

## Europe and America: A New Strategic Partnership

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Remarks to the Royal Institute of International Affairs 2002 Defence Conference  
Chatham House, London, U.K.  
February 18, 2002

### The USA: Preparing for Global Operations

Thank you and good morning. Like so many in the U.S. Administration, I appreciate Lord Robertson for reminding all of us how unique, vital, and indispensable is our NATO alliance. And as one American whose loved ones back home are safer because European pilots and crews are patrolling the skies above the United States, I come to Europe with a renewed sense of connection to our allies, and gratitude for this Trans-Atlantic bond, carried through the generations. For all the powerful history that underpins the security partnership of Europe and America, we require no such legacy to find common cause today.

And I know that by the time all the speakers on the program have said their piece, a full spectrum of concerns and insights will have been aired. But I have no doubt that the end result will be a convergence of views on the necessity of robust, effective international security cooperation, some of it taking forms that have yet to be conceived.

Today, the Royal Institute has asked me to speak about how the USA is preparing for global operations. Had I been invited to speak on this subject a year ago, as a private citizen and an ex-government official, I probably would have focused on a vision of alliance operations well into the future, considering how technology and military transformation in the U.S. might have progressed, what modernization might have been achieved by the other NATO militaries, and how the defense sectors of America and Europe would have supported that transformation. I would have discussed the nature of the threat and the corresponding evolution in the 21st Century tools of war – and rules of war. Above all, I would have ruminated about the future political character of America's alliance with Europe in the context of an expanded NATO as well as an expanded, empowered European Union. All of these remain hugely consequential topics, and I commend them to the Conference's consideration.

But I am not an ex-official – at least not as I begin my remarks this morning. And as such, I suppose I am now afflicted with the malady common to government bureaucrats: namely, I cannot see much beyond the in-basket on my desk. And so, when asked the question, "How is the U.S. preparing for global operations?" I find that there is but one vision that fills my head, and that is not some theoretical construct, but rather the global operation taking place today, right now, involving almost every country on the planet.

The American people have been warned repeatedly since September 11 about possible further terrorist threats. And so in Washington we have thrown out the old "play book" and waged instead a new kind of international campaign featuring financial, law enforcement, and intelligence cooperation. President Bush has created and empowered a Homeland Security organization and mustered whatever capabilities we presently have for this task, all the while maintaining a high alert at home and abroad. Asymmetric threats, to us, are today's threats.

Similarly, in the area of humanitarian operations, current events demand action. The nations of the world have recently met in Tokyo and pledged major assistance to help restore Afghanistan. The U.S., along with many other governments, has made a commitment to remain engaged in Afghanistan's future in order that the Afghan people do not fall prey once again to extremists. Program managers and field workers from international organizations, governmental agencies, and NGOs are now surging into Afghanistan, because they know that time won't wait for the Afghan people.

And so it is with a concern much discussed among European and American security experts – namely, the perceived disparity between U.S. capabilities and those of its allies. The discussion often turns to resources, and appropriately so. Lord Robertson, among others, has criticized levels of European defense spending as too low. President Bush, meanwhile, has just proposed a \$48 billion increase in U.S. defense spending. Recently, he said, "The price of freedom is high; the price of security is high. But the United States will pay it." So, when we think about the future of the trans-Atlantic alliance, we should talk about current defense

spending.

In the realm of defense trade licensing, I support NATO's Defense Capabilities Initiative and recognize that there are some critical priorities for military modernization and interoperability that merit a coordinated effort among the allied governments. I will support my colleagues in the Pentagon as they encourage defense industrial cooperation with Europe on key weapons programs for future use by alliance forces.

European defense industry executives often ask whether the U.S. is prepared to open its market further to European defense products. It is a reasonable question, and I believe U.S. Defense officials are attentive to workshare and employment issues in these matters; I have to let them speak for themselves. Yet, regardless of how open the Pentagon's acquisition process might be to European products, the inescapable reality is that the U.S. has been outspending Europe on defense research and development by as much as 20 to 1.

Obviously, the largest proposed U.S. defense spending increase in 20 years will only accelerate this disparity. DoD's missile defense and military transformation initiatives will push the U.S. technology baseline further still as they advance from the conceptual to the programmatic stage. So we have to think through the budgetary and defense industrial aspect of our plans for the future.

But debating future spending levels, while necessary, is not at all a sufficient basis to frame the issue of strategic partnership. Once again, the in-basket pervades my own thinking. We must come to terms with the real-world crisis that is right in front of us.

A few weeks ago, I visited eight Arab states, including all of the Gulf Cooperation Council states, and saw U.S. military forces operating in several locations. In some of them, American forces were sharing ramp and hangar space and cooperating closely with soldiers or sailors of other countries engaged in the ongoing campaign to end the threat posed by Al-Qaida and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The many Arab governments hosting these multinational forces are themselves demonstrating solidarity with the international community against the threat of transnational terrorism. I encountered the same spirit of commitment and engagement in a meeting with NATO Ambassadors in Brussels on my way back to Washington.

Indeed, as an American I cannot overstate how important it is to the U.S. and the American people to know that so many countries, starting with our closest allies, have joined with the United States to share the military risks, or to cooperate on many other levels in this endeavor. The swift invocation of Article V by NATO on September 12 and the endorsement of over 150 governments for the military campaign of the past 5 months were, to my mind, indications that the international environment was transformed by the attacks of September 11.

In waging war together on terrorism, our partnership has grown stronger. NATO invoked Article 5 for the first time ever on September 12. Since then, the European Union has moved swiftly to round up terrorists, close down terrorist financing networks, and improve law enforcement and aviation security cooperation.

Moreover, it is abundantly clear that even as we fight the war on terrorism, we will not be deterred from achieving the goal we share of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. While in the Balkans there remain several challenges to our achieving this goal, we are meeting those challenges. We have seized war criminals, helped bring about significant changes in governments in Croatia and Yugoslavia, and our military forces are in Kosovo and Bosnia to help bring stability and self-governance, while European-led action fosters a settlement in Macedonia. We need to finish the job in the Balkans – and we will. We went in together with you and we will come out together with you.

To draw attention to all this solidarity is not to overlook the pervasive international press commentary, and yes, official commentary, one hears today about the particular stance of the United States regarding the threat of terror. I am mindful of the contrast some have drawn between the U.S. and virtually the rest of the international community on this and other issues.

But let us be candid about what has happened. The United States you see today is a country whose declaratory policy, military posture, and resource commitments are fully harmonized in support of national security, reflecting the fact that it has been attacked and faces the threat of further attack. This is not a Washington D.C. that people below a certain age will have any reason to understand from personal experience.

The U.S. is a country "at war," for lack of a better term. America's military operations are being carried out as legitimate acts of self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Our allies and other states are in a condition of solidarity, support, and in some cases, joint combat operations with the Americans. For the most part, these allied and coalition forces are operating under the rubric of the many multilateral and treaty obligations invoked since September 11.

President Bush is pointing very directly at sources of threat, tension, and instability. Other countries, to varying degrees, appear to be measuring their own political appetite for whatever may come next in the war on terrorism. There appears to be some concern internationally about how U.S. leadership in the anti-terror campaign, backed by increased Pentagon spending, may translate into greater influence over the day-to-day affairs of nations once this campaign has succeeded.

Notwithstanding some of the rhetoric of late with regard to President Bush's characterization of the threat we face as an "axis of evil," I cannot believe that we do not see eye to eye – and will not be able to cooperate on – the further prosecution of the war on international terrorism. America's faith in the trans-Atlantic bond is unshaken. Indeed, it is strengthened by what we have done together and what we are doing together still.

My own answer to the perceived international concern about American "centralism," as one NATO permanent representative delicately phrased it, is this: U.S. interests cannot gain – and our partnership can hardly remain strategic – if some of the partners begin to view our most important shared endeavors in "zero sum" terms.

Certainly I am pleased that U.S. military forces today are gaining operational proficiency on a large scale, and refining methods and doctrine every day, driven by necessity. But permit me to mention the cost: the U.S. today has tens of thousands of forces forward deployed in the Gulf and Central Asia. Nearly 70,000 reserves have been called up to active duty. We have pulled air, naval and ground assets into and near the theater of operations from all over the world. When one adds the expense of U.S. military operations with its bilateral assistance to countries facilitating the campaign, as well as the commitment made to Afghanistan's reconstruction, the United States is incurring a very substantial share of the expense in the global campaign against terrorism.

President Bush has accepted this burden, as noted; but that is because virtually all Americans feel that our security demands it, not because we seek an exclusive international status either in political or military terms.

There is a message here for America's allies in Europe. Let us not talk about new strategic cooperation among allies only in terms of future scenarios, capabilities, and spending. That would be like a sports team biding its time in the locker room, redesigning its uniforms and sketching new plays on the chalkboard while the contest transpires out on the field.

The contest today is the crisis that produced more than 40 multilateral declarations of support and commitment. The playing field right at this moment is Afghanistan, whether for military missions dealing with the residual Al Qaida and Taliban threat, participation in the International Security Assistance Force, training for Afghan security forces, or support to humanitarian operations. There may well be other geographic venues as this campaign pursues global terrorist operatives who may be in hiding or on the run.

What I am saying is that instead of lamenting military disparities in the alliance, and drawing negative contrasts between American policy pronouncements and those of other governments, we need to seize upon, and build on, the overwhelming commonality of interest we all have in prevailing against these threats.

That means acknowledging the challenge posed by sophisticated global terrorism and potential weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threats, and putting the "horse" of national political commitment in front of the 'cart' of investment in military capabilities. The U.S. didn't have a Homeland Security office on September 11; we had not perfected or even tried joint unconventional warfare operations in any recent combat engagement before going into Afghanistan last fall. But we went anyway, because the nation was committed to the mission.

And that is my message to America's allies in Europe. Make the political commitment to acknowledge the threat and to face it. Identify the missions that your militaries have a reasonable expectation of being able to execute – be they combat, peacekeeping or humanitarian. And let that be the stimulus to your political debates over defense spending and modernization priorities. Some, like the U.K., have clearly made these calculations and commitments. Others have not.

The foundation of our new strategic partnership is political, not military. It is the moral certainty among leaders and citizens alike that our futures and our fates are bound together, and it is the commitment that we will proceed as partners. I hope this message will find favor at a moment in history when the path toward a more stable and secure world is right beneath our feet.

Thank you.

[End]