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Thank you Madame Chairwoman, Senator DeMint, and all the distinguished Senators here today for the opportunity to testify about the Balkans region.

Like a whole class of U.S. diplomats, I first worked on and in the Balkans region some 18 years ago, during the height of the Bosnian War. I had served in the NATO office of the State Department, dealing with the changes to European security as war first broke out in the former Yugoslavia. I was with Secretary of State Eagleburger in Geneva in December 1992 when he gave a major push toward establishing the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

I then served as an Assistant to the Clinton Administration's first US Special Representative for Bosnian Peace Negotiations, Amb. Reginald Bartholomew, and in that capacity, had the experience of taking part in the Vance-Owen negotiations, and sitting in bilateral and multilateral meetings with Slobodan Milosevic, Radovan Karadzic, Franjo Tudjman, Alija Izetbegovic and many others involved in the War, many of whom have later been placed on trial in the ICTY. I have a vivid recollection of flying into Sarajevo when it was under siege, and hearing mortar shells explode outside while we visited a hospital, which itself had been targeted.

Immediately following, I served in Hungary and helped establish the first US military bases in a former Warsaw Pact country, in order to facilitate the deployment of US military forces from Germany to Bosnia, beginning in December 1995.

I again worked on the Balkans when war in Kosovo broke out, working for my colleague here, Assistant Secretary Vershbow, when he was US Ambassador to NATO, and then as Deputy Director of the Private Office of NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, as we

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strengthened the KFOR peacekeeping mission. I then also worked with Lord Robertson, EU High Representative Solana, and others, in the successful effort to unwind the ethnic conflict that threatened to engulf Macedonia.

And finally, in working on every round of NATO enlargement since the fall of the Berlin Wall, I have helped support the democratic transition and Euro-Atlantic integration of the nations of the region. In the State Department and as Ambassador to NATO, I have worked with Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Albania – all as members of NATO – in dealing with common challenges in the region as well as in Afghanistan and elsewhere. I have worked closely with the EU, Turkey and Greece, and occasionally waded into the fraught “name issue” concerning Macedonia. I have traveled extensively in the region, including well outside the capitals, and developed close contacts with senior diplomats and officials in every country there.

With that background, and having dealt with other serious security challenges facing our transatlantic community, such as Afghanistan, I would like to make a few observations about the western Balkans – and U.S. and European policy – as I see it today.

First, I want to stress the degree of progress that has already been made.

I remember well the days when war was raging between Serbia and Croatia, or among the three sides in the Bosnia conflict, the war crimes and ethnic cleansing. And I remember the fatalism present in much of the commentary at the time: that the Balkans were an intractable region with centuries of ethnic hatred, with no tradition of democracy, that it would be impossible to get right, impossible to get out once we get in, impossible to get involved without taking sides, and frankly, “we have no dog in that fight.”

We had just drafted a NATO Strategic Concept in 1991 where we spoke of NATO’s role in crisis management and preventing conflict in Europe. Yet when war broke out, the U.S. and NATO engaged diplomatically, but otherwise – tragically – stayed on the sidelines until after the Srebrenica massacre.

Well, frankly, and with 18 years of hindsight, the fatalism present in those early debates was entirely wrong. Though challenges of course remain, we have seen enormous successes and progress throughout the region. The western Balkans region is now surrounded by stable, successful democracies that are members of the EU and NATO – Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Italy.

And many within the western Balkans have themselves become extraordinary success stories. Slovenia and Croatia are vibrant democracies, increasingly prosperous, and members of NATO. Slovenia is also a member of the EU, and has even served a term in the rotating EU Presidency, and Croatia is well on the way to EU membership. Albania has been successful as a member of NATO and despite its continuing political and economic difficulties remains far ahead of where it stood at the end of the Cold War. Montenegro is making rapid strides on all fronts.

And one thing is now crystal clear, even if it was not clear back in 1992: We may not “have a dog in the fight” when it comes to favoring one ethnic group over another, but we clearly have a very strong U.S. interest in there not being a fight to begin with. Instability and violence in the Balkans affects us all; and the success of the Balkans region is a benefit to us all. We have invested heavily there over the years, and for good reason, and with good effect. This is a region that can make it.

And this brings up my second point: the progress we have seen in the Balkans is directly attributable to robust U.S. and European policies, including a strong emphasis on NATO and EU enlargement.

Where Europe has been successful, it has found ways to overcome the divisions of history. Whether it is France and Germany, Protestant and Catholic in Northern Ireland, the Tirol, Transylvania, or Germany and Central Europe, the key to success in European political, economic, and security development has been integration, benefitting Europe’s citizens today, overtaking divisions based in history and emotion that spiral downward.

Overcoming history is no easy task. It takes strong incentives, and powerful disincentives, for nations and leaders to let go of irredentism, the memories of territories lost, the grievances of past warfare, and to instead invest in the future. Here, the real and near-term prospect of membership in NATO and the EU – and the political and economic benefits that come with that – have provided that kind of incentive structure for all the states of Central and Eastern Europe, including Slovenia, Croatia, and others in the Balkans. It strengthens the hand of reformers in convincing publics that short-term pain, and giving up on nationalist agendas, will deliver greater benefits in the near term, and that the contrast, wallowing in these agendas, will separate a nation from a growing, integrated European family.

I agree with those who stress that countries must meet the conditions of membership. No doubt about it. But we can be passive or active. A passive stance gives little incentive to reform, and empowers those with narrow agendas. But an activist stance, where we stress our willingness to admit new members and we work with candidate countries on specific reforms and criteria empowers those who are prepared to implement the fastest and farthest reaching reforms.

My third point, therefore, is to state the obvious: We never finished the job. Indeed, there is a strong case to be made that we started packing up prematurely:

- that where states never reached the level of NATO or EU membership, there has been regression;
- that leaders with nationalist agendas remain strong;
- that there has been political regression on many fronts;
- that narrow agendas -- in the region, but also among EU member states – are taking precedence over the strategic goal of integrating the region as a whole;

- that U.S. and EU engagement and assistance was ratcheted downward too quickly in an effort to hand over responsibilities and focus on even more serious challenges in Afghanistan and Iraq; and
- that despite the formal positions of NATO and the EU, the reality is that further NATO and EU membership is now seen as a dim prospect, not a near-term possibility that can inspire hard work and hard choices today.

And indeed, this is really unacceptable – to have made so much progress, and then see it now at risk. The costs of finishing the job in the region now are far lower than what were the costs of war, and stopping war, in the past – and indeed lower than the costs of dealing with a potential return to instability in the future.

Today, we are putting an extraordinary military, civilian, political, and regional effort into Afghanistan – and rightly so. The challenges in Afghanistan and Pakistan – and with violent, Islamist extremism on a wider scale – are enormously difficult and complex. And the security of our country and of our transatlantic community depends on success there.

By contrast, the Balkans is far easier to help today: there is no active fighting; there is a literate population and skilled workforce; the economy is far more advanced, more integrated regionally, and open to the outside world; and there is a surrounding region that is stable and supportive of success within the Balkans. While the politics are of course difficult, we have every advantage in getting the Balkans right – and finishing the job – compared to the magnitude of the challenges we face in Afghanistan.

And yet we see a number of areas where the region is stuck, where narrow and divisive agendas are triumphing over long-term progress. Let me name a few examples:

- First, and most glaring, is Bosnia. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who is now the United States Afghanistan Envoy, did an extraordinary job in the 1990s ending the war and putting in place the Dayton Peace agreement. It was a huge accomplishment and probably the best that anybody could do at the time.

But Dayton's achievement was to freeze the conflict in place, giving time and space for political negotiations, rather than violence, to shape a long-term settlement. While we did well in the early years, in the past several years, efforts to strengthen institutions, reform the constitution, improve governance, and reconcile competing structures have gone nowhere. Once NATO handed over security responsibility to the EU, the EU swiftly downsized the security presence. And in taking over the Office of the High Representative, the EU has been too hesitant in exercising the powers of the office to drive through necessary change. Now the talk is about reducing EUFOR further, when the forces of separatism are stronger than at many points in the past.

- Kosovo also risks being stuck. Frankly, the fact that a handful of EU member states do not recognize Kosovo's independence has been extremely damaging to

- Kosovo's ability to move forward, and thus to wider progress in the region. It has complicated economic development, inhibited certain types of EU engagement, signaled to Serbia that there may yet be a chance of reversing independence, and kept the extremely dangerous talk of eventual partition alive. The reasons for not recognizing Kosovo clearly satisfy certain national or neighborly interests – but the net result is a far larger diminution of security, stability, and long-term political and economic development affecting all of Europe.
- Likewise, it is tragic that the name of Macedonia as a country has prevented that nation from moving forward into NATO and EU membership. It is clearly in the interests of Macedonia to become a member of these institutions, and clearly in the interests of Greece to see Macedonia and the wider Balkans region moving forward. Indeed, under Prime Minister Papandreou, this renewed push for integration of the Balkans has been striking and welcome. But two years after the Bucharest NATO Summit, where Greece blocked Macedonian membership – even under the old formula of “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” – the issue remains an impediment, and arguably has gotten worse.
 - Serbia remains in a mixed position vis-à-vis the region and Europe, and the question is how Serbia itself can move forward. The combination of the impossibility of accepting Kosovo independence, the vestiges of extreme nationalism, and the painstakingly difficult engagement with the EU and NATO have combined to keep this critical country in the region from taking decisive steps forward domestically, and in contributing to a more vibrant, prosperous Balkans region.
 - Montenegro has fared far better, making significant strides on politics, governance, development, anti-corruption, and good neighborly relations, in just a few years. It has entered NATO's Membership Action Plan. But this now also begs the question of next steps in regional and European integration.
 - Albania has made it into NATO, but is far from EU membership and is still struggling with the maturation of political institutions, economic development, and fighting corruption and crime.
 - And finally, a comment about the EU and NATO as a whole. The EU already has a long-established case of “enlargement fatigue.” This is compounded by the desire of some to prevent Turkish membership in the EU – and thus any step toward enlargement which could have the effect of bringing the Turkish question closer to today's agenda. The Euro crisis has brought out a wave of recriminations within the EU, and especially Germany, that expands beyond the mere question whether the Euro zone was enlarged too loosely, but whether any further enlargement is wise or viable. Despite the EU's formal position on Balkan enlargement, the chatter is that Croatian membership will be the last enlargement of the EU for a very long time. NATO has done better – bringing in Albania as a member, keeping Macedonian membership as a live option if the name issue is

resolved, bringing Montenegro into the Membership Action Plan, and working with Bosnia and Serbia through the Partnership for Peace. But NATO, too, has de-emphasized the prospect of future enlargement, and this is noticed both by reformers and nationalists in the region.

And with this snapshot of the region, it brings me to my fourth and final point: We should aggressively pursue an ambitious strategy of engagement in the region aimed at finishing the job as quickly as possible; of making the Balkans region every bit as “mainstream” in Europe as the Czech Republic or Portugal; of ensuring that every country in the region has the opportunity to become a NATO and EU member if it so chooses, and (with our help) does the hard work necessary

Here, let me applaud the recent trip to the region of Deputy Secretary of State Steinberg, and Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos. It is tremendously important to show engagement at that level, and important that the U.S. and EU are seen acting together. And this is just the latest of several such trips.

In the future, I hope that EU High Representative Catherine Ashton takes part in such a joint visit, and that NATO Secretary General Rasmussen or his designee is also invited to take part. It is important to show a strong, united position of the entire transatlantic community, and to get back on track in emphasizing the realistic prospect of NATO and EU membership.

To operationalize this engagement further, I believe it is important that the United States and Europe pursue a concrete agenda on several fronts. It is worth greater investment of resources, and indeed, greater political risk-taking, because the gains are worth it, and the risks of not doing so are even greater.

The following steps, some of which are already being pursued, when taken together can become a key part of such an ambitious transatlantic agenda for the Balkans:

1. First, we must renew the positive commitment of the EU and NATO to enlargement in the Balkans. At upcoming NATO and EU Ministerial meetings, and especially at the NATO Summit and US-EU Summit this autumn, we should make a clear and unequivocal statement that we are prepared to admit new members in the region as quickly as they are able to meet the criteria of membership. On the EU side, there should be no linkage to Turkey or any other factors; and on the NATO side, no linkage to Georgia, Ukraine, Russia, or other enlargement considerations. This is simply about the Balkans.
2. Second, to do this, it is particularly important to engage not only the EU and NATO as institutions, but also the member states. And when it comes to further enlargement, it is particularly important to engage Germany and France, though of course all members are critical. It is also vitally important to engage directly with those states that do not yet recognize Kosovo as an independent state to urge maximum flexibility on their part for the good of the region as a whole.

3. Third, this renewed rhetorical commitment must be followed up by concrete actions. The EU and NATO should aggressively use the tools already at their disposal to put countries on a membership track and use the mechanisms within that track to push for necessary reforms. For the EU, this means association agreements, candidate status, detailed consultations about requirements to implement over time the EU *acquis*. It also means visa-free travel for all the citizens of the region, and in this context, Foreign Minister Moratinos' comments about visa-free travel for Bosnia being discussed by the EU in June are encouraging.

In the case of NATO in particular, we should make clear our willingness to admit Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Membership Action Plan (MAP), based on their meeting clearly defined criteria (e.g., settlement of defense property questions) in the near term.

It is worth recalling that when the MAP was created at the Washington Summit in 1999, there were no criteria whatsoever – it was simply a tool established by NATO to help countries meet the requirements of membership. We have consistently drifted away from that position over the years, insisting, for example, on a period of “intensified dialogue” before offering MAP, and setting out other conditions. This led to the unhelpful outcome of the Bucharest Summit, where we promised membership to Georgia and Ukraine without offering MAP as a framework for helping them meet the criteria of membership – a complete reversal of the sequencing applied by NATO in the preceding decade. We are now too far along to offer MAP to Bosnia without their meeting any criteria, but we should define those criteria and help see that they are met quickly, and that MAP is offered as both incentive and reward. We should return to seeing MAP as a tool worth using.

4. Fourth, we should maintain a robust international presence and commitment in Bosnia, including a strong OHR with a U.S. Deputy and a robust EU Force, until Bosnia sustainably implements far-reaching reforms. The fact is that the situation has deteriorated in recent months and years, and further international community drawdowns would only further that disintegration. We need to increase our investment and commitment, in order to push through necessary reforms and enable long-term success.
5. Fifth, likewise, we need to maintain our robust commitment in Kosovo as well – both through KFOR and through the EULEX operation. We must work patiently but determinedly to ensure that minority rights are respected, to remove parallel governing structures, and to facilitate the integration of north Mitrovica into Kosovo as a whole. And we must be categorical in rejecting any proposals for partition of Kosovo.

6. Sixth, we need to give a renewed impetus to the effort to resolve the Macedonia name issue. Here, the UN has the lead, under negotiator Matthew Nimitz, but the U.S. can play a critical role behind the scenes. Macedonia has the greatest interest in a resolution of the issue, because membership in NATO and the EU awaits, but Greece too has a direct interest in seeing all of its neighbors advancing in political stability, economic prosperity, and security through EU and NATO membership. Direct meetings between the Prime Ministers have already taken place, and these are essential. Further confidence-building measures would be helpful – for example, from Macedonia, in reversing provocative steps such as the name of the airport and highways, removal of certain public statues. And in the end, a compromise – not a zero-sum or 100 percent solution – must be found, and the basis for such a compromise already exists within the framework offered through the UN negotiations.
7. Seventh, we should be forward-leaning with Montenegro as a success story that can help generate greater momentum in the region. The decision to admit them to the Membership Action Plan of NATO last December was a wise one. Montenegro has further work to do on strengthening democratic habits and institutions and fighting corruption, but the progress it has made already is impressive. Successful integration of Montenegro into Europe, based on Montenegro's own performance, can be a powerful example for Serbia, Albania and others.
8. Eighth, as the United States and the EU, we should carry out a robust, bilateral agenda with Serbia. It is too much to expect that Serbia could recognize Kosovo in any foreseeable timeframe, and yet Kosovo's independence is a fact that will not change. This contradiction creates a drag on the entire region. In this unsettled situation, however, the best we can do is reach out to Serbia as a country and as a people to help them reinforce democratic institutions and integration as a whole, while simultaneously working to strengthen Kosovo as a democratic state that is itself integrating in the region and in Europe. At the end of the day, the mutual integration of Serbia and Kosovo into a larger framework may be the only way to get beyond the zero sum approaches to independence in play today.
9. Ninth, as the U.S. and EU, we should continue to encourage Albania in strengthening its democratic institutions, its economy, and government transparency and anti-corruption. And this again depends on a clear light at the end of the tunnel in terms of EU membership, provided Albania implements the necessary reforms effectively over a sustained period of time. This is obviously not a near-term prospect, but at the same time, the direction must be clear.

Madame Chairwoman, these elements are the beginnings of an aggressive strategy and agenda for finishing the job in the Balkans – a job we started almost 20 years ago. I am sure that experts in the Administration can sharpen these elements and add additional ones. But the critical thing is that we make our intentions clear, we act affirmatively, we mobilize others, particularly in NATO and the EU, and we assist reformers in the region

to bring their own countries forward. If we are passive, we will see continued backsliding, at risk to the region and ourselves. But if we are active, we have a realistic, near-term chance to bring the region into the transatlantic mainstream once and for all.

And given all the other problems we must deal with in the world, achieving a realizable success is certainly worth the investment it will require.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at this hearing.

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