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Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and members of this committee, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to testify today in advance of the NATO Summit, which will take place in Warsaw on July 8th and 9th. Often to the dismay of the policymakers that spend months of their lives preparing for them, such summits rarely garner much attention on either side of the Atlantic. To the extent that NATO summits are covered in the media, one sees lots of red carpets, hand shaking, and champagne toasts. For the general public, it is often hard to see how such a large gathering of world leaders signing communiqués with promises of “transformation” and “smart defense” will have any real impact on their daily lives. Even NATO experts sometimes find the summits disappointing, especially the countless pledges to increase defense spending that have been met for years with inaction. This year’s NATO summit in Warsaw, though, will be an entirely different affair both in substance and style. The Alliance is about to demonstrate that it is anything but obsolete.

The Warsaw Summit comes at a precarious time for the transatlantic relationship. It will occur exactly two weeks after the UK’s shattering decision to leave the European Union (EU) and a little more than a week after the suicide bombings in Turkey. The Summit will therefore be an opportunity for the transatlantic partners to showcase solidarity, unity, and resolve at a time when they need it most. As a NATO-nik, I am usually reluctant to give NATO members credit just for showing up. Instead, I prefer to judge summits based on their “deliverables” or concrete policy changes. But this year is different. With the entire European project buckling under the weight of Brexit, the historic migration crisis, counter terrorism challenges, a resurgent Russia, and instability close to Europe’s borders, one of the deliverables is simply the Summit itself. If Brexit has taught us anything, it is that we should not take the liberal order for granted. Holding the NATO Summit now serves as a timely reminder of the values we share and the bonds that keep us together, particularly in the face of so much adversity.

More importantly, the Warsaw Summit will feature policy changes that will bolster the Alliance’s ability to tackle threats to its east and south. After its last summit in Wales in 2014, some members criticized the Alliance for failing to do more to deter Russian aggression. NATO heard those complaints and spent much of last year looking at ways it could increase its deterrence measures. It wasn’t easy. Due to geographic, cultural, and historical differences, members hold widely disparate views on Russia and have had a hard time determining the right balance between prudent planning

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and needless escalation. But in a surprising twist, the Alliance has decided to deploy four multinational battalions to the Baltic States and Poland. That is a bold move for an alliance that tends to err on the side of caution. In fact, combined with what the U.S. is doing unilaterally in the region, it is the largest gathering of combat power in one area since the Cold War.

In Warsaw NATO will also announce ways in which it will do more to address instability across the Middle East. After considerable debate about the risks involved, the Alliance will agree to a training and capacity building effort *inside* Iraq alongside its current efforts in Jordan. To fully appreciate why such an announcement is newsworthy, one needs to understand that while NATO has considerable experience in training foreign forces, it prefers to do that training away from conflict zones. By taking steps toward doing more inside Iraq, the Alliance is demonstrating a willingness to assume more risk in order to increase the speed and effectiveness of its training programs. The Alliance has also decided to deploy AWACS as part of the anti-ISIS campaign. These surveillance aircraft will play a helpful role in a conflict that the Alliance has up until now been trying to avoid.

In addition to addressing the threats to its east and south, NATO will take the controversial step of welcoming Montenegro as a new member. Why, one might ask, is adding such a small country so controversial? Some members oppose enlargement for fear of escalating already high tensions with Moscow. Others argue that the Alliance should focus on its core mission of collective defense and that adding another member now would only complicate efforts to do so. The Alliance managed to work through such objections and in the end, opted to send a clear signal that sovereign nations have the right to freely choose their security arrangements and alliances.

The list of policy changes at this summit will not stop there. Expect to hear a lot about “resilience” and how NATO and the European Union will do more together to finally break through years of paralysis to address Russian hybrid tactics. Expect to hear that two-thirds of Alliance members have finally stopped the bleeding when it comes to their national defense budgets after years of budget cuts. Expect to hear a few words about NATO’s nuclear policy; a subject the Alliance has almost forgotten in recent years. It will now reaffirm and update that policy in response to Putin’s nuclear saber rattling.

Are all of these initiatives enough? Certainly not. After Warsaw, after the champagne toasts, after the speeches and policy announcements, the Alliance will have to get back to work. Despite all of its good work since its last summit in 2014, the Alliance will continue to face a number of compounding security challenges that will require more debates, innovation and investment. Specifically, NATO – with a heavy dose of U.S. leadership – will need to:

- Do more to address instability in Libya, which is now commonly described as the second biggest source of instability in the Euro-Atlantic neighborhood after Syria.
- Ensure its new battalions in the Baltic States are reinforced.
- Push its members to do more to address readiness gaps. Larger allies should be prepared to

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deploy a brigade on 10-day readiness and smaller allies should provide battalions on 10-day readiness

- Focus on Russian anti-access, area denial (A2/AD) challenges in and around Romania and Bulgaria.
- Ensure that the UK's departure from the European Union does not have a detrimental effect on UK defense spending or its role in NATO.
- Strengthen its capabilities and policies for addressing a wide range of threats and challenges to its south.
- Push more allies to move closer to the NATO target of spending two percent of GDP on defense.
- Strengthen the Alliance's relationships with countries like Sweden and Finland, a recommendation from the Center for a New American Security's (CNAS) table top exercise "Assured Resolve" that I ran with my colleagues this past February.

This list of future work shouldn't preclude us from saluting NATO's many achievements in recent months. Despite claims that it is outdated, ill-equipped for today's challenges, or entirely obsolete, this summit will showcase an alliance capable of self-reflection, rigorous debate, innovation, adaptation, and concrete policy changes that strengthen European security.

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