

to these threats that are far beyond any State's capacity to deal with.

There are 40 of us who cosponsored the Election Security Act that Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR, of Minnesota, introduced in May. I was proud to join her as one of the original cosponsors.

The legislation would provide critical resources to election officials through an initial \$1 billion investment in our election infrastructure, followed by \$175 million every 2 years for infrastructure maintenance. It would also require the use of voter-verified paper ballots, strengthen the Federal response to election interference, and establish accountability measures for election technology vendors.

Let me bring this down to Earth in simple words. If we cannot trust the outcome of an election to accurately reflect the feelings of those in America, we have lost the cornerstone of our democracy. There are nations, including Russia, that have proven they are doing everything in their power to stop us from having safe, accurate election counts.

The question for this Senate and for this Congress is, Do we care? Do we care enough to spend the resources so our States can protect the integrity of voters? I am not just talking about blue States from the Democratic side of the aisle. Every State, red and blue alike, would benefit from this legislation. If the Republicans want to demonstrate that they are joining us in putting country over party, they should join us today and protect our democracy by passing this legislation.

I have been asked to make a unanimous consent request at this point before I finish my remarks, and I thank the Senator from Louisiana for being on the floor.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1540

Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be discharged from further consideration of S. 1540, the Election Security Act; that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object and with all of the respect I can muster, this bill has more red flags than the Chinese Embassy. Despite my great admiration for the senior Senator from Illinois, I am objecting for three reasons.

The first reason I can best explain by telling you a story.

An oilman was talking to his banker one day, and the banker said: Mr. Oilman, you know, the bank loaned you \$1 million to rework all of your old oil wells, and they went dry.

The oilman said: It could have been worse.

The banker said to the oilman: Mr. Oilman, we loaned you a second \$1 mil-

lion to drill brandnew wells, and they all went dry. What do you say about that?

The oilman said: It could have been worse.

Then the banker said to the oilman: Our bank loaned you a third \$1 million to buy new drilling equipment, and it all broke down. What do you say about that?

The oilman said: It could have been worse.

The banker was now very upset. He said: What do you mean it could have been worse? We loaned you \$3 million, and you lost all of it. What do you mean it could have been worse?

The oilman said: It could have been my money.

The cost of this bill is \$1 billion—nine zeros. If I started counting to a billion right now by one numeral a second, I wouldn't finish until 2051. I would be dead as a doornail. I wouldn't make it. A billion is a lot. We toss around "a billion" these days like it was a nickel. A billion seconds ago, it was 1986. Ronald Reagan was President. That is how much a billion is. A billion minutes ago, the Romans were conquering Mesopotamia. As I made the point the other day on the Senate floor, a billion hours ago, the Neanderthals were roaming the Earth. A billion is a lot.

We have a \$22 trillion deficit—12 zeros. We have to pay this money back. I am running out of space, and we are probably going to run out of digits if we keep borrowing.

My first concern is the money. Now, if we had not given any money to our colleagues at the State level, that would have been one thing. Yet, as my good friend knows, 2 years ago, we gave the States \$380 million to combat election fraud. They haven't even spent it all yet. So, yes, I have concerns about the money.

Point No. 2, we did have problems in 2016, and I join the senior Senator in wanting to do everything we possibly can to keep it from happening again, which we did in 2018. We all had a classified briefing down in our room. I don't know the particular name of it, but it is in the Capitol Visitor Center. It is classified. You have to leave your phone and your iPad outside. We had the Director of National Intelligence there and the FBI Director, and I think we had every general there from the Western Hemisphere. We went over the 2018 elections. They went off without a hitch.

Have you read any articles about our having problems in 2018 like we had in 2016? No. Do you think if we had problems in 2018 that the members of our press would have pounced on it like a ninja? Yes. Yet you haven't seen those articles because 2018 went off without a hitch. This was, in part, because we gave the States \$380 million to solve the problem, and they have not spent it all. So a reasonable person would wonder why we would want to give them another \$1 billion of American taxpayer money at this juncture.

We also asked the Director of National Intelligence, the FBI, and every general who was there: Are you ready for 2020? Every single one of them said, categorically, unequivocally, unconditionally, yes. Every single Senator, both my Republican friends and my Democratic friends, walked out of that classified hearing impressed.

The third reason I, regretfully, have to object to this bill—and I am not ascribing this intention to the Senator from Illinois. I am not—is that some of my friends on Capitol Hill would like nothing better than to take over elections in America, to have our election system federalized. Right now, we don't have one election system; we have 50 election systems. Every State runs its elections its own way, usually by the Secretary of State. Now, I believe that is a matter of federalism. I don't see anywhere in the U.S. Constitution or in the Federalist Papers where it reads the U.S. Government ought to be running elections for States.

No. 2, our States do a great job. Yes, we had a lot of activity on Facebook and Google and within other aspects of social media, but we haven't heard one allegation—or at least any proof of an allegation—that any votes were stolen in 2016, much less in 2018. That is because our Secretaries of State did a good job. It is also safer to have every Secretary of State and every State in charge of its own election system because, if a foreign government wants to hack your system, it has to go to 50 different States. It has to do it 50 times. If we nationalize elections—yet again, give the Federal Government more power—all a foreign national has to do is to hack one system.

Again, I am not ascribing this motive or this intent to my good friend from Illinois. I am not. Yet there are some who would like nothing better than to nationalize State elections and have them run by the Federal Government. Then the Federal Government could tell the States what to do—what kinds of machines to use, whether they need paper ballots, how to order the ballots. If they have electric machines and one has to walk into a booth, the Federal Government could tell the States what kinds of and what color of curtains they would have to have. Then they would have a Federal agency get involved, and it would start promulgating regulations. Before you would know it, casting a vote would be like building a bridge.

It is a matter of federalism. Those who disagree with me will say: Oh, KENNEDY. You are exaggerating. This bill doesn't do that. It doesn't federalize elections.

Yes, it does.

Do you know how we federalize things around here? We get the object of the federalization hooked on the money. Those who want the Federal Government to run everything never go right at it. They sneak up on them. We say we are going to give them \$380

million, and they get a little addicted. Then we are going to give them \$1 billion, and they get a little more addicted. Sooner or later, they are addicted to the money, and then the Federal Government has got them.

And that is what worries me about this bill.

I am going to offer another bill after we are done today that I hope my good friend from Illinois will at least consider supporting. This bill is not going to cost \$1 billion, I can assure you. This bill is going to require the chief election official of every State—usually, that is the Secretary of State, as the senior Senator knows better than me—to disclose to the Election Assistance Commission the identity of any known foreign national who has physically handled ballots, machines, or has had unmonitored access to storage facilities or tabulation centers used to support elections or unmonitored access to election-related information or communication technology.

What does that really mean? That means that if a foreign national at any stage of the chain of custody has access to the machine or has access to the ballot, that has to be disclosed.

Now, if you want to do something to stop foreign nationals from interfering with our elections, we don't need to spend \$1 billion. We need to pass this bill.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, is there an objection?

Mr. KENNEDY. Yes, sir. I am getting to that.

For the reasons I described and with great respect for the senior Senator from Illinois, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. First, let me say this. I do respect the Senator from Louisiana. We have been cosponsors on important legislation. I hope we will be again. We see eye-to-eye on many things but not on this bill.

A billion dollars? The Federal Government spends \$1,500 billion every year. Is the integrity of our voting system worth \$1 billion?

Do you know what it has cost us to reach this point in our history where our democracy is reliable and respected around the world? It has cost more than money. It has cost the lives of men and women who went to war to fight for that, to make sure that we had the last word when it came to the future of our democracy.

A billion dollars is an overwhelming number; right? Divide it by 50, and understand what is at stake here. What is at stake here is whether we care enough to invest money in our election process—not with Federal mandates. We say to the States: You decide how to spend it. You have the authority over the State election procedure and

the color of the curtain on your booth. If you want to mandate that by State law, be my guest.

But what it comes down to—and I have to disagree with my friend from Louisiana—is that the money we have sent to the States already has all been obligated, and it is going through the purchasing and procurement policies of each of the States. It isn't as if they can't figure out what to do with it.

Upgrading our voting machines to make sure that they reflect technology today makes a difference. Have you bought a new cell phone recently? Have you watched any ads on television talking about the security of your cell phone? Have you listened to anyone talk about the privacy of you as an individual? It is because every single day, every single minute, and every second someone is trying to figure out how to get into your mind and into your life, and we are trying to keep technology up with this reality.

Now, what is the reality of the technology we use for voting? In my State, we have paper ballots to verify what is actually cast, but our technology is 20 years old. The Russians know that; the Iranians know that; and the Chinese know that, and they are mocking us. They are laughing.

If you were amused by the story of the Senator from Louisiana—and he is the best storyteller in the Senate—think about how amused Vladimir Putin is to listen to this debate.

We can't afford to spend the money to ward off Vladimir Putin's next attack in 2020. That is what I hear from the other side of the aisle. I disagree. I think what is at stake here is so basic and so fundamental that shame on us if we will not invest the money to make sure we keep up with the attackers.

Now, people say: Well, 2018 went off without a hitch. It was not only the good work of State election officials. It was the hard work here in Washington of our intelligence agencies, and the Senator knows that. We didn't sit back and say: Well, I sure hope they don't hit us again. We went after them. I can't be more specific because we are told not to be more detailed in our response.

We invested a heck of a lot of money in stopping them from ruining the 2018 election, and we are bound to do it again, and I hope we do. But to say we can't afford to protect the integrity of our vote—then, what is a democracy worth? What is it worth?

It is worth human lives, and it is worth our investment in this generation to make sure that those votes count, whether you live in a red State or a blue State. I am not talking about just sending this to Democratic State officials. I am talking about across the country. I want an election to truly reflect the way the American people feel about candidates and issues that are before them, and that is why I am so disappointed by the Senator's objection.

Yes, I will carefully consider his bill. Maybe there is some room here. But

when we say \$1 billion disqualifies you from being considered seriously, when it comes down to the integrity of our voting system—\$1 billion is too much—it turns out the Republican leader has suggested one-fourth of that amount, and nobody blinked.

I happen to think \$1 billion is more realistic in terms of helping our voting systems across this country. Shame on us if the result of the Presidential election is later found to have been tampered with by our enemies overseas. Shame on us if we didn't do everything we were supposed to do in the Senate, in the House, and in this government to protect that God-given right for a democracy that we cherish so much.

The Mueller report made crystal clear that the Russian Government interfered in the 2016 presidential election in a "sweeping and systematic fashion."

In Illinois, the Russian intelligence service hacked into our State Board of Elections, gained access to a database containing information on millions of Illinois voters, and then extracted data on thousands of those voters.

They also targeted other State election authorities, county governments, and election equipment and technology vendors.

And Federal law enforcement and intelligence officials have repeatedly warned that these interference efforts will continue in 2020.

In fact, former KGB Agent Putin recently mocked us, openly joking that Russia would definitely interfere again in the U.S. election.

Congress cannot sit back and ignore this ongoing threat—we must take action to help State and local election officials prepare for future elections.

I am pleased that Leader MCCONNELL finally relented on his opposition to any further funding to assist State and local election officials with election security efforts.

But the \$250 million included in the FY 2020 Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) appropriations bill is not nearly enough.

We need to boldly invest in our election security—and we need to provide sustained funding to State and local election officials to respond to these evolving threats.

That is why 40 of us have cosponsored the Election Security Act, which Senator KLOBUCHAR introduced in May. I was proud to join as a lead cosponsor.

The legislation would provide critical resources to election officials through an initial \$1 billion investment in our election infrastructure, followed by \$175 million every 2 years for infrastructure maintenance.

It would also require the use of voter-verified paper ballots, strengthen the Federal response to election interference, and establish accountability measures for election technology vendors.

If Republicans want to demonstrate that they are capable of putting country over party, they should join us

today and protect our democracy by passing this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I agree so much with what the Senator from Illinois has said, but we are on top of this.

Let me say it again. We gave the States \$380 million to address the problems in 2018. They haven't spent all of it. It is 3 gallons of crazy to give them another billion dollars.

We have been assured by all of the relevant Federal officials that we are ready for 2020. I am going to repeat once again: We had no problems in 2018.

If I thought for a second that our voting system was in jeopardy, I would be joining with my good friend the Senator, but I am not much for just spending taxpayer money, with a \$22 trillion deficit, just to be spending it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 15 minutes, followed by Senators JOHNSON, RISCH, and MENENDEZ, for 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROTOCOL TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY OF 1949 ON THE ACCESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, today, we will vote on whether or not to admit North Macedonia into NATO. I, for one, think we already have enough dead weight in NATO and that adding North Macedonia to NATO adds absolutely nothing to our collective security.

In his farewell address, George Washington stated: "It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliance with any portion of the foreign world." This was echoed by Thomas Jefferson in his inaugural address, who wished for "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations . . . entangling alliances with none." As we watch the most recent developments in Syria unfold, it is a good moment to remember the guidance that Washington and Jefferson attempted to pass along.

Turkey, a nation that we have been locked in a permanent alliance with since the Cold War, has launched an offensive, a war of choice, by further invading Syria.

While they are clearly acting in their own self-interest, their actions place our Nation one mistake or one small incident away from a hot war with at least one major global power. Does it make sense for American men and women to potentially have to defend Turkey over their war of choice?

I believe that when Jefferson spoke of entangling alliances, one could not pick a better example than how we have expanded NATO. Since 2004, we have expanded NATO ever closer to the border of Russia. In the process, we have added the so-called military might of countries such as Slovenia,

Latvia, Albania, Montenegro, and now, today, North Macedonia.

What benefit is it to the United States to add countries that barely have enough military might to defend themselves? I say that adding North Macedonia to NATO adds absolutely nothing to our national security.

The best-case scenario we can hope for with these countries is that an incident that triggers a major land war never occurs. If you think this is far-fetched, remember that World War I began when a Serbian nationalist assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Within months, the very system of entangling alliances that our forefathers warned about turned Europe into a killing field, which ultimately killed upward of 19 million people. Adding yet another small country to NATO does nothing to dissipate the chances of catastrophic war and, in fact, encourages that possibility.

What military capabilities does North Macedonia bring to the table? Some 8,200 active-duty soldiers. Additionally, in 2018, they spent a whopping \$120 million a year on their military. By comparison, the Chicago Cubs spent \$221 million on their payroll. Additionally, 15 other Major League Baseball teams spent more on their rosters than North Macedonia spends on defense. Even if North Macedonia brought their military spending in line with NATO guidelines, it would still only be \$227 million.

But if the goal of NATO is to have these countries spend 2 percent, why don't we wait until they are spending 2 percent to admit them instead of admitting them and saying: Please, increase your defense spending.

If they come up to 2 percent, they would only be spending \$227 million, which is \$103 million less than Bryce Harper's contract with the Philadelphia Phillies.

NATO is supposed to be about mutual defense, not just blanket security guarantees to smaller states.

How much would North Macedonia give in monetary terms to NATO? Less than \$1 million. We foot the bill. We pay for everything. We are going to get less than \$1 million of direct contributions from North Macedonia. It doesn't seem hardly fair; does it?

It is clear that North Macedonia adds little, if any, value to the NATO alliance in terms of manpower or military capabilities, which means that the only reason they are being added is to be a tripwire that would only ensnare us in a rapidly escalating wider war in which they would not be able to carry their own weight. So I don't think North Macedonia adds anything to our national security, but they are out there on the edge of Europe as a tripwire to ensnare us in a wider war.

If the recent events involving Turkey were not enough to validate the guidance laid down by our Founding Fathers, then adding North Macedonia to a tangled network of permanent alli-

ances certainly is. We would be wise to revisit and heed our Founding Fathers, who said getting involved in entangling alliances in Europe does not add to our security; it threatens our security.

I urge a "no" vote. I don't think we need to expand NATO. We certainly don't need more people that the American taxpayer will be asked to pay for.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of North Macedonia's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

North Macedonia's path to NATO accession has been a long one. Despite being regarded early on as a leading candidate for NATO membership, Macedonia's name dispute with Greece became a huge roadblock. A disagreement over a country's name may not seem like a big deal to those looking in from the outside, but getting over this hurdle required significant political courage.

In 2017, Greece's Prime Minister Tsipras and Macedonia's Prime Minister Zaev displayed that level of political courage when they committed to settle the nearly three decades-long dispute. Because of their leadership, these two nations signed the Prespa agreement last year. Greece agreed to remove its objection and approve Macedonia's accession to NATO in exchange for Macedonia agreeing to change its name to North Macedonia.

This dispute resolution between Greece and North Macedonia demonstrates that NATO is not only an effective defensive alliance, but it has been a tremendous force for stability in Europe. North Macedonia is poised to soon become NATO's 30th member because it worked to resolve a longstanding bilateral disagreement.

I support NATO's longstanding open-door policy, and I hope that the goal of NATO membership will continue to guide other aspirants to solve longstanding disputes, fight corruption, and make difficult necessary domestic reforms.

Beyond North Macedonia's accession, I would like to speak more broadly on how important the NATO alliance is to the United States. NATO is based on the principle of collective defense. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty states that an attack against one member is an attack against us all.

NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg detailed NATO's value when he addressed a joint meeting of Congress earlier this year and both started and ended his speech by saying: "It is good to have friends." I couldn't agree more.

In the wake of the attacks of 9/11, our friends, our NATO allies, invoked article 5 for the first and only time in the alliance's history. Our NATO allies and many of the aspirants stood shoulder to shoulder with us in Afghanistan. They lost 1,000 of their sons and daughters in honoring their commitment by fighting alongside us. The United States should never forget our NATO allies' contribution and sacrifice.

A strong NATO alliance is just as important and relevant today as it was at its founding in 1949. I am pleased that the full Senate is taking up this measure to approve North Macedonia's accession to NATO, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor with a resounding yes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

NOMINATION OF ANDREW P. BREMBERG

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor to express my opposition to the nomination of Andrew Bremberg to be Representative of the United States to the Office of the United Nations in Geneva. He is not qualified for this position, and his views on women's rights and access to reproductive healthcare conflict with longstanding positions of the U.S. Government and more than three-quarters of the American public.

I take my position as ranking member for the Foreign Relations Committee seriously. I have a duty to thoroughly vet all nominees who come before the committee whether they be political nominees like Mr. Bremberg or career civil servants.

The criteria I use to determine their fitness to represent our country abroad include their foreign policy experience, their core values, and whether they will be responsive and honest with Congress as we conduct our oversight. I am disappointed to say that Mr. Bremberg fails even these basic criteria. He has no relevant foreign policy experience.

I repeat, the nominee to represent the United States at Geneva has no foreign policy experience. Mr. Bremberg has served as Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor for Domestic Policy at the White House and as a political appointee to the Department of Health and Human Services in the Bush administration.

When it comes to Mr. Bremberg's core values, his nomination hearing left me deeply troubled. Our voice at Geneva must stand up for the core principle that reproductive rights are human rights; yet Mr. Bremberg made clear that he opposes access to reproductive health services for women and girls who are victims of sexual violence in conflict in the world. This radical view of women's rights and access to reproductive healthcare is totally outside the mainstream, not just for the Democratic Party but the Republican Party and the American people at large. That is why 40 reproductive health groups wrote a joint letter opposing Mr. Bremberg's nomination.

Moreover, in his positions at the White House, Mr. Bremberg led and advanced divisive and incendiary policy proposals, such as the infamous Muslim ban Executive order and the addition of a citizenship question on the census.

When questioned on these subjects, Mr. Bremberg frequently cited confidentiality interests and declined to elaborate further. When pressed by

Senators on whether he was exerting any form of privilege or executive privilege, he insisted he was not; yet he continued to refuse to answer questions. Clearly, we cannot rely on this nominee to be honest and forthright with this body.

Beyond Mr. Bremberg's lack of experience, his extreme far-right views, and his lack of respect for Congress, there is the issue of his erroneous declarations on government documents. Indeed, his nomination was significantly delayed because my staff discovered Mr. Bremberg's claim that he had terminated from his political consulting company—which Trump for America was a client—when the truth is he did not. In fact, Mr. Bremberg did not terminate his political consulting firm until forced to as part of the Foreign Relations Committee's vetting process.

Once again, the Trump administration has displayed a basic inability to conduct even the most cursory vetting to ensure that a nominee is qualified and fit to hold office, free from potential financial or ethical conflicts of interest.

We have nominees with restraining orders, nominees who have failed to mention sexual harassment lawsuits, and nominees whose virulent, troll-like approach to social media should disqualify them from holding any office, much less a Senate-confirmed representative of the American people.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration has decided to advance unqualified and unfit nominees even as it withdraws a number of qualified civil servant nominees from consideration.

The failure of the political leadership at the State Department to stand up and defend qualified, veteran Ambassadors when they come under fire from the White House is nothing short of cowardice.

It was reported last week that Fiona Hill, the former White House foreign policy adviser, concluded that one Trump administration Ambassador was so unprepared for his job that he actually posed a national security risk. Mr. Bremberg is cut from the same mold.

If his performance before the Foreign Relations Committee demonstrated anything, it is that his views are completely outside those of mainstream America. He is unprepared to represent our Nation on the world stage, and he has little to no respect for the Senate and the role of Congress as a coequal branch of government. Surely, we can do better than this. The American people certainly deserve better than this.

I urge my colleagues to oppose his nomination and to demand that this administration nominate an ambassador to the United Nations organization in Geneva who is worthy of representing our country on the world stage.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. CRUZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that amendment Nos. 946 and 947 be withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments (No. 946 and No. 947) were withdrawn.

PROTOCOL TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY OF 1949 ON THE ACCESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise today to support the accession of the Republic of North Macedonia to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and to encourage my Senate colleagues to vote in favor of this protocol.

As we know, this past April marked the 70th anniversary of the NATO alliance, the world's strongest and most successful political military alliance in the history of the world.

In honor of this, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing to reflect on the alliance's successful past and to consider its future. The Senate also passed and recognized NATO's many accomplishments, and the resolution I authored, S. Res. 123, did so. I am grateful to have another opportunity to demonstrate strong Senate support for NATO by welcoming North Macedonia as a new member. As we all know, this matter has been in the works for a long time.

NATO was founded by the United States and 11 other countries after the shock of the Soviet blockade of Berlin. The Berlin airlift in 1948 made us realize the significant and real threat that the Soviet Union posed to peace and prosperity. That conflict is far behind us, but NATO has remained a critical piece of the framework that supports our collective security.

NATO worked to help the United States in Afghanistan after the attacks of September 11 and has ended genocides and maintained peace in the Balkans. It has trained troops of the new Iraqi Government; it has run air policing missions on Europe's eastern flank; it has helped end the genocide in Darfur; and it provided assistance to the United States after Hurricane Katrina. Most importantly, it has maintained a period of unprecedented peace among the major European powers.

NATO has proven to be not only a military success but also a political and economic one. NATO's security umbrella has provided the kind of stable environment necessary for economic growth and investment. Former Soviet bloc countries clamored for—and continue to clamor for—NATO membership, not only for the protection against Russia that they sought and seek but for the economic strength that membership could foster.

U.S. trade with fellow NATO members remains vital to the U.S. economy. NATO allies remain the largest