

## Secretary General's Speech in The Hague, 6 July 2009

### “NATO: Securing our Future”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The first question that must be faced by any Secretary General is inevitably: in what shape am I leaving the organisation? How did it look on the day I took over and has it become better, stronger, more effective?

Here I believe that I can give a positive answer. NATO today is widely accepted as an essential element of the European and indeed international security order. We work with the rest of the world and the rest of the world increasingly wants to work with us. Tomorrow I am hosting a conference in Brussels to launch the process leading to NATO's new Strategic Concept. Representatives from virtually every major international organisation in the world that deals with security will be in attendance. The reason is because they increasingly see that NATO can be useful to them and that they might well benefit from having better connections to us. As we benefit very much from them.

Internally, too, we are in good shape. After an interval of nearly half a century France has returned to the integrated military structure. We have just taken in two new members – Albania and Croatia – and the North Atlantic Council continues to be a place where the vital security interests of Allies are debated and key decisions affecting the security of all of us are taken – even though you will not be surprised to hear me repeat what I have said before that the scope of our political consultations needs to be intensified and to cover even more security challenges.

Yet for me the cohesion of NATO and the reality of an Alliance that really works are not so much reflected in the give and take of debate around the North Atlantic Council table. It is when I go to Afghanistan and see 28 Allies and 15 partners working together, using the same procedures, sharing the same objectives, and integrating their efforts that I fully realise the power of attraction of NATO in promoting a joint approach to security and the willingness to share burdens together.

So after five and a half years at the helm what balance sheet do I draw? First and foremost NATO today is busier than ever. We are being called upon to undertake more and

more missions. We have to face up not just to immediate threats, but also to the longer term challenges that can arise from climate change, energy security, cyber attacks, or disruptions to our vital lines of communication from activities such as piracy. In my view NATO is the natural place to discuss these new challenges and to work out common approaches. But brilliant analysis or collective approaches in themselves are not enough. We need sufficient military means and the political will to develop them and use them. We also need to adjust our thinking to 21<sup>st</sup> century conditions. You cannot build a 21<sup>st</sup> century Alliance with a 20<sup>th</sup> century mindset.

So what should be done? Should we simply scale down our ambitions, and return to the static, eurocentric Alliance that we were during the Cold War? Should we pull the emergency brake and limit our agenda to a few easy tasks – tasks that would not threaten to overtax us? Frankly, I do not believe that is a realistic option. We cannot pretend that globalisation didn't happen. It is a fact of life. But if we don't invest and seek to shape events, we will become their victims.

For NATO to be better able to shape events, we need to take a thorough look at the evolving strategic environment. We need to draw the right conclusions of what this environment means for our Alliance. And then, based on this analysis, we need to develop an agenda that can be resourced and sustained – both politically and militarily.

On the strategic environment, I can be brief. We all know the key words.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a major factor that will influence our strategic calculations in the future. We do not know yet if deterrence will work among a large number of nuclear states in the way that it worked successfully between NATO and the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War years. And non-state actors may well acquire the technological means to provide them with destructive power of a magnitude that in the past was only available to nation states. What worries me is that a treaty framework based on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that limited the number of nuclear powers for the best part of half a century is now breaking down and we have to try to strike a new global agreement before proliferation becomes an established fact. Let me give you a stark example: if Iran develops a nuclear weapon, we might quickly see a number of other Middle Eastern States do the same. And that is a genie we do not want out of its bottle.

Failing states will be a hotbed for all kinds of threats, ranging from international terrorism to organised crime. The global competition for energy is another factor that could

lead to new tensions. Many future conflicts may be asymmetrical, but we cannot discard the possibility of traditional “symmetric” inter-state wars either. After all, that is what we saw in the Caucasus less than a year ago.

Climate change looks set to lead to natural disasters, in which the military may often be the best organised actor to provide initial humanitarian relief. But climate change may also lead to territorial conflicts as it threatens to put essential resources such as water and arable land under strain.

What consequences will this environment have for our Alliance?

First – and perhaps most importantly – many of today's and tomorrow's threats do not affect all Allies in quite the same way. The environment that I just described simply does not present the kind of visible, tangible threat to all NATO Allies that we were used to in the Cold War.

And this is perhaps the greatest challenge to our Alliance. Why? Because it leads to a tendency to multiply the number of threats that NATO is called upon to deal with, with many Allies having different perceptions according to their geographical location, their history or simply the last problem they faced – whether a terrorist attack or the breakdown of their computer systems or an instance of mass migration. The degree of solidarity that a nation wants to render today is very much at its own discretion. The test of our Alliance, therefore, is in its ability to convince Allies to show the necessary solidarity and to increase their willingness to share burdens equitably.

In this respect there has been a lot of public and media attention in my time as Secretary General about uneven burden sharing in Afghanistan and national caveats. But I believe that this doesn't tell all the story. When I came in we had just under 6,000 NATO forces in Afghanistan. Today we have 61 000. The Europeans have increased by about 30 000. 21 countries are now operating in the south of Afghanistan and with most taking on demanding counter-insurgency missions. Our governments have remained committed. In this respect I would like also to salute here in The Hague the major contribution that my own country, the Netherlands, has made and still makes in Uruzgan. So again, I repeat, the test of the Alliance is not that we have perfect solidarity and perfect burden sharing at the outset, but that we are to achieve a greater level of collective effort as we go forward. Here the record is a good one.

Another consequence from the new security environment concerns deterrence. The concept of avoiding conflict by simply putting force on display rather than using it, is increasingly unworkable against the challenges of today and tomorrow. Instead, we have to prepare for long-term engagements, with no absolute guarantee of success. As an American commentator has put it: It is not enough to use power. You have to use smart power, bringing all of your instruments to bear – military, diplomatic, economic, cultural, strategic communications, in a carefully calibrated way. Again this confronts us with a paradox. The use of force is an indispensable ingredient in stabilising situations and creating a climate of security for reconstruction and development; but it cannot work by itself alone, but only if it is constantly backed up by diplomatic and civilian efforts which allow the military to progressively withdraw to the sidelines. (“3D’s”)

This means that NATO can no longer be a solo-player. Quite the contrary. True success in Afghanistan requires civil reconstruction – something which NATO cannot provide, but which others must supply. So unlike the Cold War when NATO only had to leverage the efforts of its own members to be successful. Today it has to do that but also to be able to leverage the efforts of others. We must not only be able to work harmoniously with organisations like the UN, the EU, or the World Bank in the joint planning and conduct of stabilisation operations, but also influence them to engage in places like Afghanistan or the Balkans.

But here’s the rub: we all accept the theory of this new inter-dependence. The civilians cannot succeed without the military, but the military cannot succeed without the civilians. We need to work together from the start of an operation and not only develop the cooperation through trial and error and ad hoc as we go along. Far too much time and effort, not to speak of massive financial resources, are wasted by doing business this way. But we still do not have a form of cooperation among the major international organisations which recognises this new reality and seeks to implement it in practice.

So this brings us to the fundamental question: Given these burdens and constraints on our Alliance, how must NATO evolve in order to offer its members both maximum security and the best possibility to shape the new security environment?

First: we need a much broader political dialogue among the Allies. NATO's greatest asset is its ability to project collective military power. But you obviously cannot send troops with one eye shut into a complex situation and discover the problems only after the deployment. So we need more political consultation in the Alliance and more interaction in

planning with the other international organisations to make sure that we get the facts right in advance and that we have the right and most realistic strategy from the outset. To my mind this is all the more necessary in scenarios where the military dimension may be less clear.

That is why we need a more proactive discussion in NATO on emerging issues – for example energy security, nuclear proliferation, climate change. But we also need to develop new arrangements to better connect NATO's military contribution with the political processes in those regions in which we operate. Under my tenure as Secretary General, I pushed successfully for NATO representation in the enlarged Contact Group on Kosovo, and I established a NATO Special Representative in Afghanistan. But it is only a beginning. We need also to strengthen further our ties with those countries who are increasingly our neighbours in the regions where we are operating and who can help us not only in contributing to our operations but also to the overall regional diplomacy. One of the things that makes me happiest from my time as Secretary General is the way we have significantly boosted our ties with the North African countries in the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Gulf countries in the Istanbul Cooperation Council. NATO without its partners is today unthinkable. We must never take them for granted but continue to build trust and cooperation both through more regular political consultations and also through increasingly involving them in our operations.

Ultimately, we need to go much further, and this leads me to my second priority – which is to put in practice what we have come to refer to as a “Comprehensive Approach” between all major international institutions and NGOs. I realise that it is difficult for military and civilian players to go beyond cooperating only ad-hoc in response to specific crises. But it can be done. Just look at the Dutch model in Uruzgan where from early on both military and civilian efforts were closely integrated. There is a vital role for NATO to play here within such a comprehensive approach – but it requires the Alliance to be much better connected with the international community. We now need to look beyond our more traditional partners such as the EU or the OSCE here in Europe and reach out to others. We have made a good start with the African Union in both Darfur and Somalia but I can also envisage NATO talking to the Arab League or to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. The NATO-UN Declaration, which I signed with Ban Ki-moon last September, has certainly sent the right signal.

Third – we must continue to develop more flexible and deployable forces. Given the current financial crisis, transforming static Cold War capabilities into expeditionary forces is difficult enough. So we should not burden this process further by a pointless debate about

collective defence versus missions and operations. This debate will only distract us from the real task: to have forces that can do both – defend Alliance territory and take on stabilisation tasks well away from our own borders.

My fourth priority: Get the NATO-Russia relationship back on track. Russia's recent assertiveness has raised genuine security concerns, particularly among NATO's eastern-most Allies. It has also led some to question the future of NATO enlargement as a benign means of consolidating Europe. But most importantly, it has exposed a lack of Allied unity vis-à-vis Russia. This is an untenable situation – for NATO, but also for Russia. We need to find a common position amongst ourselves and build a sustainable, pragmatic relationship with Russia focused on areas of common interest. Our recent meeting in Corfu has helped to set the stage for such a relationship. Clearly, on many issues we will continue to disagree. But we must not let those issues prevent us from cooperating elsewhere. Certainly we can, and must, do better than we are doing now.

My fifth priority: keep developing global partnerships. Australian troops or Japanese funds for Afghanistan are most welcome. Let us not squander such valuable contributions by a false debate about a “global NATO”. Let us simply continue to develop the necessary structures for non-members from across the globe to associate themselves – politically and/or militarily -- with NATO-led missions and operations. When we face global challenges, it makes eminent sense to have global partners to help us meet those challenges.

This brings me to my last priority, which is to write a new NATO Strategic Concept. Over the past decade, NATO has been busy adapting to rapid change. Indeed, we were so preoccupied with managing our operations that we sometimes ran the risk of missing the bigger picture. A new Strategic Concept will provide NATO's transformation with the broad political context that it needs. That is why I have been championing such a project for some time, and why our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit in April gave the green light for it.

Of course, the successful conclusion of this project will fall to my successor, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. But the process is well on track. I have already mentioned the conference on the new Strategic Concept which I am hosting tomorrow in Brussels. Several hundred participants from the international strategic community, the private sector and the media will attend. And this will be a valuable opportunity to hear their views on where NATO is today, and where it should be going.

A new Strategic Concept will be an indispensable piece of the puzzle of a new, more effective NATO. But let us be perfectly clear: by no means will a piece of paper “solve” NATO’s problems. For NATO to be truly successful, we need political elites and the general public in all the Alliance’s member nations to realise that the meaning of security – and the means to provide security – have changed irreversibly.

As much as we may yearn for the easier days of the past, when the main purpose of our military forces was not to be used, we should realise that today, they must be used. And they are used: One of the things that has impressed me most in the last 5½ years is the professionalism, dedication and courage of all the men and women in uniform who run the risk of paying the ultimate prize for our security. As much as we may long for the simplicity and clarity of Cold War deterrence, we must accept that security today requires engagement in far away places – engagement that is dangerous, expensive, and with no guarantee of success. In short, security in today’s globalised world is much more demanding to achieve, and far less perfect.

This is a message that many people do not want to hear – and that many governments therefore do not want to convey. But they must. As long as we cling to the illusion that globalisation is just an economic phenomenon without any security implications, we remain vulnerable. And as long as we make ourselves believe that missions like Afghanistan are not really essential to our security, or that using military force is an admission of political failure, we will remain out of touch with reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We cannot afford to approach 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges with such a 20<sup>th</sup> century mindset. We must find a new understanding of Allied security – and Allied solidarity – in the age of globalisation. NATO offers an excellent framework – and an invaluable tool – for achieving this. That is why we must not only preserve the Alliance, but use its full potential.

Thank you.