

Testimony of Philip H. Gordon
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Madame Chairwoman, Members of the Committee,

It is a great honor to appear before this committee as President Obama's nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. I am grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Clinton have shown in nominating me. In a range of different positions over the past 25 years, I have spent extended periods of time in many of the countries within the European Bureau's area of responsibility. I have devoted my career to thinking about how the United States can enhance its interests by helping to promote security and stability in Europe and by promoting global cooperation with the other Western democracies. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with the Committee and the Congress to advance America's interests in this vast region.

No one should doubt the enormity of the challenges we face in Europe and Eurasia, all of which have become even more daunting because of the deep economic crisis on both sides of the Atlantic. But I am convinced that this is a moment of great opportunity as well. Traveling with then Senator Obama to Europe last summer, I saw the reservoir of support for our country that still exists in Europe – as manifested by a sea of American flags being waved by a large crowd in Berlin. Our mission today is to translate the enduring European desire for American leadership and the significant goodwill Europeans have for our country into a genuine partnership that advances the national interests of the United States and promotes security, stability and prosperity in the region. If confirmed I would be honored to serve the President and the Secretary, and to work with this Committee, in seeking to accomplish that mission.

When I last served in government, on the National Security Council staff during the second Clinton administration, one of my main tasks was to coordinate U.S. policy toward NATO in the run-up to the Alliance's 50th anniversary summit in Washington, D.C. Early next month, President Obama will make his first trip to Europe as President, to attend NATO's 60th

anniversary summit. Such anniversaries are important occasions on which to recognize the extraordinary achievement of the United States and its democratic allies in coming together after the Second World War to form what has become the closest, most enduring, and most powerful alliance in history. In this case, the summit will provide an opportunity for the United States to reaffirm the value and strategic purpose of the Alliance; to set a path to success in Afghanistan and secure greater Allied support for that mission; to forge an Alliance consensus on how to approach Russia; and to prepare the Alliance to confront new security challenges in Europe and around the world. The President will also travel to Prague for a summit with the European Union, where he will consult with our key partners on critical issues such as energy, climate change, Afghanistan, the Balkans, and the global financial crisis. If confirmed, I would be honored to have the opportunity to help the President and Secretary Clinton, working with the Congress, shape our policies toward these critical partnerships.

One of the Administration's most important priorities will be to continue the historic American project of helping to extend stability, security, prosperity and democracy to all of Europe. The objective of all Presidents since World War II, both Democratic and Republican, of a Europe whole, free and at peace has advanced significantly in the two decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall, but it has not yet been reached. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, I look forward to engaging actively and across the entire region to help promote democracy, encourage economic reform, protect national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and resolve the enduring conflicts that cause needless suffering on a daily basis and – as we saw last summer in Georgia – risk erupting violently at any time. The openness of Western institutions like the European Union and NATO to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe has been the most successful democratization strategy in history and has brought peace, stability and prosperity to millions. The process must be continued.

The challenge of expanding peace and prosperity in Europe is particularly acute today because of the economic and financial crisis that is affecting all of us and is hitting particularly hard in some of the Central and East European states. As Senator Kerry pointed out recently in a *Wall Street Journal Europe* op-ed, "If Western nations do not act quickly to address the snowballing financial crisis that is brewing from Latvia to Hungary, we risk replacing an era of promise and progress in Eastern Europe with one of soaring unemployment, instability and a weakening of the influence and

ideals we have spent decades building.” Even as we focus appropriately on our own economic challenges, I believe the United States must, along with the European Union and its member states, show leadership to help our friends in Central and Eastern Europe. As we have learned throughout our history, security for America requires security for all of Europe, and security for all of Europe requires a Central and Eastern Europe that is stable, prosperous, and a full participant in the transatlantic community.

In promoting a peaceful, united and democratic Europe, we must – working with the EU, NATO and the OSCE – strongly support the sovereignty and independence of all European states, including those that emerged out of the former Soviet Union. We must continue to develop our relations with the Central Europeans, now core members of NATO and the EU and increasingly important global partners. We must show leadership in the Balkans, where more than a decade after major Western interventions the forces of democracy, openness and modernity still struggle against backward-looking nationalism and intolerance. We must engage energetically on enduring conflicts in Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh; support the negotiations on a settlement in Cyprus; promote Turkey’s EU aspirations while encouraging it to improve relations with Armenia, Cyprus and Greece; and vigorously promote the diversification of European energy supplies. This Committee has invested heavily in promoting this agenda in recent years. If confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee to advance these goals.

Related to the agenda of promoting security, prosperity and democracy across Eurasia is the challenge of working with Russia. Over the past several years, U.S. relations with Russia have deteriorated significantly, plagued by disputes over NATO enlargement, missile defense, the Middle East, energy policy, the CFE Treaty and ultimately the Russian invasion of Georgia and unjustifiable recognition of two breakaway regions.

The Obama Administration is seeking to reverse this negative trend, which serves nobody’s interest. President Obama rejects the notion that relations between the United States and Russia are a “zero-sum game” and believes that the United States and Russia have many common objectives in the world. There is no reason we cannot or should not work together to counter nuclear proliferation, fight terrorism, combat climate change, or promote stability in Afghanistan.

At the same time, we must make clear to the Russians – and to our allies across Europe – that our desire to improve the tone and substance of U.S.-Russia relations in no way signals a willingness to abandon our principles. As Vice President Biden said in his speech to the Munich Security Conference in February, even as he called for a fresh start in our relations, the United States will not recognize a Russian sphere of influence in Europe, and it will remain our view that sovereign states have the right to make their own decisions and choose their own alliances. The Vice President concluded that the United States and Russia “can disagree and still work together where our interests coincide.”

President Obama and Secretary Clinton have also spoken extensively of the need for global cooperation with our European partners, a conviction I could not endorse more strongly, and an issue to which I have devoted significant attention in my own recent work. Indeed, as the President often points out, no nation, no matter how large or powerful, can confront the challenges of the 21st century alone. And when confronting any of these challenges – terrorism, proliferation, climate change, economic crises, poverty, military threats, infectious disease, human trafficking and many more – working with our European allies, some of the most prosperous, democratic, and militarily capable countries in the world, will be critical to our success.

If confirmed as Assistant Secretary, I would make a top priority of working with our European allies to confront these global challenges. This means listening to them and consulting with them closely, but also calling on them to bear their fair share of responsibilities for defending our common interests.

Madame Chairwoman, notwithstanding the many challenges we face in Europe and Eurasia today, I am convinced that this Administration, working closely with this Committee and the Congress, can accomplish great things with and for citizens of the United States and with and for the hundreds of millions of people who live in this region. If confirmed I would be honored to work with you. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and look forward to answering your questions.