

NATO's Past, Present and Future Role in Maintaining Peace and Security

KEYNOTE SPEECH HELD BY DR. KARL A. LAMERS, MDB AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE "NATO – A FACTOR OF PEACE AND DEMOCRACY FOR 60 YEARS" IN BAKU/AZERBAIJAN ON MARCH 9, 2010

Mr. President Akber,
Ms. Plate,
Your Excellency Ambassador Ureche,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A.

Thank you very much for the invitation to this very interesting conference. I am glad to be here in Baku. This is my first visit to Azerbaijan and I have to admit that I was very curious about what would await me in this country. After being here for two days now, I must acknowledge that this country and Baku as its capital has all my expectations.

Baku is a wonderful city with many historical buildings and a fortress. In 2006, the Inner City of Baku with the Palace of the Shirvanshans and Maiden Tower became the first location in Azerbaijan classified as a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO. And of course I should not forget the friendliness and hospitality of the people. I am very much looking forward to discover many more lovely things here in Azerbaijan.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Azerbaijan Atlantic Cooperation Association and the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation for their invitation to this wonderful city, for their warm kindness and of course for their very smooth organisation. Thank you very much for that! I am sure that we

will have a fruitful and interesting conference here in Baku.

As President of the Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA), I especially want to thank my friends from the Azerbaijan Atlantic Cooperation Association and in particular its President Sulhaddin Akber and its Secretary General and Coordinator of this conference, Elhan Mehtiyev, for your convincing engagement and your work for the values of our Atlantic Community.

I thank Ms. Katja Christina Plate for organising this conference as well as the coordinator Nurlana Jalil. Thank you very much for that!

I see several friends from our huge Atlantic Community. I see Theodosios Georgiou, the President of the Greek Association for the Atlantic and European Cooperation. I see His Excellency Ambassador Omer Akbel, President of the Turkish Atlantic Council and I see Fabrizio Lucioli, the Secretary General of the Italian Atlantic Committee. Good to see you here in Baku.

B.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

"The future belongs to those who give the next generation reason for hope."

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I would like to put this sentence by the French philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Char-din at the beginning of my statement.

One possibility doing what he said is to work on a world in which we can all live together in Peace and Freedom. That is our task! This needs to be the aim of all our efforts!

I am deeply convinced that no challenge is too huge for people who stand together.

"Peace has to be founded, it does not come by itself", as stated by Immanuel Kant, the German Philosopher. To achieve this, we need cooperation.

With other words: Cooperation is no option – it is the only alternative.

I. NATO's Past

Ladies and Gentlemen,

"NATO – A Factor of Peace and Democracy for 60 Years" is the topic of today's conference. 60 years of NATO – that means in my opinion sixty years of successful activity and action for peace and security in the world! Six decades are a very impressive age for an Alliance consisting of sovereign nation states. And even more for an Alliance consisting of sovereign nation states from two continents.

As a politician dealing with security and defense issues, people ask me once in a while if the Alliance is still necessary and reasonable after the end of the Cold War. Last month, I participated at the Munich Security Conference – one of the most important conferences in the world dealing with security issues. One of the main topics was NATO, its raison d'être and ongoing reforms.

At this conference, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, participated as well. He held an impressive keynote speech.

So: Is NATO necessary?

In my opinion, there is only one answer to this question: NATO was necessary when it was founded, it has become more and more important during the last six decades and it will be essential for security and peace in the future as well.

Today, NATO is the most highly legitimated and only efficient security alliance in the world. It is bigger, more flexible and more cross-linked than ever before.

In this context I always like to quote former NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer who once described NATO as a "lusty old lady".

With due respect for the former Secretary General, but I have to disagree with him. Lusty is fine; lady is fine; but old? NATO is fresh, powerful and full of energy. And: A lady turning 60 has a long life experience and is able to cope with crisis situations without losing its identity. This is exactly what we need facing today's global challenges.

Nevertheless, we have to think about how NATO has to be transformed being able to face the challenges of the 21st century and being prepared for a successful future.

1. NATO 1949 – 1989 (First Stage)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

when the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in 1949, already at that time there were many who predicted NATO's rapid demise. The United States – mindful of George Washington's warnings about "entangling alliances" – hesitated right up to the last minute. They were cautious about extending military security guarantees. All these skeptics were proven wrong.

The Cold War – the threat from the other side of the Iron Curtain – enforced the 12 founding members from Western Europe as well as Canada and the United States to work closely together in military matters – much beyond their original agenda. Furthermore, NATO emerged from a purely military partnership of convenience to an all

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inclusive security community. The Alliance not only ensured stability and security for Europe. It guaranteed peace on the continent and helped to generate and safeguard freedom, democracy and prosperity on a scale which Europe had never experienced before.

2. NATO from 1989-2001 (Second Stage)

The fall of the Berlin Wall 1989 and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact in 1991 signified the end of this post-war era. A period of upheaval and change began. Also the Alliance had to cope with new challenges.

Nevertheless, NATO, as the world's only functioning collective security system, remained an area of stability. The Alliance turned out to be a political instrument for shaping Europe as a democratic area of security. NATO took on responsibility for stability and security beyond its territory, with the aim of preserving peace.

Political milestones in this development are:

the development of cooperation in partnership with the former opponents in Middle and Eastern Europe,

the establishment of the Mediterranean Dialogue (1994),

the Partnership for Peace Program in 1994,

and the creation of a Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (1997).

Militarily, NATO demonstrated its new role in Europe in the „peacekeeping“-operations on the Balkans from 1995 onward. Due to the missions in Bosnia and in Kosovo, NATO paved the way for the pacification of this region and its return to Europe.

II. NATO's Present and Future

1. New Security Threats

The third and current stage of NATO began with the terrible terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. These attacks showed, that security policy has transcended the na-

tional and regional dimensions. Everybody remembers this horrible attacks. I remember exactly when the first airplane crashed into the first tower at 8:46 at US time and the other airplane into the second tower at 9:03. We will never forget these pictures.

Who could ever imagine that war could be brought to the world from terror camps in Afghanistan? I still remember a speech of the American President John F. Kennedy – my great idol – during his visit to Germany in June 1963. He then said that an attack against Berlin, Cologne or any other city in Germany is an attack against any American city. He could not imagine that his country would become the target of such an attack.

The attack from September 11 was an attack against all of us!

A new chapter of world policy began with that attacks. Instead of a new era of freedom and peace, in the 21st century we have to face a serious number of challenges and dangers. Dangers that do not stop at the border of a country, dangers that have swept across the world.

Like:

- Terrorism
- Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
- Failed States
- Migration flows resulting from war and violence
- Climate Change
- Water Scarcity
- Cyberwar
- the cutting off of Energy Supplies.

2. Terrorism

Especially the first point, the fight against Terrorism, proves NATO's power. The terrorist attacks of September 11 prompted NATO to invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty for the first time in history. This was an unprecedented situation for every member state of NATO. The terrorists

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trained in camps in Afghanistan. This was the starting point of terrorism.

This was why the international community had no other choice than removing the Taliban from power in Afghanistan. And this is: Why "failure is no option."

At the end of January, the Conference on Afghanistan in London tried to find new answers to the question of how to lead the Afghan-mission to success. Four weeks ago, I had the chance meeting Hamid Karzai, the President of Afghanistan, in Berlin. He is convinced, that we have already achieved much. Nevertheless, many approaches have not been good enough.

It is important and essential to develop a new strategy.

We must do more to lead this mission to success – with a comprehensive approach – military power combined with civilian reconstruction – or let me say: Counterinsurgency. This involves nothing less than the repression of the influence of the Taliban, the recoument of security and trust.

To be successful: We must give the people in Afghanistan a new perspective for their life. A perspective for a better future, for the education of their children, for a better health system. Economic development, good governance. That is what we need in Afghanistan.

We need to enable the Afghans to take over responsibility for themselves in the foreseeable future. With a focus on the increased training of the Afghan National Army and the police.

What we need is a self-sustaining security and stability.

President Karzai speaks about 2014 in this context.

It is in our common interest to avoid that terrorism will be exported from Afghanistan to the world once again. This is in the interest of all NATO members. This is in the in-

terest of Azerbaijan. This is in the interest of the whole free world.

3. Pakistan

I think we are all aware that no strategy for Afghanistan can succeed without Pakistan. Recent developments show, that Pakistan is coming more and more into the focus of Taliban attacks. On the one hand we have to worry about Pakistan as a retreat, and on the other hand, we have to worry about the security of the country and the region as a whole.

We have to ask ourselves:

Who has real power in this country?

The government? The army and ISI – the intelligence service?

We need to strengthen our efforts to cooperate with the Pakistani government and the people. We need to help them stabilize their country. We need to promote economic development. That is in our interest.

4. New Strategic Concept

Ladies and Gentlemen,

let me now turn to a very important point for the future of NATO.

All of these new security challenges demand new approaches!

NATO's future will depend significantly on how the Alliance is able to deal with these new potential threats. At the Anniversary Summit of NATO on April 4, 2009, the Heads of State and Government agreed that a New Strategic Concept should be developed until the next Summit at the end of 2010 in Portugal.

10 years after NATO has given itself a Strategic Concept in Washington 1999, it is at the time to reflect the global developments and changes of the last century in a New Strategic Concept. At the same time, it is important to integrate all those countries

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into a Strategic Concept which became NATO members after 1999.

In my opinion, the New Strategic Concept has to contain the following important items being able to prepare NATO for a successful future:

A. NATO'S ROLE AND TASKS

The New Strategic Concept will create a new strategic consensus and define the course of NATO for the next 10 to 15 years. It is therefore important to explain what NATO stands for. We have to define NATO's role and tasks. Only if we do that, we have a chance to transport the idea of NATO to the public and especially to the youth.

In my opinion it is of the utmost importance to raise awareness about the need of NATO's operations in our countries, as governments need the support of their publics to be able to contribute substantially to NATO's missions. We have to speak about this openly – in our parliaments, in the public.

B. ARTICLE 5 OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY

The commitment of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty has to remain the core purpose of NATO. There is no doubt. The revision of the Strategic Concept must not lead to a softening of the seriousness and credibility of that article. Nevertheless we have to satisfy ourselves that we all mean the same talking about Article 5.

C. ARTICLE 4 OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

I think about evolving security threats like cyber attacks, the cutting-off of energy supplies or climate change. In Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty it says:

The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened.

We have to think about how to deal with these new threats in the framework of the Washington Treaty.

D. NUCLEAR QUESTIONS

During the last years, we have witnessed a nuclear renaissance. Nuclear questions and arms control have therefore to make their way back into NATO's strategic considerations. We need new initiatives of arms control and disarmament. We need to think about how to react to the recent nuclear threats coming from Iran and North Korea for example. President Obama's goal of a world without nuclear weapons – a global zero – is a dream, we all share. We have to work on reaching this goal. But: We must not endanger ourselves.

E. (GLOBAL) PARTNERSHIPS

In the 21st century, borders have lost their separating character. If we want to ensure our security, we have to leave borders behind us. In this context, NATO needs to think about how to work together more closely with other countries which share our common values – I think about Australia, Japan, South Korea or New Zealand. And NATO also needs to think about how to work closer together with countries which are important in facing global challenges together. In the time of globalization, we have to think about how global NATO might become. At the moment, 43 countries from all over the world are contributing troops to Afghanistan (including Azerbaijan). Thank you for this.

This approach needs to be extended and supplemented. The participant list of the Munich Security Conference in February has already showed, in which direction such partnerships could lead. I was in Japan and India only recently. We talked about possible forms of cooperation with NATO. Even in China there is a certain interest in getting more information about the Alliance.

But to make it clear: NATO should neither become a kind of "world police" nor a global security agency.

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F. ENLARGEMENT

On the Anniversary Summit in April 2009, two more countries became member of NATO: Croatia and Albania. Macedonia stands at the door. And NATO has decided on its Summit in Bucharest 2008 that Georgia and the Ukraine will become members in the future as well.

According to Enlargement I want to say: The door must remain open – for those countries which fulfil the conditions. This is policy of NATO and that is my conviction as well.

G. NATO AND RUSSIA

Working on a New Strategic Concept we may not forget the question of how to deal with Russia. In fact, this is one of the most significant questions. Russia is an important country and its relations to NATO have serious implications on other important topics of the Alliance. We need Russia to solve security challenges and crisis in many parts of the world – like Afghanistan, Pakistan or Iran. We need the country for our policy of disarmament. The NATO-Russia Council is the appropriate forum for carrying forward the relationship. Due to that, we have the opportunity talking to each other and not about each other. It should be our aim to bring all topics of special interest on the agenda of the Council.

Nevertheless we clearly have to show Russia the red lines it is not allowed to cross. You know what I mean! That is a question of our credibility!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

all those challenges and questions being on the agenda of NATO can be answered in the best way possible if we work together closely.

III. ATA

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As President of the Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA), I am convinced that ATA as well

as our national ATA-Chapters can and must play an important role in supporting NATO while doing so.

Trust and confidence and common values are some of the characteristics of the Atlantic Treaty Association, of our Atlantic Councils all over the world.

For more than 50 years – since 1954 – ATA has strengthened reliable transatlantic relations and it has helped to communicate about what NATO is and what it does.

This last point is in my opinion one of the most important challenges. In this volatile world, it has become much harder for our publics to understand what the Alliance is all about. We need to communicate what NATO does and what it stands for. We need young people – active, clever and open minded – to create a future for NATO and transatlantic relations. It wants to enhance communication about what NATO is today. And above all we want to engage young people in this process.

During the last General Assembly of the Atlantic Treaty Association in Kiev in October I made the proposal of launching a so called "NATO Day" once a year in every NATO member state. They all unanimously agreed. This day should take place in schools and universities where politicians and NATO-staff inform about the organisation. I am sure that due to a personal discussion many prejudices will be discouraged and interest be awakened. We need to unite and reenergise the activities of all national ATA Chapters. I am convinced that we will be a big step closer reaching this goal after this conference.

Dear members of the Azerbaijan Atlantic Cooperation Association. Thank you very much for your convincing engagement and your work for the values of our Atlantic Community!

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C. CONCLUSION

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The vision of a world in peace, freedom and security, this is the vision of the North Atlantic Treaty Association, this is the vision of ATA, this is the vision of all of us.

But: In our world today, security is not a natural state of affairs. Security has to be worked for. And it has to be maintained. More than ever, this requires organized international cooperation. And it requires strong and robust institutions.

Already a saying proves:

Mountains and valleys will not come together, but humans do. Because in today's globalized world, we all need each other. By working closely together, we have much to gain.

I wish us now fruitful discussions and a successful day.

Thank you very much!