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# **The Transatlantic Partnership: A History of Defending Freedom; A Future for Extending It**

By

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Admiral Gehman, Dr. Koch, distinguished members of the diplomatic community and of the armed forces: thank you for asking me to join you today as you begin your symposium. You could not have selected a more vital or current topic than NATO's role in the new millennium. As we approach the ninth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NATO, we can look back with pride and deep gratitude at what the Atlantic Alliance has achieved for our people. Fifty years of peace, freedom and growing prosperity and a peaceful revolution in the East that has extended that same promise to millions more. Our success has rested on partnership—a partnership reaching across the Atlantic: a partnership between diplomacy, economic strength and military force; and now, finally, a partnership between East and West. Men and women in uniform, legislators, diplomats, and citizens on both sides of the divide worked together. It took all of us working together to tear down that wall, and it will take all of us working together to build a new Europe that is everywhere free, prosperous, and democratic.

During the last nine years we have adapted our security, political, and economic architecture to the new situation; we must now focus on the next 50 years. In Berlin last May, President Clinton invited our European partners to join us in defining a vision for the Euro-Atlantic Partnership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The purpose of this partnership is simple and enduring: to protect the security, prosperity, and democratic moorings of its members. To do this, we want a Europe that can act as a partner—in Europe, across the Atlantic, and around the world.

Today, and at the NATO summit next April, the focus is on security, the strong skeleton of the transatlantic structure. However, the security aspect of our relationship does not stand alone: it provides the backbone for and enables the articulation of the political and economic dimensions. When the U.S. and Europe act together, we can set the agenda for global prosperity. When we do not, we risk stalemate and uncertainty. The European Union (EU) is clearly the economic partner we must have for the next century—and it is much more. The EU also can be our partner for dealing with global problems of crime and the environment and with regional and humanitarian crises. We have accomplished a great deal using what we call the New Transatlantic Agenda. Deeper partnership with the EU can help us meet each of the three challenges facing us—peaceful and democratic integration within Europe, strengthened ties between Europe and America to advance the prosperity of our peoples, and joint action beyond Europe in the wider world to meet global and regional challenges. Those goals are threatened today.

## **Kosovo Challenges That Vision**

In place of a grand struggle between freedom and tyranny, in which nuclear devastation is threatened, we now find ourselves struggling with regional and ethnic conflicts where fear takes its form not in nuclear annihilation but in genocide, torched villages, hunger, hatred, and

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wrecked economies. In the very heart of Europe, most recently in Kosovo, we have witnessed atrocities that seem to belong to another, more brutal era. Kosovo, like Bosnia before it, poses a humanitarian and security problem for the transatlantic community that threatens the integration of Europe and our efforts in Bosnia. If not resolved, it could spill beyond its borders, inflame the region, and, in a worst-case scenario, put two NATO allies on opposite sides of the equation. We have both the interest and the obligation to stop the killing. The consequences of a failure to act are such that NATO and its members have taken the rarely resorted-to step of threatening to use force if unacceptable use of force on the other side is not stopped and the world community's objectives are not complied with.

### **We Have a Strategy.**

Our goals are to end the violence, prevent a humanitarian crisis from becoming a catastrophe, and compel Milosevic to negotiate with Kosovars on real autonomy. It is a situation in which military force backs diplomatic and humanitarian efforts. Dick Holbrooke and, later, General Clark and most recently General Naumann have traveled to Belgrade to make sure Milosevic understood NATO's message loud and clear. Meanwhile, Ambassador Hill is shuttling between Pristina and Belgrade to negotiate a political agreement for the future, in a coordinated U.S.-European approach. Milosevic has agreed to accept 2,000 OSCE monitors. This mission will be coordinated with NATO, which is establishing an air verification mission (AVM) and reaction force so that observers can be extracted in the event of an emergency. We also have designated a senior U.S. official to work with the Kosovo Liberation Army, are providing \$59 million and 47,000 metric tons of food to aid agencies in Kosovo, and are increasing support for independent media in Serbia following Milosevic's recent, unacceptable crackdown.

U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1199 and 1203 identify a number of key areas in which Belgrade—which means President Milosevic—must take action. These include pulling back security forces engaged in repression in Kosovo, allowing full and unfettered access to humanitarian workers and international observers, creating conditions conducive to the return of refugees and displaced persons, and cooperating with the international criminal tribunal and in political negotiations.

Milosevic's performance to date is mixed. There has been positive movement—the cease-fire has generally held, the humanitarian situation is improving, and a substantial number of units have been returned to garrison—but Belgrade still falls short of full compliance. While NATO decided on October 27 not to execute air strikes, the threat of air strikes remains ready and in place at the call of the North Atlantic Council to ensure continued progress toward full, sustained compliance.

### **Diplomacy Backed by a Credible Use of Force**

In 1961, the Allies faced a different challenge in central Europe—the Berlin crisis. In an address to the nation at that time, President Kennedy said that “we will at all times be ready to talk, if talk will help. But we must also be ready to resist with force...Either alone would fail. Together they can serve the cause of freedom and peace.” To back up his threat, President Kennedy then and there announced a build-up of military force. That credible threat of force made the actual use of it unnecessary by ensuring the success of our diplomacy.

Diplomacy backed by force has been a large factor in U.S. leadership in this century. We have used diplomacy as the first tool because we value life—the lives of our own and of our allies but also of our opponents. Diplomacy is our first line of defense—and offense—yet there is no question that force is indispensable to effective diplomacy. As Chinese strategist Sun Tzu put it, “If you are prepared to use force you may subdue the enemy without fighting.”

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In the vast majority of situations, U.S. diplomacy works without even the need to threaten force. The readiness of our armed forces has sent a clear message that gives quiet power to U.S. diplomacy and to our efforts to build a free and peaceful world. However, there are times when we have had to use force or threaten it in order to achieve our objectives. The Berlin crisis is just one example in which a credible threat was needed in order to achieve a peaceful solution.

In the Balkans, we have seen repeatedly that violence does not end until the perpetrators understand we are serious about using force. In Bosnia, it took our airplanes and bombs to get the Serbs to the negotiating table. In Kosovo, Milosevic had doubted our resolve, but NATO's approval of the ACTORDs administered a hard dose of reality. Subsequent action in the U.N. Security Council has left him with no doubt: We have the force, we have the will, and we have the consensus of the international community.

Ironically, the welcome end of the Cold War and its attendant bipolarity also means that people such as Milosevic and Saddam Hussein feel that constraints on aggression are lower. Instead of joining the ever-growing community of responsible countries, they taunt it. They break the norms of acceptable behavior, use force, and then dare the rest of us to stop them. The silent fact of our power has proven to be insufficient: only its use or a credible threat of its use has stopped them. Saddam and Milosevic have made the classic miscalculation of autocrats facing democracies, a miscalculation as old and as mistaken as that of the Spartans facing the Athenians. They assumed democracies cannot agree among themselves and that we have no stomach for battle. Milosevic and Saddam both have lost their bets before, and yet both continue to gamble.

This poses a problem for all of us because it means that in order to pursue our interests, we have had to ratchet up more quickly from diplomacy as a first tool to diplomacy backed by a credible threat of force. And the threat of force cannot be credible if there is no intention to actually use it to achieve key objectives should diplomacy fail. Our Allies and we also have had to confront new issues surrounding the use of force. Recently, the need to use force has stemmed from human rights and humanitarian concerns or the need to contain a conflict. These principles have had to be reconciled with various aspects of international law, such as the inviolability of borders. Kosovo was as difficult a case as there can be, but our Allies and us have built a strong consensus in NATO and are doing together what needs to be done.

As a nation and as an alliance, we must continue to use the tools at our disposal: diplomacy first, the credible threat of force to back our diplomacy, and the use of force when necessary. At times, Saddam and Milosevic have seemed under the illusion that they had their finger on the world's trigger. Let me be clear: we do not consign to anyone the prestige of our nation or the Alliance, the lives of our men and women, or our hopes for a peaceful, open world community. If we have to use force, it will be at a time and place of our choosing.

### **Prospects for the Transatlantic Community**

Now let me turn to prospects for the transatlantic community. In the last nine years, the transatlantic community has worked hard to build a Europe whole and free—a dream shared by the vast majority of countries and one we will not allow outlaws to derail or defer. Security is fundamental to this goal and begins with strong, capable forces. But there are other elements of security, as well—from modifying force structure to encompass new threats, to pursuing arms control, to building political and economic ties that lead nations to regard each other as friends and not foes. We are pushing the boundaries in all these areas, with our eye on the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Let's review progress:

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Institutions and force structure have evolved, even as the core mission of NATO—collective defense—remains constant.

Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are engaged in joining the Atlantic Alliance.

We have established a credible open door policy with a clear perspective for other countries that aspire to eventual membership. Secretary General Solana is well-positioned to build consensus on next steps, which we believe should include more active Alliance measures to strengthen our ability to work with all partners and to help make aspirants the best possible candidates they can be.

Central Europe has been put on a path of integration and stability. We have joined with partners across the continent in NATO's Partnership for Peace and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and in the OSCE's conflict prevention and democracy endeavors.

We have stepped up our engagement in both northeastern and southeastern Europe.

We have built a new, cooperative relationship with Russia, in the Permanent Joint Council, the Partnership for Peace, and through military partnership in Bosnia to name a few—a relationship that many critics claimed would be impossible alongside NATO enlargement—and we are building a distinctive relationship with Ukraine. We have begun to address in new ways the growing problem of weapons proliferation, while building on existing arms control treaties and weapons conventions.

## **Weapons of Mass Destruction and Arms Control**

A weapons of mass destruction (WMD) attack on any major European or North American capital from a rogue state or terrorist group is a threat that NATO must be able to confront. Stopping the spread of missiles capable of carrying WMD is one of our most immediate and critical security challenges. This is exemplified by Iran's test of the Shahab-3 medium-range ballistic missile, capable of delivering WMD throughout the Middle East and beyond and North Korea's test of the 1,500 kilometer-plus range Taepo Dong 1 missile. Several other countries including Iraq and Libya also have continued to pursue indigenous missile development programs. All of these programs actively seek foreign technology on a worldwide basis.

At the NATO summit, we plan to draw more attention to this increasing threat. We believe NATO should develop a common assessment of the threat and accelerate development of capabilities to counter it, to complement the support NATO countries simultaneously give to multilateral non-proliferation regimes such as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which includes all NATO members and which puts constraints on outside help to develop missiles capable of WMD delivery and on their related equipment and technology.

Other important non-proliferation regimes include the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which we are committed to strengthening by increasing the number of countries that have ratified it and by seeking full implementation of the concrete measures in the CWC that raise the costs and risks for any parties who engage in chemical weapons activities. I have told the Foreign Minister of Sudan that his country should adhere to the convention if it wants to rejoin the community of responsible nations.

The U.S. continues to play a leading role in the effort to reduce the threat from biological weapons. In his 1998 State of the Union address, President Clinton announced an initiative to finish the compliance and transparency protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Arms control is also a central piece of our security strategy. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe—the CFE Treaty—has enjoyed unparalleled success. To date, more than 50,000 pieces of combat equipment have been eliminated, and the Treaty's detailed data

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requirements and intrusive verification provisions ensure unprecedented transparency and predictability. It is a cornerstone of European military stability, which we are now adapting to the evolving political climate in Europe. NATO has set the stage for signing an adapted CFE Treaty at the 1999 OSCE summit.

## **NATO Summit**

Next April, we have the privilege of holding in Washington the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit of the North Atlantic Alliance. We hope to make progress on all these elements, from security architecture to arms control and from the open door for our partners to the closed door to proliferators. Here's our goal for the NATO summit: we want to create the NATO of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—a larger, more flexible Alliance committed to collective defense and capable of dealing with a broad range of challenges to Alliance interests.

Collective defense is and will be the cornerstone of the Alliance. We must never forget that or allow anything to happen which would jeopardize our ability to carry out this irreducible commitment to face shared risks and to shoulder shared responsibilities. That is what NATO was—and still is—all about.

But if NATO is to remain effective in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it too must continue to change, modernize, and adapt to new circumstances. When we talk about new threats to NATO countries, weapons proliferation is certainly one. Regional conflict is another. If you ask where U.S. and European forces could face conflict in the decade ahead, the answer must include scenarios beyond NATO's near borders. Moving NATO to think about how to deal with these issues is very much in the U.S. interest. It should be a new direction for the Alliance's focus.

During the Cold War, it made sense for Europeans to concentrate on the threat to their own territory and for the U.S. to assume the primary responsibility for defending common transatlantic interests elsewhere. But such an arrangement makes less sense at a time when the direct territorial threat to Europe has diminished and when new threats to our common interests may come from beyond NATO's immediate borders. Our ability to be effective depends increasingly on our ability to work together with allies and partners. This is one reason why we support Europe's efforts to project power and deal with a fuller spectrum of possible future dangers. I want to affirm our full support also for building a European Security and Defense Identity within NATO along the lines agreed by the Alliance in Berlin two years ago.

I know that some have suggested we are altering the original intent of the Washington Treaty or creating some kind of new "global NATO." This is, to use a very diplomatic American expression, hogwash. What we are talking about is applying the same core principles upon which NATO was founded to the new realities of the post-Cold War era and to the new threats to our common transatlantic security. It clearly makes no sense that threats to the integrity and cohesion of the Alliance should not be dealt with where they arise: the notion that we must wait until they spread to our immediate area of interest belies logic and the value of preventative diplomacy.

As President Clinton said in Berlin, "Yesterday's NATO guarded our borders against direct military invasion. Tomorrow's NATO must continue to defend enlarged borders and defend against threats to our security from beyond them—the spread of weapons of mass destruction, ethnic violence, and regional conflict."

In addition to grappling with the question of new threats from beyond our borders and from the hands of weapons proliferators and terrorists, the summit needs to look at the type of forces necessary in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A failure to do so would leave us making the bitter mistake of fighting the last war. The coalition operations likely in the next century will require mobile.

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flexible, and interoperable forces. For that reason, NATO needs to harness new technologies that can give us mobility without driving up costs.

The summit also will mark the entry of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic and sustain the momentum of the enlargement process. The extension of enhanced security and stability to all partners regardless of membership aspirations will depend on NATO's capacity to deepen the political and military links between Allies and partners. The summit should launch intensified political consultation through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council even as we also seek to deepen the partnerships with Ukraine and Russia. We welcome all partners to join us in April. An active, constructive NATO-Russia partnership is essential to stability throughout Europe. We will continue to develop the Permanent Joint Council and seek more transparency on core issues and practical cooperation, such as through a NATO-Russia Civil Emergency Training Center.

### Conclusion

We are a lucky generation to have witnessed the peaceful evolution of Europe and to have played roles in that change. We were raised, educated, and employed to prevent an East-West conflict and to win if war broke out. I daresay none of us imagined that the threat would simply vanish thanks to the Solidarity Movement in Poland; the Velvet Revolution in the former Czechoslovakia; Germany's reunification within NATO; the impact of economic decline, perestroika, and glasnost in Russia, and the efforts of citizens across the continent. These changes brought hope to millions and left us with new job descriptions. Instead of containing a threat, our jobs now include expanding the area of peace, freedom, and open societies.

No one appreciates the transatlantic partnership more than those of you gathered here today. In the trenches of World War I and on Normandy Beach, North Americans and Europeans fought side by side. Through NATO, the EU, and the Marshall Plan, through decades of cultural, commercial and educational cooperation, we constructed and defended a community of free nations. But 50 years ago—even 10 years ago—the greatest threat to that community came from other European countries—countries with weapons of mass destruction which threatened to end the existence of each of our countries. That era is over. As the 21<sup>st</sup> century approaches, we are building a larger community. North Americans, Western Europeans, Central Europeans, and Eastern Europeans labor together as soldiers, legislators, diplomats, business people, artists, and humanitarian workers. Our challenge is to complete a Europe, free, prosperous, and democratic. The partnership between diplomacy and military force remains essential to the project, and I look forward with hope and enthusiasm to another century in which we can each work together for our country and side by side with our allies for the cause of peace and freedom.