

Global NATO Overdue or overstretch?

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Beyond the Trans-Atlantic Relationship

Speech by Mr Søren Gade, Minister of Defence, Denmark

First of all I want to thank you for this opportunity to share with you some of my thoughts on where NATO is heading.

NATO is the cornerstone for Denmark's security and defence policy. For decades during the Cold War, NATO ensured the peace and security of Denmark.

Today, NATO constitutes an important framework for Denmark's contribution to global peace and security. And, not least, NATO is the central forum for trans-Atlantic dialogue and co-operation on security and defence issues.

Denmark attaches great importance to the trans-Atlantic relationship. NATO is *the* place where Europeans and North-Americans meet on a daily basis to discuss security issues. In my view the political dialogue in NATO could be strengthened even further.

Also issues where no direct NATO engagement is foreseen should be discussed to a greater extent in NATO – issues like Iran, North Korea and the situation in the Middle East. We share common values and we should therefore also share our thoughts on common problems and challenges.

Europe needs the United States of America. Not only because the armed forces of the United States are the only truly global armed forces and the United States have the necessary capacity to ensure international peace and stability. But also because we stand together in the global fight between democracy and dictatorship, between freedom and suppression.

And the United States need Europe because lasting solutions to the global challenge of fighting terrorism, to the crisis in the Middle East, in Asia and Africa require our common efforts. We, Europeans, should also be ready to take our part of the responsibility.

NATO has maintained its strong role as the focal point for the trans-Atlantic relationship because it has been able to adapt to the changing global environment. NATO has transformed. But transformation has no clear defined end. Transformation is a process, and NATO must continue to transform to keep its relevance.

One of the issues that we are going to discuss today, is whether NATO should go global. To me there is only one answer to that question: Yes, of course. In fact, NATO has already for some time been a global player.

During the last decade NATO has been through two rounds of enlargement. NATO has increased its relations with the Mediterranean countries. NATO has started developing relations with the countries in the Broader Middle East. NATO has troops deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, and staff deployed to Adis Abeba (Ethiopia).

All these developments prove that NATO has become an organisation working globally.

As NATO has evolved into an organisation with global reach the need for strengthening its relations with new partners has also increased. That is why we should consider how to further strengthening NATO's relationship also with countries like Australia, New Zealand, Japan etc. Countries that all share the same values as we do, and some of them also take part in NATO operations.

And the Alliance should also strengthen its relations with other international and regional organisations be it the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, OSCE or non-governmental organisations.

More often than not many of these organisations are involved where NATO has forces deployed. However the cooperation and coordination that takes place is often ad hoc based.

I believe, and I think that most of you will agree with me on this, that the conflicts of today can not be won by military means alone. The situation in Afghanistan is perhaps the most striking example. If we want to succeed here and in future operations it is essential that all international actors involved in a mission area carry out their work in a more coordinated and planned manner.

It is like a football team. Everyone does what he is best at. But not all can play as centre forward – or as goalkeeper. So before the match starts – and during the match - there need to be some coordination on who does what. Otherwise the risk of loosing the match increases significantly.

Now does this means that NATO should be the captain on the football team? Certainly not.

When Denmark in the framework of NATO has promoted the notion of Concerted Planning and Action - or just CPA as we have come to call it - we have strongly stressed that coordination and cooperation with other international organisations and NGOs should take place on a voluntary basis and on an equal footing. NATO shall not coordinate the work of other actors – but NATO should be better to coordinate with other actors in a mission area.

Furthermore the aim is not for NATO to develop its own civil capabilities. Others already have these capabilities and the aim is not to duplicate these capabilities. That would be a waste of resources.

No the aim of CPA is very basic and very simple:

- To work better alongside and together with the rest of the international community both in the planning phase and in the actual operations.
- And also in NATO's own planning for operations to be better at taking into account the activities of other actors.

As I said it all sounds very simple. The difficult part is to make it work in practise.

Denmark has already made a number of concrete proposals to this respect. Let me mention two:

In **Afghanistan**, we should strengthen the set-up of the Senior Civilian Representative and COMISAF in order to ensure that consultation and coordination with other actors can be executed efficiently also after the Southern and Eastern expansion of ISAF.

And in **Kosovo** we should agree to set up appropriate arrangements for exchange of information and coordination of efforts on the ground and at institutional level.

It is thus my firm belief that increased co-operation and co-ordination between military and civilian actors is crucial for achieving lasting peace and security.

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In Afghanistan the Alliance has committed itself to assisting the Afghan government and people in building a free, democratic and peaceful society. Afghanistan will be a key issue at the summit in Riga. At the summit the member states should confirm their commitment to the operation in Afghanistan. It is a matter of NATO's credibility. We must put all necessary effort into the operation to ensure a successful outcome.

To achieve success is not an easy task. There will be a need for our assistance for many years. We must be patient – not least we politicians and decision-makers. In Kosovo and Bosnia there is still international military presence more than 10 years after end of hostilities. But if we stay focussed, we will succeed.

To sum up it is my hope that NATO at the **Summit in Riga** can send a clear message that NATO is ready to strengthen and evolve its relationships with current and new partners – be they countries or organisations. A message that NATO is ready to work closely and in concert with all other actors in our areas of operations to achieve a successful outcome.

Thank you.