



The Marshall Legacy:
The Role of the Transatlantic Community in Building Peace and Security

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How Can the Transatlantic Community Help Build
Peace, Prosperity and Security in the Greater Middle East?

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Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to be here in Washington to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to George C. Marshall.

I would like to thank the Center for Transatlantic Relations, Johns Hopkins and the George C. Marshall Foundation for co-sponsoring this seminar. I also wish to thank the distinguished participants for making this a special event. And, I am particularly grateful to Lord Robertson for choosing to join us on his farewell visit to the US as Secretary General of NATO. His contribution to the vitality and transformation of our Alliance has been truly remarkable.

When, in 1947, George Marshall took the initiative to establish a European Economic Recovery Programme, later known as the Marshall Plan, few realised the remarkable impact the programme would have.

Today we appreciate that the Marshall Plan was a resounding success. It contributed greatly to the general political stability and economic growth of post-war Western Europe. It also contributed significantly to the integration of Western Europe itself.

The Marshall Plan fostered a fundamental sense of security among the war-weary populations of Western Europe – a firm belief that tomorrow would be better than the day before. The Plan helped

pave the way for economic integration, and contributed to the integration of West Germany into the North Atlantic Alliance.

By making its massive economic assistance to Western Europe contingent on close co-operation between the countries in the region, the USA played an invaluable role in facilitating European integration and stability. I believe this should serve as a reminder that solving security problems goes far beyond military means alone,
– It did so then - it does so now.

The Marshall Plan is one of the main reasons why NATO became the most successful military alliance in modern history. Another reason is that NATO is much more than a military alliance – it is an alliance of shared values and aims that must entail co-operation and common action beyond military matters. NATO is in many ways the primary embodiment of the successful transatlantic community. The Atlantic Alliance has been a core instrument in expanding the area of stability and democracy in Europe through successive enlargements and constantly expanding co-operation with partner countries. Peace, prosperity and security in Europe – as envisaged by George Marshall – seem, in practice, to have been achieved.

For Norway it is vital that NATO continues to be the most important forum for transatlantic dialogue on security issues. We want NATO to continue to safeguard the security of all its members. In short, NATO must continue to be relevant.

We want to preserve and improve our winning team so that we can be more effective in extending Marshall's vision of peace, prosperity and security beyond our own region. It is appropriate to ask what the transatlantic community can do to promote stability outside the Euro-Atlantic area.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In order to be seen by others as an attractive partner we first need to equip the Alliance with stronger military capabilities and a political will to use them when and where it is clear that our security is threatened.

Dealing with allies may be complicated. The history of NATO shows that differing views are by no means new to the Alliance. Consensus has often had to be built from the ground up. But we cannot afford to lose the conviction that helped us to win the Cold War, the conviction that through close and systematic consultations we will be able to develop a collective approach. Dialogue is the key word, both across the Atlantic and between European allies.

The present situation gives cause for concern. The differences of opinion across the Atlantic go deeper than before. There is a different sense of vulnerability, different attitudes to international co-operation, different ways of analysing the situation and different solutions to the various problems, differences on issues like the Kyoto process, trade or ICC.

Much of the frustration that characterised the transatlantic relationship over Iraq last spring is now behind us. But we should not assume that the underlying differences have disappeared. On our side of the Atlantic there is a widespread feeling that the United States has gradually developed a more insistent, less flexible attitude on international issues, and is more prone to go it alone.

The American approach is often more direct. The USA frequently exerts more pressure to obtain quick results. The European attitude is often characterised by dialogue and greater patience. We sometimes experience the US as too direct. They sometimes see us as evasive.

We must seek to reconcile these differences through dialogue and co-operation. We must avoid situations where the United States presents Europe with set conclusions and choices on key strategic issues, without prior consultation.

Any tendency to prefer coalitions of the willing, rather than making full use of existing alliances also gives reason for concern. Although “coalitions of the willing” may provide greater room for manoeuvre, and a simpler decision-making process, it also means fewer nations to share the burden.

And the burden can be heavier in the wake of military operations than during the conflict itself. The most important consequence of coalitions of the willing is, however, that they may erode the trust and confidence that has been the hallmark of the Atlantic Alliance ever since its inception.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Even though these and other challenges continue to exist, there are grounds for optimism. Although the situation was serious, the allies did reach agreement on reinforcement to Turkey this spring. We also agreed on NATO support to Poland in Iraq. Last August, NATO embarked on its first ever operation outside the Euro-Atlantic area when it took over the command and co-ordination of ISAF.

The enlargement process – the largest ever in the history of the Alliance – is on track. The seven new members, which will become full members next spring, are already participating and making important contributions to most of NATO’s activities.

The co-operation between NATO and Russia is developing well. Co-operation with other partners in the Euro-Atlantic Co-operation Council has also been steadily broadened. So has the Mediterranean Dialogue.

The new NATO Response Force is being established, and the command structure of NATO has been thoroughly overhauled to meet the security challenges of the 21st century. For the first time ever, the Alliance will have a joint combined air, land, sea and special operations force under a single commander.

We have also seen a convergence of views across the Atlantic. In the EU security strategy – “the Solana paper” - , the threat of international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are considered the greatest challenges to international peace and security.

With the forthcoming enlargement, the new Constitutional Treaty and the development of a European security strategy, the European Union is becoming more confident in its foreign and security policy. A stronger Europe will contribute to closer transatlantic co-operation provided European security and defence policy is developed in close dialogue with NATO.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the twentieth century, the most serious threats to international security came from Europe. Today, the biggest international powder keg is the area stretching from North Africa to Afghanistan, the area that some call “the Greater Middle East”.

We already face enormous challenges in Afghanistan. NATO has to deliver. In many ways NATO's future depends on how successful it is in solving the problems in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a good example of how important it is for the Allies to share responsibility.

Norway has made a substantial contribution to Afghanistan, both in military and in humanitarian terms, and we will continue to do so.

On the military side, we see it as a priority to contribute to the NATO-led ISAF operation. Starting this week, we will deploy more forces to Afghanistan ahead of schedule in order to support and safeguard the Loya Jirga, which is crucial as a follow-up to the Bonn political process.

From next year Afghanistan will be one of our designated partner countries in development co-operation. This means an increase in long-term development assistance to the country. Our political commitment to Afghanistan clearly is for the long haul. There is an important lesson here: “There is no development and reconstruction without security, and there is no security without development and reconstruction.”

A dialogue is now underway on how we can help bringing stability and prosperity to the region as a whole, and how to increase human security. I welcome this. But the complexity and variety of the challenges in the area means that we must tread carefully.

The last two years have seen an intensification of the differences between the Islamic and Western cultures. This is particularly true of the Greater Middle East. This means that the confidence between the peoples of this region and the Western world must be enhanced if we are to meet common challenges effectively. To create the necessary impetus we need to identify our principal points of commonality and difference. We need to further develop our common interests. And we need to find out how we can best build bridges strong enough to carry the weight of our differences.

We can only achieve this through a genuine dialogue based on tolerance, respect and understanding. There are many ways to go about this. The World Economic Forum has established a group called the Council of 100 Leaders, of which I myself am a member. This Group aims to become the foremost multi-stakeholder community of senior political, religious, business, media, and opinion leaders to promote understanding and dialogue between the Islamic and Western worlds.

The Group has a multidisciplinary approach that will enable it to address the whole range of issues that need to be dealt with.

When developing future relations between the West and the Greater Middle East, there are a couple of key factors we should keep in mind. Stronger international co-operation in the Greater Middle East requires initiative and local ownership from the countries concerned, rather than initiatives that have the flavour of being imposed solutions.

It is important to address a broad public. Prejudice is based on lack of knowledge. Xenophobia and anti-Muslim tendencies in the West and anti-Western sentiments in the Greater Middle East can only be overcome through more information about and exposure to each other. This is why it is important to involve not only governments but also ordinary people. The recent UNDP report on Human Development in the Arab world points to the knowledge gap as one of the cardinal challenges in the region. An appropriate countermeasure could be to establish a large-scale student exchange programme under which Western students would attend universities in the Greater Middle East and vice versa.

Economy is also a keyword. Many of the economies of the Greater Middle East are still outdated command economies, and are not meeting the economic demands of a modern globalized reality. Unless we see a change in direction of more open, market-oriented economies, there is to my mind little potential for improvement in the economic sphere.

Human rights and democratic values are other significant areas in which there are obvious differences between the Western world and the Greater Middle East. Some countries are moving towards more openness and democracy. They should be supported and encouraged. In his speech on democracy last week, President Bush rightly called on regional leaders to stand up and ask themselves whether they would be remembered for resisting reform or leading it.

When engaging in a dialogue with the region, we must address some basic issues:

Firstly, every country or party in the region should be invited to engage in the dialogue.

Secondly, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be put aside. The West – with the United States in the lead – must continue its commitment to peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. Although the conflict today seems more deadlocked than ever, we must not give up. We need continuous engagement from the outside world – now!

Every effort to stop the terror must be made. The new government of Ahmed Qurei must succeed, and President Arafat must do everything to make that happen.

But, security cannot be separated from the political situation in general. The Israeli government must do its part as called for in the Road Map. It must freeze the construction of new settlements, and end the construction of the security wall deep into the West Bank.

And, may I leave a thought with you. However distant it may seem for the time being, NATO, with a UN mandate, should consider being available to the parties, should Israel and the Palestinians reach a peace agreement.

Thirdly, we must succeed in building a democratic and peaceful Iraq. The transatlantic community was surely divided on whether to use military means.

Regardless of these differences there is only one way forward: to stabilize and reconstruct Iraq, which for decades has been abused by the dictator. UN Security Council resolution 1511 is our basis for action. Norway will do our part, as we pledged in Madrid.

Finally, we must have realistic ambitions in light of available resources. We must avoid promising more than we are able and willing to deliver. Our involvement in Afghanistan, the Balkans and Iraq is already imposing a heavy burden on the international community.

Institutionally, I believe one possibility could be to expand NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue to include more countries than the seven currently involved.

We should also study ways of enhancing our co-operation along lines similar to our Partnership for Peace, and look at the possibility of including countries from the Greater Middle East in our Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.

I believe the complexities of the Greater Middle East demand the active involvement of a multitude of international organisations that address the whole range of issues. Co-operation with international organisations employing different sets of instruments, like the UN, the EU and the OSCE, can only add value to NATO's own efforts. We need to explore the best ways of contributing to and reinforcing each other's efforts.

The EU has for many years had a dialogue with most of the countries in the region through the Barcelona process. In this connection we should consider whether parts of the CSCE's/OSCE's Helsinki process, with its wide-ranging humanitarian, economic and security baskets, could be used. Such an approach would put security and military issues into a broader perspective, which would include democracy, pluralism, human rights, and economic and social development. And our efforts to make countries of the region adhere to the international arms control and non-proliferation regimes would be strengthened.

We need a real dialogue with all governments and other actors in the region on political and economic matters – as well as in the military field. But we should always remember that lasting democratic changes cannot be imposed from outside. They must grow from within.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Although we are facing challenges of a different nature than the ones George C. Marshall had in mind when he delivered his Nobel lecture in Oslo fifty years ago, I believe much of the ingredients in his recipe for peace are the same today.

Marshall spoke of the need for an educated public – a public with knowledge of the errors of history and the horrors of war.

He spoke of the need to avoid misperceptions and misunderstandings through close contact between peoples, and the recognition of the readiness to co-operate as one of the hopeful factors of the world.

He spoke of the need for the more fortunate nations to lend assistance in bettering the lot of the poorer, as an essential ingredient of any effort toward enduring peace.

As we try to come to grips with the challenges to international peace and security, I believe we cannot do better than heed General Marshall's advice.

Thank you for your attention.