

Statement of Madeleine K. Albright
Senate Armed Services Committee
Thursday, January 29, 2015

Chairman McCain, Senator Reed, members of the committee: thank you for inviting me to participate in this important series of hearings.

I am pleased to be here alongside my distinguished colleagues and dear friends, Secretaries Kissinger and Shultz.

I want to commend this committee for initiating this timely discussion of U.S. national security strategy. These hearings embody this chamber's best traditions of bipartisanship in foreign policy, and I think they can be tremendously helpful in framing the issues facing our country.

As someone who began her career in public service working as chief legislative assistant to Senator Ed Muskie, I have long believed that Congress has a critical role to play in our national security.

So when I became Secretary of State, I valued my regular appearances before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee – then headed by Senator Jesse Helms.

He and I disagreed on many things, but we respected each other and built an effective partnership because we both believed that America had a unique role to play in the world.

That belief still shapes my worldview, and informs the perspective I bring to our discussion today.

It does not take a seasoned observer of international relations to point out that we are living through a time of monumental change across the world.

We are reckoning with new forces that are pushing humanity down the path of progress, while also unleashing new contradictions on the world scene.

One of these forces is globalization, which has made the world more interconnected than ever before, but also added new layers of complexity to the challenges of statecraft.

With globalization, it is impossible for any single nation to insulate itself from the world's problems, or to act as the lone global problem solver.

Another force is technology, which has unleashed unprecedented innovation and benefited people the world over, while also amplifying their frustrations and empowering networks of criminals and terrorists.

Globalization and technology are reshaping and disrupting the international system, which is struggling to keep pace with the change.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Middle East, where century-old state boundaries are unraveling, a rising wave of violence and sectarianism is producing the world's largest refugee crisis in 70 years, and a dangerous competition is playing out between Iran and Saudi Arabia for regional primacy.

Another key test lies in Europe, where Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine has fundamentally changed security calculations on the continent – and marked the first time since World War II that European borders have been altered by force. Events of recent days have shown that what many have assumed would become a frozen conflict is still, in fact, red hot.

Meanwhile, in Asia, the region's growth and the rise of new powers are creating new opportunities for the United States in areas such as trade, but these developments are also testing security arrangements that have ensured peace and stability since the end of World War II.

None of these challenges pose an existential threat to the United States, but the intensity – and complexity – of them can seem daunting ... particularly after we have been through more than 13 years of protracted war, and threats such as climate change, nuclear proliferation, disease, and food and water shortages also loom on the horizon.

Still, they cannot be ignored. The American people may be tired, but we must avoid another danger lurking in this new era – the temptation to turn inward.

Because for all the turmoil this young century has brought, America remains by far the world's mightiest economic and military power – with a resurgent economy and an energy revolution giving us newfound confidence in our future.

We are the only nation with not just the capacity and will to lead, but also the ideals to do so in a direction that most of the world would prefer to go – towards liberty and justice, peace and economic opportunity for all.

As the President said last week, the question is not *whether* America should lead, but *how* it should lead. And that, in many ways, is the focus of today's hearing.

Let me suggest a few basic principles that might help guide this discussion.

First, we are the world's indispensable nation, but nothing about being indispensable requires us to act alone. Alliances and partnerships matter, enhancing our power and the legitimacy of our actions. Our national security strategy must always encompass the security of others, and where possible we should work through coalitions of friends and allies.

Second, given the fluid nature of the today's threats, we must make wise use of every foreign policy option – from quiet diplomacy to military force – to protect America's national interests.

Third, the foundation of American leadership must remain what it has been for generations – our belief in the fundamental dignity and importance of every human being. We should not be shy about promoting these values, and that is why I am proud to be the Chairman

of the National Democratic Institute, and I know that you, Chairman McCain, are equally proud of your leadership of the International Republican Institute.

Working with allies and partners; balancing our diplomatic, economic, and military tools of national power; staying true to our ideals – these will all be critical in navigating today’s challenges.

That means in the Middle East, we must continue working with European and regional allies to apply direct military pressure against the Islamic State, while making clear that these violent extremists are guilty not of Islamic terrorism but of crimes that are profoundly un-Islamic.

We need to help the people of the region build governing institutions that offer legitimacy and an alternative to violence. That includes continuing to support the people of Afghanistan through NATO’s *Resolute Support* mission. And we must aid the millions of innocent refugees in Syria and its neighbors that have fled both the terror of ISIS and the depravity of the Assad regime.

Another key challenge in the region remains Iran. The President has rightly made it the policy of the United States to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. He has taken no options off the table to achieve that goal, and the Administration is exploring a diplomatic resolution.

If these negotiations fail, or if Iran does not honor its commitments, then the United States should – and I believe will – impose additional costs on Tehran, with strong support internationally. But it would be a mistake to do so before the negotiations run their course.

That would fracture the international coalition and let Iran avoid its responsibility, leaving the United States and our closest allies isolated.

In Europe, we must reinforce our NATO Allies and stand united and firm against Putin’s aggression, even as we continue to engage Russia as a global power on issues of shared interest. But until Russia honors its commitments and withdraws its forces from Ukraine, there can be no sanctions relief. And if Russia continues its pattern of destabilizing actions, it must face even more severe consequences.

Our support for Ukraine must enhance its security capabilities and support the new government’s ambitious reforms, because Ukraine will need to restore security and implement dramatic economic changes to emerge from the current crisis.

On economic reforms, the Administration has made strong pledges and worked with our allies to secure more commitments in areas such as banking and energy. However, we must remember the lessons we learned in the Balkans and in other post-conflict states: aid and technical help in good governance must be accompanied by political guidance to avoid side deals that can subvert reform.

Ukraine has chosen to make its own path. It wants a future with Europe, while maintaining a relationship with its neighbor. We should not make its road forward harder by suggesting that we see Ukraine's future as subject to Russia's veto.

The United States should also stay vigorously engaged in Asia, where the administration's rebalance has reinforced commitments to allies such as Japan and the Republic of Korea, built stronger partnerships with India and the nations of Southeast Asia, created new opportunities for regional trade, and helped expand engagement with China on economic, diplomatic, and military issues. The President's historic trip to India this week cemented the positive progress we are making in strengthening another vital relationship in the region.

In Africa, we should help nations such as Nigeria and Cameroon deal with the challenges of terrorism, and invest in the continent's unmatched potential for growth and opportunity. And in Latin America, we should pursue the opening to Cuba but keep issues of human rights and democracy front and center in all discussions with the regime, while expanding our partnerships throughout the hemisphere in order to deal with threats to human security such as transnational crime.

On a global level, the United States must also seize the opportunity of this year's UN Conference in Paris to assert our leadership on the issue of climate change, which the Pentagon recently highlighted as an urgent national security threat. While more tough work lies ahead, the agreements reached with China and India have laid the groundwork for global action on this defining challenge of our time.

Trade presents another area of enormous opportunity for the United States. The agreements under negotiation by the administration in the Pacific and in Europe would not only benefit our economy, they would strengthen our national security and should be viewed through that lens as well.

In his speech to the nation last week, the President appealed to the American people not to let our fears blind us to the opportunities that this young century presents.

For all the anxieties and turmoil that surround us, I must say that I remain an optimist – though I am an optimist who worries a lot.

Around the world, America remains the brightest beacon of human liberty. We are diverse, we are entrepreneurial, and we are resilient. No other country is in a better position to succeed in this new era than we are – but to succeed, we must stay globally engaged.

The greatest danger is becoming so intent on enjoying our freedom, that we neglect our responsibility to defend it.

That brings me to an area of special concern to this committee – the steep cuts to defense spending that will take place under the sequester mechanism later this year, jeopardizing our military's global reach.

The President, military leaders, and congressional leaders of both parties have all said that these cuts would cause undue harm to our national security.

I agree, and so I urge Congress to repeal these cuts.

But I would be remiss if I did not also mention the troubling gap in funding between military and non-military foreign affairs programs that have persisted for far too long.

For any strategy to be successful, we must provide all elements of our national security establishment – defense, diplomacy, development, and democracy promotion – with sufficient resources. Both the administration and Congress must come together and make the tough compromises necessary to renew and revitalize all of our instruments of power. A close partnership between the executive and legislative branches of government is the only way to protect our interests and sustain our leadership in this dangerous world.

Thank you again for the invitation to be here today. I look forward to your questions.

#