

CHRONO CENTRAL
BUREAU I.124
INTER/BRUXL.
1-SPEN 1-SPFR

OCT 94 8935
920606

N A T O

O T A N

SERVICE DE PRESSE

PRESS SERVICE

NATO/OTAN, 1110 Brussels/Bruxelles • Tel.: 728 41 11 - Telex: 25-599
Telefax/Télécopieurs: 728 50 57 - 728 50 58

(REVISED VERSION)

EMBARGO: CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY EXPECTED
ABOUT 10:00 LOCAL TIME, FRIDAY, 28 OCTOBER 1994

ADDRESS BY WILLY CLAES
SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO

AT

THE 40TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE ATLANTIC TREATY ASSOCIATION
THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS

FRIDAY, 28TH OCTOBER 1994

EMBARGO: CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY EXPECTED
ABOUT 10:00 LOCAL TIME, FRIDAY, 28 OCTOBER 1994

THE 40TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE ATLANTIC TREATY ASSOCIATION
THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS

ADDRESS BY WILLY CLAES
SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO
FRIDAY, 28TH OCTOBER 1994

I am very pleased to be with you at your 40th General Assembly and to deliver my first major address as NATO Secretary General before such a distinguished forum. The Atlantic Treaty Associations have played a vital role in explaining and promoting the Atlantic Alliance in our member countries. The challenge of maintaining public support for NATO is perhaps greater now than at anytime in the history of this Alliance. Thus, I salute your work and encourage you even to re-double your efforts in the years to come.

In the midst of the bewildering changes which have shaken the European security landscape over the past few years, there has been one essential element of stability and continuity with the past, and that is NATO. And yet, while instinctively recognising that the Alliance must be preserved, many of our citizens understandably wonder what is NATO's purpose today now that Russia has become our friend and partner, and there appears to be no obvious threat to Western Europe.

The answer, which I would like to expand upon today, is really quite simple: NATO's purpose remains what it has been from the beginning - to guarantee the security of its members, something which it has done better than any alliance in history, giving Western Europe an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity. But that is not all. Our purpose today is equally to extend these same blessings to the people of Central and Eastern Europe. As I said when I took office two weeks ago, working to build this wider security community I regard as my number one goal and responsibility during my tenure as Secretary General of this Alliance.

I am not a pessimist by nature. I would prefer to call myself a realist. And so as I look ahead to the rest of this decade, I see plenty of reason to hope that we are indeed on the verge of achieving a Europe which is truly whole and free, and at peace with itself. But I also see dangers - the growing threat of weapons of mass destruction; the situation across the Mediterranean; the still fragile experiment in democracy to our east; the persistence of conflict in the Balkans; and even the danger that within our midst the ties of solidarity that bind the members of this Alliance could weaken, and our commitment to maintaining and modernising our defence forces falter.

And so I am firmly convinced that we need NATO, both to consolidate what we have achieved over the past forty-five years, and to project

stability in the wider Europe and undertake the range of post-Cold War missions which we have recently assumed. I expect the final years of this decade to be very demanding ones for NATO, particularly as we move to implement the various initiatives launched by the Summit in January.

Today, I would like briefly to describe the challenges facing the Alliance as I see them.

First and foremost, our task over the next few years is to ensure that the transatlantic link between Europe and North America continues to flourish. Its strength had been questioned by some, particularly last year during the GATT negotiations. But at the Summit, NATO leaders described the transatlantic link as an expression of a shared destiny. I agree, and have always agreed, with that idea. I am a European and an Atlanticist. I see the transatlantic link as basic to our hopes of further developing the construction of Europe.

But the need for strong transatlantic ties is not based on sentiment alone. Rather, North Americans and Europeans have strategic interests as well as democratic values in common, and NATO is the only forum enabling them to consult and develop common views and approaches to security challenges, not only in Europe, but indeed on a global scale as well. For example, without NATO, we would have lacked the solidarity and even the mechanisms which allowed the United States and its NATO partners to cooperate effectively in the Gulf War and in more recent crisis situations elsewhere in the world.

But the transatlantic link is vital to others besides Western Europeans. It is also the expressed wish of the new democracies to our East that the United States and Canada continue their direct involvement in the security of Europe. They see in the transatlantic link an irreplaceable pledge of security and stability for Europe as a whole and for themselves in particular.

This brings me to what I consider to be NATO's second major challenge: working with our Central and East European partners to develop a cooperative approach to security and indeed a widening of the Western security community.

Achieving this goal above all means that we must exploit the potential inherent in the Partnership for Peace to the fullest. Indeed, the Partnership is our premier instrument for building closer relationships between Allies and the new democracies. This initiative, rightly so, was welcomed as a major step in the right direction by our friends in Central and Eastern Europe when it was launched last January. So far 23 Partner countries have joined and we are now developing individual work programmes with them to allow each country to draw closer to the Alliance at a pace and in areas of its own choosing.

No one should underestimate the importance of Partnership for Peace. Through it we seek to build the familiarity, trust and habits of cooperation which the Allies have developed among themselves for many decades. Much of the cooperation will be in the military sphere. Countries will be nominating forces and assets which they will contribute to the Partnership.

Together, we will develop common ideas and approaches for peacekeeping and humanitarian support operations to which those forces may be assigned, thereby greatly increasing the pool of trained and NATO-compatible assets which we may draw upon in future Bosnia-type contingencies. Thus, it is clear that PfP is a two-way street, with the Alliance deriving as much benefit as our partners. And we are moving quickly: already, three exercises have taken place this fall, including one here this week in The Netherlands which I had the pleasure to witness yesterday.

But there is more to Partnership for Peace than military exercises. As it develops, PfP will bind Allies and Partners in a closer pattern of activity covering a very wide range of security-related matters. For instance, we aim to provide our experience and expertise to the new democracies in creating democratically organised and politically accountable Ministries of Defence and military establishments. We also aim to introduce a planning and review process based on the force planning system that has played a major part in enhancing Alliance solidarity and underpinning our integrated military structure. It will, of course, take time to develop PfP; and let me also stress here that it will also take money. But this will be a very well spent investment with a major pay-off down the road for both Allies and partners alike.

One point I should make clear. Partnership for Peace is not a substitute for NATO membership. Nor was it designed to delay the moment when the Alliance should take on new members. At the January Summit, the Allies made clear they expect and would welcome enlargement. Our next task is to begin to examine internally the way ahead, so that we can prepare the Alliance to accept new members in a way which enhances European security. But in the meantime, countries will have time to prepare themselves for the major obligations which Alliance membership entails. Partnership for Peace is the ideal vehicle for them to do so.

I wish also, as Secretary General, to develop very close relationships of trust and mutual benefit between NATO and Russia. The dramatic progress we have already made in this respect is one of the great legacies of my predecessor, the late Manfred Wörner. When NATO formally extended the hand of friendship to Russia in 1990, it was Manfred Wörner who travelled to Moscow to convey this message with his customary vigour and commitment. He created a very solid foundation for our future relationship. And he dreamed that a strategic partnership between NATO and Russia would become the cornerstone of a new European security architecture.

Why is cooperation between NATO and Russia so important? Because we cannot possibly achieve our vision of a stable and peaceful Europe if there is a climate of suspicion and misunderstanding between us, or if we do not create a Europe free from fear as well as free from war. In other words, security in the new Europe has to be indivisible; the price of security for some cannot be insecurity for others. Thus, a partnership between Russia and the Alliance -- with each respecting the sovereignty of the other, and without any *droit de regard* -- is an important companion to the evolutionary expansion of NATO as we seek to bolster the security of Europe as a whole.

I am pleased to say that the Alliance and Russia are well on the road to achieving such a relationship. At the signing ceremony of Russia's entry into the Partnership for Peace in June, we agreed to set in train the development of a far-reaching dialogue and cooperation between NATO and Russia, including beyond the PfP framework. Our current task is to define and develop with our Russian friends the content of this dialogue and partnership, and I am confident of success.

Partnership for Peace is an example of what NATO is doing to create more friendly relations between countries in Europe. Its effects will be felt over time in greater trust, fewer misunderstandings and fewer still occasions for conflict. But NATO also has to be ready to deal with crises which happen when trust breaks down and conflict breaks out.

NATO is currently playing, as you know, an important role in Bosnia. For the first time in its history, NATO is acting outside its geographic area. For the first time in its history, NATO forces have engaged in combat. And we have been effective, especially when we forced compliance with our ultimatums on Sarajevo and Gorazde earlier this year. Even more effective has been the enforcement of the embargo at sea, which surely contributed to Mr. Milosevic's decision to accept the latest peace plan, and to isolate the Bosnian Serbs.

I should add, however, that we are not acting independently in Bosnia. We are doing so in support of the United Nations both to assist their humanitarian mission and to underpin efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement. Basically, our cooperation with the United Nations has gone smoothly. There have been inevitable ups and downs as two very different international organisations attempt to work together for the first time in their history. But we are united in a desire to achieve a peaceful settlement in former Yugoslavia, and we are laying the groundwork for perhaps more fruitful cooperation in the future.

However, I should like to clarify that NATO is not a sub-contractor to the United Nations. We are a sovereign organisation and we have a duty to discuss the conditions for our support, which is why a NATO team has again visited UN headquarters in New York this week to urge a more effective use of our air power. In the final analysis, NATO's credibility is our most valuable asset. It is the fruit of four decades of effort and vigilance during the Cold War, and it remains essential to the preservation of peace in the wider Europe. Therefore, we cannot - and we will not - allow the credibility of this Alliance to be squandered.

So far, I have spoken about NATO. Let me briefly turn to the Alliance's relationship with the Western European Union. There remain unnecessary doubts about this relationship. No one should have any doubts that NATO is, and will remain, the guarantor of its members' security. Its collective defence capabilities are unique, and without NATO both Europeans and North Americans would be less secure. All NATO's sixteen members agree on this without a shade of a doubt. Therefore, I must admit to some irritation

when the Western European Union is portrayed as a European rival to NATO. It is not. The WEU is the European pillar of NATO and all European members of NATO, including Iceland, Norway and Turkey, are represented in it in one way or another. I attended meetings of NATO and the WEU. The principles of the relationship are clear: transparency, complementarity and no duplication of military structures. We have developed close relations and our Councils meet regularly together. All the elements are in place for the fruitful, mutually reinforcing relationship we all want to have. We need to go forward and it is my intention as NATO's Secretary General to develop fully the capabilities of this relationship.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, it is clear that we are facing an ambitious agenda. NATO is changing more profoundly, perhaps, than any other organisation in the world. We have moved out of area in former Yugoslavia; we are increasing our focus on the Mediterranean; and we are beginning to confront a range of potential new tasks and missions in the fields of peacekeeping, crisis management, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. All of this while we continue to fulfil our traditional mission of defending our members' security, and as we seek now to extend the blessings of security eastwards.

Ironically, we are forced by economic realities to do more today with less in the way of resources. It is the same burden you yourselves are facing in the Atlantic Treaty Association. You, too, must gear your efforts to the east, even as you continue your vital work among our member nations. But I am confident that the ATA will be able to adapt to these new challenges, just as I am supremely confident in the future of this Alliance.