

**“Crafting the new Strategic Concept:
Ambitions, Resources, and Partnerships for a 21st Century Alliance”**

Keynote speech

by

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"New Challenges, Better Capabilities"

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Good morning. It's good to be here in Bratislava, where I last had the chance to visit when I was Ambassador to NATO nearly a decade ago. I'm glad to have the opportunity to speak with so many friends and colleagues from the NATO arena here, and also to the university students who have tuned in from Banska Bystrica, Brno, Warsaw, and Budapest.

It's particularly significant to have the opportunity to speak with all you before tomorrow's informal Defense Ministerial. My boss, Secretary Robert Gates, will be arriving in Bratislava ready to address some important issues on NATO's current agenda, including our common mission in Afghanistan and European missile defense. I'm going to talk with you today about three longer-term issues that are part of the review of NATO's Strategic Concept that is now underway: First, developing a stronger consensus over the challenges NATO should address. Second, ensuring that our publics understand the necessity of matching NATO resources to NATO missions. And third, strengthening partnerships to maximize NATO's role as an agent of peace and stability and to better reflect the globalized, networked world in which we live.

As an Obama Administration official at the Department of Defense, I can say with confidence that the U.S. is fully committed to a strong and relevant Alliance. As President Obama observed at the Strasbourg-Kehl summit last April, it is a “fundamental truth that America cannot confront the challenges of this century alone” and that “Europe cannot confront them without America.”

But NATO can only be as relevant as it is able to adapt to the current threat environment. This was why NATO leaders at Strasbourg issued a Declaration on Alliance Security tasking the Alliance with rewriting NATO's Strategic Concept by the next Summit in late 2010. The process offers an opportunity we can't miss – an opportunity to develop stronger consensus across NATO member states about NATO's challenges, ambitions, resources, and partnerships.

It's an opportunity that follows an important tradition. Since 1949, the Alliance has developed no less than six strategic concepts – four during the Cold War, and two since its end. It may reveal something about my age - or my single-mindedness – that I worked on the last two editions, and

am now involved in a third Strategic Concept review. Each time, the process has permitted the Alliance to discuss and recalibrate its collective approach based on the evolution of the security environment: whether on the question of national specialization or collective defense in the Alliance's early years: nuclear vs conventional forces later during the Cold War; advancing Europe's integration after the break-up of the Soviet empire (1991); and more recently the appropriate balance between Article 5 and out-of-area missions (1999).

As we know, the United States and Europe face some very different challenges than they did when I worked on the last Strategic Concept a decade ago. Since that time it has become clear that poor governance and festering extremism far beyond NATO borders can have deadly implications for the security of our own populations. NATO efforts to combat violent extremism and promote stability and security in Afghanistan are closely linked to our own security. And our credibility as an Alliance is at stake: should we fail at this endeavor, you can rest assured that other adversaries will be watching. As President Obama said last month after his meeting with Secretary General Rasmussen of our efforts in Afghanistan: this not an American battle, it is a NATO mission.

Since 1999, it has also become clear that our members are vulnerable in new ways. Cyber attacks against NATO members and the use of energy dependency as political leverage have raised fresh sets of concerns within the Alliance. NATO has a role in addressing acts of political intimidation against its members. Some steps have already been taken to address these issues. The NATO Cyber Defense Center of Excellence in Estonia has been actively addressing cyber security threats, and allies are discussing energy security issues such as critical energy infrastructure protection and the role of non-NATO partnerships in the energy security field. An Alliance geared toward the 21st century will need to continue to expand on these initial efforts.

At the same time, it is clear that many allies continue to link their own sense of security to the Alliance's ability to defend and deter attacks against their own territory. So as we as an Alliance consider how NATO can best address new challenges, it's also important to reiterate that our commitment to each other as allies is absolutely sacrosanct, and to guarantee that this commitment is credible. As President Obama said in Prague, "Article 5 is a promise for our time, and for all time."

So a new Strategic Concept will need to help the Alliance to strike the right balance among old and new missions. It must also ensure that sufficient resources are made available both to meet today's threats and to prepare ourselves for tomorrow's. Keeping pace with changes of the past decade will mean committing the resources needed to develop flexible, deployable forces that can be sent into action around the periphery of the Alliance as well as at a strategic distance, for the full range of Allied missions. It will mean pursuing a comprehensive approach to stability operations that fully leverages both our military and our civilian resources. And it will mean undertaking appropriate prudent planning and exercises to prepare our Alliance to address all potential territorial threats to all 28 NATO members.

We cannot achieve these objectives without engaging our publics. The new Strategic Concept offers an opportunity to develop greater consensus around these missions, and to strengthen the political will of Allies to contribute the resources and capabilities that NATO needs to remain relevant. We are an Alliance of democracies and political leaders are sensitive to public opinion.

With this in mind, our new Strategic Concept should not be a lengthy, bureaucratic document, but one that conveys the Alliance's continued importance and *raison d'être* to our parliaments and publics, especially the younger generations, where support for NATO has been declining. In order to invest in capabilities that can address territorial defense as well as threats beyond NATO borders, the Alliance needs leaders to clearly articulate the importance of getting this right.

We're familiar by now with some of the biggest obstacles the Alliance faces in having deployable expeditionary forces that can do both territorial defense and missions beyond Allied territory. Shortfalls in strategic lift, air-to-air refueling, intelligence sharing, medical support, and logistics are some of the primary limitations to NATO's ability to respond effectively. The financial crisis has made that situation even worse. However, under the motto of "never waste a good crisis," we believe that NATO should seize on this opportunity to redouble its efforts to advance a policy of defense integration.

The NATO Response Force has the potential to be a critical tool as we prepare for Article 5 missions in and around NATO territory and also beyond NATO's borders. Recently the Alliance has taken steps to emphasize the Article 5 mission of the NRF, and I hope that this will help to revitalize contributions to the force. The United States particularly appreciates the Slovak Republic's ongoing NRF contributions, and we applaud Bratislava's intent to contribute additional forces in future rotations. The results of last week's NRF Force Generation Conference were promising, and we hope that more nations will agree to voluntary national targets so that the NRF can count on having sufficient forces over the long term. We should continue to move further in this direction, and should use NATO common funding for NRF operations, wherever they occur.

Part of the answer to the resource challenge may lie in multinational arrangements. Pooling more resources would help reduce costs and redundancy, more efficiently deliver key capabilities for operations now and in the future, and more equitably share the burdens in both human and resource terms. Pooled capabilities allow multiple countries to share the burden of procurement and maintenance. Multinational arrangements are particularly helpful for smaller allies, as they offer a way to provide capability collectively that none could field individually. But even larger countries have come to see the utility of pursuing pooling and multinational procurement. Current examples of multinational arrangements include NATO AWACS, the Baltic Air Policing mission, and the C-17 Strategic Airlift Capability program, and a number of other arrangements are being explored.

Secretary Gates will discuss one important area for multinational collaboration with his NATO colleagues tomorrow: missile defense. The new U.S. approach is based on significant progress in technology and a revised analysis of the threats posed by Iran and others. We are committed to developing what we call a Phased Adaptive Approach to missile defense in Europe, and a missile defense architecture that will be inherently collaborative and, we hope, form part of a wider NATO missile defense system. It's an approach that is fundamentally consistent with Article 5 and the principle of indivisibility of Allied security since it will evolve over the next ten years to protect all of NATO territory. We need to make sure that we have a strong enough missile defense architecture to deter the widest possible range of threats, whether from missiles armed with conventional weapons or, in the worst-case scenario, missiles bearing nuclear weapons or

other WMD. We want this new architecture to be inclusive, too, and we're enthusiastic about discussing a potential cooperative role for Russia.

Ultimately, providing NATO with the resources it needs will take some difficult decisions in the parliaments of Europe and North America. But it's a necessary task. Consensus around collective defense cannot take place if there are perceptions that some members are true security providers while others are security consumers. In constant dollars, European defense spending has remained flat since 1998. That was a year before our last Strategic Concept, as well as NATO's Kosovo air campaign in 1999, three years before the Alliance invoked Article 5 in response to the 9/11 attacks, and five years before NATO began its mission in Afghanistan. In fact, if it were not for some of our newest members, who have been working hard to achieve NATO spending targets, European defense spending levels would actually have declined since the 1990s.

If NATO wants to remain relevant, we're going to have to ensure that our resources match NATO missions. We need to step up efforts to meet our level of ambition, not reduce our effectiveness as an alliance because we can't muster the means.

Even modest increases in spending will help if paired with smarter spending. Secretary Gates's mantra on the U.S. defense budget process has been that every dollar that we are forced to spend on things we do not need takes away dollars from things we do need. He put this into practice by cutting some very popular, but unnecessary, areas of U.S. defense spending. So the old cliché of pushing NATO members that cannot spend more to "spend more wisely" still applies. In fact, that phrase is more relevant than ever.

Spending wisely will take some shifts in European defense budgets away from salaries and toward procurement of modernizing elements such as command, control, communications, and intelligence networks, new weapons systems, and high-tech combat operations. Combat support and combat service capabilities are direly needed to allow us to communicate, share intelligence, track our forces and assets, and operate smoothly together on battlefield. Lower-tech but also needed capabilities such as ground transportation, base operations, and battlefield medical technology are critical as well.

Fully deployable capabilities may be more expensive, but they are needed for the full range of Allied missions, including the collective defense of Allied territory as well as expeditionary missions. Under the constrained defense budgets, we cannot afford to devote scarce resources to forces or capabilities not usable for the full range of Alliance missions. So building capabilities that address both territorial and out-of-area missions, both modern combat operations and stability operations, will be a core challenge for Europe's governments and parliaments. We all will have to work to persuade our voters at home that these resources represent a critical down payment on the future of the Alliance.

In addition to engaging our publics on the importance of NATO's role in today's security environment, the new Strategic Concept will need to reconsider how the Alliance engages with partners. The 1999 Strategic Concept elaborated on Partnership as one of the Alliance's fundamental tasks and a key instrument for shaping the security environment. That aspect of our strategy will need to be updated to reflect the changes of the past decade. This subject, in fact,

will be the focus of one in the series of official Strategic Concept Seminars planned by the Secretary General and the Group of Experts, specifically this January in Oslo with German, Norwegian, Romanian and Spanish sponsorship. In anticipation, let me offer some thoughts on Alliance priorities concerning NATO partnerships.

Seventeen Partner nations are now contributing to NATO-led operations, from Afghanistan to the Balkans to maritime missions – providing political support, as well as over 4,000 personnel. Less tangibly but no less important, partnerships give NATO direct means to promote stability and help with problems of governance in areas that, if unaddressed, can spawn new threats like proliferation and terrorism. NATO's engagement with those outside its borders -- in the Balkans, Eurasia, Russia, and even farther afield, with Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore – extend its influence and capacity to contribute to international security. NATO's engagement with its Mediterranean and Middle East neighbors through the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative have offered the means to build confidence and counter extremism, and so far represent a NATO success story. We should continue progress made in that pattern, with new NATO Partners across the globe.

We should also underscore the importance of NATO's cooperation with the EU and other institutions, and of combining NATO's military strength with economic and other civilian contributions. The ideological debate over whether NATO and the European Union are complementary or competitive has ended. As we've seen in the Balkans and are seeing today in Afghanistan, each institution has distinct capacities that it brings to crisis management, stabilization operations, and responses to threats to our economic and security interests. We support steps that strengthen the EU's capacity to contribute, and we look forward to expanded continued close, results-oriented NATO-EU cooperation in the years ahead.

NATO's longstanding partnerships are as important as ever. We are continuing to work with long-time PFP partners. In the Balkans, steady NATO engagement has allowed the Alliance to continue to play a stabilizing role, helping to secure the objective of a "Europe whole, free, and at peace." NATO has played a key role in the Balkans, not just in ending the conflicts, but in serving as a catalyst for defense reform, the strengthening of democratic values and consolidation of regional security. It is critical that the Allies continue to invest in the progress of all Balkan countries toward NATO membership and membership in all Euro-Atlantic institutions, which remain crucial to lasting peace and stability in the region.

Indeed, NATO membership should be viewed as the ultimate form of partnership with the Alliance, for those who seek to walk through NATO's Open Door. At Strasbourg, NATO welcomed Albania and Croatia as members, increasing membership to 28 countries. The Alliance also reiterated that NATO's door remains open while reaffirming decisions made at Bucharest that Georgia and Ukraine will indeed become members of NATO. The Alliance has stressed the importance of continuing to maximize the Alliance's advice, assistance and support for both countries' reform efforts through the NATO-Georgia and NATO-Ukraine Commissions. Now it is up to the Ukrainians and the Georgians to get on with the hard work required to meet NATO's standards. And in the meantime, we are giving great attention to the distinctive partnerships we have established with Ukraine and with Georgia – and rightly so.

As we keep NATO's door open aspiring members, it will be important to engage with Russia in order to dispel the false notion that NATO enlargement is directed against Moscow or that interactions between NATO and Russia must inherently be a zero-sum game. Complaints from the Russian leadership about Ukraine and Georgia's pursuit of NATO membership and Russian claims of privileged spheres of influence are troubling, and ones to which we are unequivocally opposed. Russia's leaders must accept that an enlarged NATO is not a threat to Russia -- on the contrary, by bringing Central and Eastern European countries into the Alliance, NATO has helped consolidate democracy, security, and stability in the region -- a process that has left Russia more, not less, secure.

We think a positive-sum approach to the NATO-Russia relationship is critical given our significant areas of common interest. Dialogue and cooperation between NATO and Russia should serve to demonstrate to both sides that the other is not a threat, and that our security is a common one toward which we all must work in concert. This is why Secretary General Rasmussen made a point of inviting Russian Representatives to the launch of NATO's Strategic Concept Review and has made it an explicit priority to revitalize the NATO-Russia Council as a central forum for strategic discussions and concrete cooperation.

NATO and Russia can restart their successful engagement on tangible areas of mutual concern, such as cooperation on Afghanistan, counter-narcotics, counterterrorism, and maritime security. In a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council in Corfu this past June, Ministers agreed to do just that by calling for reform within the NRC and setting forth specific, agreed-upon areas of engagement. Pending this reform, the NRC has the potential to foster transparency and information sharing, and discussion of issues on which we differ, as well as enabling joint exercises that are essential to providing reassurance to participants.

So to wrap up, the new Strategic Concept will have quite a bit of ground to cover. It may have implications for young voters in Bratislava, Prague and Budapest, for families in Kandahar, and for diplomats in Seoul. That's why we're hoping that the process over the next year -- including brainstorming efforts by the "wise persons" group headed by Madeleine Albright -- will help spark some lively discussion within NATO about how we're going to work together to operate in our new security environment. This conference is also an important contribution to this brainstorming effort. As we go forward, we should maintain an ambitious approach fitting of a great alliance, and consider how best to develop the resources and relationships to meet our objectives.