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**NATO in the 21st Century**  
**Deputy Secretary General's Speech**  
**at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart**  
**Milan, Italy -- 12 March 2009**

**Amb. Claudio Bisogniero**

È un gran piacere per me essere a Milano oggi e vorrei ringraziare il Prof. De Leonardis per il Suo invito e per le Sue parole. Saluto in particolare gli esponenti del mondo politico, diplomatico, militare, accademico che sono qui presenti: molti volti noti, che portano con sé una grande esperienza sui temi della sicurezza internazionale.

Vorrei anche esprimere tutto il mio apprezzamento all'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, al Centro Alti Studi per la Difesa e al Comando Militare Esercito Lombardia, per aver organizzato questa importante conferenza insieme alla Divisione Diplomazia Pubblica della NATO. Ma soprattutto, grazie a tutti voi per la vostra partecipazione.

Mi è stato suggerito dal Prof. De Leonardis di pronunciare il mio discorso in inglese, so I will continue in English.

As Deputy Secretary General of NATO, I am obviously pleased to see an entire conference being devoted to the Alliance. But I also truly believe that there is good reason to do so. On the eve of its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, NATO remains the pre-eminent security framework for Trans-Atlantic relations, allowing the US, Canada and Europe -- not just to consult together, but also to act together. NATO's key stabilising role in the Balkans and, more recently, in Afghanistan; its role in fighting terrorism; the success of NATO partnership policies; the expansion of Allied membership and the continuing strong interest on the part of several nations in joining NATO: well, all these demonstrate that the Atlantic Alliance is very much in demand.

At age 60, NATO remains the most successful security alliance in history.

When our Heads of State and Government meet in France and Germany for NATO's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit in three weeks' time, they will no doubt highlight

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NATO's successes. But while past achievements may inspire confidence, they are no substitute for fresh thinking and new policies. NATO faces challenges that are greater than anything it has faced in the past. And at the Summit, the Allies must demonstrate that they can muster the necessary political will, resources, imagination and solidarity to meet these challenges.

We will discuss several important issues at the next Summit -- in relation to the Alliance ongoing missions and operations (Afghanistan, Kosovo, our support to the African Union in its peace keeping operations in Africa, anti-piracy activities etc.); -- in relation to the modernisation of our structures and capabilities (because we need more flexible, deployable and sustainable forces for our defence and operations); -- and regarding our relationship with other nations and organisations (let me mention here our partnerships: the Mediterranean Dialogue, in which we interact with seven countries of the region, six of which are Arab countries, the 7th being Israel; the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative in which we interact with countries of the Gulf Region; the Euro/Atlantic Partnership Council that sees our interaction with countries of Western Europe, Russia, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Central Asian Republics; finally, our global partner countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the Republic of Korea, etc, that share our security concerns and support our operations).

But when it comes to the Alliance longer-term development, one Summit decision will be particularly important for NATO's role in the XXI century, and that is to launch a review of our Strategic Concept. Let me tell you why we need such a review.

First of all, because the current NATO Strategic Concept dates back to 1999. To be sure, the Concept has aged well, and in many ways it is still highly relevant. But the document was written by 16 Allies, whereas we soon will have 28. The current Strategic Concept does not take into account many of the key political and security events of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and NATO's engagement in Afghanistan. As a consequence, the current document also does not reflect the significant transformation that the Alliance has undergone since 1999 and since "9/11" in particular. The Alliance described in the 1999 Strategic Concept was one busy with Kosovo, facing a grave crisis at the heart of Europe. Today's NATO is dealing with security issues well beyond Europe's borders. We need to take all these into account in a new document.

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This brings me to the second reason why we need a new Strategic Concept – which is to make the public, a broader public aware of this new, transformed NATO. I have the impression that a large part of our public does not fully understand the immense changes that NATO has undergone since the end of the Cold War -- or is simply unaware of these changes altogether. A new, up-to-date basic document would make it easier to explain the Alliance, the XXI century NATO, and to foster the public support that is essential for the Alliance's continued success.

Let me add, in this context, that a clear presentation of the Alliance is not only of interest to the public in our own Allied nations. Given that NATO's strategic interests coincide with those of an increasing number of nations outside the Alliance, there is no doubt that a new Strategic Concept would be read attentively in these nations too.

The third, and arguably most important, reason for a new Strategic Concept is a conceptual one. The demands on NATO today are greater than ever before. A clear vision of the role and core tasks of the Alliance is therefore urgently required. It is the template that will allow us to better prioritise the many tasks, and identify the military resources required to fulfil them. And it will give our military forces a better picture, too, of what may be expected of them.

So much for the question of “why” we need to review our Strategic Concept. Now to the more difficult question: “what” should go in it? In my view, if a new Strategic Concept is to have real value in defining NATO's role in the XXI century, it must address the following six key issues.

First, the Strategic Concept must provide a clear description of the new strategic environment. This should cover not only terrorism, failed states, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It should also include the security implications of new challenges, such as climate change, cyber-attacks, energy security and piracy. A new Strategic Concept must lay out convincingly where NATO has a role to play, and what that role should be.

Secondly, these security challenges do not necessarily require military responses, but they do require collective responses by all Allies. It is essential that we reinforce the notion of Allied solidarity in this new security environment. And it is essential that all nations are reassured they will not be left to face these challenges on their own. Article 5, collective defence, remains the bedrock of the Alliance – no doubt about

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that. But we have to be in agreement that its meaning may not be limited to defence against a conventional attack. A cyber attack for instance does not require a single soldier to cross another nation's border; yet, a cyber attack can paralyse a country's ability to function. So the new Strategic Concept must provide a clear understanding of what we mean by collective defence today and in the future.

Third, a new Strategic Concept must incorporate the notion of a "Comprehensive Approach". What do we define as a comprehensive approach? An approach in which military and civilian efforts interact to tackle important security challenges. An approach in which not only NATO, but also other international organizations – UN, EU, World Bank, etc – individual countries, NGO's, the private sector, combine their efforts to face these challenges. This, because today's security challenges cannot be dealt with by NATO alone, or by military means only. Security in Afghanistan, and elsewhere, demands a comprehensive application of military and civilian efforts, economic and political measures that go far beyond NATO's capabilities. A new Strategic Concept has to recognize this plainly; it will need to lay out the role NATO can play within a comprehensive approach and how the necessary civilian and military means are to be applied by the international community, by the various international organizations and international actors in a coherent, effective and coordinated manner.

NATO has been, and is, very active in engaging other international organizations. The signature, last September, of a Joint United Nations-NATO Declaration is a major step towards such a "Comprehensive Approach", but it is not enough. We also urgently need a breakthrough in the NATO-European Union partnership. There is considerable overlap in NATO and EU membership, and we also share the same values and the fundamental aim to provide freedom and security to our populations. And so a closer NATO-EU partnership is logical, desirable and – quite frankly – long overdue.

Fourth element, military transformation. A new Strategic Concept must address the balance between collective territorial defence and NATO's new missions, such as expeditionary operations. Naturally, collective territorial defence - as I said - will remain the very core principle upon which the Alliance is built. But no Ally today can afford to keep armed forces solely for the purpose of territorial defence. Being able to deploy and sustain our forces in distant crisis regions is as important as being able to defend our national borders. The more flexible and deployable our forces are, the better

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they can fulfil both missions: collective defence and expeditionary missions.

This is why I believe a new Strategic Concept must strike the right balance between those two missions and be as explicit as possible on issues such as the reform of our defence planning process, and on how we finance NATO-led missions and operations.

Fifth, the consolidation of security in Europe. The conflict in the Caucasus last August prompted some observers to argue that NATO enlargement and good relations with Russia are incompatible, are impossible to reconcile. I do not agree. I believe that a new Strategic Concept must make it very clear that we want and can pursue these two objectives in parallel.

NATO enlargement - a true success story - has been and remains essential to the creation of a Europe that is whole, free and at peace. The inclusion of ten new members over the past ten years has enhanced stability and security for all in the Euro-Atlantic area – including Russia. I therefore fully expect a new Strategic Concept to signal that the enlargement process will continue, while making it equally clear that Russia's legitimate security concerns will not be ignored or overlooked. Let me add, when we talk about NATO's expansion, that we obviously have unfinished work in the Western Balkans, in this area.

And this brings me to my sixth and final point: NATO-Russia relations. A new Strategic Concept -- of course -- cannot provide detailed guidance on a dynamic relationship such as the one between NATO and Russia. This is something for the "real world", not for documents. But what a new Strategic Concept can do is to define the areas where NATO and Russia have a common interest and where we, as NATO Allies, believe cooperation with Russia is possible and indeed desirable.

I believe there is no shortage of specific areas for cooperation with Russia – from Afghanistan, to the fight against terrorism and piracy, to countering narcotics trafficking and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Clearly, cooperation in those areas can only come about if both NATO and Russia are prepared to engage in frank dialogue – and to learn from the way we have interacted in the past in the NATO-Russia Council. And it will be useful for a new Strategic Concept to underline that general interest and that preparedness on the part of the NATO Allies.

We are prepared to pursue this cooperation with Russia: as you know, last week,

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NATO Foreign Ministers decided to resume formal work with Russia in the NATO-Russia Council, including at ministerial level. With Russia, we have issues on which we disagree, even deeply (such as Kosovo, NATO enlargement, Georgia, CFE, missile defence); but we also have issues on which we share the same concerns and are ready to work together. And to tackle both sets of issues, the ones on which we disagree and the ones on which we can cooperate, we have the appropriate tool, the appropriate forum: the NATO-Russia Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the sake of brevity, I have focussed on only six issues that I consider to be key in the development of a new NATO Strategic Concept. There are, of course, many others, including the role of arms control and disarmament; cooperation with regional organisations; and our relationship with nations outside the Euro-Atlantic area -- across the Mediterranean, the Gulf region, and elsewhere on the globe.

But in describing *la raison d'être* of the new Strategic Concept, and its main contents, I hope I have given you a sense of NATO's role, tasks, objectives and challenges in the XXI century.

Clearly, the elaboration of a new Strategic Concept will be no simple matter. But launching the process at our Summit will compel all NATO Allies -- including Italy -- to enter into a broad debate about common, transatlantic solutions to the many risks and threats before us.

In order to get the process for a new Strategic Concept started, next month's NATO Summit will issue a "Declaration on Alliance Security". This shorter document will set out the basic principles guiding transatlantic security cooperation, and outline the areas in which change is needed. And that document, the "DAS", will provide useful parameters opening the way for the future work on a new Strategic Concept as I have described it to you.

This work should also benefit from input provided by the broader strategic community, including the academic world. NATO does not live, operate and evolve in a vacuum. Nor does NATO pretend to have all the answers to the challenges we face in

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the XXI century. We value the stimulating thoughts that a lively strategic debate, such as the one emerging from this conference, can generate. That is why I invite you to share with us your thoughts, and to engage with us in this new, exciting project.

Thank you for your attention.