

**Testimony by Ambassador Marc Grossman
Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs**

on NATO Enlargement

to the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee

April 8, 2003

Mr. Chairman, Senator Biden, Senators, it is an honor for me to be before you today.

We are grateful for your leadership, Mr. Chairman, and for Senator Biden's, on the issue of enlargement.

You have offered opportunities for discussion on enlargement over the past several months. These meetings have been of value to me and to other Administration officials. Also, I would like again to thank Senator Voinovich for his participation in what was an historic NATO Summit in Prague in November.

Let me begin by reporting on Secretary Powell's April 3 meetings at NATO.

The Secretary met NATO and EU Foreign Ministers together and later with just NATO colleagues. He also met Secretary General Robertson, EU Presidency and Commission leadership, Ambassadors from the Vilnius-10 countries and separately with nine Foreign Ministers. Twenty-one sessions in all!

The Secretary's messages in Brussels were clear: first, we value NATO and the trans-Atlantic partnership it anchors. Second, it is time to look to the future, including the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq. The Secretary reminded NATO ministers of Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz's presentation to the North Atlantic Council last December, when he suggested that NATO roles could include peacekeeping, WMD security and destruction and delivery of humanitarian assistance. We remain open to a NATO role in Iraq. No commitments were made. No Ally raised objections to these possibilities. We will follow up with Allies and see what, if anything, can be done.

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The Committee has heard testimony on NATO enlargement from people within and outside the Administration. There is broad support here and in the Alliance for this next stage of enlargement.

For fifty years NATO has been the anchor of western security.

The end of Soviet Communism did not diminish NATO's importance.

- The democracies of NATO made and keep the peace in the Balkans.
- In 1999, NATO stopped ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.
- NATO's just-completed mission in Macedonia has also brought order to that new democracy.

NATO responded to September 11 by invoking Article V; an attack on one member will be regarded as an attack on all. NATO sent AWACS to patrol U.S. airspace, logging 4300 hours; 360 sorties, with 800 crewmembers from 13 nations.

Thirteen Allies now contribute to Operation Enduring Freedom. NATO Allies lead the International Stabilization force in Kabul.

German and Dutch troops replaced Turkish troops in ISAF, who replaced British forces. Lord Robertson and some of our Allies would like to see NATO take a larger role in ISAF. As Secretary Powell said at NATO last week: "NATO should also look at how the Alliance could play an even greater role in Afghanistan, up to and including a NATO lead for ISAF.

NATO is the central organizing agent for Trans-Atlantic cooperation. It represents a community of common values and shared commitments to democracy, free markets and the rule of law.

NATO is key to the defense of the United States. And so NATO must continue to lead and to adapt.

The November 2002 NATO Summit at Prague launched a transformation of NATO with a three part agenda: new members; new capabilities and new relationships.

New Members

My job today is to discuss enlargement, which is key to this transformation.

At the Prague Summit, NATO leaders invited seven new democracies-- Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia--to join NATO.

In Brussels on March 26, NATO Ambassadors signed the protocols to begin the formal process of admitting the invitees into the Alliance. The President

expects to forward the accession protocols to the Senate for its advice and consent on ratification in the coming days.

I respectfully ask this committee to act swiftly and positively to this request.

This enlargement will strengthen democracy and stability in Europe, revitalize NATO and benefit the United States.

Enlargement will encourage and consolidate reforms in the seven invitees, expanding NATO's geographic reach and inducting seven committed Atlanticists, who already act as allies in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The invitation to these seven states followed an intensive program of preparation under NATO's Membership Action Plan. The Alliance worked with the aspirants to encourage political, economic and military reform. There is still work to do in these areas and we continue to work daily with the aspirants on these issues. They are committed to further reform.

These seven are committed to the trans-Atlantic Alliance. They are Allies in the War on Terror. They have contributed to Operation Enduring Freedom and to the International Security and Stabilization Force in Kabul.

(Reference Military Contribution Charts)

At Burgas, Bulgaria provides basing for U.S. transport aircraft supplying Operation Enduring Freedom. Bulgaria also sent a Nuclear Biological and Chemical decontamination unit to Afghanistan.

Estonia sent a team of explosive experts to Afghanistan.

Latvia has contributed medical personnel to ISAF in Kabul.

Lithuania deployed special operations forces to Afghanistan last year, and this year provided a team of medical personnel.

Romania has an infantry battalion serving in Kandahar and military police unit and transport aircraft serving Kabul.

Slovakia deployed an engineering unit to Kabul.

Slovenia has provided assistance with demining in Afghanistan.

They have all joined strong statements of support for U.S. policy and in some cases have lent support to United States military mission in Iraq.

All of the invitees have committed to spending at least two percent GDP on defense, and as you can see, all seven already spend a higher percentage of their GDP than almost a third of the current NATO membership.

(Reference Defense Spending Chart)

Their publics strongly support NATO.

On March 23, Slovenians went to the polls to support NATO membership. The Yes vote won with 66%. In Romania, Bulgaria and the three Baltic states, support for NATO stands at above 70%.

Together the invitees will also contribute as many as 200,000 new troops to the Alliance -- approximately equal to the number added by NATO's last enlargement in 1999.

What of future enlargements? The door to NATO should remain open. In his speech at Warsaw University in 2001, the President stated that, "all of Europe's democracies, from the Baltic to the Black Sea all that lie between should have the same chance for security and freedom and the same chance to join the institutions of Europe -- as Europe's old democracies have".

We welcome the continuing pursuit of membership by Albania, Croatia and Macedonia. We will continue to consult closely with these nations on their Membership Action Plan programs as well as with others who may seek membership in the future.

New Capabilities

Mr. Chairman, enlargement is only one aspect of a much broader transformation launched at Prague and now being undertaken in Brussels.

The most important challenge facing NATO is building its capabilities to face the modern threats of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

The gap in military capabilities between the United States and Europe is the most serious long-term problem facing NATO.

At the Prague Summit in November, NATO's leaders decided to close this gap.

European Allies agreed to "spend smarter," pool their resources and pursue specialization. For example:

-- Germany is leading a 10-nation consortium on airlift.

- Norway leads a consortium on sealift.
- Spain leads a group on air-to-air refuelings.
- The Netherlands is taking the lead on precision guided missiles and has committed 84 million dollars to equip their F-16's with smart bombs.

This is a good start. Follow-through will be critical.

NATO's leaders also created at Prague the NATO Response Force. We need NATO forces equipped with new capabilities and organized into highly ready land, air and sea forces able to carry out missions anywhere in the world.

NATO can and, in appropriate circumstances, should undertake military operations outside its traditional area of operations.

The NATO Response Force will be a force of approximately 25,000 troops, with land, sea and air capability, deployable worldwide on thirty days notice. NATO leaders agreed that the NATO Response Force should be ready for exercises by October 2004 and mission-ready by October 2006.

NATO also needs to streamline its command structure for greater efficiency.

New Relationships

The third area of transformation is the growing web of partnerships. Who could have imagined ten years ago, when we conceived Partnership for Peace that this program would repay such dividends in Central Asia, when the United States found itself at war in Afghanistan?

In May of 2002, President Bush, President Putin and Allied heads of State and Government inaugurated the NATO-Russia Council.

Since then NATO and Russia have been working on projects in key areas such as combating terrorism, peacekeeping, and non-proliferation. The Council sponsored an unprecedented civil emergency exercise in Noginsk, simulating a terrorist attack involving toxic chemicals, which brought together 850 first responders from more than thirty allied and partner nations.

And we will continue to develop and expand our partnerships with willing states like Ukraine or those in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

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Mr. Chairman, in February, the Alliance went through a bruising debate about defense support for Turkey under Article IV of the NATO Treaty.

The Alliance did arrive at the right answer. The Defense Policy Committee directed military assistance to Turkey to address a threat of attack from Iraq. That military assistance is now in place: NATO deployed AWACs planes, Patriot missiles, and Nuclear, Biological and Chemical defense teams.

This disagreement did damage the Alliance. It is my view, however, as Secretary General Robertson himself said afterwards, that this was a hit above the waterline and that NATO would recover. Secretary Powell's visit last week is part of that recovery.

Because it is essential that NATO continues to knit together the community of European and North American democracies as an Alliance of shared values and collective security, it would be wrong to draw the conclusion that we should stop pushing NATO to change to address these threats.

Indeed, we should redouble those efforts.

For at the end of the day, it is to NATO that we return to seek common ground and cooperation on the issues facing the trans-Atlantic community.