

**6th Euro-Atlantic Security Forum  
“NATO post ISAF Mission:  
Collective Defense or Operations,  
Partners and Transitions”  
May 10, 2013, Krakow, Poland**

*Panel 1 - Collective Defense or Expeditionary Missions?*

Minister Koziej, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to join this distinguished gathering to discuss the security of Poland, the United States, and our NATO allies beyond the conclusion of combat operations in Afghanistan in 2014.

After 12 years of war in Afghanistan – the longest war in American history – it’s easy to understand why many these days on both sides of the Atlantic would prefer to avoid any talk of new NATO expeditionary missions anytime soon, and to return to the so-called “core mission” of collective defense. But with all due respect to the title of this panel, I don’t see the concepts of collective defense and expeditionary missions as mutually exclusive, but rather as integral parts of one continuum.

It is true that for most of NATO’s history, the Alliance avoided deployments beyond its borders. During the Cold War, We understood well that Alliance resources were needed here in Europe to provide deterrence against the threat of Soviet and Warsaw Pact attack. We, and our publics, understood the existential risk of a failure to deter.

So for our first forty years, NATO focused exclusively on collective defense to deter a single adversary, and we dared not risk conducting NATO missions outside our own territories lest we weaken our conventional deterrence or inadvertently appear provocative.

But almost immediately after the end of the Cold War, NATO began to engage farther afield. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the threat to NATO transformed from a single superpower that aimed nuclear missiles at us to the more amorphous and more multipolar threats like piracy, terrorism, genocide, natural disasters and cyber attacks. And so NATO too had to transform. We began simply in 1990 by providing reassurance to Turkey against Saddam Hussein’s military adventurism. By 1992, we branched out beyond the Alliance to conduct humanitarian missions in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States. In the following year, we began our involvement in Balkan operations designed to protect civilians from genocidal aggression. We moved from active combat to stability operations in the 1990’s, with an evolution from IFOR to SFOR in Bosnia, and to the still important KFOR in Kosovo. Setting aside the persuasive moral and legal arguments for our action in the former Yugoslavia, we recognized that refugee flows and massive instability in Eastern Europe risked instability for Alliance members.

The second leap forward in NATO operations came with its deployment across the Atlantic in defense of the United States following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, quickly followed by NATO’s deployment to Afghanistan, and a major NATO training mission in Iraq. In swift succession came

counter-terror deployments to the Mediterranean; counter-piracy deployments to the Gulf of Aden; humanitarian assistance missions to the United States following Hurricane Katrina and to Pakistan following an earthquake there; and peacekeeping assistance missions in support of the UN and the African Union in Darfur and Somalia. In 2011, NATO again leapt into the breach to protect civilians at threat in Libya.

All of these missions emerged from not any kind of intent of NATO to conquer the world. Rather, they resulted from NATO's solid strategic calculus that the threats to our common security are different from what they used to be. They are the terrorist planning our destruction from a remote cave; the pirates on the high seas choking off the lifeblood of our economies; threats of missiles from countries outside of Europe; the natural disasters that give rise to disease and extremism; and the computer hackers – government employees or otherwise – who aim to paralyze our national security. And, as the threats to NATO have steadily evolved, old paradigms and plans concerning how best to defend the alliance must also evolve."

That NATO has new threats does not mean all the old threats have all disappeared, nor does it mean we should cease planning for countering such old threats. Quite the contrary – as an alliance we must be prepared to face every threat to our common security. That is why the United States has been eager to work with Poland and our other allies on a wide range of contingency planning and exercises like Steadfast Jazz this fall. In our era of constrained resources, this will also mean introducing much greater discipline and efficiency into our operations, and continuing to develop NATO's partnership with the EU's emerging military capabilities in a sensible, value-added way. But eliminating one end of the spectrum of threats we face is not an option. Or to put it more bluntly, in response to this panel's question of "Collective defense or expeditionary missions?" I would offer a simple, one word answer: Yes.

Every country, including Poland, is right to ask what it stands to gain from this kind of threat response across the spectrum. I would argue that there are substantial benefits that we can all gain from the increased risk.

- First, while all of us, including Poland, have paid a price for participation in Afghanistan, it is NATO's ISAF deployments that build a real combat capability for Alliance troops – including Polish troops – a capability necessary to conduct a successful Article V mission should the need arise.
- Second, expeditionary deployment forces for NATO create a capabilities mix that best matches the 21<sup>st</sup> Century concept of warfare. It is light, mobile and lethal land forces – including increasingly Special Forces – that alongside expeditionary navies and air forces, will win the peace should conflict erupt. Of course, Poland's ability to conduct blue-water naval operations is also critical for Poland's energy security given the significance of LNG to energy diversification
- Third, expeditionary operations test and practice the rapid and massive deployments necessary for Article V defense.
- Fourth, expeditionary operations test and force both domestic (inter-service) and NATO interoperability necessary for Article V defense missions.
- Fifth, expeditionary operations show capability gaps that we, as an Alliance, must close, such as gaps in C4ISR revealed during our 2011 operations in Libya.

- Sixth, as I alluded to earlier, expeditionary operations – especially to countries in turmoil on NATO’s frontier – create strategic stability for Europe.
- And finally, and here, I want to introduce a naked political consideration: Poland’s participation in expeditionary operations gives Poland a seat at NATO’s head table. In order for Poland to take up the mantle of true leadership within NATO, Poland must be prepared to engage, and must actively engage, in the full range of NATO operations, including those outside the territories of member states.

I don’t want to suggest that expeditionary operations are some cost-free solution to military preparedness for the Alliance. There are costs, in blood and treasure and, to a certain extent, for governments themselves, as often our publics often don’t understand why we’re expending resources overseas at a time of economic crisis at home. I do want to suggest however, the expeditionary operations are necessary for preparedness. The public diplomacy aspect of this issue is an important one, and one that we should face jointly as an Alliance; the United States is committed to playing its part.

The sacrifices of Polish troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, alongside their allies from the United States and across the Alliance, will never be forgotten. I think of them when I say that Americans pray for peace. We are not unique in this, to be sure. We pray for peace and prepare, together with our friends and allies, to fight only when we need to, only in the direst of circumstances when our security is truly threatened. And it is our ability to fight together, wherever need be whenever need be, that provides for all of us the credible deterrent that secures the peace that we seek.