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## **Manfred-Woerner-Memorial Lecture**

# **THE FUTURE OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE**

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It is my great honour to be able to give this speech in honour of Manfred Wörner.

Unfortunately, unlike most of you here, I never knew Manfred Wörner personally. But when you become NATO Secretary General, you get to know a lot about Manfred Wörner. For hardly any other Secretary General has marked this Alliance as much as that ever-optimistic man. And the more I learn about him, the more I wish that I had indeed known him personally.

Manfred Wörner led NATO out of the Cold War. From keeping the peace to shaping the peace – that was the short and trenchant way that he described the reform of NATO. And by his tireless personal efforts he never left the least doubt that NATO would continue to have a future without the Soviet threat. For he believed that NATO was not just an Alliance against others – for Manfred Wörner NATO was also and above all a community of values.

And today? Don't we find ourselves today in a similar situation to Manfred Wörner at that time? Don't we also face a new security environment, for which we are not sufficiently prepared – materially, but also intellectually? Aren't we once again hearing just the same Cassandra statements as at that time – that NATO has lived past its usefulness, because the transatlantic partners are now going their separate ways? Haven't we heard it all before – *deja vu* all over again?

At that time Manfred Wörner and NATO succeeded in overcoming the alarmists. But will we also succeed today? Can we also demonstrate convincingly – after "9/11" and the Iraq war – that there is no real alternative to the community of values and interests of NATO?

My answer to these questions is a clear and unmistakable "yes". There is no alternative to the transatlantic community of values and action; there is no replacement for the North Atlantic Alliance. The major security problems of our time are international terrorism, failed states and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These are challenges on a global scale. Just for that reason they can only be resolved if North America and Europe are pulling in the same direction.

If the events of recent times have taught us anything, it is that neither America nor Europe are able alone to overcome these new problems. American action without allies is just as much a dead end as illusions about Europe as a counterweight to the USA. Perhaps these mind games can sell books. But they don't make for successful security policy.

Successful security policy looks different. It is not based on wishful thinking, but on realities. And these realities speak a clear language.

The first and most decisive reality concerns our understanding of security and security policy. Today preventive security means projection of stability – even in regions outside Europe, indeed precisely there. A security policy which is limited to the European continent is no longer sufficient in the age of global threats. Either we go to meet those problems where they arise, or sooner or later they will come to us. The time when we could still distinguish between "close" and "distant" threats is inescapably past.

NATO has taken the consequences of this new reality. With our involvement in Afghanistan we have made clear that this Alliance is no longer purely "Euro-centred", but is an instrument which we can use wherever our common interests require.

This is perhaps the greatest change in NATO since it was founded 55 years ago. Anyone who remembers how difficult and frustrating it was not so long ago for Manfred Wörner to push NATO to become involved in the Balkans can judge how radical the turnaround is that this Alliance has achieved in just a few years.

But let's have no illusions. These new tasks outside Europe are still more difficult and dangerous than what we have already experienced in the Balkans. So it doesn't surprise me if our publics have difficulties with the thought that deployments like that in Afghanistan might not be the exception but perhaps the rule in future.

Therefore we owe our publics clear speaking. So let me say here quite unequivocally: German soldiers, together with other NATO partners, are in the Hindu Kush today because it is in all our interests to prevent Afghanistan once again becoming a "black hole" – a state led by a fundamentalist regime, which gives shelter to the most dangerous terrorists in the world, and makes available training camps for them. Such a thing must not happen again. And NATO, together with Germany, will do its part to prevent it happening again.

I therefore particularly welcome it that the Bundestag has extended the German deployment in Afghanistan by one year. But let me be quite frank and add: I find the sometimes rather petty criticism of the Bundeswehr's peace actions extremely irritating. Nowhere in the Alliance are for example the German provincial reconstruction teams thrown into question. On the contrary: everyone is agreed that we need more regional reconstruction teams. So, no fear of your own courage!

Here I come to the second reality of modern security policy: the need for new military capabilities. Today no state can allow itself the luxury of maintaining armed forces which serve for territorial defence alone. Today we need forces which can react rapidly and be deployed over great distances. We need soldiers who are trained and equipped for the new tasks. And we need force structures which ensure that more soldiers can be available for foreign missions.

Here again NATO has drawn the correct conclusion. We have set up the NATO Response Force. We are working to improve strategic transport capabilities. We are reforming our force planning to ensure that our political decisions are backed up militarily. And we have set up a Strategic Command which is exclusively concerned with the transformation of our forces. The point is that for us "transformation" is not an empty word, but a basic condition for this Alliance to continue functioning in a radically altered security environment.

The Bundeswehr has also faced the challenge of transformation. It has prescribed itself comprehensive reforms. These reforms are protracted and expensive. And they are all the more difficult the more they must be carried out against the background of operations already in progress. But in spite of all difficulties these reforms must be

driven forward. And they must be supported by a suitable defence budget. Germany is just too big to take its time with the renovation of its armed forces.

The third reality of modern security policy concerns the relationship between NATO and the European Union. Many a convinced Atlanticist here may wonder why the actual Secretary General of NATO is giving the relationship with another organization such a prominent place – even more so an organization which now and then has indeed been seen as a competitor for NATO.

But the reason for my emphasizing the EU is quite simple: the potential of a strategic partnership between NATO and the EU is just too big not to be exploited. Together, in fact, NATO and the EU have the use of a broad spectrum of instruments, both civil and military. And it is just this combination which we need to tackle the new challenges successfully.

Now I am the first to grant that NATO-EU relations could be better than they are at present. But what is not yet can surely come about. The time of institutional trench warfare is past. Today nobody can dispute the need for the EU to have a security-political role. An effective EU must be considered a normal part of the transatlantic relationship, and not a disruptive factor. And even if the rhetoric of the EU sometimes seems a bit too robust, NATO can take this in its stride. For NATO remains unique – it alone has the United States on board. And there can't be a stable world order without the USA.

So I will do all I can to build up the strategic partnership between these two great institutions. The forthcoming handover of the peace mission in Bosnia to the EU is only one element of this new partnership. We need more: a coordinated policy in dealing with terrorism, and a coordinated approach to preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. And we need a coordinated policy as regards the key geopolitical regions of the world.

Such a region is the so-called "Broader Middle East". Developments in this region will decisively influence our security in the coming years. To approach this region with new ideas and new initiatives – to understand the future of the Broader Middle East as a creative transatlantic task – that is an additional reality of modern security policy.

Here again NATO will not abandon its responsibilities. We will intensify our dialogue with those on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. We are in discussion with some states in the Gulf region about concrete cooperation.

But above all: we will train Iraqi security forces – both in Iraq and outside the country. Many have not found this decision easy to take. But whatever our positions on the Iraq war, a stable and democratic Iraq is the common goal of all of us. The earlier that the Iraqis can organize their own security, the better. That is why we have met the request of the Iraqi transitional government to take on this task. Because we look forwards, and not backwards.

Ladies and gentlemen, NATO's agenda is guided by the realities of the 21st century. It is an agenda of action, of getting to grips, of giving things shape. If the United Nations

are today sounding out NATO about possible support for the African Union, and if NATO and UN experts are now considering force planning together, this makes clear the key role played by NATO today. Nowhere else are multilateralism and effectiveness so efficiently combined as here in this Alliance.

But we can and must do still more. We have proven sufficiently that this Alliance can act in concert. But shouldn't we talk to each other more as well? In any case there is often the impression that we do not use the Alliance sufficiently as a political framework -- as a forum for political consultation. As if we were afraid of diverging opinions. On the contrary, I assert that early political consultation in the Alliance is the key to effective and credible intervention in crises. We should have no fear of controversy. In the EU or in the United Nations controversies are commonplace, and everyone accepts them as a necessary precondition for making progress. In NATO, on the other hand, controversies are seen as unseemly, or even as dangerous.

For me this view is no longer applicable since the end of the Cold War. We in NATO also need a "culture of argument". There are no patent solutions in a time of great security policy upheavals. We must constantly wrestle to find the correct path -- and this can only happen if we strengthen NATO's role as a discussion forum. In the coming months I will put forward some proposals for this purpose. For this Alliance can do a lot more than we now think.

Manfred Wörner put this Alliance on the right road. He achieved as much as he did because he was deeply convinced that peace and freedom can only be secured by transatlantic unity. And because he always saw the opportunities where others only saw the risks.

NATO -- and all of us -- are endlessly grateful to him.