

**CENTER FOR STRATEGIC  
AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CSIS)**

**PRESS BRIEFING: THE NATO SUMMIT**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2006**

**9:30-10:35 A.M.**

**CSIS**

**MODERATOR:**

**H. ANDREW SCHWARTZ,  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL RELATIONS,  
CSIS**

**PANEL:**

**SIMON SERFATY,  
BRZEZINSKI CHAIR IN GLOBAL SECURITY AND  
GEOSTRATEGY, AND SENIOR ADVISOR,  
EUROPE PROGRAM, CSIS**

**GENERAL JOSEPH W. RALSTON (USAF, RET.),  
DISTINGUISHED SENIOR ADVISOR, CSIS,  
FORMER US SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER IN EUROPE**

**JULIANNE SMITH,  
SENIOR FELLOW, AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR,  
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM,  
CSIS**

**MICHELE FLOURNOY, SENIOR ADVISOR,  
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM, CSIS**

*Transcript by:  
Federal News Service  
Washington, D.C.*

H. ANDREW SCHWARTZ: Good morning, and welcome to the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Our briefing today focuses on the upcoming NATO summit, and we have several of Washington's top experts on hand here with us today to discuss it.

I would especially like to welcome General Joseph Ralston. General Ralston is a distinguished senior advisor to CSIS, and of course was the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe from the year 2000 until 2003.

We are also fortunate to have with us Dr. Simon Serfaty. Dr. Serfaty is a CSIS senior advisor to our Europe program and holds the Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Chair in Global Strategy and Geostrategy at CSIS.

Julianne Smith is a CSIS senior fellow and serves as a deputy program director to our international security program. Julia is the principal author of this report that you find in front of you, "Transforming NATO: A Framework for the NATO Summit."

And last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Michele Flournoy for being with us this morning. Michele is a CSIS senior advisor, and is a former principal deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Strategy and Threat Reduction.

And we're pleased that you could be with us here today. And with that, I will turn it over to Dr. Serfaty.

DR. SIMON SERFATY: Thank you, Andy. I believe I have been given between five and 10 minutes; I'll take eight of them, and I'll make three observations very quickly. My partners in the panel will really take care of the specifics much more thoroughly than I would.

First, with regard to the summit, the significance of this summit – how to go about gauging that significance – it's not going to be an enlargement summit. That is what happened in Riga in the end and Prague in the end. It is not going to be a transition summit either. To an extent, that is what happened in Istanbul. It is not truly going to be a transformation summit. I don't believe that enough time has been invested in preparing all of the specifics on the agenda that would help shape it truly as the transformation summit it was to be.

In fact, frankly, this NATO summit is significant because it is going to be more than just about NATO; it is about the renewal of the alliance, the re-founding of the Atlantic idea. There is no question that on both sides of the Atlantic and throughout Europe, there is a great deal of misgivings, ambivalence about the condition of the alliance and the relevance of the organization said to be astray.

This is going to be a leadership, better yet, a legacy summit – 26 likeminded states really setting up a blind date with a history to the extent that they will have to set the stage for developing an alliance and an organization in ways that we confirm their relevance by the time they meet in Berlin in April of 2009. What I want to see coming out of that summit is a series of benchmarks that will enable us to see the extent to which in fact that date – (chuckles) – will be met in Berlin two-years-plus from now.

That's my first point. The second point is about the transatlantic relationship, most generally. Much has happened since Istanbul. That is quite clear. And to an extent, the alliance is more cohesive and appears to be more cohesive than it was then. Personal tensions have receded. In Istanbul, it seemed that hardly anybody wanted to speak to anybody else unless forced to do so. There is no more talk of power and weakness – our power and weakness of the Europeans; that logic was fatally flawed on historic and theoretical, and frankly has been set aside.

The philosophy of alliance now prevails over the philosophy of coalitions, and I think that is very important. There has been convergence over issues, not only between Americans and Europeans, but amongst Europeans as well. And that in turn has led to more effective cooperation between both sides of the Atlantic. And all of this is for the better obviously. And that developed over the past couple of years. And yet, that should not be an invitation to complacency.

I think that however much of a long way NATO has come over the past two years, over the past five, six years, in fact since the early 2000s, the alliance itself has fallen behind. The alliance is fragile on most specific issues that are currently on the agenda. Conditions have worsened since the last time there was such a NATO summit. I did not dwell on that, Iran or Iraq, Afghanistan, Middle East, elsewhere. We are worse off than we were two years ago.

The public appreciation in Europe of President Bush has gotten worse, interestingly enough, over the past two years in most European states. Governments in Europe are weak, and frankly, most of them are getting weaker. Over the next six months, two of the leading heads of state government in France and the U.K. will be gone. Two of them within the next year may be under some kind of internal political assault in Germany and Italy. And two, frankly, Poland and Spain, are facing uncertain conditions.

The EU is stalled. This is a deep crisis that has developed – institutional crisis within the EU. And perhaps most of all, the unipolar moment that prevailed two years ago is over. American power and leadership, and reputation I think has been wasted in Iraq, and this creates all kinds of new tensions, how to deal with the ascending cross power, what to do with Russia, for example, which will not be attending the meeting Riga and that is what I put such emphasis on the need to renew the alliance and to re-found the Atlantic idea.

I put a paper. There are a number of the specific suggestions that are being made – and simply singled out three of them in one minute. We need a more mature relationship between NATO and the EU as part of the re-founding the Atlantic idea. And I believe that this is also a concept that appears in much of the preparation that has done in anticipation of this summit. We need to have a sense of how those two institutions are going to work together. And this is not just a U.S.-NATO-initiative; it will have to be an EU initiative as well. And the summit in March of 2007 for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the union would be a good moment to start this process.

We need, second, to commit to the preparation of a new strategic concept that would help restore a fading consensus at 26 amongst the allies. And it would be a good thing to use the next meeting, next summit meeting in April of 2009 as a target date for the development of that concept. And third and last, we keep the door – we need to keep the door open on the future enlargements. Decisions will not be made this time around, but we should keep the door open for such enlargement, while keeping the door closed, incidentally, and this idea that we would go seeking global partners now over the next year or so. I think my eight minutes are up, and, first we'll have to deal with Afghanistan. (Laughter.)

MR. SCHWARTZ: Thank you very much, Simon. And with that, we will turn it over to General Ralston.

GENERAL JOSEPH RALSTON: Okay, thank you. The 2006 Riga summit was originally built as the transformation summit. This was the summit in which the leaders of all 26 NATO nations would come together and chart a course for the alliance to meet the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

But in the months leading up to that summit, a number of factors have intervened to lower the expectations coming out of it. Internally, some member states remain deeply divided over NATO's post-Cold-War purpose, and the nature of the alliance's roles and missions beyond Europe. And externally, NATO finds itself involved in what is the most substantial and consequential military operations of its history, maybe not in terms of numbers, because in Bosnia, remember, we had 60,000 troops on the ground, and in Kosovo, after a 78-day air campaign, you had 57,000 troops on the ground, and you can say, well, there is only 30,000 troops in Afghanistan, but it is a much longer supply chain, it's a much more difficult mission, and it is quite substantial.

When NATO assumed command of ISAF in August of 2003, it represented a watershed in alliance history, as that was the first mission that was conducted outside of the Euro-Atlantic area. As I have said, alliances got 30,000 troops on the ground today working to defeat not only the insurgency, but also undertaking large-scale reconstruction projects. And NATO leaders hoped that this mission would serve as an indicator of the alliance's visibility and effectiveness in working problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

But the mission has posed problems for the alliance. It has highlighted capability shortfalls; first among them, airlift. Now, in fairness, the alliance has reacted to that, and

for the first time in its history has now agreed to have a common airlift fleet. It is small starting out, but at least it's a step in the right direction. There were problems in getting additional troops. General Jones needed an additional 2500 troops, and you would think that that would have been impossible for the alliance to come up with to hear them. Helicopters – things that – there are helicopters in the alliance, but there was a reluctance – after then nations had signed up to the mission, there was a reluctance to come up with the assets that were needed to do the job.

We have found problems with national caveats. Now, national caveats are nothing new; I had to deal with national caveats in Kosovo and in Bosnia. But there was more of a willingness on the part of the nations to work the problem then. I had – each of the chiefs of defense came to me and says if you ever need my forces in a mission of which they are prevented from doing, all you have to do is give me a call and I will make sure that you have the forces that you need. That doesn't exist today.

Events in Afghanistan are reaching a critical juncture, and European politics and perceptions, as well as U.S. commitments in Iraq may prevent NATO from getting the assets necessary to ensure victory. The resurgence of the Taliban and the weakness of the central government in Afghanistan will continue to threaten global security without aggressive support from the West, particularly NATO and the European Union.

And I think I would say that Afghan is far from a lost cause, but I will tell you that the problems are substantial. If you look at the objectives that were outlined for Afghanistan, the capture of Osama bin Laden hasn't happened, the destruction of al Qaeda hasn't happened, even though there has been a lot of disruption, the capture of Mullah Omar hasn't happened. How about the institution of democracy? While there has been progress, 40 percent of the provinces have no role in the government. That is not what we think of as a functioning democracy.

And most important to me, the reconstruction – there is so much to be done in terms of reconstructing Afghanistan after 20-plus years of war, and to me, that is something that I think has to come out of Riga loud and clear that there has to be a bigger role on the part of the nations in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. It is impossible to have a military victory in Afghanistan by itself. And so the support of the nations in terms of civil projects in the reconstruction I think is critically important. And we urge the NATO members to renew their commitment to their mission in Afghanistan and use the approaching winter weather, when fighting usually subsides to develop additional strategies to bridge the stabilization and the reconstruction gap. Thank you.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Thank you, General Ralston. With that, we will turn it over to Julianne Smith.

JULIANNE SMITH: Thank you very much. Good morning. We were in Europe, Michelle and I, a couple of weeks ago launching the report in Brussels and Oslo, and we had a lot of questions about, well, what will be the headline, what would be the

main focus in Riga. And I think the general just talked about, for me, one of the main issues that will really overshadow the summit; that is Afghanistan.

But for me, there is also another issue, and I think the alliance will be haunted by one single question in Riga, and that is what is NATO for? Is the alliance going to return to its original purpose of collective defense, and eventually come to view Afghanistan as some sort of exception or will they view Afghanistan as a precedent that will lay the foundation for some sort of global NATO with a more ambitious role for itself that goes well beyond its traditional mission of collective defense.

NATO has had a very hard time answering this question over the last year. It struggled with it not just the last year, probably more than that. And depending on what country you ask, you can get very different answers to those questions with lots of gray space in between.

So I just wanted to go over a couple of the issues and a couple of the initiatives that will be launched in Riga, and show you how some of this schizophrenia is going to actually play out at the summit.

So the first thing I wanted to mention is this document called the comprehensive political guidance, the CPG. NATO tasked itself with writing this strategic document in 2004, and it was look for an answer to that question that I mentioned. It was also looking for a way for members to firm up the commitments they had made prior to developing more expeditionary capabilities.

And when you read the document, it will become public in Riga. This is a document that falls somewhere between rewriting the strategic concept and a very specific defense planning guidance. When you read the document – I had the chance to look at it; it's about five pages in length – very vague – you can kind of find something for everybody in it. So in my mind, it doesn't get at the heart of the question, what is NATO for.

Traditionalists will read the CPG and they will see that inside the document, it essentially says that NATO should put a heavy emphasis on its traditional mission of collective defense, article five. But the globalists, those with a much more ambitious global role, or a vision for the alliance in the next decade or so, will also note that there is a sentence in there that says the alliance should prepare for a wide range of missions, a wide range of missions that range from peacekeeping, humanitarian, all the way up to high-intensity combat. So, again, this document I don't think gets us at the answer to the question, what is NATO for.

Now, on the question of enlargement – Simon mentioned it briefly – there are essentially two camps inside the alliance right now. There are those that are starting to question the rewards and benefits of enlargement. They believe or they view many of the aspirant countries to be security consumers, and that they worry that further rounds of the enlargement will ultimately weaken the alliance. The other camp sees it the other way.

They say, okay, enlargement has been difficult; it's been challenging to fold new members into the alliance, but ultimately, at the end of the day, the benefits outweigh any of the challenges or difficulties associated with enlargement.

So which camp will prevail in Riga? I think the skeptics are going to prevail in Riga. You're going to see a vague statement on enlargement. It's going to be a strong indication that the door to enlargement remains open, but we're not going to see any specific commitments made there. Specific countries will not be named. But I think in the long term, the proponents of enlargement will win out. And in the next summit, in 2008, 2009, you're going to see this process reinvigorated, and we're probably going to see the Adriatic charter nations, if not others, eventually folded into the alliance.

On partnerships, this is another question where we have seen a lot of debate inside the alliance in recent months. There is a question of what to do with countries like Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and trying to figure out what to do with countries that are interested in close partnerships and relationships with the alliance. And these are countries that honestly are already committing militarily and financially to the mission in Afghanistan.

Now, again, you have got two points of view on this. You have got those that think we should find formal structures to bring these members into the alliance, short of a security guarantee. And then you have those that are very uncomfortable of the thought of pushing NATO into a more political direction that would bring a more global focus to the alliance.

So I think, like other issues, you'll see a compromise. There will be some global partnerships initiative launched; it will be modest – probably won't be much more than joint training, but again, in 2008, 2009, we may see this move forward in some new directions.

A couple of other quick capability initiatives that will be launched at the summit: The general mentioned this new strategic airlift capability. The alliance is going to commit itself to buying four C-17s by 2009, which is very important – a very important step forward. NATO has about two feet of documents that have committed itself to improving its expeditionary capabilities, but the alliance has been very short on action in the last couple of decades. So those of us who have been following particularly European military capabilities in the last couple of years are excited to see this initiative go through. It's modest, but it's a good start.

Another thing I wanted to mention is the NATO response force. The alliance committed itself to developing this force a couple of years ago. It will be declared fully operational at the summit, which means it will get up to a capacity of 25,000 troops. This is not really breaking news. The NRF has been operational, at least semi-operational for the last couple of years. It has already been used twice, both in response to Hurricane Katrina, and in response to the earthquake in Pakistan in 2005.

Two other things I wanted to mention: The United States, Norway, and Italy have proposed that the alliance undertake more training and create some sort of training initiative in the Middle East where the alliance would train a couple hundred of personnel from the region and areas such as defense planning, budgetary issues, civil military. This initiative is not without controversy. I think the compromise here is the alliance will task itself to look into doing more training, but it ultimately comes back to this question, what is NATO for. Should the alliance be in the business of training? Again, depending on who you ask, you get different answers.

And then last but not least, there will be some tasking of the alliance to look into the question of stabilization and reconstruction. Every member of NATO knows that we have to do a better job of winning the peace and that today's operations do not end when combat ends. Everyone understands that. The question is, how can NATO improve its ability to undertake stabilization and reconstruction missions?

Lots of proposals have been put on the table. Because there is still some debate about how to do this particular task inside the alliance, NATO will task itself to look into it with the hope of getting at the heart of this question later down the road.

So as you can see, just to conclude, I think there will be initiatives and new issues addressed in Riga. They will be very timid though. I think you have got some proposals that are new but not so substantial, and you have some that are substantial, but not so new. And I think this is a real shame because in my, as Simon pointed out, I think this is a critical juncture. I think the alliance is in need of bold ideas and rigorous debate, and I hope that we can work towards that goal for 2008 or 2009.

MICHELE FLOURNOY: Okay, I'm going to be very brief. You never want to stand between a room full of reporters and the Q&A period for too long, so I am going to be very brief. My job is to just draw your attention to what is not going to be on the agenda at Riga. There are a couple of really – several really critical issues that I would call the elephants that are going to be sitting in the room at Riga that many people are going to be trying not to acknowledge their presence. But these are critical issues that NATO must address to remain relevant and viable in the future.

The first has been referenced here several times already, and that is the need for NATO to grapple with this question of the alliance's basic purpose, and the mechanism for doing that is a new strategic concept. The alliance is relying on a concept that predates 9/11 and Madrid and London, and the world in which we find ourselves today.

The alliance needs to open up that box and look at developing a new consensus on the balance it's going to strike between its traditional article five collective defense missions on the one hand, and these new missions that are being put on its plate, be it stability operations, counterterrorism, counter-proliferation, and the like. It needs to have a fundamental debate and discussion, and a new concept about its roles and missions in the new world that we are in.



Politics and personalities in a number of capitals, particularly Paris and Washington, have prevented this discussion from happening to date. But the alliance really can't afford to kick this can down the road too much forward. This needs to be an issue that it tackles before its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit. So that is the first elephant.

The second elephant is NATO has to play – step up to the plate, in my view, to play a much more critical role in shepherding Europe down a path of greater defense integration. When you look at NATO's ambitions, its stated ambitions, in terms of the kinds of capabilities it believes it needs to deal with new challenges, they talk about rapidly deployable forces, forces able to deploy out of area, and sustain multiple simultaneous missions, forces to be highly interoperable and operate across the spectrum of operations.

And yet, if you actually look at the capabilities resident in the various NATO member country forces today, particularly on the European side, there is a huge gap between those stated ambitions and the capabilities that are actually existing today. At the same time, many of the European nations, particularly the smaller and medium-sized powers are hitting the budgetary wall. They are at a point where their spending on defense is highly constrained. They have cut onesies and twosies out of several capability areas, and they are now – you have chiefs of defense across Europe making hard choices about what capability do I give up because I am going to go sub-critical in a given area.

Now, those are really tough choices. And if NATO wants to be viable as an alliance 20 years down the road, we can't have nations make optimizing those decisions on a purely national basis. NATO needs to be looking at this as an alliances of what can we collectively put into the field, what can we collectively do in the future to meet these challenges.

And there are several strategies for doing this; having a common vision is one, much more cooperative approaches to research development procurement, a pulling of resources – you see the Nordic countries doing this where they have common systems. They are pulling the training logistic support and so forth to be able to afford more capability. And in the cases of some of the smaller countries, role specialization, where they simply say I can't afford to maintain a full spectrum force. So, as the Czechs have done, for example, I am going to be NATO's expert on CBW defense, for example. But NATO has a critical role to play in helping to orchestrate that movement towards greater integration if the alliance is going to be viable militarily over the long term.

The last thing I'll highlight is something that Simon, in particular, mentioned, and I'll just underline it here, and that is critical to NATO's success in the future are its strategic partners. And the two I would highlight for you are the EU and Russia. And both of those relationships are in trouble right now, speaking frankly. The NATO-EU relationship has a great deal to work out. These are two organizations that need each other to be successful. They need to figure out how to work together. And despite the

fact that they have 19 members in common, it has been very difficult for them to find that way of working together.

I think the short term we can encourage greater dialogue between the North Atlantic Council and the EU's Political and Security Committee. We can encourage practical cooperation in a number of areas, but this is a strategic issue for both organizations. Again, politics have gotten in the way of pragmatism, and it's hurting both organizations, and it's hurting the transatlantic community. And this is an area where we have got to see some fundamental spade work and some progress between now and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit, but we shouldn't expect much at Riga.

The second example is NATO-Russia. There have been difficulties in this regard as well, but as difficult as it is sometimes to manage that partnership, Russia is simply too essential and too critical in too many areas for us to leave that partnership aside. It's critical on counterterrorism; it's critical on non-proliferation; it's critical in a number of areas.

And I think here NATO has a vehicle to help, and that is the NATO-Russia Council. That council has never really lived up to its original potential or the original vision for it. It has become a talk shop where people come and read their prepared talking points and then go home. It needs to be revitalized to be a serious forum where NATO countries and Russia bring their views and work together to try to find areas of common interest, and areas where they can expand and deepen their cooperation.

So, again, a couple of elephants that will be in the room, that will be not be talked about at Riga, but as you look down the road more strategically at NATO's future, these are the issues that will need to be addressed. Thank you.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Thank you very much, Michele. And with that, we'll open it up to questions. If you have a microphone near you, and you could speak into the microphone, that will help, and also please identify yourself and your news organization. Tom?

Q: Thanks, Andrews, and thanks to the panel for an interesting discussion. I am Thom Shanker of The New York Times.

As you look at the national caveats in Afghanistan, the commanders say are absolutely hobbling the mission, do you view the glass as half-empty or half-full? Is it half-empty in that NATO is now proven to be a two-tier military alliance with a warrior class of nations capability and willing of full spectrum combat and other class – dwarf, junior varsity, or whatever you want to call them who simply won't? Or is there an opportunity that this experience will raise the level of combat proficiency and prove to the populations of the caveat countries that they can enter this without those caveats? Thank you.

GEN. RALSTON: Let me try that one first. And I fall into the category of the half-full glass more than the half-empty. For background, let me go back to NATO's recent history, and I'm talking from 1995 on. Prior to 1995, NATO essentially would have an annual exercise for a month where people would come together and use NATO procedures, and then they would go back and they would do things in their own national way for the other 11 months of the year.

That changed in December of '95 with the mission in Bosnia because once that happened, now you had not only the NATO nations at that time of 16, later 19, then 26, but really 34 nations under NATO command, many of them partnership nations and non-partner nations, all working 365 days a year, 24 hours a day using NATO procedures, and they didn't revert back to their national way of doing things. When Kosovo came along, it was much, much easier because of the, by that time, four years' experience that they had had of continuously using NATO procedures. And when Afghanistan came along with ISAP, even before NATO took over, what did the nations do? They used NATO procedures.

So we have seen a maturation in the past 11 years of I think NATO today far more combat ready and far more cohesive than it was pre-1995. And I think as the nations encounter the high-intensity conflict of Afghanistan, there will in fact be a positive outcome that comes from that.

Q: Tom Raum, Associated Press. Just to get it off the table, will there be any – for anyone up here – will there be any discussion? Is there a NATO role of any sort in Iraq besides – someone mentioned joint training exercises for the broader Middle East? Is that too much to bite off?

MR. SERFATY: I strongly doubt it. The difference is between most of the Europeans and the U.S. on the Iraqi issue remains still very vivid. They just sense on the other side of the Atlantic, especially amongst those who led the coalition of the discontent, if you will, that in essence they were what, that this was not just the mismanaged operations; it was the wrong decision.

And I cannot imagine that on that basis there would be enough of a political consensus within the alliance to bring NATO into the fray. At this particular time, the Europeans are not thinking in terms of going back or going short or going wrong; they are thinking in terms of going wide. That is to say, engage Iran, engage Syria, engage the Palestinians, do other things that will ultimately help you get out of Iraq.

So, no, I don't believe that at this point in time, this is an issue that would help at the summit, but he general and others may disagree on that.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Pam.

Q: Pam Hess with UPI. To follow up on the caveat question, General Ralston, what do you think the United States government or SACEUR should be doing, if anything, to get countries to lift their caveats?

GEN. RALSTON: Well, I think there are a couple of things: number one, bringing it to the table of the political leadership is important. Secondly, it's important to work it, what I will call behind the scenes, the same way that we would have worked it for years. General Jones can go to the chiefs of defense of the offending nations, if that is the right term, and say, look, I really need to have the opportunity to use your forces. If we have a crisis in the middle of the night and you tell me I can't use the forces to do that, then that is obviously counterproductive to the alliance. So I think it needs to be done that way, as well as putting it on the table for the heads of state to have to address.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Great. We'll go to Roger.

Q: Describe what Bush's political strength going into the summit – (off mike) – is there any political effect for Bush going into this conference with his sort of a weakened hand with Democrats capturing Congress?

MR. SERFATY: This sounds to me like a leading question. (Laughter.) But, you know, I would insist on the idea that Bush, President Bush is not the only weak political leader going there. All of them, frankly, or most of them, are rather weak too in their last political lap: Prime Minister Blair, President Chirac, they will be out of there by April or May. Chancellor Merkel come next fall may find some tensions in the context of the coalition government, which by that time will be two years old, and may have at most one year to go, quite frankly. Prodi is still heading 10- to 14-party coalition and would not view this as a picture of stability. The Poles, the Spaniards have problems of their own.

So I think that you do have a great deal of political weakness, which makes it all the more difficult to make some of the more demanding decisions related to this renewal of the alliance of which we spoke.

MR. SCHWARTZ: I think, Julie, you wanted to add to that?

MS. SMITH: Yeah, I would just add one thing. I think a lot of times when we go into these summits, folks like to try and take the temperature of the transatlantic relationship and say what is going on in the United States versus what is going on inside Europe, and how will that play out in terms of transatlantic tension. But I think this year, what's really interesting is to have a look at the tension inside Europe, or actually between Canada and some other European countries.

I mean, there are a minority of countries handling the majority of asks on the ground in Afghanistan. So you have the Canadians, the Dutch, and the Brits doing most of the heavy lifting in the South. That has created a lot of tension with the countries in other corners of Afghanistan that, frankly, are much more secure, and there have been

several requests, for example, put out to the Germans to re-deploy some of their troops to the South. Those calls have been met with deafening silence. I don't think there is any chance that we'll see the Germans re-deploy their troops to the south for many, many political reasons inside German – the German political scene. But what this has done is shift some of the internal heated debates, not from the kind of U.S.-European dynamic to the inter-European dialogue, which has been very interesting compared to past summits.

MR. SCHWARTZ: General Ralston.

GEN. RALSTON: Let me add one thing at the interest of – or the risk of jumping into a political question here. But in your narrow context of the change in leadership in the U.S. House and the Senate very narrowly divided either way, and if you look at how does that affect NATO, I think you will find, at least I would find, Senator Biden will be just as supportive of NATO as Senator Lugar. In the Senate Arms Services Committee, Senator Levin is just as supportive of NATO as was Senator Warner. On the House side, is it Congressman Lantos, I don't know – presumptive – I don't know who it is going to be to do that, but certainly very supportive of NATO. So I don't see a lessening of support at all for NATO with a change in leadership of the House and the Senate.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Chris.

Q: Chris Wernicke. I'm working for the German Daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung. If the colleagues allow, I would like to post two questions, one to General Ralston. General, what would it mean if NATO military fails in Afghanistan. Military I would imply and include failure to combat the drug production over there. And perhaps to Julianne, I have worked for quite some years as a correspondent in Brussels covering NATO as well, and the discussion about what is the use, the sense, the meaning, the mission of NATO was going on all of those years. What you're basically telling us, there is no fundamental understanding, and there is not even a dialogue on this question. Does it imply we only get the answer once Bush is out of the office?

GEN. RALSTON: Well, with regard to your first question, a military failure in Afghanistan would be – I don't know what word to use – catastrophic for the alliance. Now, you mentioned the drug issue. I think that is a legitimate thing for people to debate, is to whether the drug problem and drug eradication is a military mission or not, but it certainly is one of the things that has to be addressed along with reconstruction, drug eradication, as well as the military issues, economic issues. And that is why I think it's so important coming out of this summit that Afghanistan be looked at not as just a military mission for NATO, but all of these other aspects as well.

MS. SMITH: Yeah, you're right. I mean, this debate has been going on really one could say for decades, but I think it has really come to the fore particularly with the mission in Afghanistan because certainly there are certain member states that are deeply uncomfortable with this mission and worry about what trends it's setting for the alliance in the next decade or two.

I think there is multiple reasons why we haven't tackled or really tried to get at the heart of this question. I mean, of course there is in the instinct in the alliance that we shouldn't open up Pandora's box because we'll never get the lid back down, that ultimately when you start a debate, for example, that would be tied to rewriting the strategic concept, you're going to come to all of the sticking points that stand particularly between the United States and Europe on things like multilateralism, on the use of force, on international law, on NATO nuclear policy. I mean, there is all sorts of issues that will come to the fore if we decide to do this.

But I think what we're recognizing is that ultimately it will have to be done. It will be painful, it will be difficult, but it needs to be tackled in the years ahead because it's essentially prohibiting many of these fresh ideas from moving forward. And in terms of the political personalities, sure things might change after '08. We might have us a new – we will have a new face as a new president here in Washington, and that could influence the dialogue in multiple ways.

But I would make the same statement in other national capitals around Europe – Chirac, in particular. I think it's quite clear that Bush and Chirac are not holding hands and walking into the sunset on a future vision for the alliance, and I think we're going to have to see statements on multiple fronts.

But, I mean, to be fair, both sides of the Atlantic have also been rather preoccupied of late. You have the United States with its focus almost exclusively on Iraq, which prevents itself from really getting at the heart of some of these questions. And for Europeans, the question there is what is the future of the EU? What do we do with the constitution? Will there be further rounds of enlargement? There is also preoccupation on that side of the Atlantic.

So, I mean, a lot of things are going to have to shift, but I think ultimately, what we're coming to realize is as painful as this is, it's sitting there on the horizon. And whether it's the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, or hopefully – it's the next – the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I don't know, but it will have to be tackled at some point.

MS. FLOURNOY: I would like to just add two cents on your NATO – what-if-NATO-fails question. I guess I have a hard time imagining failure of Afghanistan or the operation of Afghanistan being military in nature. I mean, I think that if we fail, it will not be because of the military side; it will be a lack of political economic reconstruction effort.

And here is my worry: I believe that this summit meeting is the opportunity for the transatlantic community to come together and to make the political commitment necessary to try to turn Afghanistan around. But I think there will be those at the table who feel that a NATO discussion is not the right place to do that because NATO is about a military alliance, not about these questions of, you know, political engagement, economic investment, assistance and so forth. There will be some who say we should be having that discussion in the EU context.

My fear is that the sort of argument about what is NATO for could actually undermine the critical political discussion and commitment that needs to be made in whatever forum by these same nations that are going to be at the table in order to turn Afghanistan around and make it – and keep it from failing.

MR. SERFATY: I take Michele's point, but on your second question, let me add a footnote. Initially, at the creation, so to speak, in 1949, 12 states got together, formed an alliance, agreed on the set of objectives, and on the basis of that agreement, then built an organization that was designed to provide the 12 member states with the tools needed to fulfill those goals.

Since 1995, in the context of this maturation process to which the general made reference, we have done exactly the reverse. We have recast the organization. We have redesigned, or we are redesigning the toolbox, but there is no agreement truly amongst now the 26 allies as to what those tools are going to be used for, where and how. And when we speak, therefore, of the need to at least initiate the search for a new strategic consensus or strategic concept, I think we attempt to say, hey, NATO is back; NATO is in good shape; but where is the alliance? (Chuckles.) The alliance has fallen behind.

And quite frankly, and one last word, if I may, I think there is no need to wait for every single political leader who has feuded with his partner over the past couple of years to disappear before we engage into that procedure. The follow-on summit to this summit will come up in two parts. Seemingly, in Washington, there is an interest in having a follow-on summit in the fall of 2008, a farewell kind of summit. And then there is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit. I would have disconnected that a bit, and say that we will rebuild the strategic consensus by now thinking in terms of a new Euro-Atlantic community of 32 states comprising all of the member states of NATO and the – (audio break, tape change) – fall of 2008 in anticipation of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Mike.

Q: Mike Abramowitz with The Washington Post. I just want to follow up on Michele's question. What do you think President Bush's objective at the summit is? And do you feel that the agenda that you said you thought should be on the summit for Afghanistan of having a political commitment to the economic and political reconstruction there, do you think that that is in the mind of the administration going into the summit, or is this just, you know, trying to get President Bush through a day-and-a-half of meetings and photo-ops. (Laughter.)

MS. FLOURNOY: No, I think this is very much on the U.S. agenda, trying to get not only NATO to fulfill all of its military commitments, but also to get all of the other member states to make more of a commitment to the long-term success of Afghanistan through economic reconstruction and other forms of assistance. So I think this is very much on the administration's agenda as well.

Q: (Off mike.)

MS. SMITH: Well, I mean, the U.S. has put forward a number of very ambitious proposals leading up to the summit. The United States was the country that put forward the global partnerships concept. Among other countries out there, the United States has been pushing for initiative on stabilization and reconstruction. It certainly pushed through the acquisition of the four C17s. So I think the U.S. has taken a very active role.

As the general mentioned, it has had to scale back some of those ambitions, but I still think, you know, Michele is right. There is going to be a push to get a renewed commitment on Afghanistan, particularly from some of the European countries to do more vis-à-vis reconstruction. I mean, right now you have a situation where Germany is responsible for training the police. Italy is responsible for judicial reform. I think we would like to see a situation where more than a single country is responsible for handling some of those tasks, that there is more institutional involvement there.

MS. FLOURNOY: I think the other issue is that all of the PRTs, the provincial reconstruction teams, are basically being operated or sponsored by individual nations, and they are operating sort of in their own orders without much coordination, without a common vision, without a common set of objectives, without a common approach, or philosophy, et cetera. And you're getting very mixed results as a result. So you're not getting this sort of coherence of support that the Afghanistan government needs.

So I think this is one of those cases that no matter what the original planned agenda was, Afghanistan is going to force its way on to – into the number one slot into the agenda because it is the real, you know, real-world crisis that these countries are dealing with, and that NATO as an alliance is dealing with. And I think people realize, as General Ralston said, the stakes involved, not only for the individual countries, but for the alliance over the long term.

So I think there will be not only sidebar conversations but a lot of direct discussion of this issue.

MS. SCHWARTZ: Sheryl?

Q: Hi. I am Sheryl Stolberg from The New York Times. You spoke about the elephants in the room. I wonder to what extent will Iraq be the elephant in the room, and how will tensions over the war in Iraq affect the business of the summit?

MS. FLOURNOY: I mean, Iraq is another elephant – (chuckles) – maybe the biggest one. (Laughter.) No, and as Simon suggested, it certainly colors countries' perception of one another, of each other's policies and so forth. So I think that is undeniable. And one of the things that is playing out in Afghanistan in this discussion about which countries are willing to commit to what sets of tasks is really a more fundamental debate about how different countries perceive the fight against terrorism and what we need to do to combat terrorism.



And there is some very different perceptions of the threat and very different perceptions of what are the best strategies to use to deal with that threat, and is military force the best way or not. And I think those countries where there is profound internal discussion and debate over that issue, you see them staying more to the north and away from putting their forces into that part of the fight, and others where that debate has been had and they have come to national resolution on this question, you see them in there alongside the U.S. So I think there is a lot of the Afghanistan discussion and challenge that is sort of a microcosm of some of these larger strategic debates that we're talking about.

Q: Just a follow up on the election question. As you mentioned, Simon, there is a sense of I-told-you-so among some of the Europeans on Iraq. And given that President Bush is not just in a sense a lame duck, but also the election was over Iraq, how is this going to affect his ability to accomplish his objectives at the summit?

MR. SERFATY: Well, as I said earlier, this is a matter of collective weakness in the part of the heads of state and government. Some who were most recently elected may seem to be a bit stronger than others. But I don't believe that the – we are still shaped by those personal tensions when it comes to decisions, about which the states of Europe and the U.S. are putting Iraq aside – have converged relative to what was the case at Istanbul.

I think the proposition is that this alliance between the United States and the states of Europe will be either much better off or much worse off by January of 2009 when this kind of political turmoil is competed toward the alliance, as took place in 1978, 1983. It's a total political turnover. And the decisions, therefore, that are being made, will hopefully be shaped by substantive assessments of those issues, as opposed to the past-tense or corrections of who did what to whom, where.

MS. FLOURNOY: If I could just add, on the issue of Afghanistan, I actually think President Bush goes to the summit with a very strong hand, because when you look at what the new democratic leadership of the relevant – of the overall and of the relevant committees on the democratic side, in Congress are calling for, Afghanistan is high on all of their agendas – more attention to Afghanistan, more action in Afghanistan, more help to Afghanistan, let's turn Afghanistan – let's keep – let's stop the backsliding and move forward. I think he has got an extremely strong hand politically on that particular issue if he wants to play it.

Q: Thank you. Howard LaFranchi, Christian Science Monitor.

General, you made a number of points of where you have seen progress since Bosnia, but yet, on Afghanistan, you emphasize the reconstruction, and your hope to see something on that come out of the summit. And I'm wondering what you see – what specifically on reconstruction in Afghanistan you would like to see come out of the summit, and also – but then also what you think is possible.

GEN. RALSTON: Let me go back and contrast a little bit the Bosnian operation in Afghanistan. The huge difference is the European Union was enormously helpful in Bosnia in terms of the reconstruction aid, in terms of the police forces and all that was there. It was a true partnership I think between NATO doing its missing and the European Union really helping enormously, and I don't see that in Afghanistan. And whether the nations as wearing the NATO hat agrees to increase their reconstruction aid, or whether it's done in an EU hat, I don't care; I just think the resources have to be made available, and let's get on with the reconstruction.

MS. SMITH: Can I just –

Q: (Off mike.) So what about the possibility of asking another – or seeking another entity's help to fill the role that the EU did there, say, the United Nations for example.

MS. SMITH: There are several proposals on the table, what to do to improve the stabilization or reconstruction condition, or the role that NATO plays in stabilization, reconstruction. So there is a very ambitious proposal on the table that NATO should develop a stabilization reconstruction force – a little too early to move forward on that, so that will be on the backburner. That came forward from National Defense University here in town.

Another proposal – NATO should create stability teams that can be deployed on short notice to undertake these types of missions, similar to the NDU concept, but not quite so ambitious. And then there are those that say, well, all we can do is just reorganize our forces and be prepared in the future for these types of missions. And then some say all we can really do as an alliance is just coordinate better with other institutions, but even that is controversial. France, in particular, is very worried about a coordinating role that NATO would take on, whether it would be coordinating action with the EU, U.N. or World Bank.

So none of these – we're not going to see concrete results on any of these initiatives. They have all been floated. Again, I think the alliance will task itself to look into some of these initiatives. In the short term, though, NATO has already convened a group with the World Bank and the EU, put everybody around the table, and said what can we do looking forward.

I have seen the secretary general in recent weeks put out strong calls for the European Union to really pull its socks up and get going on the reconstruction task. But if the EU's not going to jump in, certainly there are calls for others, either in a national capacity, as the Germans are already doing on the ground, or the World Bank, the U.N., the OSC, there are lots of other opportunities. But the fact of the matter is, while the military component has its problems, it's really the reconstruction that's the softer side, the soft underbelly really that is failing right now.

MR. SCHWARTZ: We have time for a couple of more.

Q: Desmond Butler with the Associated Press.

This is directed at whoever wants to answer it. How far on the backburner is talks about expansion?

MS. SMITH: The question of enlargement, NATO enlargement? Well, I mean, like I said, there is going to be an indication at the summit that the door remains open. And I think that is important. And I'm personally glad to see that statement. It could have played out otherwise. But we're not going to see Ukraine, we're not going to see Georgia, we are not going to see the Adriatic charter members, no other non-NATO members have been invited. This is not going to be a summit that focuses on enlargement, but, again, long term, I think this will continue to move forward.

Now, everyone is taking kind of a deep breath because of the very tense political situation, security situation on the ground in Georgia. The Ukraine has essentially pulled itself out of the debate, perhaps temporarily, and the Adriatic charter countries, nations, are kind of on standby right now. And I think there has been strong signals to those three countries that it is less about them and more about the alliance, but that they will get there.

So, I mean, Georgia got a little bit of a plus up. When the foreign ministers were in New York for the U.N. General Assembly meeting recently, Georgia was granted intensified dialogue, which is a nice tip of the hat towards Georgia to say we haven't forgotten you; here is some love and affection, but we'll get back to you, and we'll leave it at that.

So I don't think the process of enlargement is dead. I think it has gone through a period where it has been battered and bruised a little bit because of these internal debates, but I think we'll see enlargement back on the agenda. And from what we can tell, President Bush feels very strongly that this has to be one of the core parts of the '08 summit.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Thank you all for coming this morning. We really appreciate it. And there will be a transcript of this event put out later this afternoon. Thanks again for coming, and talk to you soon.

(END)