

March 23, 2012

Brussels Forum

A Conversation with the Secretary General of NATO

Mr. Craig Kennedy: Okay. I think we're ready to start our next section, if you could all take a seat. This next session is really built around a discussion with the Secretary General of NATO. And to introduce the Secretary General, we're very pleased to have Wilfried Martens, who's the president of the European People's Party with us. He was one of the founders of the European People's Party, a longtime politician here in Belgium. I believe Prime Minister, Head of Government seven times.

Hon. Wilfried Martens: Twelve years.

Mr. Craig Kennedy: Twelve years, been a force in European politics for much of the last three or four decades. So with that, Mr. Martens, the floor is yours to introduce the Secretary General.

Hon. Wilfried Martens: Dear Craig Kennedy, dear Secretary General of NATO, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure as well as a privilege to address all of you here at 2012 Brussels Forum, (technical difficulty) a privilege to be the speaker before the NATO Secretary

General and to say a few words about the Western Alliance in this time of growing challenges.

The Eurozone crisis is not over and the European Union will have to continue to reform itself. Mario Draghi said yesterday "the worst is over" but there are still risks. The Middle East remains fraught with conflict and with risk of an even bigger conflict. NATO is facing new challenges in Afghanistan. The United States is still in a deep economic crisis.

And all this leads some people to say we should abandon the concept of a Western Alliance altogether because it is outdated and belongs to the 20th century. There are Europeans who believe we are better off talking to the Indians and the Chinese on our own without the United States. And there are Americans who believe that Europe is more of a liability than an asset to American interests.

Ladies and gentlemen, you will not be surprised that I think these notions dangerously mistaken. Maybe it has something to do with my childhood in the occupied and un-liberated Belgium of the Second World War. Maybe it has something to do with the Cold War that I knew as a young man. Maybe with the intense times of NATO's

double-track decision, which we are ... decisive experience of my years as Prime Minister of Belgium or maybe with my breathtaking time as one of Europe's leaders when the Berlin Wall fell and all of Europe, for the first time in my life, could (inaudible) being whole and free.

All the good things in this narrative are the direct or indirect result of good relations between Europe and America. And many of the bad things that have happened in past decades happened at times while Europe and America were somehow (technical difficulty) I firmly believe that this simple truth has lost none of its validity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In fact, if the Western Alliance didn't exist, we would have to invent it now.

United by common convictions, we have to rise to the challenge of our times while sticking to our central common values. And I could imagine no better man to embody this perspective than Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Denmark from 2001 to 2009 and since then, the Secretary General of NATO.

In recent weeks and months, he has focused particularly on two topics that are both at the center of present and future challenges to the Western Alliance, the

concept of smart defense and a better cooperation between NATO and the European Union. Cooperation on capabilities labeled either pooling and sharing or smart defense is the right answer to budget cuts in times of financial crisis as well as to new security threats. And a better and more structured cooperation between European Union and NATO is indispensable precisely for the same reasons. EU and NATO must continue to reinforce each other's work. The Libyan crisis, once again, showed the clear need for such an approach.

Ladies and gentlemen, I understand Anders Fogh Rasmussen is an excellent cyclist. In 2008, he even completed one of the most notorious stages of the Tour de France. And you know the old metaphor that compares the process of European integration to a cyclist going uphill. He either pedals forward or he falls over. This metaphor has never been as apt as it is today. We must go forward in order to survive. Standing still is not an option. That goes not only for the European Union, but also for NATO, which is, I believe, in good hands with Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Thank you for your attention.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Mr. Martens, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much indeed for that kind introduction. And many thanks as well to the German Marshall Fund for its continuing strong commitment to bringing Europe and North America closer together, including here at the Brussels Forum.

Mr. Martens, you mentioned my love of cycling and as you also mentioned, the (technical difficulty) in a regular forward movement, be it uphill or downhill, and the same goes for our Transatlantic alliance. And another key to success on a bike is balance. And it's a word I shall return to during my remarks this afternoon because the right balance is also the key to the continued success of our NATO alliance.

The right balance is also what many of our nations are trying to find at the moment in their national budgets. The financial crisis is an immediate challenge that requires urgent attention. And our defense budgets are not immune to this crisis. Actually, between 2008 and 2011, 20 NATO nations reduced their defense spending and this goes against the trend we can see in much of the rest of the world.

This year, for the first time, Asian defense spending

will outstrip that of NATO's European allies and Russia is planning to double its defense spending over the next decade. These declining European defense budgets are a concern (technical difficulty) and for what we are able to do as an alliance. And this is no small matter because our alliance is more than (technical difficulty) shared values and shared interests. And it has played a major role in guaranteeing peace in the Euro-Atlantic area for over 60 years.

Yes. The economic crisis now dominates the headlines. Yes, new powers are emerging. But the truth is that the world still needs our Atlantic community because, as our mission for Libya showed, our alliance remains an essential source of stability in an unpredictable world. NATO is the indispensable alliance. And Europe and North America have shown that when they act together, they can be a tremendous force for good in a turbulent world.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a special community that we must all continue to invest in militarily, economically, and politically. (technical difficulty) to deal with today's economic crisis, Europe must also continue to look outwards. Europe needs to look beyond

today's crisis so it can stay ahead of the security challenges that tomorrow will bring. And Europe needs to strengthen its global responsibilities alongside the United States (technical difficulty) we need each other more than ever. We all have a stake in keeping each other strong. And in good times and bad, we have no viable alternative to a strong Atlantic security partnership.

This is why, in my remarks this afternoon, I want to lay out my vision for NATO in the year 2020 and beyond and show how we can realize that vision by focusing on our shared purpose, shared responsibility and shared leadership.

So first our shared purpose, what is it that binds us together as allies? It is the belief that NATO is the (technical difficulty) in our values. That (technical difficulty) it remains its purpose today and it will remain its purpose in 2020 and beyond.

Fulfilling this shared purpose is what we do. How we do it, however, changes to reflect the changing security landscape. At our last NATO summit in Lisbon in 2010, we agreed a new strategic concept, a strategic concept that sets out how we should do this during this

decade and beyond. The strategic concept identifies three core tasks of collective defense, crisis management, and corroborative security.

Collective defense means NATO allies will always assist each other against attack. Crisis management means NATO helping to manage the full range of crisis before, during and after they occur, where that contributes to Euro-Atlantic security. And corroborative security means that the alliance will engage actively to enhance international security through partnership with other nations and international organizations. It is by carrying these three tasks effectively that we will be able to continue safeguarding our security and values and fulfilling our shared purpose.

So second, what exactly do we have to do (technical difficulty) and meet our shared purpose? (technical difficulty) In 2020, NATO must remain ready to respond the full range of security tasks. We will still need to be able to put together complex, during the operations, at short notice with high impacts and high precision. This means we will need flexible, rapidly deployable forces and the right mix of military capabilities.



Leap (last) year was a strong reminder of what those capabilities are. They include air-to-air refueling and the ability to gather information through surveillance and reconnaissance so we can make accurate, intelligent assessments and select and engage the right targets with precision-guided munitions. For the foreseeable future, defense money is likely to remain tight across the alliance and acquiring those capabilities will be a major challenge. But all allies have a shared responsibility to provide them and I firmly believe we will only be able to meet that responsibility with a new mindset, a new mindset, smart defense. We call it smart defense because it is about spending defense money in a smarter way. The smarter way is to prioritize, to specialize, to cooperate, to focus, not just on what we cut, but on what we keep, and to choose multinational solutions instead of unilateral solutions.

We've already (seen) the benefits of this approach. We are developing an ally ground surveillance system to give our commanders a full picture of what is happening on the ground in our operations. And we are bringing together national contributions to build an integrated

NATO-wide missile defense system to defend against the threats of ballistic missile proliferation. But we must also share the responsibility for making our capabilities and forces (technical difficulty). This will be particularly important as we anticipate the drawdown of our commitments in Afghanistan where American and European forces, as well as those of many of our partner nations, where they have developed an outstanding ability to operate alongside each other. We need to keep those gains, and we will, with the connected forces initiative I launched earlier this year.

Now, my third point is a crucial requirement for meeting our shared purpose and our shared responsibilities, and that is shared leadership. Europe and North America face a broad and complex security agenda. Making this continent whole and free remains (a) work in progress. The Arab world is going through a period of major change and further (technical difficulty) Ladies and gentlemen, to address this agenda successfully, we need a rebalanced transatlantic relationship. European allies must be ready and able to assume a greater leadership role and I'm confident

that they can.

Over the past 20 years, more European forces have deployed in more places than ever before. In Afghanistan, the United States has taken the lead from the start of our engagement. But all our European allies are present there, too, and making a significant contribution. In Kosovo, Germany has played a leading role in our operation for some considerable time, and very effectively. And last year in Libya, other European nations, together with Canada, showed that they can take the lead in NATO operations. This shows how different allies can lead different operations. It shows NATO's enormous operational affectability when there is political solidarity among the allies. And that's why I'm confident that European nations can share the leadership role within the Atlantic community.

One area where I hope Europe and North America can demonstrate this shared leadership is in continuing to engage other nations and organizations in building peace and stability. The alliance has more than 40 partners in all regions of the globe, in Europe, in North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf, Latin

America, Central Asia, and the Pacific. And this vast network of security partnerships is truly unique. It is vital for dealing with regional conflicts and with global security challenges, such as terrorism, proliferation and piracy and by working together with our partners, we enhance our own security. We enhance the security of their regions and we enhance the security of the world we live in.

Cooperation with our neighbor, Russia, is particularly important. We face common concerns and they are best addressed through common approaches. I recently spoke with President Elect Putin. I told him that I look forward to continued engagement and constructive dialogue with Russia and I was encouraged to hear him underline his commitment to good, stable relations with NATO.

Recently, President Obama announced a new focus in the U.S. defense posture towards the Asia/Pacific region. Some are concerned this will take place at the expense of Europe and the transatlantic relationship, but I see it differently. It is not just the economy that has globalized. Security has globalized, too. And it is in Europe's interest that the United States, with whom

we share our most fundamental values, that the United States contributes to upholding global peace and stability by engaging in the Asia/ Pacific region. And the new American defense posture seeks to address this, but these profound strategic challenges are just as relevant to Europe as they are to the United States. And this is why Europe must also play its full part to rebalance the Trans Atlantic alliance, by investing sufficiently in our common security, militarily as well as financially and politically by remaining engaged in making this continent whole, free and democratic and by keeping an outward-looking and global perspective on security.

As our global economy becomes ever more integrated, local, region and global security and stability become ever more interrelated. We all depend on free and diversified energy supply, free and secure sea lanes and airspace and free and secure information (technical difficulty) networks. And this is why the global rule of law and global governance within the principals of the United Nations Charter remain central to stability of our world, why the ability to participate in and contribute to international crisis management is

essential (technical difficulty) a global perspective in Europe, as in North America, and why we must invest sufficiently in the transatlantic relationship to maintain our common security in this global order.

Obviously, an American military presence in Europe is crucial for security cooperation across the Atlantic, but America's commitment to its European allies should not (technical difficulty) merely by the (technical difficulty) of troops or bases here. It should be measured by how much we do together, by where we do it and by how effectively we do it.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have laid out for you my vision for NATO for the year 2020 and beyond, a vision in which the transatlantic partnership is rebalanced and in which European and North American allies' shared purpose is met through shared responsibility and shared leadership.

In less than two months time, we will hold our next NATO Summit in Chicago. It will be a unique opportunity for European nations, right at the heart of America, to join their North American allies, shaping their shared future in their shared alliance, an alliance whose members are committed to working

together seamlessly, effectively and efficiently, an alliance that is capable of meeting the full range of evolving security challenges and an alliance that is even more connected with countries and organizations around the world. NATO already has an impressive history of success. At Chicago, we will ensure that success continues into the future through the end of this decade and beyond. Thank you.

Mr. Craig Kennedy: And Thank you. That was terrific. We're now going to move into a conversation. The Secretary General has very kindly--Yep, just grab a seat up there--has very kindly agreed to take some questions. And we'll go for probably 25 minutes so. And we have asked Nik Gowing, who has long been involved with the Brussels Forum, to lead the questioning as soon as we get him completely miked up. Okay. Nik, it's all yours.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Thank you very much, Craig, and nice to see everyone here again. I'm tempted, Secretary General, just before I open it up to questions--because this is not about an interview. It's about you putting your questions as well.

Mr. Martens introduced the metaphor of a bicycle and

talked about going uphill and going downhill. You picked it up. Of course, in November, you fell off your bicycle and had a bad accident. And I put that to you not in a facetious way, but simply because out there in the public space is another vision of NATO, which is--and I can quote many analysis at the moment, real questions about NATO's future, including from your predecessor, too, worried about whether NATO can survive in its current formation, particularly with all these pressures.

So I have to put it to you, particularly with the 20 reductions in budget, and also real limitations, which would seem (technical difficulty) even down to planning staffs not being adequate and American planners having to be flown across to bolster the European capability, that really the fundamental challenges of NATO are really deeper than you've addressed in those more formal remarks.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Actually, you see that I have survived and very much so, but I can assure you that it takes a lot of training to recover, which leads me to the political conclusion that NATO demonstrated in the Libya operation its strengths, demonstrated the



principal of solidarity in practice. Yes, you're right. That very successful operation couldn't have been carried out that successfully without a significant input of critical military capabilities from our American ally.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Surveillance, electronic warfare, refueling--

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Absolutely.

Mr. Nik Gowing: --planners.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: But that's not breaking news. I mean, since NATO was established in 1949, we knew that the reason why we need the alliance is that the Americans are capable of helping the Europeans when it comes to security. But the positive story from the Libya operation is that for the first time in the history of our alliance, European Allies and Canada provided the majority of assets for an operation. So that's actually a very, very positive example of how our alliance has transformed and adapted to the new security challenges.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Let me encourage--I can't see everybody out there 'cause it's quite dark. So if there's any chance of any more light and certainly for

the Secretary General. Can we get the microphones to people who'd like to come in on any questions? But before the microphone gets to you, let me just press you. Here, I've got, for example, a document, a series of pieces from the center from European reform. Does NATO have a future? They've threatened to push NATO into irrelevance in the future. And George Robertson, your predecessor (inaudible) too, the alliance's creditability may be better served by discussing frankly its current financial and military difficulties and adjusting NATO's ambitions accordingly

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Actually, it's very interesting for me, this doom and gloom debate, taking into account that a number of countries are queuing up to become active members of our alliance. I think it's a demonstration of the success of our alliance that a number of countries would very much like to become members of our alliance. I have experienced, as Secretary General of NATO, that never in the history of NATO has NATO been so busy, operating in Afghanistan, in Kosovo, in Libya last year, conducting a counterterrorism operation in the Mediterranean, a counter-piracy operation along the coast of Somalia.

We are as busy as ever.

Mr. Nik Gowing: But probably there are a lot of skeptics out there, Secretary General, saying that systemically and in structures, it's still under enormous pressure and it's going to get worse. And I think I'm probably reflecting a lot of the thinking of many of the experts here in the audience.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: You'll experience, if you do bike, that it makes you even stronger, that you are under pressure, that you have to go uphill. But the fact is that--and the fact is that NATO is as strong as ever, as active as ever, has modernized, has adopted, has transformed. It's really a vivid alliance.

Mr. Nik Gowing: All right. Let's get as many questions as possible. Keep them brief. Who's got the microphone first? Congressman Turner, have you got-- where are you? Over here. Thank you. You've got the microphone.

Congressman Turner: Thank you. Let me turn this on (inaudible). Great.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Let's keep our remarks quite short 'cause a large number of people would like to intervene. Thank you.

Congressman Turner: Secretary General, I really appreciate the fact that you talked about countries that want to join NATO as one of the evidences of NATO's vitality and its importance. One of the issues that we know is that NATO has been the path for emerging democracies to both move toward Europe and toward a relationship with the United States. And it's been an important tool.

To use your biking analogy, there are many nations out there who continue to pedal real fast, trying to get into NATO. And the concern that many have is that the upcoming Chicago summit has been identified as not an expansion, an enlargement summit. But yesterday, there are many countries that are in the path of still seeking to join NATO. Senator Luger and I have introduced companion bills in the Senate and the House, calling on NATO to make very strong affirmative statements in the Chicago summit, recognizing both the accomplishments and the path that aspiring nations are on that are in the process of joining NATO.

Now, many say that joining NATO is a political process, but it ought not be an arbitrary process. What do you foresee coming out of the Chicago summit that these

countries can look to, especially countries like Georgia and Macedonia, who are making great strides?

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Thank you. Without anticipating final decisions on how we will organize the Chicago summit, I feel safe to assure you that you will see encouraging language in the communiqué and the declarations from the summit, encouraging language that will reaffirm that NATO's door remains open. Overall, the whole summit will be a clear demonstration of connectivity and cooperative security, a strong demonstration of our partnerships with countries across the globe, including countries that aspire to become members of NATO.

So I don't think you will be disappointed when you see the outcome of the summit. I have to say it will not be an enlargement summit, but you will see events and language that clearly reaffirm that our door remains open.

Mr. Harlan Ullman: I like your hand signal. Can you hear me? I like your hand signals.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Identify yourself.

Mr. Harlan Ullman: Of course. I'm Harlan Ullman, Secretary General, it's good to see you again. I'd

like to follow up on the May summit in Chicago, if I may. Winston Churchill remarked that he disliked puddings because they lacked a theme and I wonder what themes or theme you think is going to run through Chicago and what are your expectations of what you hope the summit achieves and what it does not achieve?

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Actually, I think the overall theme will be a strengthened transatlantic relationship. Under that headline, we will have specifics. We will adopt a defense package, a package of concrete initiatives that will strengthen our military capability in the future, strengthen the glue that binds or aligns together, including through more international cooperation in the acquisition of necessary military capabilities. That will be one basket of initiatives.

Secondly, we will discuss partnerships in the wake of the Arab Spring. I think we should take the opportunity to enhance our partnership with countries in the region. There may also be other partnership initiatives.

And finally, we will discuss Afghanistan. We will reaffirm our commitment to the Lisbon Road Map as to

how we gradually transfer lead responsibility for the security to the Afghans and we will reaffirm that we stay committed to our mission in Afghanistan based on the principle in together, out together. So the overall message will be a strengthened transatlantic relationship.

Mr. Harlan Ullman: Thank you.

Mr. Andrew Michta: Hello. Andrew Michta, GMF. Mr. Secretary, a very brief question. In every crisis that NATO and the allies in Europe have been in together, afterwards we said we need more capabilities, we need more usable capabilities. How do we create the sense of urgency so that a credible argument can be made for the American side of the equation that the Europeans understand the need to spend more on defense and to become more proactive so that we do not have, at every turn beginning with the Balkans and ending in Libya, the argument you, sir, articulated here as well, that the American role in this was absolutely critical to the mission? How do we get the politicians to muster the political will to speak directly to the republic?

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: In Europe?

Mr. Andrew Michta: In Europe, yes.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Well, again, I would point to the Libya operation as an excellent example.

Despite the economic crisis, despite declining defense budgets in almost all European allied countries, the Europeans stepped up to the plate.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Are they committing themselves to that definitely with clarity? Are they committing themselves to that?

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: To such engagement as we saw in the Libya operation?

Mr. Nik Gowing: Well, and also to replace the assets, to have the assets which the Americans don't want to provide in the future.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Yeah, I will revert to that. But again, use the Libya operation as an excellent example. How will partitions address that properly? Let me use my own country, Denmark, as an example. Denmark decided to participate at the very sharp end of that operation, right from the outset, without any caveats, delivering F-16s from the first day, even before NATO took on responsibility for the operation.

That decision was based on a very, very, very broad



political majority, including political partners that in the past have been very skeptical about any military intervention, not just speaking about NATO. But this time, they addressed their constituencies in a very proactive manner. They really engaged. They realized that the United Nations Security Council had taken a histor(ical) decision based on the principle of responsibility to protect the civilian population in Libya. They used that to make the case convincingly and they succeeded. And the same goes for other countries as well.

Let me use another example. The day before the Swedish parliament took the decision to join our Libya operation, I met with the Foreign Policy Committee of the Swedish parliament. And as you know, Sweden is not a NATO ally, but a valued partner. And in the Swedish parliament, you will also meet some skepticism about NATO.

The argument I met, why a broad majority in the Swedish parliament decided to join the operation, was that NATO took on the responsibility for that operation, that it took place within a NATO frame word, a tested and tried frame word, with all the institutions necessary to also

exercise political control.

So I use these examples to demonstrate that it is possible for the politicians to make the case convincingly and get public support for such a decision.

Mr. Nik Gowing: But Secretary, now the issue of procurement and assets.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Now, to your question about assets. Again, a concrete example. Yesterday, I met with the European Union. The European Union has initiated an actual air-refueling project which will address one of the shortfalls we identified during our Libya operation.

Overall, we do have a sufficient actual air-refueling capacity within NATO, but primarily delivered by the Americans. But the Europeans lack that capacity. This is the reason why the European Union has now decided, through the European Defense Agency, to focus on developing that capacity and probably, and I will encourage them to do so, that will be a significant European input to our defense packets in Chicago. So I take that as a concrete European commitment to delivering critical capabilities in the future.

Mr. Nik Gowing: A concrete commitment even with 20 member nations having to reduce their defense budgets. Can it be done?

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: It can be done through more multinational cooperation. It can't be done if we continue business as usual. If we go for purely national solutions, many countries will not be able to afford to acquire these capabilities. But if we pull and share resources, if we help each other cross borders and go for multinational solutions, it's possible.

Mr. Nik Gowing: And we won't run out of weapons and ordinance as we did during Libya, and many of the nations who were actively involved had to go looking for extra weaponry because they'd run out.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Yeah, but actually that's very much about being an alliance.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Okay.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: That we help each other.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Right.

Mr. Anton La Guardia: Anton La Guardia of The Economist. I want to, in a sense, following from Nik's point about procurement and your question of smart

defense. I mean, in a sense, it's a new word for an old idea which is pooling and sharing. This has been knocking about NATO corridors for a long time. It never quite seems to happen. Why is it going to happen now?

Secondly, if you really want to make this happen, does NATO need to take on a role similar, for example, to the European Commission, which is to say, okay, allies, this is what you have to cut, this is what you cut, this is what you share, to have some kind of a rational organization within NATO?

Take the case of Denmark. It's about to go through--is it a 10 or 15 percent cut in defense spending in the coming years? It gave up submarine warfare. You were critical of that actually, although perhaps today that might be seen as a smart rationalization of one's national resources.

Mr. Nik Gowing: So can I just build on that? I mean, one commentary here. The efficiencies that smart defense stands to generate will be too small to compensate for the cuts in national defense budgets made by European governments since the economic crisis began.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Yeah, let me first correct a misunderstanding. I was not against--scrapping the submarines actually was my government who took that decision. So I was very supportive. And it leads me to a very important point, speaking about smart defense, because you asked me why is it that we will succeed in more multinational cooperation now.

Yeah, well, I have no illusions. It is first and foremost because of declining defense budgets and the economic austerity. But let me point to a very important aspect of this. This goes well beyond economic austerity and declining defense budgets because the long term trend is that the price, that the cost of advanced military equipment rises more rapidly than inflation and GDP.

So investments in the military will occupy an increasing part of our budgets if we don't find new ways to do business. So it's not just because of the economic crisis. It's a long-term challenge. But the economic crisis is a driving force right now. But that's just a demonstration of the fact that you should never miss a good crisis to promote reforms that are necessarily anyway.

And it is actually my firm belief that we need more and strengthened multinational cooperation. We will never reach the point as a European Union that we have a commission to take initiatives and being the driving force, because when it comes to defense and security, nations will protect their national sovereignty. But actually we do have, within NATO, what we call a defense planning process that very much addresses what you asked for, that we try to coordinate how individual allies organize their military so that overall, we provide the right mix of military capabilities. But I have to say, and that's a reality in today's world, it is more or less a voluntary process. Nations have not handed over sovereignty to NATO as they have done to the European Commission. And realistically, I don't think they will.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Secretary General, we have about seven minutes to run so I want to get many more questions in, if possible. Steven Erlanger at the back, you've got it and I'm going to bring the microphone forward here and over here. So go ahead, Steven. Can you keep it brief? And then we'll...

Mr. Steven Erlanger: I will. Mr. Secretary General,

from the New York Times. Just very quickly, Colin Powell used to say if you break it, you own it. NATO's pretty good at breaking it. It broke it slowly, but it did manage to break it in Libya, but we seem to have left the shards in the desert. Does NATO not have any responsibility for helping Libya to construct a real government that's coherent? Isn't this part of the responsibility to protect? Thank you.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Do you want to answer that now, quickly? And move the microphone forward to Michael Ignatieff, please.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Yeah, we had the responsibility to fulfill the UN mandate to protect the civilian population and we did so and we did so successfully. When it comes to the post-conflict phase, I think it's primarily a responsibility for the United Nations, helped by international organizations, to assist the new authorities in Libya.

We have stated that, if requested from the Libyan authorities, we stand ready to help where we have some added value and some expertise within reforming their security and defense sector. So in that respect, we are ready if requested.

Ms. Xenia Dormandy: Xenia Dormandy, Chatham House, thank you for being here. I'd like to move you into a longer time horizon, in fact, where you started with your remarks. The Libya operation had a NATO umbrella, but as you rightly said, there were members involved in that operation that were part of NATO. Afghanistan, again, it's a NATO, in some respects, operation, but has lots of members that aren't part of NATO.

It seems to me that we're moving towards a structure that may be has a NATO umbrella, but is more of an ad hoc coalition of members acting. Is that the direction that NATO might go in a concrete way, or is NATO going to continue to conduct such operations in an implicit way? And what are the implications of that in terms of, for example, former Defense Secretary Gates comments about everybody has to step up and everybody has to do the same thing because there's clearly a conflict there?

Mr. Nik Gowing: Is that desirable or a matter of fact now?

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: It's desirable to conduct such security operations in partnership with countries across the globe. It's desirable. It's also



necessary. And (technical difficulty 09:30:29 - 09:30:52) is capable to (technical difficulty) system in which they have confidence in our counsel, we can exercise political control and management and they appreciate that. So that's why such an operation (technical difficulty) a coalition of the willing. A coalition of the willing don't have these fixed structures so NATO is (technical difficulty) but you will see such operations conducted in the future (technical difficulty) that will be the model for future operations as we saw in Libya, as we see it right now in Kosovo.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Secretary General, I'm determined to get a voice from Canada and from Russia.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff: Secretary General, Mike Ignatieff from the University of Toronto. It follows on Stephen Erlanger's question. You're proud of the Libyan operation as a military success. How then do you explain the extent, depth and ferocity of the buyer's remorse on the Security Council because it's making it very difficult to get collective action on Syria?

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Yeah, actually that's also

an interesting paradox that after the successful Libya operations, we are now in the situation that I can't meet media without getting the question, when will NATO intervene in Syria, and why not...

Mr. Nik Gowing: This is coming from a politician and now an academic again...

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Yeah, and...

Mr. Nik Gowing: ...not from the media.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: No, no, but it's okay.

But I just point to the fact that it's a testament to the success of our alliance that people are now wondering why we don't stand ready to intervene in Syria or wherever. We have no intention to intervene in Syria because it's quite another case than Libya and it would be too lengthy to elaborate on that.

So let me just clearly state that I regret strongly that the international community embodied in the UN Security Council has not managed to reach an agreement that could send a very strong message to the leadership in Damascus. I really believe that the lack of unity in the UN Security Council has sent a very unfortunate message to the leadership in Damascus so they have concluded that they could continue their crackdowns on

the civilian population. But we operated in Libya because we had a UN mandate and strong support from countries in the region. None of these conditions are fulfilled when it comes to Syria.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Secretary General, this time last year, we had a very spirited debate about exactly that, about laying down those markers very clearly to Damascus in this room. It didn't get very far at that point. Russia?

Mr. Konstantin Eggert: Secretary General, Konstantin Eggert from Kommersant Publishing House in Moscow. President Medvedev today issued a series of threats regarding missile defense, deploying nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad, withdrawing from START Treaty.

Minister Lavrov told me on Monday that, on the other hand, NATO/Russia, NATO/U.S. relations will never be hostage to the missile defense issue. Who should I believe? And following up on that, isn't the problem is that there is no common threat assessment and this is essentially political and psychological question rather than counting warheads and measuring distances? Thank you very much.

Mr. Nik Gowing: And Secretary General, you talked

about a commitment to good and stable relations from President-elect Putin. Does that message from Moscow fit in with the kind of message you yourself got from President-elect Putin?

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Yeah, if I base myself on facts on the ground on what is actually happening in the NATO Russia relationship, it's a fact that our discussions on missile defense haven't made a negative impact on cooperation in a number of other areas.

Actually, we have seen steady progress in our cooperation in a number of areas across the board from Afghanistan where the Russians have delivered a valuable transit arrangement to counter terrorism, counter-narcotics, counter-piracy, just to mention some of the practical areas in which we have enhanced our cooperation with Russia. So the fact is, we have disputes when it comes to missile defense, but these disputes have not blocked progress in other areas.

Well, just to relate it to our upcoming summits in Chicago (technical difficulty) busy domestic political calendar in Russia, we won't have a NATO/Russia summit meeting in Chicago, but we will have a NATO/Russia Foreign Ministers' meeting next month. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of

April, we will meet in this very town and we will discuss progress in our cooperation across the board and also how we could advance cooperation on missile defense.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Secretary General, thank you very much. I know there's six or seven people who want to come in, but we've got to talk about Iran and we've overrun our time so I begged a few more minutes as I was being asked to wind up. So thank you very much, Secretary General. I have to ask you before you go, is there any plan for an alliance bike ride in Chicago?

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Nik Gowing: No photo opportunity.

Hon. Anders Fogh Rasmussen: No.

Mr. Nik Gowing: Thank you very much indeed, Secretary General.

Hon Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Thank you.

Mr. Craig Kennedy: And thank you, Nik. Secretary General, that was really a terrific conversation.

We're going to take about a 20-minute break and then we're going to come back and we're going to end on a high note and talk about Iran.

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