CENTER FOR
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THE STATE WE'LL BE IN:
THE ROLE FOR NATO IN FUTURE CONFLICT

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MR. : Ladies and Gentlemen, ladies and gentlemen could I have your attention? We are going to start the program in just a few minutes, so if everybody could take their seats, that would be much appreciated. We will not be able to start the program until everybody takes their seats, thank you.

(Pause.)

JOHN HAMRE: Good morning everybody, my name is John Hamre. I'm the president here at CSIS and it's great to have all of you here, and let me just say a very warm welcome to John Hutton. We're delighted to have him here. It's hard to think of a time where problems have been more fertile and we're now having to confront them. Fortunately, we confront them with an ally and a friend, and I mean that not just about the United Kingdom, I mean that about John Hutton. He is a very good friend of the United States.

That doesn't mean he agrees with us all the time. He's had his very spirited way of telling us when we're wrong and we need that, too. But overwhelmingly, he comes to this exchange between our countries with just a very profound respect and affection for the colonies, so we'd like to thank you for that, John. This is a time of a remarkable set of issues in front of us. Obviously, we have a future that we're going to be crafting together about the way ahead in Afghanistan. We've got a NATO 60th anniversary summit that's coming up where we need to – we're going to spend a lot of time celebrating what the past was about, but the question is, what the hell is the future?

Okay, you know, we've got to figure that out. And both of us are wrestling with economies that are struggling at a time when we have very pressing defense needs. So this is a time of really quite significant importance for both us, and we're lucky to have a man of this talent and caliber who is leading the defense establishment in the U.K. and to help us think through these things together. I'm not going to dwell on John's resume; you can all look at that. It's just to say that he comes to this with a deep seasoning of political and substantive experience in senior levels in the United Kingdom in the government, and at a time when more than ever, in our country, his country, we're needing to find ways to connect the public to the larger defense issues of the day.

It's easy for that to get lost; this is why we want politicians to be running our government, because they know how to connect it. If we were to leave it to bureaucrats like me, we wouldn't make that connection. So it's a great, great honor that we have him here today. We've had a great opportunity this morning to have a lively discussion, and I look forward to hearing him now and sharing all of that with you. So ladies and gentlemen without further delay I introduce to you the Right Honorable John Hutton, Secretary of State.

(Applause.)

JOHN HUTTON: John, thank you very much indeed for that very generous and warm introduction. Can I start by saying what a very great honor it is, and a privilege for me to be here this morning to talk to you all about the future of the North Atlantic Alliance. For all of my lifetime, NATO has provided, I think, an absolutely essential shield behind which the freedoms that we all enjoy today could be nurtured and, on occasions, defended. NATO itself was born out of the service and the sacrifice of previous generations – men and women, who were prepared to pay the ultimate price to secure the defeat of tyranny and dictatorship – who, when they needed to, all stood up for freedom and democracy, the values of tolerance, respect for others, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the right to life itself.

NATO was a bulwark; without it, the freedoms my father and millions of others like him on both sides of the Atlantic fought so hard to defend would have perished from the face of the earth. Throughout its existence, we can say without doubt or hesitation, that NATO has been a force for good in the world. The events of the last 20 years in Europe, and the end of the Cold War in particular, have, as we all know, changed many of the old parameters that have defined our concepts of security. My generation, that had it so easy, who benefited so much from the efforts of those who defeated fascism and faced down the threat of communism, today we face a new set of challenges.

NATO, today, must justify itself again, to a new generation who have known nothing but peace and a united Europe, but who do recognize, I believe, that our values and freedoms are once again under attack and who want to understand how we can best defend ourselves today from these new threats – threats that this time do not come exclusively from enemies in hostile countries that challenge our borders, but instead, often originate in a hostile ideology, that now, today respects no frontiers and harbors no moral compulsion.

A generation that is alive to the danger posed by the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and wants to know how these threats can best be overcome. A generation that wants to make sure that the freedoms we have inherited that we, I think at times, take for granted, can once again be passed on to those who have come after us. And as we celebrate all of NATO's many triumphs over the last 60 years, I think we must once again make the case for our alliance and the North Atlantic bonds that have kept us so closely together through thick and thin, ever since the Washington treaty was signed in 1949.

And one other thing is clear to me when I talk to my own children about these very same issues: The Cold War is as remote to them as the Munich crisis was to my generation. Of course, we should never forget the debt Europe owes to the Atlantic alliance, and to the United States in particular, for basing a quarter of a million troops in our continent and offering us a nuclear guarantee, that at the end of the day, was prepared to sacrifice Philadelphia for Paris or Brooklyn for Berlin.

Yet NATO's claim to relevance today, and I believe it to be a strong and convincing one, must have its origins not in how we dealt with the Cold War, but in how we adapt and must continue to adapt to the realities of the new threats that we face. NATO adapted first, by reaching out and stabilizing Central and Eastern Europe, nourishing a new movement for

freedom and democracy, and by beginning the process of engagement and enlargement that has helped mold today's Europe.

It is a chapter of NATO's history that it can be rightly proud of, equal, I think, to many of its great achievements. NATO adapted by using its unique military capabilities as a tool, an essential tool, for ending the bloody crisis in Bosnia and Kosovo and bringing peace to the Balkans – something, again, that NATO's many critics said it couldn't do. We showed the opposite was in fact the case, that when the right type and amount of force, combined with a willingness to deploy it and clear political resolve, when they come together, it is possible to achieve our common security goals.

And perhaps most significantly, in 2001, NATO came to America's aid, on the day after 9/11. Today, its missions extend far beyond our own borders; fighting extremism and terrorism in Afghanistan, training security forces in Iraq and helping the EU and coalition forces counter piracy of the coast of Somalia. All of these tasks that we are doing today would have been inconceivable 20 years ago. They have required political vision and courage to take on, strategic patience to season through, and they've taken some Europeans and some Americans, even, to parts of the world their forefathers had never been. And they've changed fundamentally and forever, I think, the nature of the North Atlantic alliance.

But as we all know, past achievements are no guarantees of future success. It was the right that NATO went out of area rather than out of business. But today, it needs an even more radical transformation still; an ability to anticipate and respond to new threats; an agility to mold its organization to the times in which we live. NATO has to change because the challenges it faces are changing. Insurgency in Afghanistan, or a cyber attack on Eastern Europe require very different responses than an attack from a tank army or a pack of nuclear submarines.

Implementing a comprehensive approach to Afghanistan demands cooperation with other institutions, from the United Nations to the European Union to the World Bank, in a way that Cold War warriors, could only marvel at. Building and maintaining consensus on discretionary non-Article V operations and ambiguous threats requires diplomatic skills and consultative processes profoundly different form the old certainties of the Cold War.

I've been following the debate here, led by Secretary Gates, about the changing nature of modern warfare and I've admired the ability of the United States military to put new theory rapidly into practice on the ground. This debate is enormously important; I think it must become a trans-Atlantic one that informs, guides and directs NATO's new strategic concept, because this, perhaps, is the greatest challenge for the armed forces, not just of the United States but for every member of the alliance.

I know that we all have a long distance to travel on the journey to ensuring that the balance of our own armed forces reflects modern needs. That is why I was pleased to agree with Secretary Gates yesterday, that the U.K. and the U.S. would undertake a joint piece of work to understand the lessons from Afghanistan, what it tells us about the characteristics of future conflict and what it means for our bilateral defense cooperation in the future. Re-orientating

organizations as large as complex as the military, their doctrine, acquisition programs, intelligence and civilian capacity, will take a huge amount of focus, leadership and persistence.

Now I believe this is the work that must be deepened, accelerated and integrated as a matter of priority into NATO's command and operational structures. But I have a sense, too, that NATO sometimes does work better in practice than it does in theory, but that's only because we usually rely, or have to rely, on ad-hoc solutions. To deal effectively with the next 20 years' problems, NATO needs to get the theory, as well as the practice, right. To build consensus for the 21st century in a way that can reflect, and a way that did reflect, the 20th-century consensus of the Cold War. In the 1950s, '60s, '70s and '80s, building and maintaining that consensus was a two-way street; neither America nor Europe had a monopoly of wisdom, and so it should be today.

For example, it's right that we listen to and respect the view of our allies who live on NATO's geographic periphery; they are also on the periphery of potential instability. Those of us insulated by geography and size from such risks and threats have too often been guilty of paying only lip service to our allies' Article V concerns. We should also listen to our allies who have been living and breathing the comprehensive approach in the front line in Afghanistan, and recognize that building civil effect, vital though it is, is not in fact always the easy option. Previous strategic concepts have tended to provide a retrospective, almost theological, underpinning for a challenge that, in fact, often has already been met and mastered.

The 2010 concept does not need to reopen issues where consensus exists; let's bank them and move on. It should however, provide a blueprint for further, continuous evolution, so that we can tackle future challenges as well as threats. And here, I believe there are four guiding principles that should steer the work that now needs to be done between NATO's 60th anniversary summit forward to the 2010 summit.

First, NATO needs to be clear about what it's for, and in doing so we must stop thinking in terms of the lowest common denominator. It is probably true that individual NATO members have often taken a different view about risks and threats, even at the height of the Cold War. But I don't think we can sensibly deal with a crises of today and prepare for the crises of tomorrow without, now, a common view of the fundamental risks and threats that we face. And that doesn't mean either/or choices.

In my view, NATO does not need to choose between Article V, between counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan, and cyber warfare, for example. Its priority's can and should be Article V and Afghanistan and cyber warfare. But it should be able to agree on a robust analysis of the dangers in all of these areas and what practical action it's going to take to deal with them. Now, these are not simply political questions of drafting or political rhetoric. The current failure to agree on threat and risks is already having a negative impact on NATO today; the NATO response force, for example, designed and intended to bridge the gap between Article V crisis response and modernization, has been hamstrung by this total lack of any consensus about its real role.

As a result, NATO, today, lacks a rapid reaction force and for the strongest, most effective military alliance in history, that represents an extraordinary failure. Britain's recent proposal for a small alliance solidarity force, dedicated to Article V, is intended to be a pragmatic way of trying to square this circle. My second guiding principle flows from the first: We should use the 60th anniversary of NATO to put institutional theology firmly behind us and attempt to build a new, cooperative relationship between all of those international institutions that have a role to play in improving global security. Now, my perspective is that of a proud Atlanticist, a proud European and a very strong supporter of the United Nations.

And I see no contradiction between them, and care little for the dogma that suggested that they were in competition with each other in the first place. That is why we have been such a strong supporter of President Sarkozy's courageous policy of bringing France fully back into the NATO family and why the U.K. will go on looking to develop a role for European security and defense policy that complements the work of NATO as we did for example on the anti-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia.

We should all focus on delivering effect, and worry less about organizational boundaries. And in Afghanistan, for example, it surely must be possible for us to mobilize the collective resources of all of the organizations that I have referred to, all with the same aim – to deliver better effect. ISAF needs a much stronger UNAMA mission to bring coherence and cooperation to the delivery of civil programs and good governance. The European Union must be able to work with and talk to NATO on the ground when our people are under fire, whatever the politics prevailing in Brussels. We can't allow these theological niceties to undermine our ability to tackle the insurgency in Afghanistan.

Disputes about insurgency links with narcotics funding or caveats that restrict our ability to give proper training to the Afghan police, for example, are cases of how organizational boundaries are having today a practical, negative impact on operational effectiveness. And beyond Afghanistan, we must use every institutional tool at our disposal, working together to the maximum extent possible, in the cause of the common good. Now, Somali piracy is not the greatest threat facing us today, but it obviously needs to be dealt with. And if we were starting from scratch, without institutional or even national baggage, I think it would be pretty easy to create a single operational model into which all of our naval forces could fit; but politically, of course, this is not where we are.

Nevertheless by building on the welcome flexibility of all of those nations concerned, we are, in fact today, putting together a structure which may not be perfect in shape and form, but is one that works nonetheless. As a result, coalition forces, together with the U.N., EU, NATO and countries from Russia and China to India and Malaysia, have been able to play a part in securing these vital trade lanes. I think this points to a mindset that abandons the fascination with organizational boundaries and is obsessed about how they can best be patrolled, for what works in order to generate the best outcomes. The strategic concept is also a timely vehicle for this change of mindset, but it can't be used as an excuse to put off until tomorrow what we know can and should be done today.

My third guiding principle is that NATO must accelerate its practical transformation. Now, this too, today, has an obvious economic dimension. In the depths of a recession that is already affecting the ability of some member states to take on these new challenges, who amongst us can afford unnecessary headquarters, or unusable non-deployable military forces? Who amongst us can justify the over 300 NATO committees or the people who are necessary to staff and attend them? Who can argue against giving the secretary general of NATO the ability to run the alliance efficiently and effectively?

I don't think NATO can afford to indulge in the luxury, for example, of informal defense ministers meetings that achieve nothing, but contribute to organizational lethargy. When we meet it should be for a purpose, and that is to make decisions. Our troops on the ground, I think, have an absolute right to expect nothing less from us. We need to build an alliance for change within NATO. Your new administration, here in the United States, I think, has the leverage and the vision to do this. There is an appetite out there for greater efficiency, greater effectiveness and real change; many European nations feel the same as you do. Now, I'm a fan of deadlines. This is work that should be completed at the same time as we agree the strategic concept, to bring theory and practice into harmony.

Now, my fourth and final guiding principle is that we absolutely must renew our collective commitment to success in Afghanistan and set out clearly to our people why this mission is an essential component of the security interests of all our allies. And as the British defense secretary, I am very acutely aware of the need to be clear why, at any one time, I am asking over 8,000 brave young men and women who wear the uniform of my country to pay the ultimate price in the service of the United Kingdom.

Just last week the 152nd member of the British armed forces in Afghanistan died on active service, and many more still have paid the price in life-changing injuries. What each member of the British armed forces is doing in Afghanistan is, first and foremost, about safeguarding our national security and that of our allies. That is the reason why they are there, and no other reason can justify that level of enduring commitment. We cannot take the risk that Afghanistan becomes again the safe haven and the inspiration for terrorism and extremism. President Obama calls this our good war, and he is absolutely right. For NATO, Afghanistan is without doubt its greatest test since the Cold War. The alliance is in Afghanistan by consensus, taking on the ISAF mission, sent the most powerful message possible about the determination of the trans-Atlantic community to protect its people, its interest, and above all, its values.

Since then, some NATO governments have faced very serious political difficulties as a result, yet none has left. Where we have been less successful is in translating political commitment into a fair and effective sharing of roles, risks and responsibilities on the ground. Many of you will recognize that phrase: sharing roles, risks and responsibilities. It has its origins in the Cold War. I believe it is no less relevant today in confronting this even more insidious threat. And like everyone else in this town, I am waiting eagerly for the outcome of the administration's strategy review. And I'm pretty sure it's going to be welcomed right across the NATO family. The test for NATO will be how the alliance acts upon it. Now does that mean in simple terms, I think some allies could do more? Yes, I do. We need more combat troops in order to improve security. But we also need to extend the operations of those who are already

there. We need to do more to train the Afghan army and police, and yes, we need to do more to inject more civil effect.

Yet, you know we are in the very fortunate position that we are able to determine our own exit strategy and that that lies entirely in our hands to do. The Afghan army and police are that exit strategy. So the question is not whether we can succeed in building an Afghan capability that can take responsibility for their own security, but how quickly we can do it. Imagination is also key to how we deal with Afghanistan's neighbors, especially Pakistan. Treating the two countries as a single challenge is going to be politically difficult for some of our allies, but we cannot ignore reality. Neither can we be like 11-year-old soccer players, chasing the ball to every corner of the pitch, shifting from Afghanistan one day, swinging to Pakistan the next. We need to demonstrate consistent political and yes, where necessary, military focus on both these challenges, in equal measure, in the coming years.

We all have a common interest in helping the Pakistan government to tackle its problems and those spreading across its borders now into Afghanistan. NATO may not be the best vehicle; some of us have closer ties than others. But when you visit Pakistan, it is striking, for example, how many Pakistan army officers were trained not at West Point or at Sandhurst, but in Germany and in the military academies of many of our NATO allies. Now, that constitutes invaluable influence that I think we have so far failed to properly harness. And I want to conclude my remarks today, Stephen, on Afghanistan. NATO and its international partners and allies, as we all know, are involved in major combat operations in that country. The lives of tens of thousands of our young men and women depend on the decisions that we take together, now at this critical time.

It is a war we did not choose, but it is a conflict that we must win, not just because the future of NATO depends upon it, although it does, but because the security of every NATO member, and all of our ISAF allies, is inextricably linked to it. It is a war that will typify the very nature of future conflict for this generation and the next. My argument to you today is simply this: We need a new NATO to fight this war successfully; one that demonstrates more of a campaign mentality when it is engaged in combat operations as we are; one that is much more agile and decisive; one that can deliver military as well as civil effect on a sustained basis. Now, 2009 can be the year that we build this new NATO,

French reintegration into the military command structure, the new U.S. administration's strong and very welcome commitment to multilateralism, the appointment of a new secretary general and NATO's 60th anniversary provide all of us with a unique backdrop, a unique opportunity, to make this change. Sixty years on from its inception, I believe a trans-Atlantic security alliance is as vital to dealing with our common security challenges as it was back in 1949, but the new NATO is needed to respond to new threats.

Now, this will not be without many significant challenges, and all of the contributions of all of NATO's members to this reform and regeneration process will be welcome and important. And even though we rightly emphasize the importance of civil effect and a comprehensive approach for security our objectives, a new NATO depends on Europe having an equal stake in that future, and this will come with a price. It must share an equal burden of the hard, as well as

the soft, military effort. And for America, the creation of a new NATO based around a partnership of equals, is not going to be without its challenges either. For the truth, I suspect, has been, for much of NATO's 60-year existence, that American has liked to lead just as much as Europeans have liked to be led.

And I want to finish, if I may Stephen, on a personal note. Later today, I'm going to be visiting Frank Buckles (sp) in West Virginia. At 108 years of age, he is the last surviving U.S. veteran of World War I. My own grandfather, who was born in California, the son of Irish immigrants, served alongside Frank Buckles in the U.S. infantry in the First World War. They served bravely, like so many of their generation, to protect the freedoms that we all enjoy today. And in all of the difficult challenges that we face together today, Mr. Buckles and my grandfather, Bill, provided this generation with a real and powerful reminder of the deep and enduring bonds that continue today to link our two countries together. And the strength of those ties, I believe, will stand us all in good stead for the challenges that today we must face again together. Thank you very much, indeed.

(Applause.)

STEPHEN FLANAGAN: Well thank you very much, Mr. Hutton, for those clear and compelling and, indeed, even moving remarks at the end there. So we thank you for joining us this morning. We have, ladies and gentlemen, about 30 minutes for discussion. I'm Stephen Flanagan, senior vice president here and Kissinger Chair and delighted to have this opportunity to chair this session. We would just ask that you identify yourself and wait for a microphone, and, yes, there's a gentleman in the mid-section there.

Q: Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for you excellent speech. My name is Dreyton Mishtov (ph), political secretary of Ambassador of Albania, in charge of NATO integration issues. We know that a very crucial issue of NATO reorganization now is the enlargement. In April, two countries, Albania and hopefully, Croatia, are going to be members of the organization, bringing new energy to the organization. At this point, I want to say that the Albanian government has undertaken great reforms to deserve the invitation in the full NATO membership. So what's your opinion on that process and Albania's full membership, sir? Thank you very much.

MR. FLANAGAN: We will pull a few questions – this couple right here on the front, please. Actually, why don't we just go right down the front row, here.

Q: Sir, Arnaud de Borchgrave (ph), CSIS. Could I ask you a question about FATA? It seems to me that success or failure in Afghanistan depends to a very large degree on what we can do or not do to end those sanctuaries the Taliban enjoys in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. And the Pakistani army's view on all of this seems to be ambivalent, at the very least.

MR. FLANAGAN: And Harlan Ullman (ph)?

Q: I'm Harlan Ullman, Mr. Secretary, thank you for your comments. If I could respectfully take issue with your view about an exit strategy from Afghanistan being based on the Afghan army and police, it would seem to me that what would make the difference between a

successful exit strategy and a retreat is really governance, it's really putting in place a judicial system, property rights, civilian sector reforms, all those kinds of things for which NATO has not been really employed and NATO is not the solution. So how do you make sure that the governance side really works, because it seems to me that will be the measure on which Afghanistan's success or failure will be measured and whether we have an exit strategy or a retreat returning.

MR. FLANAGAN: One last question, here.

Q: Thank you. Abdullah Fanshia (ph), Shiarak (ph) Report. In terms of your general characterization, Mr. Secretary, of the need of NATO to be engaged in the task at hand, as is clear in Afghanistan, as you have expanded upon, clearly, in the U.S., there is a perception that Europe in general, Great Britain and others excluded, is not doing very much. I mean, this is the crux of this, and I think it was last year that Secretary Gates, under old management, expressed openly his dismay, saying, are you really serious about this?

You know, essentially, this was his condensation of his remarks. Like, there is no follow-on. So the question is, to the extent that, indeed, the alliance is premised on – as the preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty of Washington says, on the preservation of the common values of our civilization – and indeed, this is an existential threat – radicalism and the festering of this crisis in Afghanistan – what can we expect in terms of more effective contributions from other members of the alliance?

And is that a crucial element, in your judgment, for the United States taking the lead, as President Obama has done, with the declaration of sending out 17,000 additional troops and the others that will follow. Is this going to be a fundamentally U.S.-led operation with some support from allies like Great Britain, or is it going to be a significant scaling up that would reflect the political seriousness with which European leadership take this crisis? Thank you.

MR. FLANAGAN: Okay, I think that's enough to load up your plate, and I'll let you – on Afghanistan and then – a number on Afghanistan enlargement (ph).

MR. HUTTON: Let me take those in the sequence those questions were asked. Albania – well, we're looking forward to welcoming Albania into the NATO family. It will be a great day when that happens – and Croatia, also. I think the process has gone pretty well. I think it's been well organized and I think we will all look forward to the NATO summit, where we can welcome Albania around the table properly. So it will be a good day for Europe when we welcome Albania into our family.

The other questions were largely about Pakistan and Afghanistan. I think we do Pakistan a great disservice, if I can be really frank, sir, if we caricature their involvement, really, as one of ambivalence. I don't think that is true. I think the Pakistan democracy – the government of President Zardari, who, lest we should ever, ever forget, knows directly at his own personal cost, the evil that al Qaeda and this violent extremism are responsible for – they murdered his wife – I don't think we should every assume that Pakistan cannot be/is not a good and trusty ally in the fight against extremism and terrorism.

I think what we've got to do is help the Pakistani military become more effective in that operation, and we can do that. I think we can do that across the NATO alliance. We have experience and capability and insights that I think we should make available. I think we shouldn't forget, either, that the Pakistan military endured very, very significant casualties up in the tribal areas – the Northwest Frontier area – in trying to deal with this problem of al Qaeda and the Taliban, who I agree, absolutely strongly with Powers' (ph) view, that they do represent an existential threat not just to us in the NATO alliance, but to democracies everywhere, and a direct threat to the Pakistan democracy. So we've got to support Pakistan in this struggle.

And we've got to ensure greater security effect can be delivered along the border area, up in the tribal areas, down towards Baluchistan, where more and more American servicemen and women will be operating from this summer. And we've got to do this together. So I think that the challenge for us is to support Pakistan in delivering greater military and security effect against the insurgency that is operating, now, in many parts of Pakistan. I don't think there's a justification in describing Pakistan's position as ambivalent. I think we've just got to make it more effective.

I agree also – I don't think – I hope I didn't imply any difference of emphasis here on delivering better governance in Afghanistan as part of what we can leave behind when we go. And I believe that, too, to be very important in sustaining the progress that we make. I think there are two points I would make about that. I think we tend to over-exaggerate, exactly, the legacy of powerful central government in Afghanistan creating civil effect and institutions that can operate in the way that you described in the country. There has never been such institutions in Afghanistan.

So I think we've got to be pretty practical and realistic about that set of expectations that you've begun to describe, but I think it's an important part of what we've got to do. But I don't believe that those institutions that you've described, vital though they are, are likely to be sustainable unless there is proper security in the country. I think one is an absolutely essential precursor to the other, and right now, the requirement is clearly to create more security effect in the country.

Now, we will have to do that ourselves in NATO and all of the ISAF countries, because that is how it is at the moment, as we build up Afghan security capability. But that's really got to be absolutely front and center in our strategic thinking about Afghanistan and creating the circumstances where our young men and women can leave with their heads held high, having done a proper job that is in everyone's best interest. So governance is important. Security, I think, however, right now, trumps that. And that's what we've got to focus on, and making sure we can secure.

Paolo (ph) asked about other contributions from Europe. I think we'll see that. I think they'll come in different roles and different types of contributions. It's a big day for us in Europe – the NATO summit. The U.S. has provided, once again, very, very strong leadership. It's our responsibility to step up to the plate as well, and that's very much what I think you'll see and which many, many countries in Europe want to do.

MR. FLANAGAN: Thank you, Minister. Maybe, if there are any more questions on Afghanistan, I think we also might want to show some time to the other parts of the minister's agenda that he articulated. But are there any more questions on Afghanistan, first, before we – yes, over there – two on the side.

Q: Colonel Dutta (ph), former aide to the president of India and president of Indian Veterans Officers Association here. Where I lived in Bombay, I had a – (inaudible) – of my walk, there was an Afghan church where the brave soldiers of McNaughton's (ph) brigade were buried, and I drew a lot of inspiration and then I joined the army. Under these circumstances, went from McNaughton's brigade and, on the passage of history until now, would you, with your experience, and also, keeping in mind that this has been – Afghanistan has been the graveyard of all the superpowers and history has taught us.

And also, now, intervention, at this moment, when al Qaeda and Taliban seem to have no boundaries – al Qaeda definitely lives in the mind of people, maybe to the misinterpretation of what Quran is, but Talibans have got different designs. And especially being an Indian, I would be concerned, because they are inching towards India. What is your estimation of the Taliban's future?

MR. FLANAGAN: Okay, thank you, and then, maybe, one more question on Afghanistan if it is on Afghanistan, sir?

Q: Terry Murphy (ph). I'm the head of a consulting firm, but I also have another hat with CSIS. My question, again picking up the civilian side in Afghanistan, and I must say, Minister, that one of my dearest and closest friends is a former officer of the Royal Navy who's now serving as an American citizen there – he volunteered at age 61 – in the provincial reconstruction teams. And I'd just like to ask you expand a little bit on the civilian side of the events or the battle, if you like – the struggle – in Afghanistan.

MR. HUTTON: Well, I'm invited to comment about the future of the Taliban. I think we shouldn't lose sight of one very important factor: I think we're all right to be – and you particularly are right, sir, to be concerned about the influence of Pakistan Taliban – but I think the mistake sometimes we do make when we talk about the Taliban is to imagine that they are quite the same sort of terrorist organization and cell as, for example, al Qaeda. I don't think that's true.

There are elements of profound Islamic extremism present in the Taliban. We've seen that and paid a high price for that. But I think it's a loose alliance of various different groups, and I think therein lies its great strategic weakness that we must find a better way of exploiting. So I think we need to emphasize always in our discussion of the operation in Afghanistan that it's both military, civil, political and economic in its characteristics and those are the tools that we'll need to undermine this conspiracy, which is the Taliban.

We can deal with some of these issues in traditional counterinsurgency ways, but I think we need to find the answer to some of these problems outside of the current textbooks. This is a

new campaign – different from Tia's (ph) – you were quite right to describe that in that way. And we need to bring together the brightest and the best of our thinkers and strategists to continue to inform the policy of how we can take apart this conspiracy of extremism, which the Taliban represents. So I think we should be clear about that in how we develop our strategy.

I think we also should be clear about one other thing – that I there is prospect for progress here, at some point, getting to a political reconciliation. I think there will be a hard core of irreconcilables, whose ideology will exclude any accommodation based on reason and rationality, with the democracies either in Pakistan or Afghanistan or anywhere else. And I think for that group, we will have no choice but to continue to wage that campaign against them until we can degrade their command and control operations, we can affect their ability to mount operations. So that is going to be an enduring task; I don't think there's any realism in pretending otherwise.

A big mistake we should avoid is to kid ourselves that there's some silver bullet – some easy strategy that we can pursue. This will be a long campaign against that type of fundamentalist, terrorist extremism and we've got to be geared up to deal with that. There's no quick fix; it's not going to disappear over the hills anytime soon. The Taliban is different. And we've shown in our own operations in Afghanistan – up in Musa Qala, Garmser and various other parts – that it is possible to reach pretty good deals that can guarantee the sort of results that we all want to see – peace, stability, respect for the Afghan democracy, lower levels of violence.

Now, these are all important things that we should try and work on, and I think we can. Terry's point about the provincial reconstruction teams – I think we're learning the hard way, as we go along, about the capabilities that we need to put these people together. I often reflect on one thing, as a defense minister: Sometimes, it does feel quite hard to generate the forces that you need to run these campaigns and we do it because that's the military way. We have great capabilities; we've got great men and women – and by the way, can we have this Royal Navy officer back? He sounds exactly the sort of guy that we need.

MR. : (Inaudible) – commanding a Royal Navy ship where his father – (inaudible).

MR. HUTTON: Well, there we are. That's great. Great to hear that. I didn't think we actually wore our swords when we were commanding our ships – (laughter) – but we are chasing pirates again, so – (inaudible) – maybe that will come in handy at some point. I think – look, sometimes it feels to me that it's easier, though not straightforward, to find a combat brigade than it is to staff a provincial reconstruction team.

And that tells us something, I think, about our own strategy and analysis and the way we've prepared, or not, for these sorts of campaigns. And I think there's a lot of merit – a very great deal of merit – but a lot more work to be done – in developing the sort of capabilities that Secretary Gates has been talking about – these stabilization brigades, a fusion of military and civil tradition, different skills, operating probably within a pretty tight chain of command and within a security bubble – that's absolutely essential, too, if we are going to call upon civilians to support this type of effort.

So I think within all of that, there is really, really promising areas for us to develop and work together and that's some of the territory that Secretary Gates and I will be working on ourselves over the next few months. But I think the commitment of some of these people – certainly, the teams I've seen in Afghanistan – really are quite breathtaking. When you see what these young people, in the main, are doing, you've got to take your hat off to them. But I think we need to develop that, as a capability, we've got to accelerate the ability to deploy that type of expertise. And I think therein lies one of the very, very important ways forward in this campaign.

MR. FLANAGAN: Thank you. And we have a couple of questions up here and I hope we can turn to the other part of the minister's NATO agenda – NATO transformation agenda.

Q: Thank you. Good morning, sir. Andrea Chalabi (ph), sir, with Reuters. You mentioned the need for radical changes within NATO, including defense acquisitions strategies, and there are, of course, several pressing concerns for European nations, at this point, among them, the biggest defense budget – (inaudible) – and we understand that Britain is considering either reducing purchases and/or has already been talking with U.S. manufacturers such as Lockheed and Boeing to offset some of the need for airlift.

I wonder if you can speak about that, and then, I also wanted to ask you, in the kind of scheme of the U.S. reassessment of its defense programs, there are expected to be some cuts coming in both 2010 and then, beyond. The Pentagon has tried, for many years now, to kill the second engine for the Joint Strike Fighter, and one suspects that, given the cost-cutting mood at the Pentagon, that that will happen again. Could you speak to that and whether you addressed that with Secretary Gates and what your views would be on eliminating that second part?

MR. FLANAGAN: And maybe one or two other questions on the rest of the NATO agenda – is there one in the back, there? Yes, sir.

Q: Christopher Chinnis (ph), RAND. I was wondering if you could just comment briefly on how you see the future of the NATO-Russia relationship, or at least how you'd like to see it go over the next five or 10 years?

MR. FLANAGAN: Okay. And if I could, maybe, just add one myself, Mr. Minister, you mentioned that the need for the development of the NATO response force and your proposal for an alliance solidarity force and suggesting some need to balance the NATO capabilities in the expeditionary areas with capabilities for executing defense of alliance territory, should that be necessary. And I wonder – we hear some allies complain that they're having enough trouble providing forces for current missions, so they can't really staff up the NRF, really, but even the alliance solidarity force might be an issue. And I wonder how you see the challenge or a pathway ahead for balancing that kind of commitments to both maintaining capabilities for alliance defense and the expeditionary missions?

MR. HUTTON: Okay. Well, alliance – Andrea raised a number of questions about procurement issues. I don't – with great respect – I don't want to get into the detail of much of

what you've said – it's too tricky. (Laughter.) But I think, let me offer some more general observations about this rather than looking at particular programs, because really, it's too early to comment about A400M or any of the other projects you referred to. I think the economic reality is pretty clear. I think we'll need to do more together when it comes to procurement. I think we'll need to plan more together about the sort of capabilities that we'll need in the future. Europe's been doing this. Europe-U.S., I think, will need to do more of it. So I think that's a very general observation, I know, but I think that's a very simple reflection of the economic times in which we live.

I think interoperability is fundamental, particularly in the context of the NATO alliance. And I think all of this can help. We should talk more to each other about procurement, but it's got to be a two-way street. So I think that's probably all I want to say today. I have raised a number of issues with Secretary Gates, but they're between the secretary and myself and that's how they're going to stay. Christopher's point about NATO and Russia – again, Chris, I think probably, today, there's only a few general comments I can make about that rather than specific comments, because again, I don't want to get into that today.

I think the events last summer with the Russian aggression in Georgia and continuing problems, for example, around energy supplies coming in through the Ukrainian infrastructure, these raise really serious issues for us in the NATO alliance that have got to be addressed. And they are being addressed. I think we've made a very clear position in relation to both Ukraine and Georgia, which is the right position to take. But I think we should always be clear that NATO is a defensive alliance. It doesn't pose a risk to Russia or anyone else, period. It's for NATO to decide who its members should be – no one else – period.

But I think in all this, we want a good – and it's perfectly possible to have – good, strong, positive relations with Russia. We want that. It has always been our ambition and our desire to have that. The end of the Cold War was such a great moment. Europe came together. We should never lose sight of how we all felt at that time. And that's what we've got to continue to strive towards. But it does take two to tango. This is, I'm afraid, a simple statement of the obvious. When partners behave in a way that is not acceptable – use force in a way that is not acceptable – there has to be a consequence.

Otherwise, the credibility of the alliance – it's posture and position – comes under direct attack, and we can't allow that. There are big, strategic issues at stake here. Missile defense is such an issue, and there needs to be discussions – I'm glad that there are – about the future of that particular policy. But I think it is not beyond the ability of NATO and Russia, who share, basically, I think, a profound common sense now of securing European peace and stability, to find a way through these problems. And we stand ready, always – we always have done – to engage in that discussion with Russia. And we've got an opportunity to do that. And I think some of the initiatives that the president has been describing, I think, will help. Stephen's point about the alliance –

MR. FLANAGAN: Balancing the expeditionary and the main defense obligations.

MR. HUTTON: Yeah. Okay, if we can't find a way forward on the NRF, I mean, that will be a pretty poor advertisement for the ambition to really face up to some of these new challenges. This is absolutely our core task. I mean, fundamentally, the Article IV and V obligations that go right to the heart of the NATO Treaty require an effective ability to defend the European homeland – to defend European territory. And it's, I think, a standing indictment that we have not found a way forward, yet, to fully resource the NRF.

And you're quite right: There are those of us who feel that the NRF should have a deployable capability outside the NATO frontier who are not going to see their limited military and combat resources tied up in a force that cannot deploy. And similarly, those who feel really, really strongly about the need for European homeland defense will not commit if they feel their forces will go elsewhere and will not be available. The alliance solidarity force is not a big force; it's a battle group plus enablers.

And I don't think that is an impossibility to put together. If we can't put together a force like that, which is minimum, it's a political demonstration of solidarity – that's really what it is – so that we can free up the rest of the NRF forces to do the deployable, out of area stuff, well, I would be pessimistic about our future ability to deal with some of the other challenges that I've described today. This is right at the guts of what NATO needs to do just to tick over (ph 53:53). This is basic stuff, and if we find this a struggle, we're going to find everything else a struggle.

MR. FLANAGAN: I think we might have time for one more, really brief question. Yes, sir, if you could be succinct.

Q: Yeah – (inaudible) – where in your guiding principles is the fact that Asia and the Pacific have assumed a larger importance, particularly in terms of economic risks and opportunities, and the fact that the majority of Atlantic alliance countries are countries that are sluggish and slow, compared to Asia, where there's a lot more competition between the U.S. and Europe over economic opportunities.

MR. HUTTON: Well, I think we've got to deal with these issues in the way that I tried to describe at the beginning of my remarks – or it might have been halfway through – I can't remember exactly where – about organizational boundaries between security institutions. We all have a variety of defense and security alliances involving Asia and Pacific countries. I think they can complement, overall, the policy interaction of where NATO is going. I don't think we need to obsess about this, however.

I think we are perfectly capable and we've shown an ability – the Five Powers Defense Agreement, for example, is a very obvious example of how we can work effectively in that area. But we need to be agile and we need to be flexible. I don't think there's anything fundamental in the shift in the economic balance of trade that we've seen in the last 20 years that we can't rise to when it comes to security challenges and operations. But I think the fundamentals are flexibility between the security operations, focus on deployability, which is absolutely fundamental, because NATO's interests, now – rightly so – extend far beyond our own territorial frontier. That is the way for us to deal, I think, sensitively and sensibly with some of those security challenges in Asia and Pacific.

MR. FLANAGAN: Well, Mr. Hutton, I want to thank you this morning. You certainly, I think, in your comments and the range of issues you addressed, demonstrated exactly what Dr. Hamre mentioned in his opening – that her Majesty's government is blessed with a number of politicians who have a great ability to articulate clearly and understandably why the alliance remains important, why the U.S.-U.K. relationship remains important and how we should move ahead together on some of these difficult security challenges.

So I hope that when you're in West Virginia, you also have time to talk to some of our public. I'm sure the State Department would love to sign you up for some public speaking and articulating why we need to continue to move ahead on these difficult challenges. Sincerely, we wish you the best of luck both on moving forward on the agenda you've articulated on the alliance and for your work together with Secretary Gates on other aspects of learning the lessons of Afghanistan. So thank you, Mr. Minister, for joining us.

(Applause.)

(END)