

Remarks

**by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer
at the “Young Atlanticist Summit”**

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

Let me start by saying how much I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this “Young Atlanticist Summit”. I want to thank the Atlantic Council of the United States and the Euro-Atlantic Council of Romania for their initiative in organising this meeting together with the Atlantic Treaty Association. I should also like to thank you all for taking an interest in NATO and joining the Alliance’s political leaders here at their Summit in Bucharest. And let me extend a special greeting to the students from Kabul University who are tuning into our meeting through video-teleconference. I hope you have a good picture, and that you can hear us loud and clear.

I am well aware that we are meeting in the “Sala Spectacular”. But -- to be entirely honest -- I was not planning to make any spectacular comments in my opening remarks here this afternoon. As a matter of fact, I want to keep my remarks relatively short so we have more time for discussion, which I believe will be more interesting for all of us.

NATO Summits are big events, and we have never had a bigger one than our meeting here in Bucharest this week. Leaders from over 60 nations and key international organisations will gather to discuss the many complex security challenges before us – immediate challenges that occupy us all today, but also emerging risks and threats that look set to affect the safety and security of future generations, especially your generation. And there is a key role for NATO in meeting all those challenges, now and into the future.

I know that you will be debating all the challenges facing the Alliance actively – and I expect – also passionately over the next few days. So to help you frame your debates, let me highlight for you what I believe will be the four main themes at our Summit this week.

First, the Summit will reaffirm that NATO’s operations are vital to our security – and that they are successful. We will reaffirm our determination to help ensure that extremism and terrorist training camps never come back to Afghanistan. Indeed, we see a secure, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan in a stable region as vital not only for Afghans but for our own security as well.

We will make it clear that NATO’s military presence in Kosovo will continue throughout the current critical phase.

To demonstrate that our objective for Afghanistan is not only a NATO objective but shared by many others, our ISAF partners will join us here in Bucharest, together with President Karzai.

The presence of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon,, HR Solana and EU Commission President Barroso and key officials from other international organisations will also

emphasise the need for a Comprehensive Approach by the entire International Community. Afghanistan is a common challenge – one that we can only meet if we act in common. And that will be one clear message coming out of our Summit this week.

Second, our Summit will demonstrate that, notwithstanding our key role in Afghanistan, consolidating Europe remains a major task for NATO. I expect that the Summit will open NATO's door to several new members from Southeast Europe, and that will be a major headline. But we will also strengthen our ties with other countries in the Balkans and the Euro-Atlantic area more generally, including Ukraine and Georgia. And that will also help to make our continent more stable and secure.

Third, we will demonstrate that partnership not only with other institutions, but also with other nations, is essential for NATO's success. NATO's Euro-Atlantic partners have all been invited to take part in our Summit. We will also have separate meetings with our two special partners, Russia and Ukraine. We want to further engage our partners in meeting today's security challenges together with us. But we also want to think creatively about extending NATO's network of partnerships to nations outside the Euro-Atlantic area. We live in an age with global challenges, and our partnerships must reflect this.

Finally, our Summit will demonstrate that NATO is working to address new risks and threats, such as cyber attacks, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and the disruption of our energy supplies. These are some of the emerging challenges that I mentioned earlier – and which will shape the security environment over the coming years. We realise that we need to act now to develop a common transatlantic approach to these emerging challenges. And that there is simply no better venue for developing such an approach than NATO.

Summit meetings are important opportunities for our Heads of State and Government to review the challenges before NATO, and to give direction on how those challenges should be met.

But we all know that, if we want to ensure the long-term relevance and effectiveness of NATO, Summits alone are not enough. We realise that we need the support of our publics. And that we rely in particular on the active interest of a successor generation of future leaders who understand the challenges before us, and NATO's ability, but also its limitations, in helping to meet those challenges.

That is why I am so pleased that you have come here this week to represent that successor generation.

I am especially pleased because you have gathered here not simply to observe our Summit, but to develop your own views on today's security challenges -- and to discuss those views not just among yourself, but also with Alliance leaders and senior representatives from partner nations and organisations, whom I will encourage to come here and meet with you.

I was also interested to see that you will be making use of the latest in communications technology, such as blogs and webcasts, and that you will create a Young Atlanticist Network. That should not only help to make your meeting here this week even more

dynamic, but create useful contacts for many years to come. It will be a valuable experiment in modern communications and public diplomacy also for NATO. And as we look ahead to future meetings, especially our 60th Anniversary Summit next year, perhaps there will be lessons from your experiences that we can usefully draw upon.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,

We live in a time of momentous change and complex challenges -- and I am afraid that your generation will not have more of a holiday from history than mine. How do we finish Europe's unfinished business? How do we enhance our ability to deal with weak and failing states? How do we integrate important new players like India and China in our global system? How do we come to grips with challenges such as climate change, migration and the scarcity of natural resources -- which all have important security dimensions?

How do we handle the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in a way that doesn't lead to a catastrophic world?

My generation is working hard to address all those challenges, including at our NATO Summit here in Bucharest. But there are no blueprints or magic formulas. The answers that we will come up with will be temporary rather than permanent, so we will need to adjustment or perhaps even change them radically further down the line. And of course, we will also face new challenges that we have not yet even thought about.

This is where you will need to be prepared to take over. This 21st century is your century. You are the leaders of tomorrow. Your generation will produce the politicians, the thinkers and the do-ers to meet the challenges of the future. Many of you will work in international companies and organisations -- maybe some of you will end up working at NATO. And perhaps, who knows, one of you will even end up as NATO Secretary General.

How you will approach the challenges of the future is up to you. But I am certain that your generation, just like my own, will come to realise that NATO is a tremendous achievement, and a precious asset -- a very flexible instrument that can deliver real security in new ways and in new places. And we will demonstrate that at our Summit here in Bucharest this week.

I thank you for your attention, and look forward to your questions. Who would like to go first?

Sursa: NATO