



Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland

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during the conference on

NATO's NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT

Global, Transatlantic and Regional Challenges and Tasks Ahead

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Mr Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

Despite numerous debates about NATO's purpose after the fall of the Iron Curtain, events have proved that we have not reached the "End of History". The democratic world still has dynamic challenges to tackle, reflecting the ever-evolving security environment. NATO will be called upon to help the world cope. Success will depend to a great extent on the recently-launched revision of its basic conceptual document: the Strategic Concept. I hope that it will be comparable to the *Harmel Report* in terms of its importance to the future of the Alliance. I also hope that as with the *Harmel Report*, the Strategic Concept will give momentum to NATO's dual-track policy: combining credible deterrence and a strong defensive military posture in the context of security threats with mutually beneficial partnerships with those who see the Alliance as a partner for engaging with common challenges, and not as enemy.

During this process NATO has shown an unprecedented readiness to consult with partners, think-tanks, non-governmental organisations, scientists and the public at large. The "Group of Experts" is an example of an interdisciplinary exercise, which I hope will conclude its work with a report encompassing a wide range of recommendations to be presented to the NATO Secretary-General. We expect you, Secretary-General, to continue with your leading role in the development of the Strategic Concept, using your characteristic determination and involving all of the Allies in a transparent and inclusive manner.

We are focusing today on the security interests of Central and Eastern Europe. First and foremost, I must emphasise that they are not in any way inconsistent with the security interests of our Western Allies or Eastern partners. In fact they should be seen as facilitating better communication and a building of trust over those disagreements that used to divide Europe. Let me be absolutely clear: we in this part of Europe do not expect any kind of preferential treatment. We just want to enjoy the solidarity and protection that will make us feel as safe and secure as all other Allies. Central and Eastern Europe needs strategic reassurance, and this will be achieved through the new Strategic Concept.

The principle of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty as the cornerstone of transatlantic security is still widely cited and respected. However, today's priority is to translate theory into practice. We need to make sure that we are capable of resisting any kind of threat that might

disturb the stability and prosperity that we have achieved through our common efforts. A fall in the number of “conventional” conflicts in recent times does not mean that this form of threat has disappeared altogether. We should therefore remain vigilant and prepare contingency plans – but this does not mean pointing fingers at anyone in particular. As well as its exercises, NATO should fulfill the promise made by President Obama in Prague last year, namely that every member would be provided with an up-to-date Contingency Plan if it so wished.

Solid and credible guarantees of security are especially important at NATO’s periphery, giving inevitability and reliability to the Alliance’s self-defence posture. Defensive capabilities should be maintained through, among other things, proper allied investments into infrastructure related to collective defence, operational capabilities and the allocation of scarce resources into its military infrastructure in order to ensure that the full range of tasks can be fulfilled. We must also remember that a US political and military presence remains the key element of security for many countries in this part of Europe, and is a fundamental element of allied deterrence capabilities.

Allies should also take a closer look at the issue of nuclear weapons in an effort to combine the continued credibility of nuclear deterrence with a need to establish, step-by-step, an arms-control regime for tactical nuclear weapons in and possibly around Europe.

It is of high importance that we maintain a proper balance between Article 5 and crisis response operations. Crisis operations have to be carried out selectively, and in accordance with a firm understanding of when and where the Alliance should get involved. Tangible security interests and policies agreed amongst the Allies should be our guiding principles. It is no less important to strengthen our commitment to implementing common decisions concerning crisis operations, to make sure that they are conducted in an effective and comprehensive way. NATO crisis-response and stabilisation activities should be based on the principle of solidarity, meaning that all Allies should share the burdens, including those of a financial nature.

Central Europe is vitally interested in extending the zone of stability and security, in line with NATO’s Open Door Policy. I am confident that we will soon be welcoming the conclusion of the process of the Western Balkans’ integration with the Alliance. But we also need to reassure Ukraine and Georgia that our commitments regarding their membership remain valid. They remain firmly anchored in the process of partnership co-operation with the Alliance, which is geared towards their future accession, assuming that all criteria are met.

Let me now elaborate on our regional expectations.

In today’s globalised world we must change our way of thinking about security. Polish citizens have died in terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid and London. Poland and Central Europe understand the nature of the new threats, and do not underestimate them. That is why we are in Afghanistan. Similarly, Western nationals residing in Poland could one day be affected by the security challenges that our region is facing. We therefore have to stay united,

in thought and in action. One Ally should fully understand the security perception of another, even if individual national security threat perceptions may differ from time to time.

Our region may seem oversensitive about NATO-Russia relations, but this is a reflection of our desire to develop those relations in a realistic and mutually beneficial manner. Secretary-General Rasmussen's efforts re-engage Russia are most welcome. Central Europe wants NATO to develop relations with its Russian partner pragmatically and with full respect to the legitimate security concerns of both sides. The precondition of this co-operation is primarily respect for common values uniting the Euro-Atlantic family, to which Russia also subscribes. We have to rebuild mutual confidence and base our efforts on the fundamental notion of reciprocity. In order to avoid further misperceptions we should focus first of all on military predictability, to be achieved through greater openness and transparency in military affairs. Security today is not a zero-sum game, where one's loss is necessarily to another's benefit.

Since all Central European Allies are also EU members, we naturally place an emphasis on the proper handling of NATO-EU relations. We need to work out an appropriate pattern of co-operation between these organisations. It is unacceptable that NATO and the EU are not able to act together even when they are standing side by side in solving political and military crises. NATO and the EU have to engage in strategic policy co-ordination as equal partners. These efforts should be based on a shared responsibility for global security and stability. NATO and the CSDP should be mutually complementary. It is in that spirit that I have launched the initiative to develop the CSDP, and to make it a priority for Poland's EU Presidency next year. Our common interests and values should be reflected in new forms of political consultation and military co-ordination at the strategic (leadership), operational (in-theatre) and staff-to-staff (headquarters) levels.

Ladies and gentleman,

It is in our common interest to maintain the Alliance's strong position in the world. To achieve this, our organisation needs to keep adapting its structures and capabilities to new challenges, whilst fostering its basic defensive functions.

We hope that the new Strategic Concept being elaborated by our distinguished guests will prove a visionary look to the future. This document will help us to tackle all of NATO's challenges, old and new, and should be formulated in clear and understandable terms. The Concept should offer strong strategic guidance, paving the way for the reforms necessary to maintain NATO's credibility and to increase its effectiveness. Neither strategy without reform nor reform without a strategy will help the Alliance.

We hope that elaboration of the Strategic Concept will not only be productive but will also confirm our unity and unanimity. The process will reinforce Euro-Atlantic cohesion, even when the road to consensus is not easy. The message from Warsaw for the future of the Alliance is twofold: reassurance for us, and re-engagement for Russia.

Thank you.

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