

Remarks by General Henault
Chairman of the NATO Military Committee

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NATO in The 21st Century

Introduction.

Acknowledgements. Before I begin, I would like to thank you for inviting me here today to address the Conference of Defence Associations (CDA). It is an honour for me to have the opportunity to address a group that does so much to support the security and defence issues of Canada. Over the last 73 years, your group has grown to number 31 Associations from all parts of the country, and the support that you offer to the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces is indeed, considerable.

Bien entendu, il est clair que nous traversons une période où la sécurité et la stabilité sont fragiles à plusieurs endroits. Le monde est secoué de crises difficiles à prévoir, causés pour la plupart par une globalisation des menaces, et en particulier par la première d'entre elles, c'est à dire le terrorisme.

Like all nations, Canada has questions to answer with regards to establishing priorities for the continuing review of its Armed Forces and its defence expenditure. Following the election of a new government, these questions will be pushed to the fore, and the assessment of where money should be spent to best serve national interests will be an ongoing debate for some time. I must say that I am encouraged by what Minister O'Connor has said here this morning. His message is good for Canada and NATO.

Your influence will have a part to play in these matters. Indeed, this seminar comes at a crucial moment. As the theme of the conference implies, understanding NATO's Transformation process is very important for any member state. It is great to have General Lance Smith here today to discuss some of these very issues during the panel period.

In the next 25 minutes or so, before I open the floor to questions, I would like to explain how NATO has evolved over recent years, and more importantly, what I see as being the Alliance's priorities for the future.

As you will be aware, NATO is busy preparing for its next Summit in Riga in Latvia later in the year. As the Secretary General has stated, NATO heads of state and government will want to continue to demonstrate that they are leading an Alliance, which is visibly and effectively, focused on today's security challenges. The outcome of the Riga Summit and the one that follows in 2008 will be crucial in shaping the future

direction that NATO takes. The two summits will of course be coordinated to ensure maximum benefit is gained from them.

To support the Secretary General's political objectives and help ensure the success of the Riga summit and the future of the Alliance, I have worked with the Military Committee and the Strategic Commanders to better define what this future may be. I have launched what I call the "CMC's Strategic Outlook to 2006 and Beyond". I cannot over emphasise how important a credible military component is to the success of NATO.

There are many important factors to address, but today I will focus on the three pillars of this strategic thinking, firstly our operational priorities, secondly our transformation process and thirdly, our programme of building relationships.

Please remember, that when I speak to you today, it is as an international officer, as the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee and not just as an ex Canadian Chief of Defence. And, I hope that what I describe to you about the future of NATO will help to inform those involved in national, and international military transformation debates.

So let's take a look at the first of my three themes:

NATO's Current Operations.

The new defence and security environment that has emerged over the last 15 years or so has made it clear, that in order to guarantee our safety at home, we are now required to go further and further afield to promote security and stability in an ever more unpredictable world. There is now very little distinction between domestic and international security, or between homeland defence and forward defence. Today, unscrupulous individuals have the power to undermine our security in ways that used to be available only to hostile states.

Nations have their own sovereign responsibilities, but increasingly the best way that they can achieve the objectives of self-defence, and contribute to international peace and security is alongside their allies. This is why NATO is taking an ever more prominent role in helping to find solutions to these problems.

Since 1990, NATO evolved considerably, and has rapidly established itself as the World's most experienced peacemaking and peacekeeping force, and is becoming a major enabler for the United Nations. Regular contacts now take place between the Secretaries-General and the Staffs of both organisations. Similar contacts are also maintained with other regional organisations such as the European Union and the African Union. While NATO does not have ambitions to become a global alliance, it is keen to have global partners.

As a result, the World is demanding more of NATO, not only to assist with failing states, but also to counter the growing threats of terrorism, drugs, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and all this, well outside of its traditional areas of responsibility.

To illustrate the way in which the Alliance is now focused on "taking the problem

to the source”, NATO has more than 30000 troops deployed under command, engaged in operations and missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and Darfur.

NATO’s first priority for these operations is in Afghanistan. Indeed, the whole international community is committed to help Afghanistan find its way towards lasting peace and stability. As it was made clear at the London Conference on Afghanistan, which I attended last month, the country could conceivably descend into chaos without our help, and once again become a breeding ground for international terrorism, that could threaten us all.

The continued expansion of Alliance operations to the south of the country is critically important. This part of Afghanistan is a dangerous place, and is sometimes referred to as the “heartland of the militants”. By succeeding in bringing stability to this region, it will make a significant difference to the security of Afghanistan, which in turn will increase security in our own capitals.

The challenges, of course, are considerable. For example, there has been a recent increase in suicide bombing attacks throughout Afghanistan, and analysts have warned that al-Qa’ida is stepping up its assistance to the Taliban. Afghan security forces are still many years away from self-sufficiency and the country is still the world’s main source of opium.

In addition, earlier in the month we witnessed violent protests against NATO forces, in reaction to the “Cartoon Controversy,” which re-emphasised the need to ensure that our forces in theatre are both well protected, well supported and mobile.

But if we consider what has already been achieved in Afghanistan, the results are very encouraging. The country has emerged from 30 years of civil war and now has its first democratically elected parliament, and President, in 33 years. Many thousands of refugees have returned, the country’s infrastructure is slowly being repaired, and investment is slowly beginning to trickle in. At the London Conference, nations pledged \$10 billion for the ongoing development of Afghanistan.

J’ai visité l’Afghanistan plusieurs fois durant mon mandat comme Chef de Défense, et récemment en tant que Président du comité militaire. J’ai vu le remarquable travail réalisé par les équipes de reconstruction de l’OTAN. Je peux vous garantir que ces équipes sont essentielles et irremplaçables.

Le Canada est un contributeur majeur aux opérations de l’alliance et continuera de l’être. Il renforce ainsi sa crédibilité, et croyez ici que je suis particulièrement fier de l’engagement du Canada en Afghanistan, au sein de l’ISAF et notamment dans la région de Kandahar.

The second Operational priority for NATO is the Balkans. NATO’s involvement dates back to 1992 when it took on its first crisis management mission in this volatile region. The overall role for the Alliance and its partners was, and continues to be, to promote a peaceful and stable environment in the Balkans, in the aftermath of the wars of Yugoslavia’s dissolution in the 1990s. NATO continues to be involved throughout the Balkans, but today, our primary efforts are focused on building a secure

environment within the province of Kosovo.

The whole world reeled in shock in the 1990's when we watched a bloody war unfold in Europe. It is in all of our best interests that we never let this happen again. Our next challenge in that region, will be to establish the future role for NATO's forces in Kosovo following progress in the status talks.

Lastly, as well as our commitments to these and other ongoing operations, we have responded effectively to humanitarian relief efforts, in the wake of hurricane Katrina in the southern United States, and in Pakistan, after the terrible earthquake that devastated parts of the region.

What all this means is that NATO has found itself increasingly involved in expeditionary operations, spanning the full spectrum of warfighting. To be ready to meet these new challenges, NATO has had to adapt once again. That leads me into my second theme, and that is:

Transformation.

The missions that I just described are far different from those that NATO was engaged in during the Cold War. Since the early 1990s, NATO's strategic thinking has been fundamentally altered by World events such as the Kosovo Campaign in 1999, the terrorist attacks on America in 2001 and more recently, the terrorist attacks in Spain and the United Kingdom. As a result, the posture of the Alliance has evolved from one of static confrontation to one of global reach, stabilisation, cooperation, partnership and inclusion.

In order to meet these new demands, NATO has embarked on an ambitious process of change, known as "Transformation". Collectively, this has involved the identification of the critical military shortfalls, in terms of both equipment and concepts, that needed to be addressed by the Alliance, and then building new strategies around emerging capabilities. This capabilities-based approach is much different from the threat-based one that prevailed during the Cold War era.

And, NATO is making very real progress with these initiatives. What is especially important is that Transformation within Nations is now showing signs of convergence. As an example, Nations have truly embraced the need for an expeditionary capability, with an ability to operate across the entire spectrum of conflict, from humanitarian assistance to combat. It is this convergence that enables us to be more interoperable, which in turn makes us increasingly more effective.

But, it is difficult for individual members of the Alliance to ensure that they uphold their commitments to expeditionary operations, remain interoperable with NATO standards, and at the same time have the resources to pursue their own national change agendas.

A real challenge for the future is to continue to persuade Nations to remain committed to all of these tasks. And as they do so, we need to help them with new and innovative solutions, that might include increased common funding for some elements of operations such as strategic lift and other theatre-level

enablers.

I, of course, am a huge supporter and promoter of the transformation process, including the one that is being undertaken by the Canadian Forces to make the organization more relevant, responsive and effective. If I can reflect on comments made by General Hillier for just a moment, "Canadian Forces Transformation is based on meeting the new threats of a new security environment, and therefore operational effectiveness is at its heart". These are very important words, and they mirror the principles underpinning the Transformation initiatives of NATO.

The transformational engine for NATO's Transformation, with which you are all undoubtedly familiar, is the NATO Response Force (NRF). When the NRF reaches its full operational capability, planned for Summer 2006, it will be a rapidly deployable, multi-role, expeditionary force numbering 20,000 to 25,000 soldiers, sailors, and air personnel. It will consist of technologically advanced land, sea and air elements that will be ready to move quickly to wherever they are needed, as decided by the North Atlantic Council. I should add that the Force will be task tailored for the mission it faces. It will not always deploy all of its personnel.

It is an ambitious undertaking, and reaching Full Operational Capability is not without certain resource and personnel challenges, especially given all the other demands placed upon us. But it is essential that we see it through, as in many ways it can be considered as the key to the success of NATO's Transformation.

Indeed, the NRF has already demonstrated its ability to react quickly and effectively, with the deployment of elements of the force to support humanitarian relief efforts in Pakistan over the last couple of months. NRF capability was also used to respond to the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina in the U.S. last fall.

But, what we must of course remember is that NATO is a military alliance that relies on political and military consensus to move forward. What is becoming clearer is that military Transformation in itself is not enough to ready us for the challenges that we will continue to face. NATO must take a more comprehensive approach towards its Transformation, to include its political arm.

If we think about the events that led up to the war in Iraq, it is clear that the deepest crisis in NATO's recent history was not caused by a lack of collective military power, but by fundamental political differences over its use. To this end, the Secretary General has clearly stated that we must emphasise the political Transformation of the Alliance as a way of improving its ability to meet the new security challenges.

Le Conseil de l'Atlantique du Nord doit continuer de développer une plus forte identité politique afin de répondre au mieux à ses ambitions géographiques. Lorsqu'une crise apparaît, le Conseil doit être en mesure d'établir rapidement ses priorités, ce qui implique délaissier certaines tâches pour d'autres, même si elles semblent plus importantes.

And of course, this political Transformation is very important to those of us in the military. Comprehensive Political Guidance (CPG), recently approved by the North Atlantic Council, and contributed to by the military, will be essential to our military

Transformation agenda. Without it, we risk developing capabilities that do not satisfy the Alliance's political ambitions, or worse still, developing capabilities that are irrelevant.

The final theme I want to touch on is:

NATO's Relationships with its Partners and the Policy of Cooperation and Enlargement.

Since the end of the Cold War, the Alliance has had remarkable success with its partnership policy. Through the Partnership for Peace Programme and other such initiatives, we have created important political and military bonds with many countries across Europe, around the Mediterranean basin and well into Asia.

These countries often include former adversaries from the Cold War period, most notably important regional actors such as the Ukraine and Russia, with whom we continue to reinforce our links. We are also creating new bonds with countries such as Japan, New Zealand and Australia as well as with many countries of the Broader Middle East and the Caucasus.

These relationships are vital to the future success of the Alliance. As we expand the area of security and stability that NATO has created, with the addition of new and like-minded allies, we become stronger. There are several examples that illustrate the point:

Security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean area. Our enhanced interaction with the Mediterranean Dialogue Countries, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia is contributing to a more stable environment in that region. I recently participated in the first meeting of NATO Defence Ministers and Defence Ministers of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries, in Taormina, Italy. This is an excellent extension of the previously established military-to-military relationship.

Of interest, I also participated in the first meeting of NATO Chiefs of Defence Staff and Mediterranean Dialogue Chiefs in November 2004.

The same is true in the Broader Middle East. The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), which was launched at the Istanbul Summit in 2004, invited members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, namely: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to open a security dialogue with NATO. ICI is designed to build trust on a bilateral basis and to fight terrorism, illegal trafficking and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

As well as enhancing partnerships, NATO has expanded its membership 5 times since its formation, 55 years ago, and this trend looks set to continue. However, membership in NATO does not come easy, nor does it mean a free security ride after accession. It is important to note that it is not just the military forces of a country that are joining NATO, it is the whole nation, with all the implications that go along with becoming a member of an Alliance of free, democratic states.

The drive for Alliance membership has been a constant stimulus for aspiring countries to transform their constitutional, political, legal, democratic and military structures, as well as to erase dividing lines and further enhance Euro-Atlantic integration.

While our policy of enlargement reaps many added benefits, and is ultimately what gives us our strength, it is important to remember that Transformation in NATO, in the current day and age, means coordinating this effort within an Alliance of 26 sovereign Nations. The challenges posed by different military cultures, different capability starting points, language, geo-political considerations, unique national security issues, economic factors, domestic law and equipment interoperability issues make the process very challenging indeed.

Of course, there are other relationships that are extremely important to NATO that I would like to say a few words about. There are two on which I would like to focus in particular.

The first relationship that I want to emphasize is the one that exists within NATO itself. The transatlantic partnership between North America and Europe, most often referred to as the “transatlantic link”, has been fundamental to NATO’s success ever since the Alliance was formed, in 1949, and this is most definitely still the case today.

Together, Europe and North America share the same values and security interests, and together we have developed a military capability, which is a formidable deterrent and a potent force when required. Of course, the use of force is a measure of last resort, but we should remember that having this capability contributes significantly to NATO's relevance and credibility.

This transatlantic security cooperation, with NATO as its backbone, is essential to the maintenance of a safe and secure Europe and a safer world overall. And this was emphasised at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, which I attended earlier this month.

But, there are several problems to be overcome. There is now a significant technology gap between US military forces and those of most other NATO Nations. As we continue to Transform, we must work to prevent it from widening. At present, the US supplies 30% of the military equipment used in Europe, whereas in return, the EU supplies only 1% of the needs of the US and arguably, of Canada.

Nations must be persuaded to improve industrial defence cooperation, and to continue to invest in the technologies that will ensure they are interoperable with other NATO nations, in particular the US. We must do this to prevent a multi-tiered Alliance from developing. Again, this is an area in which political Transformation has a large role to play.

The second relationship that I want to emphasise is the one that exists between NATO and the European Union (EU). At present, 19 of NATO’s 26 members are also members of the EU, and this proportion is only likely to increase.

I consider the evolving defence and security role of the European Union to be an

element that can only strengthen the Alliance and add to its effectiveness, and we have already enjoyed a number of successes in developing our cooperation. For example, the EU conducted operations for the first time in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in 2003, and took over responsibility from NATO for ongoing operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the 1st of December 2004. In addition, NATO and the EU have cooperated closely to provide airlift support to the African Union's mission in Darfur.

But, what is crucially important, as NATO's relationship with the EU develops further, is that we focus on complementarities and cooperation, to ensure that mutual benefit is gained. The two organisations must develop a strategic partnership that covers the entire spectrum of modern security challenges, not just those concerning the Balkans.

If we don't coordinate our political agendas effectively, we in the military will see duplication of effort between the two organisations. This is already happening in some areas. For example, the EU is busy developing a more capable command and control capability, while most of the elements it is developing are already found within NATO.

So, the continuing improvement of the relationship between NATO and the EU is of vital importance, and this is why it is one of my key objectives as Chairman of NATO's Military Committee. To help achieve this, the Military Committees of NATO and the EU now meet on a regular basis. In addition, we have created permanent liaison teams that are embedded in each other's organisations, in order to enhance cooperation and build on our operational successes.

Conclusion.

Well on that note, I will conclude by saying that I hope I have managed to explain the essence of the main issues concerning NATO today, and where our priorities are for the future. I have concentrated on three main areas, expanding our operations, improving our operational capabilities through the process of Transformation and enhancing relationships in all their forms. NATO today is a dynamic organisation.

What I have shared with you are many of my personal opinions, and I have tried to give you a strategic overview of some of the challenges that will face us for the coming years.

Despite the fact that we face a very different threat from the one we did during the Cold War, I believe that the core purpose of the Alliance will remain one of collective defence and security. No nation can stand-alone against the menace of international terrorism, and while a passive, reactive approach was appropriate during the Cold War, it isn't any longer.

NATO must continue to employ a strategy of engagement. We must be proactive in addressing international security issues and we need to place an increased importance on defence against terrorism. In doing so, we must be capable of engaging with many different actors to find solutions.

Je suis très satisfait aujourd'hui des progrès qui ont été réalisés et je suis tout à

fait confiant quant à l'avenir de l'Alliance.

We have achieved considerable successes, particularly on operations in Afghanistan, the Balkans, and in the Mediterranean, and we are making a significant contribution to improving the global security environment.

And the work that is done by Canada far from national shores is vitally important. What we must all remember in the modern security climate, with the globalisation of asymmetric threats, is that these contributions not only help people in regions far outside the traditional Euro-Atlantic areas of responsibility, but they also reap considerable benefits at home.

Thank you.