

**Testimony of Ivo H. Daalder**  
**Ambassador-Designate to NATO**  
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**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman 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 and I am grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Clinton have shown in nominating me.

I am joined here today by my family. My wife, Elisa Harris, has been my partner and best friend for almost a quarter century and I am extremely grateful for her continuing love and support. My sons, Marc and Michael, continually remind me that there is much more to life than work – starting with baseball and football – and, as importantly, that our life's work must be dedicated to helping create a better, more prosperous and peaceful world for them and their peers to grow up in. They mean everything to me. My mother, had she lived to witness this moment, would have been proud though slightly amazed that her youngest son would have been nominated to this important position. My father, who still resides in the Netherlands, is doubly proud because of it. I thank both of them, from the bottom of my heart, for helping make me who I am.

Madam Chairwoman, I am especially pleased to be nominated to serve as Ambassador to NATO because I am a transatlantic being. I spent the first half of my nearly 50 years living in Europe, growing up in the Netherlands, finishing high school in Italy, and studying in Great Britain. I first arrived at these shores a quarter-of-a-century ago, as an exchange student on a scholarship that bears the name of one of this Committee's most revered former chairmen: Senator J. William Fulbright. This fellowship allowed me to pursue my doctoral studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. My dissertation, by the way, was on the subject of NATO's nuclear strategy – a subject I had decided to pursue following a stint as a research assistant working for the political and security committees of the North Atlantic Assembly in Brussels in the early 1980s. I met my wife in Cambridge, and following a return to Europe shortly after we were married, I returned to the United States more than twenty years ago determined to contribute as a new citizen to this great country of ours. It is therefore a special pleasure, should

I be confirmed, to represent the United States at an organization that I have long admired and supported in a part of the world that I once called home.

But putting aside the personal, Madam Chairwoman, I sit here before you most importantly as someone who strongly believes in, and wholly endorses, our President's desire for a new era of American engagement and leadership in world affairs. We live in a world marked by great and growing interconnectedness – a world that is getting smaller each and every day. In this age of global politics, developments very far away can have very large and immediate consequences for the safety, prosperity, and health of Americans here at home. In such a world, no country, not even as great and powerful a nation as ours, can deal with the myriad of challenges and opportunities we confront all on its own. That is why President Obama has made renewing our alliances and partnerships a top priority – because he understands that our security, our prosperity, even our liberty increasingly depend on the security, prosperity, and liberty of others around the world. Now is the time for a new era of international cooperation that strengthens our existing partnerships and builds new ones to confront terrorism, violent extremism and nuclear proliferation; the consequences of failed states; climate change and poverty; genocide and disease. In this era of globalization, threats are no longer geographically confined – they can come from anywhere around the world. And they can be dealt with effectively only if we band together with our allies and friends around the world.

Our partnership with Europe, solidified in the Atlantic Alliance, has always stood – and must continue to stand – at the core of this cooperative effort. It was no accident that President Obama's first extended overseas trip was to Europe, thus emphasizing the continuing importance the United States attaches to uniting America with its most important and strongest partners in the world — each and everyone determined to join together to address new and existing security challenges. In an era of global politics, regional alliances remain the key pillars of our international engagement — and none more so than the Euro-Atlantic alliance that was formed 60 years ago. This Alliance is based on common interests and, above all, on shared democratic values. Earlier this month, NATO celebrated its anniversary in an historic Summit on the Franco-German border — where it welcomed new Allies in Albania and Croatia, the decision by France to return to the military structure of the Alliance, and the appointment of a new Secretary General who will lead the Alliance to face the new challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Europe has come a very long way from the dark days of fratricidal conflict and is now a large and continually expanding zone of peace and freedom. NATO enlargement has been a tremendous success, providing a foundation for Europe's broader transformation — in the process making the world more secure, more stable, and more prosperous. NATO's door must remain open to all countries that meet its standards and can contribute to security. And NATO must continue to fulfill its core security mission: to protect the territory and population of every member of the Atlantic Alliance against threats to its integrity and security. No one should question whether the Article 5 guarantee is real. It is — and for every one of the 28 NATO members, as we ourselves found out on September 12, 2001, when for the first time in history the Allies invoked its provisions following the horrendous attacks on our country 24 hours before. The key question for the United States now must be how we and our Allies can make NATO as effective in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as it was in the 20<sup>th</sup>; how to make this Alliance, which has stood us so well for so long, an effective partnership to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

And Madam Chairwoman, we do face grave and growing challenges — but we also face a number of great opportunities. The most immediate and urgent challenge we confront is in Afghanistan, where nearly 62,000 NATO troops are engaged in the largest military operation in Alliance history — many thousands of miles away from NATO's headquarters in Brussels. Our men and women in uniform, as well as the diplomats and aid workers who face great danger every moment of every day, are doing extraordinary things. In that distant land, they are defending the Afghan people and their government against a resurgent and brutal insurgency led by the Taliban and a terrorist threat from al Qaeda. And we are determined to succeed.

The President's goal is clear: to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country in the future. After close and intense consultations with our NATO Allies as well as other countries, the President last month announced the conclusion of the Administration's review of our strategy towards this region. NATO endorsed this strategy at the Summit earlier this month — making clear that Allies understand that we are in this together, as an Alliance of like-minded states with common interests and perspectives, and that all of us will have to do more to succeed.

Getting Afghanistan back on track is vital to our collective security. At the International Conference on Afghanistan in The Hague on March 31, participants endorsed a better-coordinated and strategically comprehensive approach that places increased emphasis on civilian programs, affirms the need for strengthening Afghan security forces, and leads to greater responsibility for the Afghan people themselves. And therein lies an important opportunity. We can succeed if we strengthen our partnerships and collective efforts, not only among our NATO Allies, but with our partners in the EU and across the globe.

The Alliance is making good on its pledge to secure the Afghan elections this year and is establishing a training mission in Afghanistan. In this way, the Alliance will both strengthen the role of the Afghan Government and build up the country's security forces. We all have a hugely important role to play in training and equipping the Afghan army and police and in building the capacity of Afghanistan's many civilian institutions. The fact that so many countries and organizations care so much about Afghanistan should be a decisive advantage, not an obstacle to success. Of course, it will be vitally important to secure and maintain the troops, public support, and financial resources necessary to meet these challenges. I see it as one of my most important roles, should I be confirmed, to secure such support from our European Allies.

The NATO-Russia relationship also presents challenges and opportunities. As the President said, the Administration is determined to "reset or reboot" our relationship with Moscow. Our Allies agree, and the Alliance is united in its determination to renew its engagement with Russia. Events in Georgia in 2008 dramatized the differences between NATO and Russia. We will not recognize a Russian sphere of "privileged interest"; we will not recognize as independent countries the breakaway Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; and we affirm the right of all countries, including Georgia and Ukraine, to choose their own alliances. But even when we disagree with Russia – and especially when we disagree deeply as we do over these and other issues – we need to maintain an open dialogue so that we can discuss our differences frankly even while seeking new avenues of cooperation. To that end, I look forward, should I be confirmed, to working with my NATO and Russian colleagues in revitalizing the NATO-Russia Council to forge a new era of cooperation.

I do believe such cooperation is both necessary and potentially very useful.

NATO and Russia have unique resources to bring to bear on the full range of global security challenges. In Afghanistan, Russia is cooperating with NATO through a transit arrangement to support our forces operating in that country. For many years, guided by the able and determined leadership provided by Senator Lugar and others, we have worked with Moscow to secure nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons materials, facilities, and capabilities. Since 9/11, Moscow has been an important partner in combating the scourge of terrorism — a reality that has proven deadly for many Russians as well. We must build on these successes and strengthen our joint efforts to address these and other challenges to our common interests — by succeeding in Afghanistan, defeating terrorists, securing nuclear materials, enhancing biosecurity, bolstering arms control, strengthening the nonproliferation regime, countering piracy, and more.

Of course, we must be realistic. NATO and Russia will sometimes disagree. But as Secretary Clinton has emphasized, that is all the more reason for us to talk to Russia. You don't punish Russia by stopping to talk to them about the issue on which we disagree. Instead, we must state our differences clearly and frankly, and aspire — through engagement and joint efforts — to gradually transform the NATO-Russia relationship into an effective partnership to defeat common threats and enhance common interests.

Beyond Afghanistan and relations with Russia, there are a host of new challenges that are equally pressing — terrorism and violent extremism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failed states, piracy, cyber and biosecurity, as well as broader challenges such as threats to energy security, and environmental issues. The Alliance has been an unqualified success in creating a Europe that is united, peaceful and free, but even this region is threatened by the world beyond it. Terrorists do not recognize geographical limits. Pandemics know no borders. Climate change does not stop at frontiers. Hackers are not deterred from attacking critical infrastructure by firewalls in local computing systems. Some people speak of these issues as if they were looming on the horizon, but I believe they are already at our doorstep. Addressing these new challenges is not just a matter of political agreement, but of adapting and reforming our organization so that NATO has the capability to respond if and when necessary.

NATO may be a Euro-Atlantic security organization, but the security of the Euro-Atlantic region is intimately tied to security around the globe. Just as

the world affects NATO, NATO must affect what happens in the world. It is critical that the Alliance evolve. And it is doing just that. The Alliance is engaged in out-of-area operations in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Kosovo; its ships patrol for pirates off the Horn of Africa; it is enhancing security in cyberspace; and it is looking into ways to ensure energy resources and critical energy infrastructure are kept secure. NATO is building and enhancing its partnerships with other actors in the realm of security, in particular the European Union. It is also collaborating well with the African Union and the United Nations. But these are only the first steps. We will need to take many more if we truly want to take on the challenges of this new century. At its Summit earlier this month, the Alliance launched a comprehensive review of its Strategic Concept — now ten years old and widely acknowledged as outdated. If confirmed, I will work hard, and consult with this Committee, to help ensure that the Alliance continues to ensure the safety and security of its citizens as we confront a multitude of new challenges stemming from a shrinking, yet dangerous world.

The Administration has stressed both publicly and privately that consultations among friends and Allies will be a cornerstone of its diplomacy. As President Obama said in Strasbourg, the United States is ready “to listen, to learn, and to lead.” That will be my approach in the North Atlantic Council as well, should I be confirmed.

It is a true honor to be nominated to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to an organization for which consultation with the aim of reaching consensus has always been the operating principle. But NATO is more than a forum for dialogue: it is above all an Alliance of Democracies, of like-minded nations that share common values, and are willing, if necessary, to fight for these values – as we and our Allies are doing right now, in Afghanistan. America is strongest when it acts in concert with its most powerful and democratic friends. If confirmed, it will be a great honor to work with Congress and this Committee to represent the United States in the one organization that unites these allies in what has been and will remain our most important and successful partnership – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and members of the committee for granting me your time and attention today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have for me.