
The Road to North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Riga Summit

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North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Achievements

I would like to begin by saying that I am optimistic about the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) future. Over the past dozen or so years, NATO has risen to meet many post-Cold-War security challenges, from Bosnia to Afghanistan. NATO has done well, and I have no doubt it will continue to do well. A close assessment of the longer view shows that NATO is moving forward, and is as capable as ever to advance the collective defense and security interests of the allies.

During the Cold War, when the transatlantic community faced an existential threat, NATO bound us together. By guaranteeing our shared security and defending our values freedom, democracy, human rights, rule of law, and free markets NATO helped create the conditions for democracy and prosperity in the Europe we know today. This is the prosperity that today forms the basis of our \$2.5 trillion economic and trade relationships. As the Iron Curtain fell, the feared 'security vacuum' in Central Europe never appeared because NATO and the European Union (E.U.) lead the way in anchoring those fledgling democracies in our transatlantic community.

These two achievements, winning the Cold War and advancing freedom and security through enlargement in the East, point to a third: NATO has proven itself the most adaptive Alliance in history. Consider our path since the end of the Cold War: In 1994, NATO was an alliance of 16, without partners, having never conducted a military operation. By 2005, NATO had become an alliance of 26, engaged in eight simultaneous operations on four continents with the help of twenty Partners in Eurasia, seven in the Mediterranean, four in the Persian Gulf, and a handful of capable contributors on our periphery.

No longer is NATO a static force defending the Fulda Gap. NATO has transformed from defending our societies and values to advancing security based on our values. A common purpose unites our disparate missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Darfur, and Iraq: the promotion of peace and security; the protection of freedom. NATO has become an instrument for assuring our collective defense and advancing peace and security by directing its political and military resources to end conflicts, deter terrorists, provide security in strife-torn areas, and relieve humanitarian suffering far beyond its borders.

Transformation is an ongoing process, and in November, NATO will hold a summit in Riga, Latvia to deepen its capabilities for its current and future operations, and enhance its global reach to meet today's demands. Whether leading peacekeeping in Afghanistan, training Iraqi military leaders, patrolling the Mediterranean, delivering humanitarian aid to Pakistan and Louisiana, or helping transport African Union troops, NATO is the place where transatlantic democracies gather, consult, forge strategic consensus, and, where necessary, take decisions on joint action. NATO is where leaders turn when they want to get something done in partnership with us, and we must be prepared for this to happen more, not less.

The United States and NATO also want reliable and capable partners in the world and we support the strengthening of the European Union's security and defense capabilities. It is false logic to believe that E.U. steps to develop security capabilities must necessarily be steps away from NATO.

The E.U. has been in fifteen operations, including in Bosnia, Darfur, Aceh, the Congo, and elsewhere. We believe that further development of European security and defense capabilities can reinforce NATO's transformation, and that it is essential that new E.U. capabilities, for example, in rapidly deployable troops, are compatible and complementary with NATO. We also share the perspective of other Allies, such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel who stated in February that NATO should be our primary forum for strategic security dialogue with Europe and that when Europe and America act together on security and defense, we should act through NATO.

The Riga Summit

Recognizing the future demands on NATO, at the Riga summit we are proposing that leaders support initiatives that develop new capabilities for common action, to ensure sufficient resources to sustain cooperation, and to engage new partners in our collective defense. For this to occur, the United States must play a leadership role by investing in NATO politically, militarily, and financially.

Operations

Our first priority for Riga is to ensure that NATO succeeds in Afghanistan as it prepares to expand the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the south and thereafter to the East, at which point NATO will be responsible for security throughout Afghanistan. NATO took over ISAF on August 11, 2003. I note this date because although there were deep differences among Allies over Iraq, there was no disagreement over what needed to be done to secure Afghanistan. And since that time, the Alliance commitment to that mission has only gotten stronger. NATO's increasing security role will allow a remaining U.S.-led coalition to focus on a counterterrorism mission. As part of this transition, NATO has changed its operations plan and strengthened its rules of engagement to meet greater challenges in those regions.

The security situation in Darfur is of great importance to our President and to our country, and we believe NATO should do more to assist the United Nations and African Union, in accordance with the recent United Nations (U.N.) Security Council Resolution and a request from the U.N. Secretary General. This is a critical issue and the United States will continue to urge Allies to do everything we can to assist. We continue to support the Kosovo status process. To reach our goals, NATO must remain involved in the security dimensions of the solution, and the United States will be there doing its share in NATO-led security force in Kosovo (KFOR).

NATO's training mission in Iraq has trained over 1,000 mid- and senior-level officers, and by Riga we want to boost allied support through progress on the ground that allows us to expand participation and course offerings. The Iraq training mission also highlights NATO's potential as a security trainer, using its expertise to help nations around the world improve the professionalism and accountability of their armed forces.

Capabilities

These and other challenges require fresh, innovative thinking about collective defense and NATO's role. In the 21st century, NATO needs far different capabilities than in the past. NATO's 2005 humanitarian missions on the Louisiana Gulf Coast and Pakistan are unlikely to be its last, and the United States wants NATO to develop the means to be swift and generous when disaster strikes, until more permanent civilian relief efforts can take hold. Whether supplying forces in Afghanistan, transporting African Union troops, or delivering humanitarian assistance, all of these missions underscores the critical capability gap of nearly every NATO operation strategic airlift. Discussions have begun among Allies on how to collectively address this. Any solution should include the United States and will require creative new approaches, possibly including common funding to ensure that NATO is as effective as possible, and that the financial burdens of NATO operations and needed capabilities are shared equitably. NATO activated the NATO Response Force (NRF) for the first time after the earthquake in Pakistan. The NRF is scheduled to reach full operating capability in October

2006, as our outstanding SACEUR, General Jim Jones has discussed in his own appearances on the Hill. To succeed, the NRF will need greater resources and support. In the run-up to Riga, we are working with Allies to ensure the necessary commitments are made to the NRF, including training, and funding. Again, U.S. contributions and U.S. leadership will be critical to success.

We are also exploring with allies other areas for cooperation to bolster NATO capabilities in the types of missions we face. Over the past few years, the United States has had good experiences in working together in Afghanistan with the special operations forces of NATO allies. These forces have specialized skills that can support peace and stabilization operations, and in advance of Riga, we are developing ideas to build on these cooperative relationships with NATO Allies.

Increasingly leaders call on NATO to assist in post-conflict situations. The reality is that many of these environments remain too hazardous for civilian reconstruction personnel to do the very work that would hasten stabilization, establishing governance, rule of law, and infrastructure. These circumstances mean that the alliance must plan to provide and support stabilization and reconstruction needs as part of its security operations. The provincial reconstruction team (PRT) model in Afghanistan has yielded valuable lessons in this field, and we will be working with allies to develop these ideas.

Global Partners

In this century, our security depends on meeting threats at strategic distance with a wide variety of partners. NATO is an alliance with increasingly global partners from the Mediterranean to the Pacific who are committed to many of our strategic goals and want more ways to contribute to NATO's missions. We and the United Kingdom have circulated a proposal at NATO that would allow NATO and partners from all parts of the globe to work together on areas of shared strategic interest. At Riga, we would like the alliance to endorse a flexible framework that allow for a range of partnerships with NATO.

I would like to note that our goal is not, nor should it be, to create a global alliance. NATO is and should remain rooted in the transatlantic community, based on our Article Five collective security guarantee, and shared history, culture, and values. Allies have made a solemn treaty commitment to mutual defense, and nothing can replace or weaken that. But this should not exclude NATO from working with others who share our interests and values, and who are ready to contribute to common action well beyond the North Atlantic area.

We are also exploring ways that NATO can support increased security cooperation with its neighbors in the broader Middle East and in Africa through greater access to NATO training and education resources. Working with Italy and Norway, we have initiated these discussions at NATO and with countries in the region.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization Enlargement

NATO enlargement has been an historic success, giving us a stronger NATO, even as NATO and E.U. enlargement have served to solidify freedom and democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. Both NATO and E.U. membership have always been, and remain today, powerful incentives to promote democratic reforms among aspiring members. The process of NATO enlargement is not complete, and NATO's door must remain open. While we do not believe that any of NATO's Membership Action Plan participants Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia is ready for membership today, we support consideration of NATO's offering membership invitations in 2008 on the assumption that further, active reform efforts under way will close the gaps that now exist. When they and other NATO aspirants become ready for NATO, NATO must be ready for them.

The same is true of Georgia and Ukraine, where the Rose and the Orange Revolutions created significant opportunities for freedom. In Georgia, the new government has embraced the path to political and economic liberty, but its work is not done. We believe that NATO's intensified dialogue

is the right tool to assist in the new government's continuing progress, and we are working with allies toward realizing that goal as soon as possible.

In Ukraine, the March 26, 2006 election demonstrated the country's commitment to democracy. The government of Ukraine remains focused on NATO membership, but Parliamentary and domestic support is crucial and we hope and expect that the new cabinet will reiterate its aspirations. If the Ukraine is committed, we must give it its chance to meet our standards. At the right time, when warranted by their own performance, the next step would be a membership action plan for both Ukraine and Georgia.

Finally, by Riga, the United States would welcome Serbia and Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina joining Partnership for Peace, provided they meet the conditions for doing so. We will continue to support the Western Balkans as they move closer to the alliance.

This is a big agenda. It reflects the increased operational tempo at NATO, and the increasing frequency with which our NATO leaders want NATO to tackle a wide range of problems and shape the future of the Alliance. It reflects a core fact which has been true of NATO since the beginning: NATO is the essential venue for strategic dialogue and consultations, and acting on the collective will of the transatlantic democracies. With the important support of the Congress, we will continue working towards a Riga Summit that demonstrates the alliance's courage and vision to address these challenges.