

Statement of  
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For European Affairs  
before the Senate Armed Services Committee  
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Mr. Chairman, Senator Levin, distinguished members of the Committee:

Thank you for welcoming me to the Committee today.

Mr. Chairman, last week you said that through these hearings you want to create a record of the Kosovo conflict for future generations of young military officers and enlisted personnel. That is a worthwhile cause. If you would allow me, I'd like to add young diplomats – who also need your support and also defend our country -- to the list of people who will benefit from these hearings.

Mr. Chairman, you have asked me to discuss NATO's Strategic Concept.

I have greatly benefited from our conversations on this subject over the past year. Your invitation gives me the chance today to try to connect NATO's Strategic Concept to the Kosovo crisis and the lessons to be drawn from this conflict.

Over the last five years many in our country, including this Administration and Members of Congress, have pursued a vision of a NATO committed first and foremost to collective defense and willing to embrace new qualified members and new crisis response missions. The Kosovo conflict affirmed the need for such a military alliance and for the Alliance unity so well described by Secretary Cohen in his testimony here on October 14.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, Kosovo highlighted some Alliance weaknesses that must be addressed, especially when it comes to European forces and capabilities.

Mr. Chairman, the capability gap across the Atlantic is not a new problem. It has existed for years -- and Senators such as yourself have done much to draw attention to it. But it is one thing to have an imbalance in peacetime. It is quite another to experience them in a crisis. Increasing European capabilities is essential if we are to sustain a strong NATO in the future.

Mr. Chairman, the key idea of the Washington summit was this: The NATO of the future must be as good at dealing with the next challenges as it was in dealing with the threats of the past fifty years.

The Strategic Concept adopted at the Washington summit is a key component in a package of initiatives designed to meet this objective. The Strategic Concept creates the planning framework which will help ensure that we and our Allies build the kinds of forces and capabilities to see that the Alliance can meet that standard.

Mr. Chairman, you and I have talked about whether April was the right time to adopt a new Strategic Concept. We agreed in April to disagree on the question of timing but to assess the judgment in the future.

So let me today try to make the case that the Strategic Concept was the right document at the right time.

Let me address the concerns we have heard about the Strategic Concept six months after the Washington Summit by making five quick points.

First, the Strategic Concept does not saddle the United States with new "out of area" commitments. The commitments of the United States in NATO are governed by the Washington Treaty of 1949 and only by the Washington Treaty of 1949.

The Strategic Concept does not alter those commitments. As Under Secretary Slocombe said in his statement, since 1950 the Strategic Concept has been revised a number of times, including this year. But our commitments under the Treaty have remained unchanged since 1949.

Those commitments are straightforward: an armed attack against any Ally or Allies in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against all Allies, and each of the Allies will assist those attacked, through individual and collective action, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

At the same time, NATO's founders also understood that the realm of Allies' interests could be broader than the scope of Alliance territory. They left open the possibility that Allies might come together voluntarily to address a threat to their security beyond Article 5. The 1949 Treaty leaves open the possibility of consultations and action by allies if a consensus exists. NATO will continue to decide its non-Article 5 tasks on a case-by-case basis, and by consensus. There is no prior commitment to any particular action by the United States. There is a clear distinction between what Allies are obligated to do under the Treaty and what they can do voluntarily if they so choose.

Second, the Strategic Concept is about creating new capabilities. The Strategic Concept creates the framework within which military planners establish the military strategy to implement those commitments--and helps to ensure that the capabilities exist to implement NATO's strategy. For many of our smaller European NATO Allies, it is the central framework for their national defense planning.

Third, why now? Both we and our Allies felt that the 1991 Strategic Concept was out of date given the significant changes that had taken place in the strategic environment in Europe and the security challenges the Alliance is likely to face.

The 1991 Strategic Concept was drafted before the USSR collapsed. The 1991 Strategic Concept predated the Alliance's operations in Bosnia, NATO's decision to enlarge to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary as well as the signing of the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

The 1991 Strategic Concept focussed on a residual Soviet threat. By the late 1990s we had concluded that the Alliance needed to give more focus to new threats such as weapons of mass destruction; and that the Alliance needed an updated military strategy and better capabilities for carrying out Article 5 commitments to old and new members in a changed strategic environment as well as to do a better job in future crisis response missions. We wanted to lock in the progress we had made in getting the Alliance to address this new environment.

Fourth, this Strategic Concept provides a framework and incentive for our Allies to develop capabilities that are more like ours. Too few Allies are able to project and sustain their military forces over distance either as part of an Article 5 regional reinforcement mission or as part of a non-Article 5 crisis response operation.

U.S. forces are designed and equipped to perform power projection missions beyond our borders. Our Allies are starting to shift to a new force posture where they can project power to defend NATO's borders or participate in crisis response operations. The Strategic Concept is designed to help accomplish this central goal .

As Secretary Cohen said when he appeared before this Committee earlier this month, the successful implementation of NATO's Defense Capabilities Initiative, a U.S. initiative adopted at the Washington Summit, has to be one of our top priorities. He noted that, in the wake of Kosovo, the Allies are now concentrating on what needs to be done to measure up to the need to have precision guided munitions, greater strategic lift, and secure communications that are fully inter-operable. They understand this is not simply something to talk about. Action has to be taken.

In designing this Strategic Concept, we were guided by the views of the vast majority of U.S. Senators as expressed in the amendment offered to the resolution of ratification of NATO enlargement by Senator Jon Kyl. NATO's new Strategic Concept implements the goals established in that amendment.

I'd make one note on the issue of mandates. Nothing in the Strategic Concept modifies the positions we have taken regarding NATO's ability to act in the absence of a UN Security Council mandate.

Fifth and finally, Mr. Chairman, we think that the Kosovo conflict underscored the need for NATO's new Strategic Concept. Kosovo was a success for NATO, but it also

highlighted where its capabilities must be improved. Both Bosnia and Kosovo validate one of the most important underlying principles in the New Strategic Concept -- the need for Allies to improve their military capabilities to cover the full spectrum of future missions and thereby to narrow the imbalances in the transatlantic partnership through achieving greater European military effectiveness and flexibility.

Mr. Chairman, the new Strategic Concept will not solve all of the Alliance's problems. But in tandem with the lessons learned from Bosnia and Kosovo, it set the framework for moving the Allies in the right direction on enhancing their military capabilities. Together with our Defense Capabilities Initiative, our Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative and a more balanced European Security and Defense Identity, it can help us narrow the capabilities gap across the Atlantic. By doing so, it can help us meet the benchmark the Alliance set for itself at Washington: to be as good at meeting the challenges of the future as it was in meeting the challenges during the Cold War.