

**Statement of Kay Bailey Hutchison**  
**Nominee to be U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**July 20, 2017**

Good Morning Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin and all of the Committee.

I'm not used to being on this side of the podium, but I am pleased to be where I spent so many great years working with my colleagues for my state and our united country.

I am here if you consent, this time, to have the opportunity to represent our country in a different capacity, but in an area with which I am very familiar.

I have visited U.S. Troops often, sometimes together with service members from other NATO nations, wherever they have been in harm's way – Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. I have met with military and diplomatic leaders during their deployments, sometimes as in Bosnia, where our Ambassador resided in a bombed-out building, sleeping on a cot in his makeshift office, or in a Russian-built hanger next to a runway in Afghanistan, where hundreds of troops slept under a leaky roof with only a duffel bag of uniforms under their cots as they began to build a headquarters, barracks and hospital for the larger contingent to follow.

My appreciation for the work of our military and the crucial role of the diplomatic corps is boundless and I look forward to being an effective partner for our policies, for our military and for our Allies, who are also making sacrifices for our mutual defense and protection.

NATO is the most successful defense and security alliance in the history of the world. It was formed in 1949 after the sad experience of the two world wars last century. President Truman said at the time, *"By this treaty, we are not only seeking to establish freedom from aggression and from the use of force in the North Atlantic community, but we are also actively striving to promote and preserve peace throughout the world."*

It was determined that an Alliance between Europe and North America sends a message of solidarity that would deter aggression and help avoid a third World War, and in the event of conflict, make earlier action against a common enemy more effective in protecting freedom for its democratic members.

Does NATO exist to protect Allies against any threat of aggression? Yes, that was one of NATO's original missions and it remains relevant today. But NATO has also evolved into much more because today's security environment now encompasses a much broader array of challenges, including asymmetric warfare. Terrorism by ISIS, Al Qaeda and other extremist elements seek a caliphate to displace religious freedom where it is protected throughout the world. Rogue Nations such as Iran and North Korea have developed ballistic missile capabilities and may be close to achieving nuclear weapons; a threat to all of the 29 members of the Alliance. Russian disinformation campaigns and malign influence activities targeting NATO Allies and Partners seek to undermine Western democratic institutions and principles, and sow disunity in longstanding transatlantic bonds.

In its evolution, many questions are raised. Does every country in the alliance meet its agreed commitment? No. Improvements are in order. President Trump has called for a stronger effort from Allies not meeting the Wales Pledge on Defense Investment -- 2% of GDP on defense, and 20% of total defense expenditures on defense modernization. Allies need to meet this commitment because it is necessary for their security.

I am encouraged by the recent meeting of Alliance Heads of State and Government where, under the leadership of the Secretary General, Allies agreed to redouble efforts to meet their commitments on defense spending and burden sharing.

In addition there are moves to become more focused on the common threat of terrorism, including efforts to ramp up counter terrorism initiatives.

I believe the shared values of democracy, protection of human rights, individual liberty, and rule of law bind all NATO members. This bond that unites us must be reinforced. Those values underscore why we need to remain firm in dealing with Russian aggression, balancing an Alliance commitment to strong deterrence with political dialogue, foremost on issues like the situation in Ukraine. I want – I think all NATO Allies want – a constructive relationship between NATO and Russia, but there can be no return to “business as usual” between NATO and Russia as long as Russia fails to live up to the deal it signed in Minsk and continues to ignore basic norms of international law and responsible international behavior.

President Trump stands firm on the U.S. commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. He has also asked that each Ally honor the pledge they made to increase defense spending so that our capabilities will be robust, our deterrence credible, and the cost of our collective defense will not rest unfairly on the shoulders of the American taxpayers.

I have said this as a U.S. Senator and I will continue to encourage our allies to equitably share the responsibility for our common defense.

We are stronger together than any one of our countries would be alone. Our Allies have been by our side throughout NATO’s history. The first – and only – time in the Alliance’s decades’ long history NATO invoked Article 5, the collective defense clause of the Washington Treaty, was when America was attacked on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Allies stood with us in solidarity, and there is no better example of this than Afghanistan, where over 900 troops from Allies and partners have given their lives alongside U.S. soldiers for more than 15 years. Our NATO Allies are our core partners in diplomacy and on the battlefield, our partners of first resort in dealing with old and new threats to the security of our people. The strength of this alliance benefits every member.

If confirmed, I hope to represent the integrity of American commitments. To be a formidable enemy, we must be a reliable Ally. I want America to be both.

In closing, I appreciate the role of the Senate. I know how hard you work and the dedication of each of you to represent your state and build the strongest and safest union for those who elected you to be their representative in Washington.

Thank you for your consideration. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to represent this Country that we love and to protect what our forefathers and mothers fought for us to keep – security, freedom and an indomitable spirit.