



**WASHINGTON SUMMIT**  
**STATEMENT BY DR. JAVIER SOLANA,**  
**SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO**  
**24 APRIL**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this Summit our primary focus has been on the Kosovo crisis. Yesterday you saw the clear signal of our resolve and determination to continue our air strategy until our objectives are met.

This morning we have turned our attention to the future of the Alliance.

To equip the Alliance to be ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have today taken a number of key decisions. First we have approved:

- A New Strategic Concept for NATO. It will provide a roadmap to help us navigate through the challenges that await us in the next half-century. It also marks the transition from an Alliance concerned mainly with collective defence to one which will be a guarantee of security in Europe and an upholder of democratic values both within and beyond our borders. The updated concept:
  - reaffirms our commitment to collective defense and the transatlantic link;
  - But at the same time gives our Alliance a key role to play in handling crisis situations beyond its borders; our non-Article 5 peace support operations will be on an appropriate legal basis.
  - Enlargement remains a priority for the Alliance. NATO is committed to keeping its door open. The three new members that we have celebrated here in Washington will not be the last.
  - Today, the Alliance has adopted a membership action plan. It will help all the nine candidate countries, and others in the future, to prepare more actively to meet the requirements for NATO membership.
  - Another strong message from our meeting today is our desire to strengthen our partnership with Russia. It is in the interests of both NATO and Russia. We want Russia to be our partner in finding solutions to the regional crises in the Euro-Atlantic area.
  - We have also made today the Partnership for Peace and our Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council more operational. They foster the habits of cooperation between NATO and 24 nations that are essential to build a stable, integrated security system in Europe. Tomorrow we will discuss these enhancements with our Partners in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council at Summit level.
- Our discussion of the European Security and Defense Identity showed the great progress made by the Alliance to build within NATO a strong European security pillar based on the decisions we took in Berlin in 1996. We have now completed this work and have created arrangements that will allow the European Allies to carry out their own operations drawing on NATO's assets and capabilities. We need to carry this work further but let me stress: The European Security and Defence Identity will be rooted in the Alliance. It will strengthen the transatlantic relationship.
- Weapons of Mass Destruction continue to pose one of the greatest threats to the modern world. The Alliance cannot ignore this peril to Allied populations, territory, and forces. The Summit has launched an initiative which will lead to more active cooperation among Allies on Weapons of Mass Destruction issues and how to respond to them.

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Today we also endorsed:

- A Defense Capabilities Initiative. It is an essential area of work which will ensure the Alliance maintains a credible military capability. The Initiative will help Alliance military forces become more mobile, interoperable, sustainable and better able to engage in the full spectrum of NATO's future operations with great effectiveness.
- Finally, the future of southeastern Europe has been a key topic of this Summit. We want this region to be able to put the instabilities and the tragedies of the past behind it and to join the European mainstream. We will develop initiatives in three areas – security, economics and democracy–building - that will be crucial to the integration of this region. Many other institutions will be involved but NATO will have its part to play. Tomorrow morning we will meet with the seven neighbouring countries of Yugoslavia to discuss our ideas.