



Speech by NATO Secretary General

Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen

during the conference on

NATO's NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT

Global, Transatlantic and Regional Challenges and Tasks Ahead

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*Ministers
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a distinct pleasure for me to be here today in Warsaw and to participate in this third annual international conference on NATO organised by the Centre for International Relations. We have had many conferences on the new Strategic Concept in recent months.

But this exercise would certainly not be complete without a Polish perspective.

What I should like to focus on in my remarks this morning is territorial defence -- what it means today -- and how we continue to implement it and keep it credible.

NATO's core task was, is, and will remain, the defence of our territory and our populations. But we need, at the same time, to take a hard look at what deterrence means in the 21st century. We need to decide what kind of capabilities will ensure that no one ever thinks that an attack against a NATO member country can be successful. For our deterrence to remain credible, I firmly believe it must continue to be based on a mix of conventional and nuclear capabilities. And our new Strategic Concept should affirm that.

However, our new Strategic Concept will also need to reflect something else: it will need to reflect that the meaning of territorial defence is changing.

Static, heavy forces won't deter terrorists bent on destabilising our societies, or computer hackers targeting our critical infrastructure, or rogue states armed with nuclear weapons. To meet these new threats, and to defend our territories, requires a level of engagement. And I want to highlight three areas where we must demonstrate that engagement.

First, if we want to fight terrorism, we must do so where it originates. And that is what we are doing in Afghanistan. We are at a crucial point in our mission.

There has been a significant increase in NATO's military contribution. And together with an increase in the international community's civilian contribution, this has produced a real swing in the momentum away from the Taliban.

It is vital that we capitalise on this momentum. Our recent operation in the south of Afghanistan has demonstrated the importance of integrating civilian and military efforts, and that is an area we must continue to focus on.

What it has also shown is the growing ability of the Afghan army to take the lead in security operations, and it is essential that we build on that. That's why we have decided to assist the Afghan government in expanding the Afghan security forces. We have established a training mission with the aim to train and educate Afghan soldiers and Afghan police. The ultimate goal is to hand over the lead responsibility to the Afghan security forces when conditions permit – district by district, province by province.

A second challenge that we must tackle head-on is cyber security. I am heartened by the progress that we have made in this area over the last few years, with our Centre of Excellence in Estonia and several other response measures. But I am also convinced that we can and must do even better.

Cyber space does not respect national borders. We need a sustained effort to enhance our protection. And if our protection is breached, we need the solidarity of Allies and friends to come to our aid.

Third, we must develop an effective missile defence. In the coming years, we will probably face many more countries – and possibly even some non-state actors -- armed with long-range missiles and nuclear capabilities. Therefore, I believe that NATO's deterrent posture should include missile defence.

Deterrence works against rational actors, but not all actors that we will have to deal with in the future will be rational. That's why deterrence and defence need to go together. And why we have the obligation to look into missile defence options.

If we want to keep NATO's territorial defence effective, affordable and credible, we must push ahead with the Alliance's transformation. We need more flexible, mobile and deployable armed forces. If our military is stationary, if our armed forces can't be moved beyond the borders of each individual member state, the defence of Allied territory will not be effective.

Transformation is also about more efficient use of resources. Allies should work more closely together in acquiring key capabilities and funding operations.

The current financial crisis and the budgetary problems faced by all our nations only make this a more pressing requirement. We need to use the economic constraint as an incentive to eliminate duplication and rationalise our defence procurement.

NATO and the EU should cooperate and coordinate better. By cooperating in areas such as heavy lift helicopters, maritime surveillance and countering road side bombs and other explosive devices we can not only increase security for our troops on the ground but also save tax payers money.

But transformation is not only a military topic. It also has a political dimension. To cope with the new security challenges, NATO's consultations must be broader and more intensive.

NATO Headquarters must be less of a bureaucracy and more of a streamlined, operational headquarters. A headquarters where staff and resources are realigned to serve the Alliance's new priorities, not outdated legacy activities and narrow national interests.

We need better intelligence sharing and more situational awareness to deal with emerging crises. And we need, in particular, to overhaul our military command structure, to make it more flexible and deployable.

This is an ambitious agenda. But there is no alternative to keeping NATO strong. History has taught us time and again that security cannot be had on the cheap.

But history has also taught us something else: the more secure our neighbours are, the more secure we will be. And that is why our first line of defence must be to complete the consolidation of Europe as a continent that is whole, free and at peace.

What does this consolidation of Europe entail? For one, it means that NATO's Open Door policy must continue. It must continue because it provides a strong incentive for the aspirants to get their house in order. And it must continue because it is an expression of a key principle on which any European security order must be based: the free choice of alignments.

But continuing NATO's Open Door policy is only part of the answer to Europe's consolidation. We also need a new relationship with Russia.

Indeed, I firmly believe that a much improved relationship between NATO and Russia would be the best reassurance of all, to all our nations. That is why I have invested a lot of time and effort, ever since I took office, in building better relations with Russia. There has been progress in a number of areas, including our joint review of common threats and challenges. But there is a lot of work still left to do.

We continue to have our differences, not least about NATO's Open Door policy. There are also profound concerns, all across our Alliance, about Russia's policy vis-à-vis Georgia.

We think Russia sends the wrong kind of signal by conducting military exercises that rehearse the invasion of a smaller NATO member. Let me stress, NATO is not a threat to Russia and will never invade Russia. Nor do we consider Russia a threat to NATO. That is why Russia's new military doctrine does not reflect the real world. It contains a very outdated notion about the nature and role of NATO.

But we must not let these differences hold the entire NATO-Russia relationship hostage. After all, NATO and Russia also have many common interests – in Afghanistan, in combating terrorism, and in preventing nuclear proliferation.

We need a NATO-Russia relationship that allows us to pursue these common interests, and which will not de-rail every time we disagree. I will continue to work for such a strong, trustful NATO-Russia relationship. And I am confident that NATO's new Strategic Concept will underline the determination of all our nations to make it a reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, NATO is engaged in Afghanistan, in the Balkans, in the Mediterranean Sea, and off the Horn of Africa. This broad spectrum of missions and operations is only natural. Today's risks and threats are increasingly global in nature, and our Alliance must reflect this fact.

But these new missions of NATO must not – and will not – lead us to neglect what constitutes the very core of this Alliance: the collective will and the collective means to defend each other. An Alliance that cannot provide for collective defence will lose the cohesion to contribute to collective security.

By the same token, a Europe that relegates Russia to the role of a disgruntled outsider will remain incomplete. Such an incomplete Europe will waste too much time on revisiting its past. And in so doing, it may miss the future.

As we prepare for that future, we need to reconcile collective defence with our new expeditionary missions.

And we need to demonstrate NATO's longstanding commitment to a Europe that is whole, free and at peace – and including Russia. I am confident that our new Strategic Concept will reaffirm this fact.

Thank you.

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