

NATO's Role in the War on Terrorism

By Senator Richard G. Lugar

Introduction

There are moments in history when world events suddenly allow us to see the challenges facing our societies with a degree of clarity previously unimaginable. The events of September 11th have created one of those rare moments. We can see clearly the challenges we face -- and now confront what needs to be done.

September 11th forced Americans to recognize that the United States is exposed to an existential threat from terrorism and the possible use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists. Meeting that threat is the premier security challenge of our time. There is a clear and present danger that terrorists will gain the capability to carry out catastrophic attacks on Europe and the United States using nuclear, biological or chemical weapons.

In 1996, I made an unsuccessful bid for the Presidency of the United States. Three of my campaign television ads, widely criticized for being far-fetched and grossly alarming, depicted a mushroom cloud and warned of the existential threat posed by the growing danger of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorist groups. I argued that the next President should be selected on the basis of being able to meet that challenge.

Recently, those ads have been replayed on national television and are viewed from a different perspective. The images of those planes crashing into the World Trade Center on September 11th will remain with us for some time to come. We might not have been able to prevent the attacks of September 11th, but we can draw the right lessons from those events -- now.

One of those lessons is just how vulnerable our societies are to such attacks. September 11th has destroyed many myths. One of those is the belief that the West was no longer threatened after the collapse of communism and our victory in the Cold War. Perhaps nowhere was that myth stronger than in the United States where many Americans believed that America's strength made us invulnerable.

We know now that we are all vulnerable -- Americans and Europeans. The terrorists seek massive impact through indiscriminate killing of people and destruction of institutions, historical symbols and the basic fabric of our societies. The next attack could just as easily be in London, Paris or Berlin as in Washington, Los Angeles or New York. And it could or is even likely to involve weapons of mass destruction.

The sober reality is that the danger of Americans and Europeans being killed today at work or at home is perhaps greater than at any time in recent history. Indeed, the threat we face today may be just as existential as the one we faced during the Cold War, since it is increasingly likely to involve the use of weapons of mass destruction against our societies.

We are again at one of those moments when we must look in the mirror and ask ourselves whether we as leaders are prepared to draw the right conclusions and do what we can now to reduce that threat – or whether it will take another even deadlier attack to force us into action.

What Needs to be Done: The Lugar Doctrine

Each of us recognizes that the war against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction must be fought on many fronts – at home and abroad. And it must be fought with many tools – political, economic and military. President Bush is seeking to lead a global coalition in a global war to root out terrorist cells and stop nation states from harboring terrorists.

The flip side of his policy is one that I have spent a lot of time thinking about: namely, the urgent need to extend the war on terrorism to nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Al-Qaeda-like terrorists will use NBC weapons if they can obtain them. Our task can be succinctly stated: together, we must keep the world's most dangerous technologies out of the hands of the world's most dangerous people.

The events of September 11 and the subsequent public discovery of al-Qaeda's methods, capabilities and intentions have finally brought the vulnerability of our countries to the forefront. The terrorists have demonstrated suicidal tendencies and are beyond deterrence. We must anticipate that they will use weapons of mass destruction in NATO countries if allowed the opportunity.

Without oversimplifying the motivations of terrorists in the past, it appears that most acts of terror attempted to bring about change in a regime or change in governance or status in a community or state. Usually, the terrorists made demands that could be negotiated or accommodated. The targets were selected to create and increase pressure for change.

In contrast, the al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the United States were planned to kill thousands of people indiscriminately. There were no demands for change or negotiation. Osama bin Laden was filmed conversing about results of the attack which exceeded his earlier predictions of destruction. Massive destruction of institutions, wealth, national morale, and innocent people was clearly his objective.

Over 3,000 people from a host of countries perished. Recent economic estimates indicate \$60 billion of loss to the United States economy and the loss of over 1.6 million jobs. Horrible as these results have been, military experts have written about the exponential expansion of those losses had the al-Qaeda terrorists used weapons of mass destruction.

The minimum standard for victory in this kind of war is the prevention of any of the individual terrorists or terrorist cells from obtaining weapons or materials of mass destruction.

The current war effort in Afghanistan is destroying the Afghan-based al-Qaeda network and the Taliban regime. The campaign is also designed to demonstrate that governments that are hosts to terrorists face retribution. But as individual NATO countries prosecute this war, NATO must pay much more attention to the other side of the equation – that is, making certain that all weapons and materials of mass destruction are identified, continuously guarded, and systematically destroyed.

Unfortunately, beyond Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union, Nunn-Lugar-style cooperative threat reduction programs aimed at non-proliferation do not exist. They must now be created on a global scale, with counter-terrorism joining counter-proliferation as our primary objectives.

Today we lack even minimal international confidence about many weapons programs, including the number of weapons or amounts of materials produced, the storage procedures em-

ployed, and production or destruction programs. NATO allies must join with the United States to change this situation. We need to join together to restate the terms of minimal victory in the war against terrorism we are currently fighting – to wit, that every nation that has weapons and materials of mass destruction must account for what it has, spend its own money or obtain international technical and financial resources to safely secure what it has, and pledge that no other nation, cell or cause will be allowed access to or use of these weapons or materials.

Some nations, after witnessing the bombing of Afghanistan and the destruction of the Taliban government, may decide to proceed along a cooperative path of accountability regarding their weapons and materials of mass destruction. But other states may decide to test the U.S. will and staying power. Such testing will be less likely if the NATO allies stand shoulder to shoulder with the U.S. in pursuing such a counter-terrorism policy.

The precise replication of the Nunn-Lugar program will not be possible everywhere, but **a satisfactory level of accountability, transparency and safety can and must be established in every nation with a WMD program. When such nations resist such accountability, or their governments make their territory available to terrorists who are seeking weapons of mass destruction, then NATO nations should be prepared to join with the U.S. to use force as well as all diplomatic and economic tools at their collective disposal.**

I do not mention the use of military force lightly or as a passing comment. The use of military force could mean war against a nation state remote from Europe or North America. This awesome contingency requires the utmost in clarity now. Without being redundant, let me describe the basic elements of such a strategy even more explicitly.

NATO should list all nation states which now house terrorist cells, voluntarily or involuntarily. The list should be supplemented with a map which illustrates to all of our citizens the location of these states. Through intelligence sharing, termination of illicit financial channels, support of local police work, diplomacy, and public information, NATO and a broader coalition of nations fighting terrorism will seek to root out each cell in a comprehensive manner for years to come and keep a public record of success that the world can observe and measure. If we are diligent and determined, we will end most terrorist possibilities.

Perhaps more importantly, we will draw up a second list that will contain all of the states that have materials, programs, and/or weapons of mass destruction. We will demand that each of these nation states account for all of the materials, programs, and weapons in a manner which is internationally verifiable. We will demand that all such weapons and materials be made secure from theft or threat of proliferation using the funds of that nation state and supplemented by international funds if required. We will work with each nation state to formulate programs of continuing accountability and destruction which maybe of mutual benefit to the safety of citizens in the host state and the international community. This will be a finite list, and success in the war against terrorism will not be achieved until all nations on that list have complied with these standards.

The Nunn-Lugar program has demonstrated that extraordinary international relationships are possible to improve controls over weapons of mass destruction. Programs similar to the Nunn-Lugar program should be established in each of the countries in the coalition against terrorism that wishes to work with the United States and hopefully its NATO allies on safe storage, accountability and planned destruction of these dangerous weapons and materials of mass destruction.

What Role for NATO

If this conference had taken place before September 11th, I would now deliver an eloquent statement about the importance of continuing NATO enlargement and trying to build a coope-

relative NATO-Russia relationship. In a speech preceding the remarkable call by President Bush in Warsaw for a NATO which stretched from the Baltics to the Black Sea, I listed Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Bulgaria as strong candidates for membership consideration and I visited five of these countries last summer to encourage continuing progress in meeting the criteria for joining the Alliance. After ten years of hands-on experience in working with Russian political, military, and scientific leaders to carefully secure and to destroy materials and weapons of mass destruction in cooperative threat reduction programs, I anticipate that a new NATO-Russia relationship could be of enormous benefit in meeting the dangerous challenges which we must now confront together. In many ways, September 11th has strengthened my conviction that both of these efforts are critical.

But they can no longer be our only major priorities. **As important as they are, neither NATO enlargement nor NATO-Russia cooperation is the most critical issue facing our nations today. That issue is the war on terrorism. NATO has to decide whether it wants to participate in this war. It has to decide whether it wants to be relevant in addressing the major security challenge of our day.** Those of us who have been the most stalwart proponents of enlargement in the past have an obligation to point out that, as important as NATO enlargement remains, the major security challenge we face today is the intersection of terrorism with weapons of mass destruction.

If we fail to defend our societies from a major terrorist attack involving weapons of mass destruction, we and the Alliance will have failed in the most fundamental sense of defending our nations and our way of life – and no one will care what NATO did or did not accomplish on enlargement at the Prague summit. That's why the Alliance must fundamentally rethink its role in the world in the wake of September 11th.

At the Washington summit in the spring of 1999, NATO heads of state made a bold statement. They stated that they wanted NATO to be as relevant to the threats of the next 50 years as it was to the threats of the past five decades.

The Alliance invoked Article 5 for the first time in its history in response to September 11th. But, NATO itself has only played a limited, largely political and symbolic role in the war against terrorism. To some degree, Washington's reluctance to turn to NATO was tied to the fact that the U.S. had to scramble to put together a military response involving logistics, basing and special forces quickly – and it was easier to do that ourselves. Since it was the U.S. itself that was attacked, we were highly motivated to assume the lion's share of burden of the military role of the war on terrorism and we had the capability to do so.

But U.S. reticence to turn to NATO was also tied to other facts. Some Americans have lost confidence in the Alliance. Years of cuts in defense spending and failure to meet pledge after pledge to improve European military capabilities has left some Americans with doubts as to what our allies could realistically contribute. **Rightly or wrongly, the legacy of Kosovo has reinforced the concern that NATO is not up to the job of fighting a modern war.** The U.S. did have confidence in a select group of individual allies. But it did not have confidence in the institution that is NATO. And the fact that some military leaders of NATO's leading power didn't want to use the Alliance it has led for half a century is a worrying sign.

Some of us in Washington did suggest to the Administration that it could and should be more creative in involving NATO. Senator Joseph Biden and I, for example, wrote an "op-ed" suggesting a number of tasks the Alliance could assume in the war on terrorism. But I am not here to second-guess the President and his national security team on these issues. Whether we should have used NATO more is a question best left to future historians. The strategy the US employed in Afghanistan worked, and I congratulate the Administration for that success.

The key issue is: where do we go from here? Will we – Americans and Europeans – now decide to prepare NATO for the next stages in the war against terrorism? If not, how should we organize outside of NATO to meet the military challenges of the war on terrorism? What do we want NATO to look like in three to five years? How do we launch that process between now and the Prague summit next November?

Washington's "Schools of Thought"

You will not find a single American answer to these questions. Indeed, as I listen to the Administration and my colleagues around Washington, I hear very different views. One school of thought holds that NATO should simply remain the guarantor of peace in Europe. With successful integration of all of Central and Eastern Europe into the Alliance, they see NATO's next priority as trying to integrate Russia and Ukraine into European security via the new NATO-Russia Council. They accept the fact that NATO is likely to become more and more a political organization such as the OSCE but one with at least some military muscle. They consider any attempt to give the Alliance a military role beyond Europe "a bridge too far." If all NATO does is keep the peace in an increasingly secure Europe, that's enough.

A second school thinks NATO as it is currently constituted is about the best we can do. It does not want to take a big leap forward either with regard to NATO cooperation with Russia or with respect to new missions such as a war against terrorism. This school would be willing to enlarge to some additional countries but is much more cautious about NATO-Russia cooperation. It is willing to work with allies on future missions, but on an ad hoc basis and not as an Alliance, lest a NATO framework create "war by committee" and coalition "drag" on the prosecution of hostilities. It prefers a division of labor whereby the U.S. focuses on the big wars and leaves peacekeeping in and around Europe to the Europeans.

A third way of thinking about NATO is to see it as the natural defense arm of the trans-Atlantic community and the institution we should turn to for help in meeting new challenges such as terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. With Europe increasingly secure, the Alliance needs to be "retooled" so that it can handle the most critical threats to our security. If that means it has to go beyond Europe in the future, so be it.

This last way of thinking about NATO's future is closest to my own for several reasons. First, I have always had a problem with the "division of labor" argument that assumes the U.S. will handle the big wars outside of Europe and lets Europeans take care of the small wars within Europe. It presupposes that the U.S. has less interest in Europe and that Europeans have less interests in the rest of the world. Both are wrong. We have interests in Europe and Europeans have interests in the rest of the world -- and we should be trying to tackle them together.

Second, the U.S. needs a military alliance with Europe to confront effectively problems such as terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. We can't do it on an ad hoc basis. We were willing to proceed more or less alone in Afghanistan. But we might not be so inclined next time, depending on the circumstances. What if the next attack is on Europe – or on America and Europe simultaneously? The model used in Afghanistan would not work in those scenarios. Americans expect our closest allies to fight with us in this war on terrorism – and they expect our leaders to come up with a structure that allows us to do so promptly and successfully.

Third, the problem we faced in Kosovo, and the problems we are encountering with respect to developing adequate military capabilities to meet the new threats, do not lead me to conclude that the answer is to reduce NATO to a purely political role. Rather, they are arguments to expand our efforts to fix capability problems so that NATO can operate more effectively in the future. Americans do not want to carry the entire military burden of the war on terrorism by themselves. Nor should we. We want allies to share the burden. The last attack may have

been unique in that regard. We were shocked by attacks on our homeland. The US was prepared to respond immediately and to do most of the work itself. But what if the next attack is on Brussels, or on France and the US at the same time?

Finally, some of my critics have said: Senator, that is a great idea but it simply is not "doable". And it would be a mistake even to try because you might fail and that would embarrass President Bush and hurt the Alliance. I find it hard to believe that the US and Europe – some of the richest and most advanced countries in the world – are incapable of organizing themselves to come up with an effective military alliance to fight this new threat.

When NATO was founded, there were those who said it would be impossible to have a common strategy towards the Soviet Union. And in early 1993 when I delivered my first speech calling for NATO not only to enlarge but to prepare for substantial "out of area" activities, many people told me that what I was proposing ran the risk of destroying the Alliance. Those of us who believed in NATO enlargement stuck to our guns. We now have three new Perm Reps with us today, and a much more vital NATO as a result.

My view can be easily summarized. America is at war and feels more vulnerable than at any time since the end of the Cold War and perhaps since World War II. The threat we face is global and existential. We need allies and alliances to confront it effectively. Those alliances can no longer be circumscribed by artificial geographic boundaries. All of America's alliances are going to be reviewed and recast in light of this new challenge, including NATO. If NATO is not up to the challenge of becoming effective in the new war against terrorism, then our political leaders may be inclined to search for something else that will answer this need.

I believe that September 11th opened up an enormous opportunity to revitalize the trans-Atlantic relationship. It would be a mistake to let this opportunity slip through our fingers. Neither side of the Atlantic has thus far grasped that opportunity fully. It is a time to think big, not small. It is a time when our proposals should not be measured by what we think is "doable" but rather shaped by what needs to be done to meet the new existential threat we face.

In the early 1990s we needed to make the leap from NATO defending Western Europe to the Alliance assuming responsibility for the continent as a whole. Today we must make a further leap and recognize that, in a world in which terrorist threats can be planned in Germany, financed in Asia, and carried out in the United States, old distinctions between "in" and "out of area" have become utterly meaningless. Indeed, given the global nature of terrorism, boundaries and other geographical distinctions are without relevance.

At NATO's founding on April 4, 1949, President Harry S. Truman described the creation of the Alliance as a neighborly act taken by countries conscious of a shared heritage and common values, as democracies determined to defend themselves against the threat they faced. Those same values that Truman talked about defending in 1949 are under attack today, but this time from a very different source.

In 1949, Truman went on to say that the Washington Treaty was a very simple document, but one that might have prevented two world wars had it been in existence in 1914 or 1939. Protecting Western Europe, he opined, was an important step toward creating peace in the world. And he predicted that the positive impact of NATO would be felt beyond its borders and throughout the World.

Those words strike me as prescient today. Truman was right. NATO prevented war in Europe for fifty years. It is now in the process of making all of Europe safe and secure and of building a new relationship with Russia. That, in itself, is a remarkable accomplishment. But **if NATO does not help tackle the most pressing security threat to our countries today – a threat I**

believe is existential because it involves the threat of weapons of mass destruction -- it will cease to be the premier alliance it has been and will become increasingly marginal.

That is why NATO's agenda for Prague has to be both broadened – and integrated. While NATO enlargement and deepened NATO-Russia cooperation will be central to the summit's agenda, they must now be complemented by a plan to translate the fighting of terrorism into one of NATO's central military missions. NATO enlargement and NATO-Russia cooperation should be pursued in a way that strengthens, not weakens, that agenda. This means that new members must be willing and able to sign up to new NATO requirements in this area, and that the new NATO-Russia Council must be structured in a way that strongly supports the Alliance in undertaking such new military tasks.

To leave NATO focused solely on defending the peace in Europe from the old threats would be to reduce it to sort of a housekeeping role in an increasingly secure continent. To do so at a time when we face a new existential threat posed by terrorism and weapons of mass destruction will condemn it to a marginal role in meeting the major challenge of our time.

That is why this issue has to be front and center on NATO's agenda before, during and after Prague. The reality is that we can launch the next round of NATO enlargement as well as a new NATO-Russia relationship at Prague, and the Alliance can still be seen as failing -- that's right, failing -- unless it starts to transform itself into an important new force in the war on terrorism.

I plan to work with the Bush Administration in the months and years ahead in an effort to promote such a transformation of the Alliance. I hope that the representatives of member states in the room today will join me in this effort.

Thank you.