

Transatlantic leadership for a new era



**Public address by Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,
Secretary General of NATO**

January 26, 2009



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SECURITY & DEFENCE AGENDA

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Evening Debate Programme

Transatlantic leadership for a new era

On January 26th, at the beginning of the year marking the 60th anniversary of NATO, its Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer gave his first public announcement after the inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States of America. The Secretary General set out his vision for the future of NATO and transatlantic relations before an audience of 170 policymakers, industry experts, think-tankers and journalists.

MODERATOR: **GILES MERRITT**

Director, Security & Defence Agenda

26 January 2009

Stanhope Hotel, Brussels

18:00 Speech

19:00 Cocktail Reception

Introduction

Introducing the debate, the SDA's Director Giles Merritt stated that the NATO Secretary General's appearance at the SDA was timely given the recent US election victory of President Barack Obama.



Giles Merritt

The transatlantic relationship was now at top of many agendas and the future of NATO was exercising minds in the two continents. Introducing Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Merritt noted that the title of the Secretary General's remarks - a transatlantic partnership for a new era – gave him ample scope to define a future path for the Alliance.



The Secretary General

Overview

With the President Obama era moving ahead on a number of fronts, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer used the SDA platform to remind Member States that merely offering encouragement to the US would not be enough. The Secretary General said Europe would need a “unified answer” and, more importantly, “resources” when the new US Administration called. This necessitated a real show of political will by the Member States.



Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

Looking ahead to a much-anticipated Strasbourg-Kehl summit in two months, De Hoop Scheffer highlighted piracy, cyber terrorism, energy security and instability in South Asia as critical issues for the Alliance. The Secretary General therefore called for NATO to be “more ambitious”. Focusing on two key areas, he called for a regional approach – that included the involvement of Iran – in Afghanistan and a more “trusting relationship” with Russia.

Above all, de Hoop Scheffer wanted Europe to show that it could be a strong partner for the new US Administration. Stating that security was “the foundation for economic confidence”, he repeated his call for resources. Otherwise, the Secre-

tary General added, any decisions taken at the forthcoming summit would “founder on the rocks of bureaucracy”.

The speech

The Secretary General opened his remarks by looking back just a few short days to the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Acknowledging that the US was in its “deepest financial and economic crisis since the 1930s”, de Hoop Scheffer welcomed the new President’s desire for America to play a more active role on the international stage.

However, the Secretary General insisted that it was a two-way street and that for any dialogue to be effective, Europe had to be ready with a “unified answer, backed by resources to match.” De Hoop Scheffer said that if Europe expected the US to close Guantanamo, sign up to climate change treaties, accept EU leadership on key issues and expect nothing in return, then Europe was making a mistake.

Taking Afghanistan as an example, de Hoop Scheffer argued that the US was expecting Europe to do much more than just shout encouragement from the sidelines. The Secretary General argued that the world was still just as dangerous today: international terrorism, the proliferation of WMD's and the growing number of failing states were still major security threats. Adding South Asia, the turmoil in Pakistan, the Mumbai attacks and tensions with Iran, the Secretary General argued forcefully that extremists had to be defeated. Otherwise, the case study of Afghanistan would result in failure, with severe consequences, not just in the near future but for future generations.

However, he reasoned that terrorists were not the only threat: the impact of climate change was leading to an increase in political tension (due to the diminishing amount of arable land and a lack of water supplies), the effects of cyber attacks could be crippling, and piracy was back on the security agenda with its threat to energy supplies.



Acknowledging that the US and Europe were not the only players, the Secretary General nevertheless called for transatlantic action in the form of sharing analysis, developing a common action plan and providing the resources to actually carry it out. To this end, De Hoop Scheffer saw the 60th Anniversary Summit as a key opportunity to move NATO’s evolution another major step forward. He wanted NATO “to be more ambitious” and this meant change. As priorities, he chose:

- **Afghanistan:** de Hoop Scheffer called for a more regional (and pragmatic) approach with the strategic involvement of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, China, Russia, and Iran. Describing the current efforts (militarily, politically and in the areas of international developmental aid) as “patchwork”, de Hoop Scheffer wanted more coordination. He also called for an increase in forces and if they would not be forthcoming, then he wanted substantial increase in civilian reconstruction efforts.

- **Russia:** here, a “new, more trusting and more rewarding relationship” was the aim. This had to include cooperation on Afghanistan, piracy, counter-terrorism and arms control. De Hoop Scheffer called for re-engagement at the political level.

Overall, de Hoop Scheffer highlighted many challenges in NATO’s near future. He wanted the Strasbourg- Kehl summit to be an opportunity to demonstrate that



NATO was ready for change. A new document¹ – currently being drafted - would reaffirm NATO’s core purpose, sketch out the broad lines of NATO’s role in today’s world and set the stage for a new Strategic Concept. This concept should

include a place for NATO in “much broader political consultations, including issues where the Alliance was not engaged”, simply to keep Allies informed and on the same page. His advice was brief and to the point – “aim high.” But he ended on a note of caution: if heads of state and government did not take tough decisions and provide the necessary resources to implement them, future summit decisions would founder on the rocks of bureaucracy and insufficient resources.



Q & A Session

The need for more resources

Giles Merritt opened the debate by asking the Secretary General how, as many secretary-generals had tried (and failed) in the past, he would be able to convince the Member States to back the Alliance both financially and with more (man)power.



While accepting that the situation was more difficult given the global economic crisis, de Hoop Scheffer insisted that Europe had to match the political will of the US. For example, he wanted to see a “civilian surge” as well as a “military surge” in Afghanistan, as Europe could not just sit back and applaud the efforts of the new US Administration. This was a new era and Europe had to stand up and play its part.

Afghanistan - the need for a regional solution

The mention of Iran in the proposed regional solution for Afghanistan surprised Dagblad Trouw correspondent **Gijs Moes**, and he wanted to know about the plans to engage Iran on this subject.

The Secretary General had no specific proposal but he was sure that any real re-

gional approach had to include all relevant actors, including Iran. De Hoop Scheffer had held constructive talks with Pakistan, and now he wanted all of the neighbouring countries to play a part in the process of reconstruction and state-building.



El Pais correspondent **Ricardo Martinez De Rituerto** noted that the Secretary General had recently criticised the Afghanistan leadership and he wanted to know if de Hoop Scheffer had similar misgivings about Pakistan.



Ricardo Martinez De Rituerto

The Secretary General assumed that Martinez De Rituerto was referring to a recent article in the Washington Post³ where de Hoop Scheffer had outlined five key lessons learned by the Afghan case. The Secretary

General said that only one of these lessons contained criticism of the Afghan

government and he reiterated his belief that Afghanistan suffered from “too little good governance”.

As for Pakistan, de Hoop Scheffer said it was a country that was serious about looking for extremists (within their borders) and that NATO would increase its cooperation with Pakistan, including more exchange of intelligence.

Russia

The European Council on Foreign Relations’ **Nick Witney** was interested to hear about the Secretary General’s plans to re-engage Russia and he asked for de Hoop Scheffer’s reaction on Russia’s proposed “new security architecture” for Europe.



Nick Witney

The Secretary General insisted that he was happy with the existing security architecture (i.e. NATO, ESDP/CFSP/OSCE, etc.). However, he also added that NATO recently began “a careful discussion with Russia”. He wanted more specific details of the Russian plan, including what was meant by the term “territorial integrity” This was seen to be

a subject that was primarily relevant to the OSCE, but de Hoop Scheffer was sure that any concrete proposals from Russia would be discussed at the NATO-Russia Council.

Energy security

Defense News' **Julian Hale** asked for more detail on NATO's involvement in energy security.



Julian Hale

The Secretary General confirmed that the security of critical infrastructure was a national responsibility but he added that NATO's strategic concept referred to a "free flow of energy" throughout the Alliance since 1999.

NATO's enlargement

Given the talk of "enlargement fatigue", **Julian Hale** also asked if the Secretary General could provide information on when the Ukraine and Georgia might be joining NATO. De Hoop Scheffer insisted that NATO would be setting the pace on enlargement but that any further additions to the Alliance would be "performance based" and that they were "not around the corner".

ZDF's **Joerg Moses** asked if the Secretary General knew of any plans for Russia to join NATO. De Hoop Scheffer had not heard of any plans of that nature but, above all, a pro-active Russia had a role to play in the solutions to all of the challenges faced by the Alliance.

The need for wider consultation

ZDF's **Joerg Moses** was interested to learn that the Secretary General recommended that NATO to be involved in a wider consultation of more subjects, such as the Middle East, and he asked for details of where such consultation was lacking in the past. De Hoop Scheffer said it was simply a case of NATO - a political-military alliance - staying informed of key issues (e.g. Middle East, Russia-Ukraine).



The EU-NATO relationship

A reporter from the **EU Observer** asked for more information on the EU-NATO relationship as the two organisations were drawing on the same pool of resources.

She therefore asked how to increase the effectiveness of joint missions.



Valentina Pop

The Secretary General looked initially at Kosovo where KFOR and EULEX⁴ were working side-by-side as an example of the EU playing an important role alongside NATO. He accepted that the overall relationship was not easy, due to “political reasons”, but both sides were trying to be as pragmatic as possible. As for Afghanistan, de Hoop Scheffer called for reinforcement of the EU police mission. The EU was a key player in Afghanistan and he wanted the “civilian surge” to go ahead.

Overall, the Secretary General was somewhat saddened by the fact the EU-NATO relationship had not been institutionalised during his tenure, and he hoped that this critical relationship would mature in the future.

Friends of Europe Trustee **Robert Cox** felt that the institutional relationship between the two organisations was dependent on approval of the Lisbon Treaty as well as the EU showing that it had the will and resources to offer “hard power” in the defence of Europe.

De Hoop Scheffer did not agree that the Lisbon Treaty might be a panacea for the “stalemate” in the EU-NATO institutional relationship. With EU Member States stretched economically, the Secretary General felt that it was essential that Europe increase its efficiency in every way.



Robert Cox

Funding

Jane’s Defence’s **Brooks Tigner** had seen no progress on the issue of helicopters and asked for the Secretary General’s thoughts on the future of NATO’s “*Security Investment Program*”⁵.

The Secretary General said progress was ongoing but he agreed with Tigner that funding was problematic. Speaking personally, de Hoop Scheffer called for an objective assessment of how operations were funded as it was obvious that the principle of “letting the costs lie where they fall” was flawed. He wanted a more innovative approach, starting with a review of the on-going issue of helicopters.

The Italian Defence Review’s **Gianluca Cazzaniga** followed up by asking how NATO could be more ambitious given



Gianluca Cazzaniga

the limitations of Member States' budgets and there would be little support for expansion.

The Secretary General wanted Member States to be more efficient in every way – in the type of equipment purchased and in how the Member States used such equipment. He wanted to make better use of Europe's forces, especially as defence budgets would not be rising. Europe needed to do things more efficiently and then, added the Secretary General, it would have a global role to play.

End notes

¹ “Declaration on Alliance Security”.

² http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Afghanistan_map.png

³ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/16/AR2009011603717.html> for the full article. The other four lessons learnt had been calls for: more cohesion from NATO and its partners, a real regional approach, more support on the civilian side and much better communications in the sense that the real feelings of the Afghan people need to be publicised.

⁴ <http://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/>

⁵ http://www.defenselink.mil/comptroller/defbudget/fy2008/budget_justification/pdfs/nsip/02_NSIP_FY%202008.pdf

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The Security & Defence Agenda (SDA) is the only specialist Brussels-based think-tank where EU institutions, NATO, national governments, industry, specialised and international media, think tanks, academia and NGOs gather to discuss the future of European and transatlantic security and defence policies in Europe and worldwide.

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