

**Speech to the NATO Summit of  
Heads of State and Government  
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*by*

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President of the NATO PA***

***Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer, distinguished  
Heads of State and Government***

It is an honour for me to address this auspicious gathering as the newly elected President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

In the view of our 248 elected representatives from both sides of the Atlantic, this Summit should be a milestone in NATO's development. NATO's role cannot automatically be taken for granted any more. And it is we - politicians, rather than diplomats and civil servants - who must lead public opinion and build the consensus to reinvent a more political NATO.

This task is made more difficult by transatlantic differences and a sceptical public opinion that is increasingly inward-looking. As a Dutch parliamentarian and as a member of the opposition who supports our important mission in Afghanistan, I am acutely aware of this.

However I see – maybe just in time – the beginning of a changed transatlantic atmosphere and a generation of young politicians in the NATO Assembly, who are willing to engage when they do believe that the results in terms of human security and solidarity are really worth the huge risks we ask from our soldiers.

During its plenary session in Quebec, the NATO Assembly endorsed a declaration regarding all aspects of NATO's future which laid out our preoccupations with the state of the Alliance.

Although the challenges are everywhere, NATO cannot be a global policeman. Moreover, we still have unfinished business in Europe. That means we will have to do a better job in balancing the widening and deepening of NATO, and

more than ever we HAVE to agree on priorities. Nowhere is this more true than in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is in our view the reality check on all aspects of NATO's transformation.

We first of all commend the work of our armed forces. Yet if we are honest, we have to admit that we as political leaders have not yet passed our test.

Failure in Afghanistan, we tell ourselves, is not an option. Yet we are in danger of losing the all-important battle for "hearts and minds" at home and in Afghanistan itself. The key to both is to ensure a much better balance between military action and reconstruction. A sense of urgency on this matter seems to be lacking. We recommended that this Summit should take a political initiative and urge you to take the following steps:

(1) Deploy the required capabilities. One hundred percent *means* one hundred percent. Anything less places operations at risk and reduces the scope for reconstruction.

(2) Remove those national caveats that impair the effectiveness of NATO in the field. This proposal received strong parliamentary support during our Meeting in Quebec. We did not shun debate on this difficult and controversial issue. We stand for solidarity in the Alliance.

(3) Achieve a much better synchronization of security and development. Civil and military engagement should go hand-in-hand.

(4) Establish a more equitable system of common funding. This emerged as a strong demand from all our parliamentary debates.

(5) Ensure that at all times we respect the Afghani people and we adhere strictly to international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions.

(6) Adopt a common and critical approach towards the Government of Afghanistan by emphasising that much more needs to be done in the fight against corruption, drug traffickers and the neglect of the South. Likewise towards the Government of Pakistan when it comes to curbing infiltration across the border.

(7) End the institutional rivalry and bickering between the EU and NATO. This is now an absolute necessity. Better coordination is urgently needed in Afghanistan on crucial issues like a new police force, transitional justice and alternative livelihoods for drug farmers.

***Distinguished Leaders,***

In addition to our focus on Afghanistan, the Assembly will emphasize its unique selling point: investing in new partnerships.

We extend a program of cooperation to the democratic parliaments of countries seeking closer association with NATO; the countries of the Balkans where much remains to be done and where the Adriatic Three are in our view clearly next in line for Membership, and, of course, the vulnerable Caucasus and those key countries participating in the Mediterranean Dialogue.

We promote our core values of democracy, human rights and freedom. We ask you to not forget these principles when extending, as we should, our training cooperation with countries in the Mediterranean.

We emphasize our relations with the Russian Duma and the development of an open but also critical dialogue, and thereby seek to reinforce NATO-Russia cooperation.

Likewise, we continue to work with and assist the Ukrainian Rada as that country decides its future orientation.

I also call for better coordination with the UN in Africa to ensure that NATO plays a constructive role in failed states and preventing genocide.

Distinguished leaders, on behalf of the Assembly, we welcome your recognition of the work of your parliaments. Regular and timely consultation with your parliamentarians and, through them, your publics is more essential than ever, particularly as the Alliance develops – as it must - its new strategic concept. I look forward to working with you in the coming two years in building a broad consensus for that purpose.

THANK YOU.