

**Transcript of Remarks by Hans Binnendijk, Director, Center for  
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Michael [Wyganowski], thank you.

First let me begin by congratulating the Center for European Policy Analysis not just for this inaugural event, but also for its very creation. I think you have found a niche with this center – a sort of gap in the Washington think tank community – and so I am really quite pleased that you have created this center. And I look forward to working with you, and, of course, with Dan Hamilton and his Center [for Transatlantic Relations] (as we have over the years).

I have been asked to talk a little bit about the Riga Summit and try to do that in about ten or so minutes. I will try to comment and highlight a few things that Adam [Kobieracki] had focused on.

First, let me say that summits never fail – by definition – but sometimes they do not succeed. And I think that is where we are headed right now for Riga: a summit that is not going to fail, but it is not going to succeed nearly as well as it might. And this is important for Central and Eastern Europe.

As Adam indicated, Central and Eastern Europe has a lot at stake in the Riga Summit. In many ways, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe now rely for their security on NATO more so than the countries of Western Europe. It is particularly true as we see changes in Russia – as we see a shift in direction there, as we see Russia using various instruments (troops in Georgia, energy cut-offs in Ukraine) to intimidate their neighbors. So this is a time for Eastern Europe and Central Europe to focus on NATO. It is important to them. In addition, countries in this area have troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, training in Kosovo (so they are engaged in NATO missions) and the concept of NATO transformation (which is supposed to be a core element at Riga) benefits the countries in the area where the Center [for European Policy Analysis] is focusing perhaps even more than the countries of Western Europe.

So Riga is important to this region, but it may not be as successful as it might. And let me just look a couple of issues to tell you why I think that we may be on the road to a less than successful summit.

First of all, the focus will be very much politically on operations (and I think Adam made that point). Afghanistan will be number one, Kosovo will be number two.

The situation that the summiteers in Riga are going to find is that even between now and when this event takes place (and certainly for the next six months), the situation in both Afghanistan and Kosovo may well become more difficult than it is today. In Afghanistan, we are seeing the Taliban in resurgence. European countries are taking essentially half of the casualties now. And that is having an effect in European capitals. I think your [Anja Nielsen's] points about center of gravity in Afghanistan were very solid as you look at Afghanistan, but I would argue that the center of gravity in Afghanistan is not in Kandahar or Kabul; it is in Paris, in London, in The Hague, and in Warsaw. The center of gravity is there because we can win in Afghanistan – we must win in Afghanistan. We can see this through. The issue is: do we have the will to see it through. And so, for me what is important at Riga is not just a notification that while we move to Stage Four that is a good thing. What we need to hear from the Riga Summit is a strong statement of the will to see this thing through in Afghanistan. Because – in my view – if NATO loses in Afghanistan, NATO itself is in deep trouble. This is a real test for NATO.

Kosovo is a lesser issue in a sense, but it is going to become more difficult as well. The final status is not going to be a negotiated agreement, in my view; it is going to be imposed. And that makes a big difference. The Serbian government might well be in some trouble as a result of this. And the key issue is going to be what do we do with this area north of the Ibar river, in Metrovica, in the area north. What do we do in that area? And KFOR is going to have a new role here. It is not just going to be training (it is going to be part of it), but KFOR is going to have to move up to that area in northern Kosovo in a way that that it was not before. Because if it is an imposed agreement, we are going to need KFOR forces there to enforce this. So we are headed for difficult time there as well. We need a recognition in Riga that things are changing there, that things may become more difficult in Kosovo, and that KFOR is going to stay, is going to see it through, and is going to meet this new mission.

Other issues facing NATO that will be dealt with in the Riga Summit.

The next issue I would call “membership and partnership.” I do not think much is going to happen in the way of membership (NATO enlargement) at the Riga Summit. I think we will be building a bridge to 2008, which is the summit that is supposed to be about enlargement. We will probably see a sort of an open doors statement with regard to the so-called Aegean Three (Macedonia, Croatia, and Albania). The key issue is: what will the summiteers say about Georgia and Ukraine, about Serbia and Bosnia? I do not expect to see a lot there, frankly, at this summit with regard to those last four countries. So I think we will see a sort of an open door statement for the Aegean Three.

And then there is a global partnership which was touched on. This was really an American notion that the U.S. State Department, in particular, has been pressing for the last half a year or so. The notion here is that NATO needs to reach out to other global partners, like Australia, Japan, New Zealand, maybe South Korea – countries that have will and capability. We are working in coalition with them in many of these operations now. We need to be more interoperable. But there is also a more political dimension to

this. We should be thinking about ways to strengthen consultative mechanism between these countries and NATO.

I think it is not a bad idea, but it is not going well in terms of acceptance of this notion of global partnerships. It conjures up the notion of a global NATO and our European partners are very uncomfortable with that. So I do not expect much happening at Riga in this area.

This summit is supposed to be about transformation and the focus of transformation is on expeditionary capabilities. We have made progress with the NATO Response Force. Adam, you raised the question “what do we do with the NATO Response Force once it is fully operational?” I think there is a danger here: that we throw this response force into stabilization and reconstruction missions. That is not what it was intended to do. The NRF is not about missions of long duration. It is about forced entry. It can do other operations for short duration. If you throw the NRF into stabilization and reconstruction mission, you are going to dull the sharp edge of the sword and you are going to lose it. So I would argue that we not do that.

There are two other areas in addition to the NATO Response Force where I can cite some progress in expeditionary capabilities. We will see at Riga some movement on Special Operations Forces. There will not be a NATO headquarters for SOF forces, but there will be some kind of a focal point – a way in which to develop doctrine and training for the SOF forces that are assigned to NATO. And that is a plus. That is a movement in the right direction.

We will also see some movement on strategic lift. We are all familiar with this recent C-17 consortium. That is a step in the right direction. We are only talking about three or four aircraft here, but it is something to build on, and out of that will come a sort of an Awax-like operation for NATO. So that is a plus.

The big negative in this area for me is stabilization and reconstruction. This is something that we have been pushing in Washington here for the last two years: to get NATO to build a stabilization and reconstruction capacity (we started out saying – “Force,” with the capital “F”; that did not work, so then we started talking about NATO stabilization and reconstruction “capacity”). That made its way into the QDR. The Quadrennial Defense Review calls on NATO to do this. United States has been pushing this in the NATO circles, to try to get visibility for this in the Riga Summit. And the French and others do not like it, because it creates a broad NATO rather than a narrow NATO, and the French have been resisting and so far have been vetoing it.

So, to me, that is where the focus now ought to be in Riga. It is to create the stabilization and reconstruction capacity. And I am not sure we are going to make it.

This is something that Dan Hamilton and I (and a few others) have been working on. The basic notion here is the following. You all recall, about a decade ago or so Senator Lugar said: “NATO: out of area or out of business.” Well, if you look at what NATO has been

doing over the last several years and if you look at much of the Riga agenda, it is all out of area. The focus is *all out of area*. And the argument that Dan and I and others have been making is that we need some balance. We need to come back into NATO (Dan has this wonderful phrase “In area or in trouble”). And I think that is right. We need to restore a bit of balance, we need to remember that we have had Article 5 declared once (that was about homeland security after September 11<sup>th</sup>). And so we need to develop this concept of transatlantic homeland defense (I mean, NATO is already doing pieces of this; you can identify things that NATO is doing in the homeland security area; but it has not been packaged properly, it does not have a king of the umbrella concept; there were a number of things that could be done in terms of guarding the approaches to NATO in terms of consequence management, in counterterrorism). Riga is going to do nothing on this incidentally, because I think the French and others are also going to veto this. But we need to move to this area so that the people of the NATO countries, both in Europe and in the United States, recognize that it is not just about expeditionary capability. NATO is also about a sort of a redefined Article 5 that has to do with homeland defense. Unfortunately, I do not see a lot of progress in this area right now.

What will be talked about in the quarters in Riga? I think it will be energy. And that is not just Jim Jones and his notion of creating protection for the energy infrastructure, but it is going to be very much about how do you deal with a Russia that has demonstrated already that it is prepared to use energy to intimidate. I was in Riga myself a couple of weeks ago at a conference (sort of looking forward to the Riga Summit) and in this conference this is what people were focusing on. And you can see why in Riga they would. This is a critical issue, especially for Central and Eastern Europe.

Two quick institutional issues. Basically, we have these two institutions, and in many cases the same people represent them with different hats on, and they do not talk to each other (technically because of the tricky Cyprus issue). But if what we are looking at here in the future is what we might call “complex operations” – operations in which the military and the civilian side have to work together. That is what we are doing in the United States: we are trying to develop that capacity. In the transatlantic setting, we have to do the same thing and the only way you can do that is by developing closer relationships between NATO and the EU. We need a paradigm shift in our thinking here. I do not see much evidence that this is going to be dealt with in Riga.

It used to be that we had the “quad” or the “queen,” depending upon the issue. That went away in 2002. There is no mechanism within NATO to have sherpas sort of lead decision making and, as a result, decision making has really been tangled over the last couple of years. We need to come up with an alternative for streamlined decision making within NATO.

We are working off of the strategic concept from 1999. The world has changed dramatically in the last six or seven years. We cannot and will not come up with a new strategic concept in Riga, because this is too hard. I think the best we can hope for is – and I know that Secretary General Hoop Scheffer wants to do something like this – to put in place a mechanism which will create (like perhaps the Harmel effort in the mid-1960s)

a way in which we can develop a strategic concept, because NATO needs a strategic concept. We really do not have a solid focus.

Let me just conclude by saying that the agenda right now for NATO is full. At the Riga Summit, we will see some (but only a few) of these issues addressed. Central Europe has a lot at stake here. There are a few areas where I would suggest you could focus: certainly on operations. Keep contributing. Secondly, homeland security. This is very much an issue for this part of the world. Get that on the agenda. Third, energy. Very much a key issue for you. How do you develop a NATO policy towards this? Some have suggested an “Energy Article 5” – not a military response, but a response in which if a NATO country is hit with a cut-off, other countries will come in and support that country through financial or other means (by providing energy directly). So an attack on one is an attack on all, but – then – in an energy field. And finally, I think countries of this region that we were talking about here today need to focus on the NATO-EU relationship. You are members of both of these bodies and we need to get these two institutions talking to each other.

So: full agenda. I do not expect a lot to get done at Riga, but maybe we can tea up some issues for 2008. Thank you.

## Q&A

*Question from Stanley Kober, (CATO): Mr. Binnendijk, you said the center of gravity is in the European capitals. I would challenge that. I think the center of gravity is in places like Peshawar, Quetta, Karachi, Islamabad. If that border with Pakistan is wide open for reinforcement and re-supply of the Taliban, what do we do?*

There are many centers of gravity in Afghanistan, but the reason I focused on Western Europe is that roughly half of the NATO/U.S. coalition troops there now are European (twenty something thousand). And we are hearing from several European capitals concerns about the way the war is going in Afghanistan, about the casualties that they are taking. And we need to make a number of changes in Afghanistan (as we heard from other presentations and from your comments), but without sustained support from those European forces we cannot do anything. And I think we are losing that support and we just need to sort of step back and recognize that this essentially is about Article 5, this is a follow-on from that Article 5 commitment that was made of September 12, 2001. And if we lose in Afghanistan, we are going to lose not just Afghanistan, we are going to lose NATO. And so it is that important.