NATO ENLARGEMENT Testimony

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before you today. Thank you also for the support you have given to me and to other members of my commands during the time I had the privilege of serving in uniform. I have enjoyed working with you over the years, and I sincerely appreciate your inviting me back to testify here today on such an important matter as the future of NATO.

It is truly a privilege to testify on the subject of NATO and its enlargement. For those of us who served in NATO command and policy positions over the past decade, the prospective addition of these seven new members is a dream come true. We watched as these nations of Eastern Europe shook off the legacies of Communism and struggled to find their way to the West. In that struggle, the prospect of NATO membership, and its promise of a security association with the United States, was a very strong motivating factor. Now we are moving to fulfill their hopes. I also applaud the work of both Administrations – the Clinton Administration and the Bush Administration – in making this day possible. And, I especially want to congratulate the armed forces, the governments and the peoples of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Romania; your hard work and dedication to the principles of democracy and liberty has made NATO membership possible.

Unfortunately, NATO is once again at risk. It is an organization in search of a mission, excluded from intimate participation and support in the US war on terror, excluded from early planning and engagement in the war against Iraq. For many, it has become an after-thought. As one official told me wryly last year, "NATO –Keep the Myth Alive." Recently, as NATO members have quarreled publicly and angrily about matters of war and peace, some have looked at this organization and concluded that its time has passed, that the issues which divide the US

from Europe are too broad to be bridged by an old treaty and an experienced bureaucracy. They have charged that the old allies contribute too little, our respective attitudes are too different, and the focus of American security interests lies elsewhere.

But this is at bottom not a dispute about NATO; rather, it is a debate about the nature of America's interests abroad and how we should pursue them. This is a question about American leadership. In this debate, one group apparently believes that with the end of the Cold War, our purposes in Europe were essentially finished, that the countries there have no real choice but to support the broad outlines of American policy, and that therefore our most important work is now centered on the Midddle East and Asia, where we are most likely to fight. They have looked there, rather than the old countries of Europe as the vital areas of engagement. They see troop deployments oriented toward potential theaters of war as critical; they are prepared to use military power in coercive diplomacy and preventive conflicts; and they would reduce much of our half-century-old military presence in Europe. This strategy did not emerge in response to the terrorist strikes on New York and the Pentagon, but rather took advantage of those events to gain ascendancy.

I see greater promise in a different approach. I believe our security as a nation, and the safety of every American, is best enhanced by a broad and visionary leadership, which enlists capable and committed allies in support. We are safer when we are liked, not when we are hated, when we are respected, not just feared. American power should remain a wellspring of inspiration, not become a source of concern. As President Harry S. Truman stated at the founding of the United Nations in 1945 [without new security structures]…"we will be forced to accept the fundamental philosophy of our enemies, namely, that Might Makes Right. To deny this premise, and we most certainly do, we are obliged to provide the necessary means to refute

it. Words are not enough. We must, once and for all, reverse the order, and prove by our acts conclusively, that Right Has Might."

And while it is certainly clear that today, the American military is virtually unchallengeable, we cannot know what the future will hold. For all our military strength, we are only 5% of the world's population, and other, larger nations, particularly in Asia, are developing their own economic strength and military potential rapidly. We must conduct ourselves with the aim of not only dealing with immediate challenges but also establishing the precedents, procedures and institutions that we need for decades ahead.

One of my predecessors in NATO, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, warned in his farewell address that "America's leadership and prestige depend, not merely upon our unmatched material progress, riches and military strength, but on how we use our power in the interests of world peace and human betterment." And those of us who have served in the Armed Forces have a full appreciation of the ultimate limitations of military power, no matter how capable and benignly led. America's strength was really built on the strength of our economy. And our economic strength has been based on our success in building allies and friends, opening markets, winning global investors' confidence, and encouraging peace and stability world-wide, even as tens of thousands of American manufacturing and service jobs continues to flow overseas to lower cost areas.

We should be focusing our security efforts first on how to prevent war. Deterrence and containment are still largely valid concepts, even in the post-Cold War world. This means focusing on ending both conventional and unconventional weapons proliferation, encouraging the peaceful resolution of disputes, and improving opportunities for all nations around the world to achieve some of the security, democracy and prosperity that Americans enjoy. We should be

seeking to prevent the emergence of frictions and tensions that might lead to conflict. When problems do arise, we should use diplomacy and economic measures first, and force only as a last resort. If fighting is necessary, we should aim to work multilaterally with strong allies if we can, and unilaterally only if we must. And in each of these tasks, we should expect the greatest potential for support from our friends and allies in Europe.

These European nations reflect our values, share our heritage, and understand our culture and interests more than any other country. We are together more than 600 million people, approximately half of the world's GDP, and three of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. Working together, we can assure prosperity and security for our people as well as most of the world.

Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction may change the nature of the threats we face, but they do not fundamentally alter the nature of the responses we should undertake. The US military response against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan was essential, but there are clear limits to the role of military force in attacking terrorists; many of the terrorist cells have been embedded within our own allies, where we must work with information sharing, law enforcement, and their judiciaries to break-up terrorist planning and activities. These activities require the closest harmonization of lows, standardization of procedures, and deep-seated trust among allies.

When the nation is in imminent danger, every American President has always had the authority and responsibility to consider the use of force preemptively, and many have done so. But this has not changed the broader pattern of international affairs with which we must be concerned – American interests in promoting trade, travel and commerce abroad: encouraging the free flow of capital and ideas; and sustaining international institutions to ease the burdens of

leadership in working difficult issues like trade and development, economic growth, the environment and security. American leadership has traditionally sought the support and assistance of international institutions to spread the burdens and increase the legitimacy of necessary security measures, and to promote our broader interests as well.

NATO, one of these international institutions, has a critical role to play in assuring our collective security. NATO is itself a "consensus engine" able to convert disparate national interests into common NATO policy. It not only reflects common interests between nations, it also creates them. These member nations of NATO are our closest friends in the international world. NATO is the engine that binds us, converting national perspectives and issues into agreed Alliance positions through a proven system of issue papers, council meetings ministerial meetings and summitry.

Each nation in NATO is represented by an Ambassador, who brings national perspectives and concerns, into a formal and informal system of consultations and meetings to calibrate differences, seek compromises, and build consensus. International staffs analyze national issues and positions to help formulate policies to achieve consensus and govern implementation. Alliance military headquarters, with very strong US participation and leadership, are available to provide military advice, and to conduct military operations with the forces that nations provide.

Yet for all its multinational character, NATO is essentially an American institution. We not only took the lead in organizing and sustaining it, we also are its largest stakeholder and major contributor. Organizationally it looks to us for leadership. NATO is effective only if it is used diligently by American leadership, respected by our officials, and tended carefully by their staffs. Much of the work is time consuming and inconvenient, and many would suggest, out of all proportion to the military contributions that the Alliance can add to US capabilities.

But here is the point: NATO has never been purely a military alliance. It has always been fundamentally political, aiming at heading off war through deterrence and resolve. It has been the foundation for much of America's success in promoting our economy and our values not only in Europe but throughout the world.

Even after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, NATO served a vital purpose in support of American diplomacy in Europe and the Balkans, and in establishing the common understandings there that enabled agreement on a host of other issues elsewhere. Today we should be engaging NATO as the centerpiece of our efforts to deal with the issues of terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and peacekeeping beyond the borders of Europe. NATO could be "multifunctionalized," to serve as a consensus engine helping us harmonize laws and procedures to counter international terrorism, establish common procedures for information security to strengthen efforts against weapons proliferation, and of course, to deal with military requirements even beyond Europe.

This is a vision of NATO that remains to be achieved, but it offers an important opportunity for this nation and our leaders. Enlarging NATO is an essential step in this direction. It will strengthen the alliance, promote greater stability in Central and Eastern Europe and allow us to deal more effectively with many of the new security threats facing us today.

During the 1990's NATO membership offered hopes to Eastern European countries that the cycle of threat and conquest which marked Europe in the 20th Century would never be repeated. At first, to be candid, NATO membership was seen as protection against repeated Russian domination. As one foreign minister remarked to me several years ago, "Today Russia is weak, but someday she will be strong again, and before that day, our country must be a

member of NATO." Another minister, from a different country explained, "Distrust the Russians? There are many reasons. In 1878…" he began.

While we may discount such fears today, these concerns are very much alive in Eastern Europe. As one President told me, 'In Europe, you must think forty years ahead in planning security…" Indeed, our recent disagreements with Russia, despite the highest hopes and most cordial relations between the heads of state, should warn us that all states have their own interests – and necessarily ours – in their aims.

But fundamentally, NATO's enlargement is in Russia's interest as well. Stability and peace in Eastern Europe is essential if Russia's own economic and human potential is to be realized. And the Baltic States, in particular, may have vital roles in providing, Russia with access to Western ideas and cultures, accelerating the economic and political development of Russia itself. While many in the Russian power ministries may yet oppose the entry of the Baltic States, Russia has nevertheless acquiesced, in part due to the diligent efforts of NATO's political leaders, and in particular, Secretary General George Robertson, to offer an improved mechanism of consultation and engagement for Russia.

The new mechanism has enabled Russia to overcome the legacy of its resistance to NATO's operation in Kosovo, and Russia should now feel that it has an opportunity to have its interests fully considered by the Alliance before final decisions are made on critical issues. On the other hand, from my own experience, I would second the warning that many have given over the years, that Russia must not have a veto on NATO activities, either formal or informal.

Beyond the issue of Russia, though, the decade of the 1990's proved that NATO had a role in promoting the stability of southeast Europe. Engagement in the Balkans defined NATO's purpose for a decade, and still dominates NATO activities today. NATO in Bosnia ended a war

that had claimed perhaps 150,000 lives and displaced more than 2 million people. And in Kosovo, NATO actions rectified an emergent ethnic cleansing campaign which threatened to throw a million and a half Albanian out of their homes.

Each of the countries under consideration now for NATO membership played crucial roles in military operations and peacekeeping in the Balkans. I would like to thank especially Bulgaria and Romania, who, at considerable risk, accepted NATO over flights, isolated Serbia from resupply, and refused Russian air over flight requests during the crisis at Pristina airfield. They helped NATO achieve victory in that vital campaign and establish a peaceful occupation of Kosovo afterwards. It was NATO's first – and hopefully, last - war, and we should be grateful to them.

Gratitude itself, however, is not a sufficient rationale for admitting these and other candidate nations into NATO. Each of these nominated states has met NATO's criteria for membership in terms of stability, economic reform, democratic governance, civilian control of the armed forces, resolution of border disputes and lingering ethnic problems, and commitment to rule of law and human rights. Their military structures have been reduced and reorganized from the legacies o the Warsaw Pact and Cold War experience. And they have each worked on their Membership Action Plans, a series of measures to ready them for integration into NATO military structures, though completing the military transformations may well take up to a decade to complete.

Some have cited the relatively modest forces that the new members could contribute as reason for concern. Yet as I watched the evolution of their capabilities during my tenure in Europe, I was impressed with the quality of their emerging leaders, their willingness to work together in forming collective capabilities, like BALTBAT, and their determination to live up to

their resource commitments in funding their security needs. I also appreciated the geography and facilities they offered to the alliance – vast training opportunities, unused airstrips, port and refurbishment facilities, and of course, an increased zone of stability to add to the protection of existing NATO member states. In sum, these are substantial contributions.

As far as costs are concerned, these should be relatively insignificant. During discussions of NATO's first round of enlargements five years ago many in our Congress voiced objections on the basis of costs. Figures ranging into the billions of dollars were cited. In fact, the overall cost has been virtually nil, since the new entrants are obligated to pick up a share of NATO's infrastructure and administrative budgets, thereby reducing our own expenses. And if some modest costs do arise, such as from redeployments of US troops or training ranges, I believe we should evaluate these in terms of the benefits of the prospective changes.

A third area of concern sometimes raised has been in NATO decision-making procedures. Many have suggested that somehow these additional members might render ineffective NATO's decision making process of unanimous consent. I believe the politics and the records of these prospective members refutes that concern. As is clear from the diplomacy preceding US actions in Iraq, these states are very strongly pro-US, and are likely to side with us in facing the issues ahead. Certainly in the Kosovo campaign, the three new members proved the most loyal of allies, often at great risk to their support at home. In any event, it has always been the case that those with the most resources at risk have the heaviest weight in deciding the issues at hand. I would urge that NATO's decision making process not be altered or abridged.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I ask your support of NATO membership for these seven nations. They have the long term commitments to be part of the West, they have met the democratic standards essential for NATO members, and they have positive and tangible

contributions to make to our own security. Bringing them in will strengthen the Alliance and allow us to respond more effectively to the new security threats facing us today.

Finally, and perhaps more importantly as we look ahead, I also ask that you report out your support for their membership with a view for further transformation of NATO to serve as the clearing point and focal point for increased efforts against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Our allies are critical to our success in these areas. And, as you do so, I would hope that you would call for greater commitment from American leadership in the further transformation of NATO, that our nation may energize a new era of collective efforts to strengthen our security abroad, reduce our burdens at home, prepare the institutions and procedures we will need to guard American interests decades into the future, and make every American safer and more welcome at work or at leisure anywhere in the world.