

Written Testimony of Kurt Volker
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Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to NATO
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee.

It is an honor to come before this committee as the President's nominee to serve as the United States Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I am grateful for the confidence expressed by President Bush and Secretary Rice through this nomination.

I am joined here today by my wife, Karen, also a career member of the Foreign Service. I am also delighted to see friends here from the diplomatic corps and others, with whom I have worked to transform NATO. Their support means a great deal to me, and I thank them for being here. I am also grateful for the support of my family and others who cannot be here today.

Mr. Chairman, I am especially pleased to be nominated to serve as Ambassador to NATO because I have dedicated my career to building a secure transatlantic community, based on shared democratic values.

In 20 years in the Foreign Service, I have served four Administrations, advancing our agenda for NATO – at our Embassies in the United Kingdom and Hungary; as a legislative fellow here in the United States Senate; at the U.S. Mission to NATO and in the NATO Secretary General's Private Office; at the National Security Council; and currently as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. In this latter capacity I am proud to have worked closely with this Committee on a variety of issues and am grateful for the close relationship between the Committee and the European Bureau.

I am committed to NATO and to our transatlantic partnership because I am committed to the founding principles of our nation: the values of individual liberty, democracy, market economy, human rights, and the rule of law. These are principles which transcend our national borders and define the best hopes of humanity. We and the other members of NATO are part of a single transatlantic community, based on these shared democratic values.

Those of us who are a part of this community view security challenges in the world from the shared perspective of our values. We know that we need to work together if we are to deal with these challenges effectively, and to continue to advance these enduring values in the world.

NATO's defense of freedom helped to end the Cold War. Yet the end of the Cold War did not mean the end of threats to our democratic community. The strategic landscape has changed and NATO has changed with it. To be sure, NATO's core mission remains the collective defense of its members. But the means by which NATO goes about this mission have changed dramatically over time.

NATO is now in the process of learning how to defend our transatlantic community against new threats and challenges that are often global in scope – threats such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the consequences of failed states.

In its nearly 60-year history NATO has served as:

- our defense of freedom against the Soviet threat, leading eventually to the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the birth of a Europe whole and free;
- the military force that ended ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and kept the peace so democratic governance could emerge;
- the driver for democratic progress in Central Europe, admitting ten new Allies since the fall of the Berlin wall – and deciding to admit still more at the Bucharest Summit last week;
- a core security organization building partnerships with dozens of nations around the world; and
- a front-line alliance in dealing with the 21st century challenges of terrorism and extremism – for example, by conducting counter-terrorism operations in the Mediterranean, or running the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan.

The Bucharest Summit further advanced NATO's transformation, by renewing our commitment to operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo, inviting new members, setting a vision of future membership for others, strengthening partnerships across the globe, and focusing on the defense capabilities needed for the future, including missile defense.

NATO's most important operational challenge is in **Afghanistan**. The United States is deeply committed to the long-term effort in Afghanistan. We have made enormous investments in blood and treasure. I honor the service of our men and women in uniform, as well as our diplomats and civilians. I respect enormously the families who sacrifice so their loved ones can contribute to meeting these important challenges.

I also want to pay tribute to the contributions and sacrifices of our Allies and partners in Afghanistan. They are fighting hard, especially in the East and South, and have suffered significant casualties: Denmark and the UK in recent days, but also Canada, the Netherlands, Australia, and others. All 26 Allies, along with 14 non-NATO partners, have troops in Afghanistan. All are playing a vital role, and all are determined to see this mission through to success.

At the Bucharest Summit, Allies endorsed a strategic vision for Afghanistan that reaffirms their long-term commitment to build an enduring, stable, secure, prosperous and democratic Afghan state, free from the threat of terrorism. Many Allies backed up these words with deeds by announcing new force contributions.

Most notably, though by no means alone, President Sarkozy announced that France will send a new battalion to Eastern Afghanistan, freeing some U.S. troops to do more to help Allies in the South. In addition to the French contribution and the temporary addition of 3,500 U.S. Marines, UK, Polish, Czech and other additions bring the total to about 6,000 new forces so far in 2008.

That said, all Allies must do still more to provide the combat troops, helicopters, and trainers crucial to winning this counterinsurgency fight. Allies must also make serious efforts to ensure their citizens understand that the mission matters, success is within reach, and humanitarian assistance is possible only in a secure environment.

NATO faces real challenges, operationally on the ground, as well as politically in Europe. Violence levels are up, particularly in southern Afghanistan where opium production is also largest. Many Europeans are skeptical about the Afghanistan mission – people either believe it does not matter to them, that success is out of reach, or that humanitarian assistance

alone should be enough. We are working with our NATO partners to clarify the mission and its importance. As agreed in the common vision statement issued at the Bucharest Summit, we are building a shared NATO counterinsurgency strategy that provides for population security, real economic development, and progress in governance. Civil-military coordination can and should be better, and we welcome the naming of a new UN Special Representative, Kai Eide, who will bring greater coherence to our international civilian efforts. The narcotics trade fuels the insurgency and fosters corruption, making all other efforts an uphill struggle. NATO Allies can do more to help the Afghans lead their own counter narcotics strategy.

In acknowledging the serious challenges, we also must recognize our achievements. Working with our Afghan allies, NATO forces thwarted the Taliban's much-hyped "spring offensive" last year. Allies and partners are helping the Afghans build capacity so they can improve good governance and increasingly stand themselves at the forefront of security operations.

It is easy to forget the gains made since 2001. Under the Taliban, there were only 900,000 kids in school – none of them girls, because it was illegal. Only 8 percent of the population had access to medical care. There were only 50 kilometers of paved roads. The Taliban imposed a dark and severe regime on the people of Afghanistan, while terrorists were allowed to train and export their violence and extremism to other countries.

Today, there are nearly 6 million kids in school – over 1.5 million of them girls. Over 65 percent of the population has access to medical care, and there are over 4000 kilometers of paved roads. The government was elected by 8 million Afghan voters, on the basis of a constitution approved through an open process, a Loya Jirga.

To be sure – the challenges in Afghanistan are great, and success will take time. But we are doing the right thing in Afghanistan, we are making progress, and we should continue.

NATO's other major operation is in **Kosovo**, where NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) remains the ultimate guarantor of peace and stability for all people

in Kosovo, with nearly 16,000 personnel from 35 Allied and non-NATO troop contributing nations. It was NATO that ended ethnic cleansing not only in Kosovo but in the wider Balkans, and it has kept the peace that has enabled democratic governance to emerge.

At the recently concluded Bucharest Summit, NATO recommitted itself to helping ensure a safe and secure environment and declared its intention to play a key role in the establishment of a new, multi-ethnic Kosovo Security Force and a civilian agency to oversee it.

NATO has played, and will continue to play other vital operational roles – from its role in securing peace in Bosnia (which has now been passed on to the European Union), to counterterrorist naval operations in the Mediterranean, to offering support for African Union forces in Darfur and transporting humanitarian supplies to Pakistan after a major earthquake, and Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina.

One of the fundamental principles of the Alliance is that the door to **membership** is open to those European democracies who wish to pursue it. The enlargement process has been and remains a driving force for countries to focus on difficult reforms. The United States must continue to provide leadership and clarity of purpose in expanding the Alliance to advance the goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

NATO enlargement has been a historic success – securing freedom, democracy and burgeoning prosperity for 100 million people in Central and Eastern Europe, and strengthening NATO in the process.

In Bucharest, Allies reiterated the importance and success of NATO's Open Door policy. Membership invitations were issued to **Albania and Croatia**, marking an historic occasion for security and stability in the Balkans. Allies also determined that **Macedonia** is ready to receive an invitation as soon as the name issue is resolved. We hope this is done as quickly as possible. We look forward to working in close cooperation with the Senate as we seek its advice and consent to the ratification of the protocols of accession for each of the invitees, which are to be signed by July 2008.

Allies provided an unprecedented commitment to **Ukraine and Georgia**, stating unequivocally that these countries will become members of NATO. They welcomed their request to participate in the Membership Action Plan

(MAP). Allies recognized that the MAP process will benefit reform efforts and authorized Foreign Ministers to review and take decisions on their MAP participation in December 2008. We must continue to support their aspirations.

Allies also invited **Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro**, to begin an Intensified Dialogue relating to their membership aspirations and conveyed their desire to develop a closer relationship with Serbia. NATO's cooperation with these countries will further increase stability in the western Balkans.

To further secure freedom and democracy, NATO is also strengthening its **relationships with partners** across the globe and the developing of new capabilities, such as Missile Defense, Energy Security, and Cyber Defense.

When the Wall fell in 1989, NATO was an Alliance of 16 members and no partners. Today, NATO has 26 members – with 2 new invitees, prospective membership for others, over 20 partners in Europe and Eurasia, seven in the Mediterranean, four in the Persian Gulf, and others from around the globe.

Through the creation of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace, NATO provided the political and practical cooperation necessary to help the newly independent nations of Europe integrate into the transatlantic community.

NATO has also established the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative to reach out to the Middle East, and reached out to new partners around the world on the basis of shared security interests and democratic values. Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and now Singapore are making valuable contributions to NATO operations, especially in Afghanistan, and the Alliance decided at Bucharest to remain open to developing relationships with additional countries.

It is also vital that NATO work effectively with international organizations such as the European Union and United Nations. A capable and united European Union is in NATO's interest. We recognize the value that a stronger and more capable European defense brings, providing capabilities to address common challenges, and support NATO and the EU working closely together. We also need to work as closely as possible with the

United Nations, particularly in UN-mandated, NATO-led operations as in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

In Iraq, NATO provides leadership training to Iraqi Security Forces to help establish a more secure environment. The **NATO Training Mission in Iraq** is looking to broaden its training mission in response to Prime Minister Maliki's requests. Allies have also agreed to proposals for a structured cooperation framework to develop NATO's long-term relationship with Iraq.

NATO is committed to building a relationship where **NATO and Russia** can work together to address common interests such as nonproliferation, counterterrorism, and border controls and counter-narcotics with respect to Afghanistan. We welcomed Russia's most recent offer of a mechanism for transiting non-military freight through Russian territory in support of ISAF.

On other issues such as Kosovo, missile defense, and the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), serious differences remain. On CFE, NATO has endorsed the U.S. parallel actions package, which we believe can ensure the viability of this important security regime.

We are working hard to develop the **capabilities** needed for a new century – the NATO Response Force, the C-17 consortium, the Special Forces coordination, and steps toward NATO missile defenses. At Bucharest, Allies recognized that ballistic missile proliferation poses an increasing threat; that missile defense forms part of a broader response to counter this threat; and that the U.S. system will make a substantial contribution to protecting Alliance territories and populations. NATO will continue its work on missile defense, and also with Russia as well, in order to provide more effective defenses for all Alliance territory.

A NATO **Cyber Defense** Policy, endorsed at Bucharest, enhances our ability to protect our sensitive infrastructure, allows pool experiences, and come to the assistance of an Ally whose infrastructure is under threat. I thank Senators on this Committee for focusing attention on this issue following the cyber attacks against Estonia.

NATO's role in **energy security**, noted at Bucharest, will help address threats to energy infrastructure and in order to better safeguard the security interests of the Allies. I appreciate the leadership of Senators on this

Committee for their involvement in energy security and believe NATO is building a response to the concerns you have raised.

NATO faces genuine challenges, as it always has. The strength and enduring character of the Alliance comes from our ability to face these challenges together. As Winston Churchill said, “the only thing worse than fighting with Allies is fighting without them.”

If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to NATO, I will work to strengthen support and understanding in Europe for two fundamental ideas:

- That the prosperity and well-being of our democratic societies still depends critically on security, so we must invest in security; and
- That the security of Europe and North America remain fundamentally linked, so we must face our modern-day security challenges together.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. If confirmed, I will do my very best to serve my country with distinction, and to work closely with you and this Committee.

I look forward to listening to your views, and to responding to any questions you and the members of the Committee may have.