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Remarks for a Panel Discussion on the Future of Nuclear Weapons and Missile Defense in NATO Security



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- I want to begin by recalling the “Great Ends of the Alliance”.

- NATO was created to:
 - promote peace and stability by preventing war and aggression in the Euro-Atlantic space, and, in so doing,

 - to insure that Alliance security is indivisible, that risk is shared equally by all members, and that the burden to do all of this equally is shared.

 - This concept had its origins at the Alliance’s very beginning, at a time when the European members faced a military threat that was not yet faced by its North American members....

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- Geography was irrelevant then: a threat to one was deemed a threat to all, and would be met as such
- The key pillar of the Alliance therefore has been -- and remains -- the Article V guarantee
- I believe that as part of that guarantee, all NATO members should be protected against ballistic missile attack.
 - In the mid-1990's I chartered the first studies as to where missile defenses might be placed in Europe in order to provide the same degree of protection to NATO Europe as the United States was seeking in its limited missile defense programs. I believed then, as I do now, that if Alliance security is indivisible, one part of the Alliance should not be denied protection afforded other allies.
 - The United States has now deployed a system to protect North America against long-range missile threats from rogue states. I believe NATO Europe should similarly be protected. NATO Europe's missile defense should evolve commensurate with the threat facing it. In this regard, I support both the MEADS program and the Obama Administration's decision last year to redirect efforts to protect NATO Europe against the current generation of shorter-range threat ballistic missiles. If the threat to NATO Europe matures and becomes more sophisticated, so too should NATO's defenses. But those decisions do not need to be made now.

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- Defending against attack is a necessary but insufficient policy however. For that reason, nuclear deterrence has always been a key element of Article V.
 - Given the tremendous devastation in Europe created by World War II, the threat of nuclear escalation made clear NATO's determination that fighting another conventional war on NATO's soil was unacceptable
- And deterrence worked. I believe it was because nuclear weapons made war between the great powers too dangerous.
- But the world remains a dangerous place.
 - There are still nations which do not share our collective view of the world, and which, if they believed they could do so with impunity, would threaten our collective vital interests.
 - Some of these have nuclear weapons; some of these have nuclear weapons and are building more; some have embraced nuclear weapons at the heart of their security policy; and others are seeking to acquire them.
 - That is why Article V remains vital. It is why Article V still requires, in addition to conventional capabilities, a nuclear element. And, as in the 1950's when geographic separation from the threat

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was irrelevant, so too in 2010 those nations which directly benefitted Article V in the past have a moral obligation to ensure new Allies receive the same benefit.

- The strategic forces of the United States and the United Kingdom, which are directly committed to the defense of the Alliance, underpin the nuclear element of Article V. French strategic forces, although they are not directly committed to NATO, also have a role to play in NATO's overall nuclear deterrent.
- And the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe has traditionally filled a critical role: that of "coupling" U.S. strategic forces to NATO's defense.
 - History plays a role here. For example, the United States has extended a nuclear umbrella over Japan without forward stationing of nuclear forces in the region (although some Japanese officials are now advocating forward stationing).
 - But the strength of the US umbrella over NATO has for decades rested on forward deployments. Over the past year the governments of many of the Alliance's nations have made clear they continue to view these deployments as both credible and vital to their security – today and for the foreseeable future.

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- These forces, while they have properly come to assume a symbolic role, nevertheless retain military capability. Indeed, the credibility of the coupling effect they provide would be meaningless without that.

- “Coupling” has many aspects. It demonstrates to allied publics and to potential adversaries alike that NATO shares the risks and the burdens of maintaining a nuclear shield which protects all allies. Similarly, it demonstrates to American politicians and strategists – and American voters and opinion makers as well – that the European members of NATO are as committed to the Alliance’s defense as are the North American members. Bluntly put, the basing of nuclear weapons in NATO Europe serves to put the U.S. homeland at risk to nuclear attack if NATO should ever be forced to consider escalating to nuclear use to defend the Alliance’s territorial integrity. This, in turn, signals any potential aggressor government that the risks of attacking NATO far outweigh any possible gains.
 - And make no mistake: changing the status quo radically will also send a signal. And the signal that it sends, to both allies and to potential adversaries, could have unintended and highly counter-productive consequences. A decision of such import affects the security of the entire Alliance, and cannot and should not be taken unilaterally or even by a few allies; it must reflect the consensus, and support the security concerns, of all allies.

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- The size of the European-based nuclear force has been, according to NATO policy, been maintained “at the minimum level necessary” for more than twenty years.
 - Indeed, the force which was deemed “a minimum” after the 1991 nuclear initiatives has been reduced further by two-thirds over the last two decades.
 - Future adjustments can and should be made commensurate with the Alliance’s view of its security situation.
 - But NATO should also take account of the obscenely large Russian short-range nuclear forces. Those forces, which the governments of Presidents Gorbachev and Yeltsin pledged to reduce as dramatically as NATO cut its forces in 1991, remain in place, as much a threat to Russian security -- due to risks of theft, diversion, sale and exposure to terrorists -- as to NATO.
 - And it is in NATO’s interest – and in Russia’s interest -- to see those forces reduced dramatically and in a transparent manner. NATO has tried unilateral cuts and leading by example: this has not produced the desired result.
 - It’s time to try a new approach. That is why in February of this year former Secretary General Lord Robertson, Dr. Kori Schake and I opened the debate by advocating the initiation of a NATO-Russia arms reduction agreement for shorter range nuclear forces. Cuts by

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both sides, in a transparent and open manner, will do much to demonstrate mutual commitments to further disarmament and will boost non-proliferation efforts in a meaningful and demonstrable way.

- An arms reduction treaty which preserved the nuclear element of Article V while cutting dramatically the numbers of shorter-range nuclear weapons in Europe should be a NATO aspiration.

- I am delighted that NATO Foreign Ministers, with strong leadership provided by Secretary Clinton, endorsed in their Tallinn meeting in April the broad outlines of the approach which Lord Robertson, Dr. Schake, and I advocated, as did the report of the NATO Experts Group chaired by Secretary Albright. And I am pleased that the Administration's Nuclear Posture Review recognized the important role our extended deterrent plays in both reassuring allies who need reassurance and in helping to prevent nuclear proliferation. Modernizing B-61 and ensuring JSF is equipped for nuclear delivery are important decisions. Like the rest of you, I look forward to the upcoming NATO Summit and expect that "it will do the right thing" by endorsing a Strategic Concept which embodies the Tallinn principles.