

## **Is NATO up to the Challenge?**

**by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Since 11 September, our world has been rendered unfamiliar. The mundane has become dangerous. Who can ever look up again at an airliner or go to work in a high-rise office building without, at the back of their minds, recalling the horrific images of the World Trade Centre?

Amidst these unfamiliar images and emotions, however, there have been some reassuring beacons of stability and security. The heroic exploits of rescue workers in New York and Washington confirm our faith in what is best about human nature. And the extraordinary outpourings of outrage, grief and sympathy across the international community remind us of the very real advantages of today's global village, joined together to confront and to defeat terrorism on a world-wide basis. NATO has been one of the main beacons of stability and security. The response of NATO governments to the events of 11 September demonstrated that the commitments on which the Alliance has been based for 52 years are tangible and real. NATO's historic decision to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty made that very clear. It underlined categorically the fundamental link between two Continents and between 19 nations.

What was important about this step is not only that it happened. It was equally important that it happened so swiftly. For decades, analysts and pundits had been arguing about the true meaning and value of Article 5: whether it would suffice to drag a reluctant US into a European war, or indeed whether it had lost its meaning altogether with the end of the Soviet threat.

It took only some six hours, on Wednesday, 12 September, for the North Atlantic Council to put an end to these debates. The Article 5 commitment is alive and well; and it applies to US soil just as it applies to Europe. This should leave no room for doubts or second-guessing. We stand together. Europe and North America are one single security space.

It is too early to say what the decision on Article 5 will mean in practical terms for the immediate future. The US response has, rightly, been measured. The Administration has not yet confirmed formally that the attacks were mounted from abroad; or decided what kind of support it will request from Allies. Nor do I want to speculate on these issues, for reasons I am sure you will understand. So today, therefore, I would like to concentrate on the long term impact of these attacks and their follow up.

First, however, I would like to address a question I am being faced with at almost every press conference I undertake: can NATO cope with this new challenge? There are subtexts to this overarching question. Can an Alliance which is involved in three simultaneous crisis management operations in the Balkans focus more strongly on terrorism? Can an Alliance which features a long list of membership applicants, which has to invest so much energy into its relations with Russia, and into its many other partnerships -- can such an Alliance tackle yet another challenge? Will the NATO Allies, who are already struggling with defence modernisation, find the extra money required to improve our means of protection -- and our means of response?

The answer to these questions can only be an unequivocal "Yes". NATO has the experience, the processes and procedures, and the people to do all of these things, and do them well. And that's a very good thing, because for the moment, NATO is the best - indeed the only - game in town. The European Security and Defence Policy is still in its early stages. And the structures and functions of the UN and OSCE are different and certainly do not mirror those of NATO which is unique in its composition, strength and cohesion.

Let me also squash at birth a new myth that seems to be making the rounds: that the attacks on New York and Washington have somehow invalidated NATO's established agenda. The myth that suggests that what we are doing in the Balkans is peanuts compared to the far more pressing job of hunting terrorists elsewhere in the world. The myth that has it that NATO enlargement is now off the agenda, because we need to focus on more urgent issues.

I want to be very clear. It is true that NATO is a small organisation, with only 2-300 core staff at NATO HQ to run a demanding and growing agenda. It is also true that it may need to prioritise some of our activities if some Allies become involved in major military operations. But the events of September 11 have not invalidated

NATO's pre-September agenda. If anything, they have reinforced the logic of that agenda. They have reinforced the logic of keeping the peace in the Balkans -- because building stable, multi-ethnic states are our best insurance against terrorism emerging in the first place. They have reinforced the logic of the Defence Capabilities Initiative, which is designed to equip our forces for today's diverse and unpredictable threats.

They have also reinforced the logic of NATO enlargement -- because the broad coalitions we need to respond make the notion of "ins" and "outs" ever less valid. And they have increased the value of our Partnerships -- because the ties we have built to Russia, and even to faraway places like Central Asia, can turn out to be crucially important in an emergency.

So we will not let the terrorist attacks of last month derail our agenda. We will have to broaden our agenda, adapt it, modify it, yes -- but we will not replace it with something completely different. Because the core of what we do made sense before 11 September and continues to make sense after 11 September.

But changes will be needed. What follows are my very provisional personal ideas. I should warn you that some of them may stray well beyond official NATO policy at the moment. But part of my job is to help keep NATO focused on the hurdles ahead, not the ones we have already cleared. And some are not for NATO at all but for other international organisations.

First, we must make sure the culprits pay a price. By definition, suicide terrorists cannot be deterred. But others can. Because behind the terrorist foot soldiers there are the terrorist colonels and generals -- and they have no inclination to die. These people were playing the stock market only hours before the attack. They are not suicidal maniacs. They have spent years to build up elaborate networks. And it is these networks the international community must go after. We must hit them where it hurts, where we can trace the flow of money, and where we can disrupt their profitable activities. That is why President Bush's decision to freeze bank accounts as the first US response made eminent sense, and why the EU followed suit.

Second, we must continue to develop international law. A year ago, hardly anyone believed that Milosevic would end up in The Hague. But he did. Equally important, he was indicted when he was still President of Yugoslavia. This indictment destabilised him at a key moment in the military campaign. In retrospect, it has changed much more than we thought at the time. As a result, elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia, many people refrain from illegal acts because they know they are under scrutiny -- and because they know they would not go unpunished. We hold an instrument in our hands here that is far more valuable than it may sometimes appear.

Third, we need to tie more systematically together some of the things we are already doing. NATO may not be the lead organisation in combating global terrorism. But we have not yet exhausted the potential for cooperation with our Partners against this menace. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council has much to offer in this respect. Immediately after the events of September, the EAPC issued a strong statement of condemnation -- the first of its kind. 46 nations rallied behind a single purpose. This was a remarkable development in itself. But there is also a practical dimension here. The EAPC might focus more specifically on issues that relate to combating terrorism. Effective border control, for example, is a problem particularly for some of our Central Asian Partners. If we could use the EAPC to address such issues more thoroughly, we would make life for terrorists far more difficult.

Fourth, we need to move the NATO-Russia relationship forward. There is a window of opportunity here that we cannot afford to miss. In Russian eyes, Article 5 has been the quintessential demonstration of NATO's anti-Russian orientation. Now we have invoked Article 5 -- but in an entirely different context, a context Russia can understand. We must build on this momentum and eradicate the remaining Cold War stereotypes, on both sides.

Fifth, we need to maintain our focus on non-proliferation and missile defence. Critics will argue that the events of last month proved that both are simply superfluous. They are wrong. One of the reasons the terrorists resorted to such unconventional tactics on 11 September was that non-proliferation activities have frustrated their efforts and those of rogue states to acquire and use more familiar weapons of mass destruction. We must therefore redouble our efforts in this respect. But we cannot be certain of 100% success. That is why the subject of missile defence - whether short or long range - is here to stay. And that we need to keep abreast of the developments, including through continuing consultations among Allies, through continuing our work on proliferation in our WMD Centre, and through continuing our cooperation on tactical missile defence.

Sixth, we need to enhance technological safeguards. The technologies are available. We have today the possibility to "finger print" weapons, to trace them back to their origins, even to the plant where they were manufactured.

Seventh, we should develop a more holistic approach to internal and external security. Terrorists blur the line between criminal and combatant. That is why we need much closer interaction between our military and civilian security agencies. I am not talking about garrison states, about militarising our societies. That would be too high a price to pay. But since I come from a family of police officers, I would suggest that closer cooperation of our internal and external security agencies can be achieved in ways that do not compromise the open nature of our societies.

Eighth, we need to move ahead with a European Security and Defence Policy. The events of September 11 will inevitably lead to a new discussion about the United States' global role. Isolationists will use the events to argue their case for a reduction of the United States' worldwide commitments. They will argue that attacks of this kind are the result of our commitment. Their arguments will not carry the day. But Europeans can surely expect a tougher US stance on transatlantic burden sharing. If that happens -- if the US Congress asks the Europeans "what have you done for me lately?" -- we should be ready to give a decent answer. Political solidarity is only part of the answer. The strong European military presence in the Balkans is also only part of the answer. Ultimately, the answer must be far more comprehensive. It must include a new European willingness to develop serious crisis management capabilities, with new military hardware. And that means new money, wisely spent. In short, the transatlantic aspects of building an ESDP will be highlighted even more strongly in future.

Finally, we must look at the issue of financial implications/resources which arise from these new challenges and tasks. If we want to do a proper job in the fight against terrorism, we need the right tools. It is not possible to have security and defence on the cheap and at the same time request more measures, more protection against new threats. For NATO, the zero real growth "mantra" which many liked to apply in security and defence is an insufficient and, maybe, irresponsible answer to the security needs of the 21st Century.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are all on new and unfamiliar territory. We know that the struggle against terrorism will be difficult and prolonged. We accept that our political determination will be tested. And we have sensed already that the tools of this struggle will be many and complex.

But there are historical precedents that should encourage us at what may be the beginning of a long road. The international community has in the past united against behaviour that it held to be unacceptable. In the 19th Century, the growing international consensus against slavery was based on a similar moral revulsion and was backed by a similarly diverse range of political, economic and military measures as we are envisaging in our fight against terrorism today. The difference was that it took most of the century to achieve the international coalition against slavery that the attacks on the United States created in a matter of hours or days. It is indeed a global coalition, from Vancouver to Vladivostok and from Reykjavik to Islamabad. There is a new awareness that we are confronted with a threat that concerns us all. And from that awareness springs a new momentum of cooperation -- a cooperation that I am certain will eventually lead to dealing terrorism a deadly blow in the 21st century, just as slavery was overcome in the 19th.

Thank You.