

Javier Solana, NATO on the threshold of the 21st century

Caption: In June 1997, in an article published in the Spanish magazine *Política Exterior*, Javier Solana, NATO Secretary-General, outlines the role of the Atlantic Organisation in the world and, in particular, in Europe on the eve of the new millennium.

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NATO on the threshold of the 21st century

Javier Solana

EUROPE is undergoing a transformation similar to that of the late 1940s and early 1950s which saw the emergence of the Atlantic Community. The difference between then and now, however, is that there are, at present, encouraging signs that Europe can become a more secure and more stable place than it has been throughout this century. NATO is one of a group of key institutions in Europe that can play a prominent part in attaining this objective.

The present moment in history offers us a rare opportunity to influence the configuration of European security and the direction that it will take in the years to come. That moment arrived in 1997. This July, NATO will be holding a Summit in Madrid at which we expect to take a series of decisions that will reaffirm the role of the new, renewed Alliance. I should, therefore, like to consider the nature and major implications of the main decisions to be taken at that meeting

Before turning to the matters on the agenda for the Summit, let me say a word about NATO's role in Bosnia. The unprecedented effort made by both countries and organisations to put an end to the war in the Balkans and guarantee a lasting peace in the region was both impressive and encouraging. Who would have imagined that troops from so many countries of Central Europe, North Africa and Asia could be involved in a joint operation led by NATO? This experience has shown the importance of having available the three basic components of peacekeeping and crisis-management: the means to act resolutely and effectively, the political will to do so, and proficiency in conducting joint operations with other countries and organisations involved in European security.

In this respect, Bosnia proved that the ongoing adjustment of the Alliance is proceeding on the right lines. But there is still a long way to go. Hence the importance of the Madrid Summit which will take the decisions and lay down guidelines for the continuing process of transformation.

A brief look at the agenda confirms that we have set ourselves very ambitious objectives:

- We shall invite one or more countries to start accession negotiations with the Alliance. Our goal is to be able to welcome the new members in 1999, when the Alliance celebrates its 50th anniversary.
- We shall launch an enhanced Partnership for Peace initiative in a new cooperative framework, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC).
- We aim to reach agreement with Russia on a strong, stable and enduring security partnership.
- We shall endeavour to formalise an effective and distinctive relationship with Ukraine.
- We shall step up our Mediterranean dialogue.
- Last, but by no means least, we shall continue to build the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within the Alliance.

Taken together, these decisions will reflect the fundamentally changed nature of the Alliance and its purpose. The Madrid Summit will thus be of crucial importance in paving the way for a new European security and defence architecture.

Opening the Alliance to new members

The aim is to welcome the new members in 1999, when NATO celebrates its 50th anniversary, after successful completion of accession negotiations and subsequent ratification by our 16 national parliaments.

The prospect of a larger NATO has generated a lively debate in the press. Different views have been expressed in the media, but I am convinced that we are on the right course. From whatever angle one wishes to approach the question, the conclusion is the same. NATO has always been an open organisation, and it should, and will, accept new members. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe have made a very strong case for rejoining a Europe from which they were artificially separated in the past. Now they want to join NATO and other institutions; they want to be part of NATO for the same reasons that member countries do not want to leave NATO. They are making great strides to prepare themselves.

NATO has undergone enlargement several times in its history: Turkey and Greece joined in 1952, West Germany in 1955 and Spain in 1982. With the reunification of Germany in 1990, the former East Germany also came to enjoy the security of the Atlantic Alliance. On each occasion, there were difficulties and a debate about NATO enlargement. With hindsight, however, we see clearly that each enlargement enhanced European security as a whole, making the Alliance more cohesive and giving it greater strategic weight in shaping the current security environment in accordance with our basic values. From a present-day perspective, it is impossible to imagine that Europe could have evolved so dynamically if NATO had been confined to its original 1949 configuration.

NATO's commitment to accept new members is already having a positive effect. The prospect of rejoining the West has induced many countries to undertake domestic reforms and settle long-standing disputes with their neighbours. Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, the Baltic States and others have concluded, or are about to conclude, agreements settling long unresolved differences. Such progress has been possible because the Alliance, at the right time, declared its willingness to accept new members.

Opening the Alliance to new members is a deliberately assumed moral obligation vis-à-vis the new applicants. They want to be part of our unique community because they share our values, because their sense of belonging is a positive factor both for them and for the whole of Europe, and, finally, because there is no law of nature that restricts the number of democracies in the Atlantic Community to 16. The new members will strengthen the stability of the continent of Europe.

Not to enlarge is the 'do-nothing, achieve nothing' option. It is an option that the Alliance long ago rejected.

However, in order to ensure security and stability for all of Europe, we shall also have to take into account the needs of those who do not join or who may join later. This will not only require keeping the door open to future members, it will also require a strengthening of the Partnership for Peace, the key initiative which demonstrates NATO's commitment to Europe's wider security.

At the Madrid Summit, we shall launch an enhanced form of PfP that will considerably expand the scope for participation. Military exercises will cover the whole spectrum of possible interventions in the event of a crisis. Partners will be involved in planning and preparing for contingency operations, building on the success of our common experience in Bosnia.

There will also be possibilities for closer political dialogue and consultations. We already have the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) which, in its five years of existence, has proved entirely successful in conveying to our Partners habits of consultation and cooperation which the Allies now take for granted. But we want to go even further. The next stage will be the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) which will provide a single political framework for all our cooperation activities and a forum where Allies and Partners can meet and determine our future security arrangements on a cooperative basis.

We are now looking at a series of wide-ranging proposals to enhance PfP. They include: increasing the possibilities for political consultations between the Partners and NATO; widening the spectrum of PfP operations in line with NATO's new crisis-management and peacekeeping missions; expanding the programme of joint exercises to reflect the new range of operational activity; involving Partners in a joint decision-making process on the future development of partnership programmes; promoting regional cooperation among Partners; providing Partners with the opportunity to establish diplomatic representation at NATO.

Our goal is to bring together the best elements of the NACC political consultation process and of the military cooperation under Partnership for Peace. The EAPC will thus have a key role to play in future in the planning, drawing up and implementation of PfP operations. In creating the EAPC in close coordination with Partners, the Alliance is, once more, responding innovatively to new political realities, new operational requirements and increasing Partner needs.

The role of Russia

A European security architecture worthy of the name must be one that gives the largest European state, Russia, its rightful place. In recent months, the view has gained ground that, somehow, we had to 'choose' between NATO enlargement and Russia. The underlying idea seems to be that we cannot have both: new members and a new relationship with Russia. That is simply not so.

Those who believe that NATO has to choose between enlargement and Russia are approaching Europe with a mentality that is wholly inappropriate for today's strategic environment. It is obvious that Russia still has considerable problems in understanding the new NATO and its ongoing transformation. There are those who would prefer to keep Russia isolated. But many Russian interests suggest close cooperation with European and Atlantic structures, and Russia already has close links with the EU, the Council of Europe and the G7.

In our opinion, a close cooperative relationship with NATO is part of Russia's role in European security. We consider, therefore, that a privileged relationship with NATO is the best option and will serve Russia's interests much better than self-imposed isolation.

Neither the transformation nor the enlargement of NATO poses a threat to Russia. We have stated explicitly that the Alliance has no reason, plan or intention to station nuclear weapons on the territory of any new members. With regard to conventional weapons, NATO has already outlined its intentions with regard to the stationing of forces on those territories. The North Atlantic Council recently stated quite clearly that 'in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defence and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces.'

We have also demonstrated our willingness to give serious consideration to adapting the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) to reflect the evolving European security environment. NATO has submitted detailed proposals to the negotiations in Vienna on CFE Treaty adaptation, the most important being the abolition of the bloc-to-bloc and zonal structure and its replacement by a system of national and territorial ceilings, no increase in the total figures for treaty-limited equipment (TLE) in each category and readiness to reduce the national TLE ceilings applying to members of the Alliance. We have also proposed additional inspection quotas, as well as measures to boost mutual exchange of information.

To address concerns about the possible implications of the admission of new members in terms of military infrastructure, we have submitted new ideas for confidence-building measures for negotiation at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna. We are making preparations for increased transparency of military air bases, other installations (including air defence installations and emplacements) and military headquarters. The scope of these measures would be that envisaged in the 1994 Vienna Document. These advances will do much to dispel any misconceptions while increasing security in Europe.

Beyond these significant steps forward, we have stressed our readiness to reach agreement on the arrangements for a permanent institutional relationship between NATO and Russia. We are now engaged in a discussion on a fundamentally new partnership arrangement. NATO has proposed the creation of a NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council that would establish a permanent mechanism for consultation and, possibly, joint action.

We should also welcome Russian diplomatic and military representation at NATO. We would favour the

attachment of senior Russian military liaison officers to appropriate elements of NATO's military structure, with reciprocal arrangements on the presence of NATO liaison officers in Russia.

Russia should be represented at NATO on a standing basis so that it might see with its own eyes what the new NATO is really about. A true partnership will emerge once Russian and NATO staffs start to work closely together, on a daily basis. Such an arrangement will leave no room for the old misconceptions. Our successful cooperation in Bosnia is a model on which to build.

The emergence of new democratic states is a feature of the new security order. Their ability to survive and flourish as independent states is a key test for all of the institutions and individual nations alike. In this sense, Ukraine occupies a crucial place in Europe. An independent, stable and democratic Ukraine is of strategic importance for the development of Europe as a whole. We are putting in place an efficient distinctive relationship between NATO and Ukraine aimed at enhancing the latter's contribution to European stability. We are working with the Ukrainian authorities to formalise this new security relationship by the time of the Madrid Summit.

Security in Europe is closely linked with security and stability in the Mediterranean, and the Mediterranean dimension is one of the various security components of the European security architecture. The Alliance will, therefore, have to make an active effort to forge closer ties and dispel some of the damaging misconceptions and apprehensions that exist on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. Clearly, the problems of the Mediterranean are unique, and we cannot simply transpose to this region the approach that we have taken to Eastern Europe. We are well aware that our Mediterranean dialogue can only complement other international efforts, such as those of the EU, OSCE and WEU. Yet our dialogue with non-NATO countries in the Mediterranean underlines our belief that it is possible to create good, strong and friendly relations across the Mediterranean — just as we have done across Europe. It is my hope that the Madrid Summit will provide us with the opportunity to advance our thinking on the position of the Alliance with respect to Mediterranean security and on ways of putting our dialogue on a more institutional footing.

If Europe wants to become a strategic player, it must tackle defence. That was, after all, the idea that inspired all the Member States of the EU when they drew up the Maastricht Treaty. However, defence issues must be tackled in such a way as to strengthen Europe while at the same time ensuring a continuing American commitment to European security.

Only a stronger Europe can be a strategic partner of the United States in managing global security challenges. Yet, for too long, the debate on a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) has been bedevilled by a false debate on a European defence versus an Atlanticist one.

Europe and the US

This sterile debate does not do justice to present realities. What are those realities? To put it briefly, we have, on the one hand, a European Union that, as the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) shows, is intent on developing a common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and, on the other, a United States that is increasingly conscious of the cost of internationalism. This means that security issues can no longer be left solely to the Americans and not appear on the European agenda. In future, the US may no longer wish to lead intervention in European crises, even if it remains prepared to lend military support to its Allies in their efforts at resolving them. Let us be clear: the old division of tasks whereby NATO took care of European security while the European institutions concentrated on economic integration no longer reflects transatlantic reality.

For that reason, we have been developing the means by which European Allies could draw NATO support for future operations led by WEU. If we can achieve such a separable, but not separate, European operational capability in the future, it should be possible, if so decided by the North Atlantic Council, for a European component of the larger structure to act in a crisis. As a result of these changes, the new NATO will be more in line with the political, economic and military realities of the late 1990s and beyond.

All the decisions and initiatives to which I have referred will have far-reaching consequences for the

functioning and organisation of NATO. NATO cannot fulfil its new missions with old structures. Internal adaptation is, therefore, the precondition for the achievement of our wider goals. NATO must properly reflect its European dimension. It must, moreover, be equipped with a new military structure and the instruments needed to carry out not only the collective defence missions referred to in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty but also its new peacekeeping and crisis-management tasks. The Bosnia operation has taught us that we need our military command structure to be more flexible, more mobile and to offer more opportunities for involving our Partner countries in joint operations.

Our aim at the Summit is to conclude the main details of a reformed, more flexible command structure, in which there will be headquarters authorised to take command of the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) that will be the main military instrument for conducting the new crisis-management and peacekeeping missions. The inherent flexibility of the CJTF concept will also enable non-NATO Partners to participate in operations conducted by the Alliance — as in the case of the multinational ‘Joint Endeavour’ and ‘Joint Guard’ operations in Bosnia. We are making progress towards the establishment of CJTF headquarters under NATO’s two Supreme Commands: a land-based HQ under SACEUR and a sea-based HQ under SACLANT. We shall be testing and determining the operational requirements over the next few months.

The reformed command structure and the CFJTs will further benefit the Alliance by providing a suitable response to the Allies’ decision to develop a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI). The European Allies aspire to play a greater defence and military role, especially in crisis-management and peacekeeping, i.e. the type of operations envisaged in WEU’s 1992 Petersberg Declaration. The Alliance is helping to build the ESDI by preparing to support operations led by WEU. These preparations include identifying Alliance resources and capabilities that could be used by WEU once a decision has been taken by the North Atlantic Council; organising a European command for planning and conducting operations led by WEU; and appropriate military planning and planning of exercises. We expect the Madrid Summit to endorse these measures.

The changes set out above will have far-reaching consequences for the Alliance. The Madrid Summit will certainly lead to profound changes in the way in which the Alliance works. We may expect a major intensification of our consultations and contacts with Partners.

That applies to both the political and the military organs. The whole system will become much more open and transparent for our Partners. Nevertheless, the Alliance will retain the ability to act on its own, whether to defend its Allies in response to situations envisaged in Article 5 or to carry out new crisis-management and peacekeeping missions. In short, it will do nothing that reduces its own capabilities.

Some people are, nevertheless, asking themselves whether the admission of new members, the development of new relations with Russia and Ukraine and the creation of the new Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council with an enhanced PfP will not make NATO less cohesive and thus less efficient.

The answer is no. An internal NATO transformation of such scope has been possible precisely because our strategic vision and our aim of achieving a united democratic Europe have remained unchanged.

It was the unity of the Allies that impelled NATO to change so radically and so quickly and enabled it to do so without experiencing any internal identity crisis or the lack of a strategic objective, which many people predicted would be outcome of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The cohesion of NATO is the result of the Allies’ conviction that, together, through NATO, they can play a key role in building a stable and more secure Europe for the 21st century.

Since joining the Alliance, Spain has made a solid and reliable contribution to collective defence. By placing immediate and rapid reaction forces, main defence forces and augmentation forces at the disposal of the Alliance for tasks such as the protection of Spanish territory and air space, and participation in sea and air operations in the eastern Atlantic, the western Mediterranean and the Straits of Gibraltar, Spain has proved to itself that it must, does and will make its full contribution to the new security architecture. Its considerable contribution to the international peacekeeping coalition currently deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina has

been equally significant.

The Summit will afford each of the Allies an opportunity to exert direct influence and enjoy the fruits of its full and active participation in the Alliance's collective security arrangements and new missions. In this context, full participation by Spain and France in the Alliance, including the new command structure, is a necessary step which we welcome. As far as Spain is concerned, I believe that the Cortes' decision of November 1996 to participate fully in the new Alliance was a decisive step forward. As Europe prepares to take on greater responsibilities within NATO, it would make no sense for two key European countries not to be fully integrated. On the other hand, for NATO to be able to contribute effectively to greater European stability, it needs to carry out an internal transformation that reflects the new security realities.

We still have some way to go before we achieve our goal of a just and enduring European security order. But we are moving forward. The NATO Summit in July will be a milestone in the construction of a new security architecture with a dynamic NATO as its core. Internal adaptation, enhanced cooperation with Partners, a formal strategic partnership with Russia, an enhanced Mediterranean dialogue and the invitation to one or more Partners to begin membership negotiations are measures that will help to build a Europe that is more united than ever before.

Javier Solana is NATO's Secretary-General.