing. We may wage war and we *will* maintain the peace.

For over half a century NATO was indispensable to security on both sides of the Atlantic. That has not changed. Today the Alliance remains indispensable to our security, and to meeting the security challenges in a world of diverse threats, multiple challenges, and unprecedented opportunities. The Alliance remains crucial to the link that binds North America to Europe and Europe to North America.

Let me stress also, Mr. Chairman, that the door to NATO will remain open. Prague was not the end of the enlargement process, just one step on the way. We welcome the applications of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia and other future applicants as well.

We will continue to enlarge the Alliance as emerging new democracies -- and perhaps some established ones as well -- pursue membership, and as they demonstrate their ability

to contribute to the security of the Euro-Atlantic community as required under Article 10 of the NATO Treaty.

Today, Mr. Chairman, I ask the Senate to make its vital contribution by performing its own Constitutional duty in helping us transform the Alliance. I again urge this Committee to act swiftly to recommend that the Senate provide its advice and consent on the NATO accession protocols that will welcome our new allies into our Alliance.

I understand that the committee will mark up tomorrow and that a floor vote will likely occur on May 7th. If I am correct in that understanding, I am grateful for such speed, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, and I will be pleased to take your questions.