



“An Alliance for Future Generations”

**Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,
at the Pan-Atlantic Student Summit**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thanks for having me here with you today. I am in a good mood this afternoon, and it is not just because I am in Istanbul and about to start an important NATO Summit meeting. The main reason for my optimism is the opportunity to address such an energetic and interested crowd.

I have been in politics for quite a while. Sometimes, politics can be a frustrating business. But it is always stimulating. Because, at the end of the day, it is about shaping things for the better – and about promoting and protecting our values. So I never lost my enthusiasm for politics.

For me, politics is first and foremost about values. About the freedom to speak your mind, the freedom to travel, the freedom to listen to the music or see the movies you want. About the freedom to elect your own leaders, or to stand for office yourself. To me, these values have always been non-negotiable.

During the Cold War, NATO protected these values. And that is why I have always been an ardent supporter of this Alliance.

But what about today? The Cold War is ancient history. For many of you here, I might as well talk about the Stone Age. The freedoms I just mentioned have spread all across Europe. We all share the same values, from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

So why should anyone still be concerned about protecting these values? And why should anyone care about keeping NATO?

The answer is easy. Because we cannot take our freedoms for granted. Security, freedom and prosperity are not humanity's natural state. These achievements have to be worked for – day in and day out. Our values need to be promoted – and protected. Because they are vulnerable.

We saw as much in the conflicts in the Balkans, when the values that we thought were firmly entrenched throughout Europe were crushed. And we saw it again, just a few years ago, on September 11. The terrorists who launched the attacks on the United States were also attacking the values we cherish: pluralism, freedom, democracy, and tolerance. They have made it clear that they want none of that. On the contrary, they preach hatred and worship intolerance.

So it is evident that we continuously need to protect our values. But how? There is no single answer. But one key tool is NATO, the Atlantic Alliance.

Tomorrow's Summit will demonstrate why. Because the new NATO we are building can protect and promote our values as effectively today as the old NATO did in the very different circumstances of the past.

The key feature of this new NATO is its readiness to build stability where it matters – in Europe, and beyond. Because today, we simply can no longer protect our values without addressing the potential risks and threats that arise far from our homes.

Afghanistan is a case in point. Under the Taliban, this country exported instability to its neighbours, and terrorism and drugs all around the world. If we do not help this country to become a more stable place, these problems will once again end up on our doorstep. If we do not help the Afghan people to live a life in peace and dignity, their country could once again become a safe haven for the world's most dangerous terrorists.

We will not let this happen. NATO is doing its part to create a better future for Afghanistan. Tomorrow, at the Summit, we will decide to further expand our presence in this country. And we will play a strong role in the upcoming elections. Because nourishing democracy is the best security investment of all. This was true for the Balkans – it is also true for Afghanistan.

But building stability in the 21st century requires more than a readiness to take on demanding missions. It also requires strong relationships with the countries around us. That is why we are strengthening our relationships with an ever-growing list of partners, from the Balkans to the Caucasus and Central Asia, across the Mediterranean and into the Middle East.

We are building closer ties with the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations, who are vital partners in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction.

And we are transforming our military capabilities and the way we organise and deploy our forces for the new kinds of operations NATO is called upon – a demand that, I am sure, will grow in the future.

Tomorrow's Summit will deliver across this broad spectrum of issues. It will demonstrate that NATO is in good shape. But to keep the Alliance in good shape, we need to do more than hold Summits. We need to make sure, above all, that we can count on the steady support of creative and energetic people. We must ensure that the younger generation, too, is firmly focussed on the challenge of providing security in a complex world. Because it is a never-ending challenge.

You represent this new generation. You have come to Istanbul because you take an active interest in international affairs and international security. By being here today, you demonstrate that you care about NATO and its transformation.

So my key message to you is clear: preserve that spirit. Cultivate it. Get involved. Never be content with standing at the sidelines.

You can play your part in making sure that NATO remains for you what it has always been for me: an indispensable instrument to protect and promote our most fundamental values and to pass them on to future generations.

Thank you.

Questions and answers

Q: Focus on your consensus of stability in the region, and what's happening (inaudible) tomorrow with Iraq and by the upset (inaudible) for more stability? I think first off, interim government in Baghdad, if tomorrow you receive a letter from an elected leader from a (inaudible) society General (inaudible) asking me to come to Gaza would you do that?

de Hoop Scheffer: Excellent question... might be the best this morning. But let me first of all; first of all answer you like this sir, NATO fully realizes that when it strengthens its Mediterranean dialogue and when it makes an outreach into the broader region, let me stress to and with countries whose soldiers are--it's a two-way street not a one-way street--that does not mean that NATO or for that matter other international organizations like the European Union should say: we're doing this, let's forget about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On the other hand, I think, the fact that--to your regret and to my great regret--we still do not seem to be very close to a solution for that conflict; I think should prevent NATO from playing its part into the outreach, into the broader Middle East because you and I will be very quickly agree, I think, that this region is indeed pivotal.

Coming back to your question, I did not intend to say in my speech that NATO is going to send in many more troops into Iraq. You know, the letter I received three days ago from Prime Minister Allawi, focused on training. Training of the Iraqi security forces, training of the Iraqi security institutions and let nobody say, by the way, that this is something of secondary importance; I know and I think I understand why Prime Minister Allawi wrote the letter as he did because its of the utmost importance that the Iraqi government, after the elections, can stand on its own feet. It's Iraqi ownership which is now at stake.

We have to change our mindset, it is not anymore western capitals deciding what's happening in Iraq, the key is in Baghdad itself and, as I said yesterday and I can repeat here today, NATO ambassadors reached initial agreement on answering Prime Minister Allawi's letter positively and I'm confident that the heads of state and government tomorrow will give their final approval.

So let me take as a central thesis that this should never be an alibi of not doing everything to, to find a solution for the Israeli-Palestinian problem.

And now I come to the key of your question. One can never exclude in the future, one can never exclude in the future a role a stabilization force--I'm not speaking about NATO in the first instance--but a stabilization force, but you will agree with me sir that one needs a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians before you can discuss this. So I'm afraid this is

not in the cards at the moment to give you an honest answer to a very honest question. But again, if the Israelis and the Palestinians would come to an agreement and--you and I, I think, share the opinion that I'd rather see that happen tomorrow than the day after tomorrow--and if, there would be a need by a UN cover; because I would imagine there would be some sort of a United Nations cover, that there would be a need for a security force. I would not be the first one to say: It would be absolutely impossible for the Atlantic Alliance to play a role. But there's a big 'but' here that is if there is a peace agreement and unfortunately it isn't there yet.

Q: In condoning the member states, to try and give the republic (inaudible) training, might that (inaudible)

de Hoop Scheffer: ...answer your question in front of cameras and microphones? The NATO Secretary General could say: Listen country X or Y or Z, we have a peacekeeping operation, please send our forces. I've been a member of Parliament in my own country for 16 years so I know what it means to make these complicated decisions of sending the men and women overseas at... and, and in many occasions in harm's way, but I think indeed, as you say, we should have a much more fundamental discussion on national caveats.

And I've tried to contribute to that by answering your question here and by going around with this message. May I say, at the same time, that although you're right in saying that there were some problems with national caveats in Kosovo when the ethnic hatred flared up mid-March, I think Kosovo was an excellent example of NATO being able to very quickly fly in reserves and to try to do its utmost--and I think KFOR did very well in Kosovo--to see that it was only strength which was necessary within 24-48 hours.

The problem was, as you know in Kosovo, that this, this ethnic hatred was inspired by radical factions in the majority Albanian community, that it started in 5-6-7 or 8 places at the same time by cell phone. It was ethnic hatred and ethnic violence by cell phone because that is the way it was organized. That KFOR had some difficulty in the beginning of being at all those places together, my conclusion is, from this to give you another practical example, that a force like KFOR should have the opportunity to jam cell phone traffic.

Here you have a very practical thing which KFOR doesn't have, if it were up to me that would be the kind of discussion we would start apart from--I take your point--discussions on national caveats but it didn't prevent KFOR from being very effective and efficient in March in Kosovo.

Q: (inaudible) the legitimacy of the security of the EU? Do you want to do away on this and what sort of a relationship do you envision in the future between NATO and the EU and that's not the mentality as you envision it? Can't not the mentality work without the (inaudible) of European membership within the EU and NATO meaning that all European members of NATO ought to be found members of the EU as well and vice versa?

de Hoop Scheffer: As far as the last part of your question sir that is up to them. I mean every country should decide for itself and by itself if it wants to become a member, non-EU NATO, non-NATO EU. I'm here today, this morning, in a country with a strong European vocation, a country, Turkey, which expects a very important at the European Summit at the end of this year.

A country which is showing, I think, everyday it's European aspirations and quite rightly so. So I hope that, the decision at the Summit at the end of this year will be an extremely important decision for Turkey--that's up to me, it's up to the European leaders to decide that, not for me as the NATO Secretary General--but coming back to your question, my point is, first of all, if you write the word complementarity and no duplication in capitals, because I think it's essential.

What we saw last year is not the right approach for Europe to develop completely independent operational planning headquarters, we have that behind us, that's, for me, part of the past. If you realize sir, and I think everybody does, that nations are working with one single set of forces, no nation can afford to have a separate force marked EU and another force marked NATO. We work with one single set of forces. The European Union and marks on a program of, of setting up the so-called battle groups, I think that's a good idea.

Where I need complementarity, I need complementarity in a sense that I do not want those battle groups and the soldiers who are going into those battle groups are going to harm the NATO response force. In other words, here you have a very practical example of complementarity because what NATO cannot have is that in a situation where NATO would like to employ the NRF, contributing European nations would say: Sorry, sorry NATO, but we have the battle groups out, they can't participate in the NRF.

Second remark of a more general nature, I would of course very much hope and I always say I'm of course an Atlanticist as Secretary General of NATO but I have a European vocation as well. I'm half Turk in that respect, I have a European vocation as well. That... if, you want a real European security and defence identity, it should of course be based on a common foreign and security policy. Otherwise it will, it will be something which is too empty, so I mean, as Europe develops its security and defence identity I think there's still a lot to do on the European side in developing a common foreign and security policy because the one does hardly go without the other I think.

But, I mean, to come back to the last part of your question, we have now, I think, in NATO nineteen members who are at the same time European Union but I stand as Secretary General for the full complement of 26 NATO nations or so the non-EU members, so we need, we need fine tuning and we've able to find that fine tuning, I mentioned it in my speech, in the end of SFOR of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the start of EUFOR. I think we have managed to do the fine tuning.