

Symposium *Realities of European Security*



**Eerste
Kamer** der Staten-Generaal

Realities of European Security

*Reacting to growing uncertainties
and waning capabilities*

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Foreword

In the current complex and networked world no entity can operate alone. Sustainable cooperation between states is necessary to tackle global as well as local security challenges. In June 2012 the Senate was set to debate the government's vision on Dutch foreign and defence policy with the Minister for Defence and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. In preparation of this debate, the Senate organised an expert symposium, bearing the title 'Realities of European Security: reacting to growing uncertainties and waning capabilities'.

The discussion focused on the extent to which Europe succeeds in protecting its vital interests – if at all. Are, for example, European states capable of safeguarding their own security, despite major cuts in the defence budget? Other points of conversation were the possibilities of pooling and sharing and the future of the Transatlantic Pact. Throughout, the emphasis was not on future ideals, but on current realities.

The political reality in the Netherlands made that in April 2012 parliament called for early elections, to be held in September of that year. As a consequence, the policy debate with the ministers has been postponed. Nonetheless, we are pleased to present, with this digital publication, the minutes of our expert meeting to all those interested.

Fred de Graaf,

President of the Senate of the Netherlands

Major General Royal Netherlands Marine Corps (Rtd) Frank van Kappen,

Chairman of the Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Cooperation of the Senate of the Netherlands

Opening address

Mr Fred de Graaf
President of the Senate of the Netherlands

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

It is my honour and pleasure to welcome you at this expert meeting. First of all, I would like to welcome our distinguished speakers: Igor Ivanov, François Heisbourg, Michael Stürmer and Rem Korteweg. Also a special welcome to the officers of the embassies and my colleagues from the House of Representatives. And of course, a special welcome to the members of the Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Cooperation of the Senate. They, after all, launched the idea for this seminar in the first place. In this national democratic house, we do not hold international seminars very often. The last time was in February 2011. Back then, we spoke about power shifts in a changing world order. Exploring that topic certainly made for a fascinating afternoon. This time, instead of staying broad as we did last year, we hope to go in depth. Today's seminar will be about the extent to which Europe succeeds in safeguarding its vital interests. That, of course, raises the question what these vital interests are. Our Dutch national security strategy currently outlines five interconnected ones: territorial security, economic security, ecological security, physical security and social-political stability. Most likely, all European and other governments can agree with this all-embracing definition. The differences of opinion tend to come in when discussing the methods, approaches and institutional framework to safeguard them.

As we are all aware, safeguarding our international security remains a Herculean undertaking. Our globe has become a very complex space. The conduct and the awareness of world politics has rapidly increased. Newly emerging economic actors are framing their political voices. We witness the proliferation of small arms, of weapons of mass destruction and weapons of mass effect, including in little-governed territories. I guess we can argue that from a security point of view, a more complex and networked world means a more uncertain world and as such a more vulnerable world.



During our pleasant lunch, I could already sense the pool of expertise we have gathered today. I am very grateful for that as the set of questions we hope to address is vast. For example: to what extent can an indebted Europe take care of its own security? Is pooling and sharing a sustainable and desirable solution? Is the Transatlantic link becoming defunct? Can Europe and the United States, within the world as it stands today, do without each other? At present, does Europe have any alternatives for safeguarding its security?

I hope that today, while pondering on these issues, we will keep in mind the constraints of reality. Hopes and dreams are very important, and we should never stop having or sharing them. But our policy makers need to make decisions in the here and now and they need to take into account the consequences of their current actions. This seminar was proposed as a preparation for an upcoming policy debate with our ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence. But as I myself and my colleagues are very much aware, and probably the speakers as well, since April 2012, we only have a care-taker government left in the Netherlands. As a result, the policy debate itself has been postponed. Nonetheless, fortunately, the findings of this afternoon will be documented, they will be bundled and circulated among the participants. As such, none of the insights will be lost and I have all confidence that the knowledge generated today will be of great value to our senators in their activities of scrutinizing Dutch foreign and security policies.

I would hereby like to give the floor to the chairman of the Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Cooperation, Mr Frank van Kappen. He will also be our chairperson this afternoon and he will be moderating the panel discussions.

Introductory remarks

Mr Frank van Kappen
Chairman of the Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and
Development Cooperation of the Senate of the Netherlands

Thank you, Mr De Graaf. Let me add my warm welcome to all our guests and in particular to our guest speakers. We consider it an honour and a privilege to have you all here and we are grateful for your willingness to help us plot the right course through the troubled and stormy waters of the international security environment.

Troubled and stormy waters indeed, because I believe we are condemned, if you like, to live in one of those terrifying moments in history where the established order of power is beginning to change and the new powers are beginning to take shape. What the end result will be is still unknown; are we witnessing the creation of a stable and homogenous, multilateral system? Or are we witnessing the creation of a fragmented new world order where only chaos reigns? What we do know, what history teaches us, is that these periods of shifting power are always accompanied by turbulence and often by bloodshed.

Ladies and gentlemen, shifts of power between nations or blocks of nations are nothing new. These lateral power shifts have happened before; on average once every 100 years. However, there is something going on today that has never happened before. Up till the recent past, power has always been encased in the institutions of nation-states. Today we are subject to other elements of power: the power of the internet; the power of satellite broadcast; the power of the Facebook-generation; the power of the money changers, the financial speculators. Today, we are witnessing the globalization of power; a vertical shift of power to an all-encompassing virtual domain that is beyond the regulating power of any single nation.

This vertical shift of power has brought us many good things: social interaction is no longer bound by national borders; we can communicate with any person in the world who has a SIM-card; we can transfer money with the speed of light with our cell phone; Google and Wikipedia put information at our fingertips. We all benefit from these developments.

However, there is also a dark side to this vertical power shift. The fact is that this virtual global space is largely unregulated; it is largely ungoverned space; the worldwide web has no recognized network manager. One of the lessons of history is that ungoverned space sooner or later becomes populated. Not only by those who are welcome, but also by those you do not want there. Besides all the good things it brought us, the globalization of power also empowers a wide variety of Non State Actors (NSA's), ranging from shady companies to terrorist and criminal organizations



*Mr Van Kappen:
'The international security
environment is
in a state of flux'*

that operate at a global scale. Readily available technology enables State Actors and Non State Actors alike to attack us and our vital interests in unexpected ways. The result is the emergence of a closely intertwined and unpredictable mix of new defence and security threats.

In addition to the effects of a simultaneous lateral and vertical power shift, we have to deal with the effects of the rapid increase of the world population and the resulting scarcity of water, energy and raw materials. Climate change is another complicating factor. As a result, the international security environment is in a state of flux; a state of constant change.



*Mr Van Kappen:
'The best chance we have
is to face these challenges
together with like-minded
nations'*

No nation on earth can face these challenges alone. The best chance we have is to face these challenges together with like-minded nations. The EU and NATO are organizations of such like-minded nations. The question is whether these organizations have the right structure. Are they sufficiently equipped to deal with the shifting security environment of the future? An overarching question is whether we need to reach out beyond the cosy circle of our traditional allies, to make alliances with others.

Ladies and gentlemen, I come to the end of my introduction. There are indeed many unanswered questions, but at least today, we get some invaluable help from our expert guest speakers to find the right answers. Europe is a diverse place and to provide for a stimulating discussion, we have brought together a team with diverse backgrounds and from different generations. My guess is that their combined ideas on the realities of European security will provide us with a useful framework of thought.

Before I give the floor to our first panel, I would like to say a quick word about the proceedings of this afternoon. As you all can see on our programme, we will have two panel discussions that hopefully leave plenty of room for plenary discussion. The panel members will provide us with their views, and after every view, those wanting a clarification of what has been said, can ask questions. Later on this afternoon, there will be room for debate on what will be said here. So initially, I ask you to limit yourselves to questions for clarification. In the sequence of questions, I will favour our members of parliament, if you do not mind. After all, we are here to learn and I am afraid there will not be sufficient time for everyone present to ask questions. If you have a question, please use the interruption microphones. Do remember to press the button as long as you speak.

Without much further ado, I would like to introduce our first speaker on our first panel, François Heisbourg. I would like to highlight some gems of his impressive career. He is Chairman of the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. He has held senior positions in government, notably as international security advisor to the French Minister of Defence, in the defence industry as well as in academia.

I would like to give the floor to Mr Heisbourg, who will speak about the realities of European defence.

European defence: Hanging together or hanging separately?

European integration has advanced, especially in the economic realm. But spill-over effects on defence-related issues have remained relatively minimal. More than a decade ago, the 1998 Anglo-French summit of St. Malo was supposed to trigger something grand. Since then we have seen the emergence of European battle groups and the European Defence Agency as well as of the practice of pooling and sharing. However, is this enough? The defence capabilities of Europe are still below par. Cuts in defence spending by the far majority of European states further increase the gap between expectations and capabilities. Operation Unified Protector (Libya) hinted that Europe as a whole lacks the capability to conduct large-scale military operations without the assistance of the United States. If this is the reality of today (is it?), creating a coalition of the willing of those European states that are willing to come to an increased defence co-operation could be an alternative approach. Will Europe ever create a truly integrated, effective and affordable European defence force without a coherent common security and defence policy? Will European states ever give up their sovereign right to decide if and when to send forces into battle? Will pooling and sharing sufficiently safeguard our vital interests?

Mr François Heisbourg

International Institute for Strategic Studies, London

Mr Michael Stürmer

Die Welt, Berlin



Mr Heisbourg diagnosing Europeans: 'We have great trouble growing up strategically'

Mr François Heisbourg
International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London

Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for inviting me to this meeting, which indeed comes in particularly troubled times. It is a pleasure to be back in this town, where I spent a few years of my youth, and it is a particular pleasure to be in this very magnificent room, which hosts your institution.

I am going to focus my remarks on the patient, meaning the Europeans. We have been invited to speak on “European defence: Hanging together or hanging separately?” I will focus on the Europeans and I will do so pretty much along medical lines, as it were. I will discuss a few elements of the situation, otherwise known as symptoms. I will then give a few elements of a diagnosis and say a few words on the prognosis, followed by a discussion of the remedies. You will have guessed by now that my assumption is that we are not doing very well and that therefore, we are in need of some medical attention.

I will start with the symptoms, first of all the European defence per se, and notably the project that was originally known as European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which is currently referred to as Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). That policy started with some fireworks at the end of the 1990s, when the Saint-Malo Declaration was issued – a very remarkable declaration – and with the establishment of new EU-institutions by the

European Council in Cologne and subsequently in Helsinki. If we look back twelve to fourteen years, we see some accomplishments. There have been and continue to be successful civilian, military and common civilian/military operations run under ESDP, most recently and currently the Operation Atalanta, the fight against pirates. However, if we look at the broader picture, none of the approximately 25 operations conducted over the past ten years have been of what I would call earth-shaking importance, positively or negatively. Their terms of reference were fairly narrow and on the basis of those terms, the operations have generally been successful. However, if they had not existed, the world would not be very different today. What went wrong? Why was the promise not fulfilled? I will get to that later on. How was it not fulfilled?

In 2002, 2003 we had the Iraq crisis. It had the immediate material effect that the United Kingdom, which had been a prime mover in ESDP, was not able – to speak with the Americans – and no longer present or hardly so in the adventure. We lost sight of the initial goals of ESDP, the ability to project 60.000 European soldiers for one year in demanding missions. Maybe that was a bad idea to begin with, I do not know, but the fact is that if we had acquired that capability, Europe would have been in a league of power, in military terms, second only to that of the United States. We did, however, not do that. The substitute was the creation of the so-called battle groups, with 1500 men in each battle group. Most lived the idea of playing to the nimbleness of some of our military establishments. The French, the Dutch and the British are quite good in this type of operations. However, the battle groups have remained in a state of catalogue. Not one single battle group has actually been deployed, so I can only assume that they are virtual rather than real.

The bulk of our deployed military forces has been tied down in Afghanistan for about ten years now. That is an important mission, one which may have its relevance, but one cannot call it “European defence” in the political sense of that expression. Maybe at the end of operations in Afghanistan, our ability to deploy forces elsewhere may increase, but that is only tomorrow and not today. As far as the bulk of the EU is concerned, about 30.000 European soldiers are in Afghanistan today. So ESDP is pretty much in a rut, made worse by the manner in which we collectively have decided to interpret the Lisbon Treaty, that is “à minima”, as one would say in French. In terms of our casting choices, we did not necessarily choose the most powerful people. We did certainly not create a situation in which ownership of ESDP was seized upon by the newly created External Action Service. It is pretty much an orphan. That is one element of the symptoms.

A second element is constituted by the effects of the great financial crisis. I will speak about this very briefly, because you all know by heart the material impact of this on our defence budgets. There is no need to go much deeper. We are reducing the French armed forces by 55,000 people. I understand the Dutch are reducing theirs by 12,000. Proportionally, these cuts are quite similar. It is not a great situation to be in when the world is evolving the way it is. There is another effect of the great financial crisis in its European dimension. The measures we have had to take until now to try to save the euro have recently had an immediate consequence: the formalization of a two-speed Europe. The United Kingdom has opted out from the latest European Treaty. This is probably a sign of greater and deeper shifts to come, in terms of the absence of the EU in the field of defence. As we all know, the United Kingdom is, along with France, the largest military establishment, certainly in terms of the ability to deploy forces overseas.

As a third element of the symptoms, I see the consequences of the strategic changes in the world. A few of these were mentioned earlier on by the chairman. I will now sketch only a couple of them which have particular relevance to Europe. The first is the pivot to Asia by the United States, along with the American decision, which had a material effect on the conduct of the Libyan war, of leading from behind. We are dependent on the US for our defence, but clearly, the US no longer gives us the level of priority we had until now. I also remind you that the American defence budget is going down as well. If the budgetary sequestration measures mandated by Congress last November actually kick in towards the end of this year, the American defence budget will go down by a further 500 billion dollars by the end of this decade. So we need the Americans more than ever, but we are not going to get them to the extent in which we would need them.

The second feature is what in France, we have called “rupture stratégique” in our defence and national security white paper, strategic upsets, of which the great financial crisis has been an example, but also of course the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring or “renaissance” is something most admirable in many of its manifestations, but it makes for more instead of less instability in a region of vital strategic interest for the European Union, from Gibraltar to the Persian Gulf. Of course we will also have to deal with partners, notably China, who are becoming more powerful and also more assertive.

The fourth and last element of the symptoms is the continued inability of the Europeans to make up their minds as to what their collective strategic interest is. We continue to have deeply divergent viewpoints on the trade-off which has to be consented between being a good ally to the United States and an

excessively good ally to the United States. In the case of the war in Iraq, we had two categories of countries. Countries considered to be a good ally to the United States did not require participation in every single American misadventure, like Vietnam for example. Others considered that we had to go everywhere the Americans would want us to go, because that would be the price to pay for their continued presence in Europe. There is still no consensus on that. A similar thing, which is more troubling, came across particularly strongly during the war in Libya: there is no agreement amongst the Europeans on the degree to which pooled military assets should be made available to European countries fighting wars which have been mandated by the United Nations and which have been approved by and are conducted through NATO. As you know, half of the members of the European Union refused to participate in that war, but some of the most significant countries even refused to allow jointly managed assets such as NATO-AWACS to be used with national air crews from the countries involved in the operations. That is particularly troubling, because it severely constraints the options which lie in front of us in the field of so-called smart defence or in the activities of the European Defence Agency.

I will now give a very brief diagnosis. A man from Mars could say that Europe suffers from a particular case of the Peter Pan-disease. We have great trouble growing up strategically. We remain in a state of deep dependency of the US, with the US being less forthcoming. On top of that – and this is no longer the Peter Pan-category, this is the sweet Jamie Hayes-category – Europe is characterized by a deep rejection by our peoples of fully federal solutions to the problems we are encountering, be it in the euro crisis or in the framework of European defence. In this respect, the referendums held in the Netherlands and in France in 2005 were forerunners, not aberrations. So you could call it a form of autoimmune disease.

Then the prognosis. What happens if we take no particular remedial measures? I would like to begin with the consequences of the financial crisis and its European translation, being the crisis of the debts and of the euro. There are two scenarios, none of which is particularly appealing. In one scenario, we succeed in saving the euro. We succeed, with or without Greece. We will have put in place a federalizing machinery in the economic field and therefore in the political field as well. But that will have a knock-on effect, namely that a number of European countries, such as Great-Britain and the Czech Republic, will not go along. Therefore, we will in strategic terms eventually have a true two-speed Europe. How do you handle that in terms of the consequences? So this best-case scenario actually poses particular strategic problems.

Another scenario is failure. The euro collapses and we will no longer have a single currency. I am less worried about this kind of scenario than other people sometimes tend to be as they talk about a return to the World Wars et cetera. That I seriously do not believe. The World Wars set against each other countries which were involved in a struggle for and against hegemony. We are dealing with countries in decline in Europe today, not with hegemonies. It would still be one hell of a big mess and the consequences in terms of security and strategy, for example in the Balkans and in the Levant, of Greece going belly up in its exit – it is currently called the “Grexit” – from the euro, would be a clinically very interesting test case of what would be the broader strategic implications of the disappearance of the euro. Not great.

Secondly, the rise of China. I mentioned the American pivot to Asia. As China rises, the United States will focus more and more on the handling of its relationship with the peer competitor, to use language from one of the American national security strategy documents. American relations with Europe in the strategic field will therefore be heavily dependent on the terms of the trade-off which the Americans will ask us to make. Which will be: you support us in our policy vis-à-vis China, in which our vital interests are at stake, and we will continue to help you in your defence and security in your part of the world, or you succumb to Chinese blandishments and we will draw the strategic implications. That sounds pretty grim and far-fetched, but project yourself forth 15 or 20 years and I think you will not necessarily come to a different conclusion. I would also add that most people, certainly in my country, would draw from this remark the conclusion that it is an easy one: we support the United States rather than China. Well sure, but wait until the Chinese actually have a serious handle on us. There was an article in one of the French papers yesterday, which was entitled: HoMer or HuMer? As we all know now, HoMer is HollandeMerkel, and HuMer is president Hu of China and Merkel. In 2012, China became the largest trading partner of Germany. Germany’s positive trade balance is now more heavily dependent on trade with countries outside the area of the euro, particularly with China, than with countries within the euro area. This is a big change compared to five years ago. What will the situation be like in 10 or 15 years time? What will be the strategic choices of all countries, individually and collectively, if we are going to have a true Chinese super power, presenting substantial inducements for us not to go along with the Americans?

The third element of the prognosis is our decreasing of the defence budgets. I will very briefly describe what I would call the default mode of budget cuts in the field of defence. These are pretty universal. When we have defence cuts, what nearly invariably happens is that first of all, we prefer to save existing, on-going military programmes, in which current actual jobs are

involved, rather than sacrificing them for future military programmes. Now that is okay if you do it for one or two or three years, but we do it for ten or twenty years, which means that we will be running an army of the last generation fairly quickly. Secondly, you will emphasize big programmes which involve many jobs, lots of bureaucratic positions and lots of political capital, rather than saving smaller programmes which may, in some cases, be more important. You then end up with a deeply unbalanced force. In France we would call this the Rafale-syndrome. Here I guess you would call it the F35-syndrome. The third implication is unfortunately visible in Europe today: countries having to choose between procurement at home and procurement abroad, will choose procurement at home, even if it is less cost-effective. After all, they want to save jobs at home. We have to break out of that mode.

I will enter into three possible remedies, by rising order of importance. The first remedy is that we should actually try to fulfil the potential of the Lisbon Treaty, as far as CSDP is concerned. That would imply a change of casting at the head of CSDP. I do not need to give names. I think we all know who I am talking about. We will need somebody who is able to take ownership of CSDP. Secondly and even more importantly, we should try to do in actual operations what is contained in the Lisbon Treaty, namely integrating civilian and military means, which is made much easier by the existence of the External Action Service, by the fact that the High Representative for External Affairs is in the Commission as well as in the Council and so on. When I look at the rapid transformation of Mali in Sub-Saharan Africa into an African version of what Afghanistan was under the Taliban – and everybody in Brussels seems to be sleeping at the switch, a little bit like the Americans were sleeping at the switch when the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan in 1995 – I get a little bit worried. After all, we have the tools to deal with that sort of situation. We are big enough to do that, but we do not do it. We have to do it in a way which is, of course, not purely or even principally military. Are we doing it? No, we are not doing it.

The second remedy is NATO's Smart Defence. First of all the expression itself is a public relations disaster, because it implies that until it was invented, everything we did was completely idiotic, which is not a good way to convince people that you are going to be very smart. Secondly, you do not take people on trust. I did not begin this presentation by saying: you are going to hear a really smart presentation. I leave it up to you to decide on that in the end, but let us set that aside. In substance, smart defence means that there are no limits to what can be achieved multilaterally through pooling and through division of labour. Apart from reasons of national pride and the procurement factor which I mentioned earlier, a problem is that, when we are not in agreement on a particular military operation, we do not have guaranteed

access to the resources which have been pooled or which have been transferred to a third party. There is no way that I can think of, apart from federalization, which can surmount that obstacle and which would be, if anything, more visible if not larger than it was. We know that thanks to the experience with the Libyan ruler, which demonstrated how big this obstacle is. So of course we have to do things within NATO, within the European Defence Agency. It would be nice to see the EDA for example cutting its teeth in flight refuelling capacities, but this is not where most of the measures are going to be taken. Most of the measures needed are going to be national. Smart defence begins at home. It begins with thinking very hard about how to allocate your scarce resources and avoiding what I just described as the default mode of defence budget cuts. I can tell you from experience – I was one of the people who drafted the French defence and security white paper – that this is an exalting, but also an exceedingly difficult exercise. Of course we have devised a remedy, but it is one which will take us well away from the specific concerns we were invited to discuss today. We are going to need economic growth in Europe and if we do not have economic growth, we are not going to be able to resolve our defence equation in a manner that is compatible with our long-term interests.

Thank you very much.

Mr Van Kappen (chair): Thank you, Mr Heisbourg, for a very interesting and honest overview of what is going on in Europe today. What you said does not make me very happy, but I think it was very realistic. Are there any questions at this moment for clarification of what Mr Heisbourg told us?

Mr De Vries: Mr Chairman. I would appreciate it very much if Mr Heisbourg were a bit more specific about the kind of threats that will be confronting us. One would say that the geopolitical surroundings have changed dramatically over the past decades. He hinted at dangers that may confront us from for example China. I would like to be a little bit more specific. What are we preparing for? After all, if we do not know what we are preparing for, we will never do the right things.

Mr Heisbourg: I did not quote the usual list of threats, which is how one usually begins a white paper exercise. Referring to China for example is not thinking in terms of military threats, but in terms of strategic power and influence. The ability of China to affect the nature of our relations with the US is one thing. The risk of China attacking us is of course an entirely different one. The first thing is highly probable and currently happening, in some ways, while the second one is extremely unlikely.

As for the threat list, if we are talking defence in the narrow sense of the word, it is a situation in which you have to consider using armed force. You know the classical list: international terrorism is one threat. It has not gone away, in spite of some of the good things that happened last year. From a military and strategic point of view, there are more important threats, but I name terrorism first, because that is what actually strikes the men and women in the street, probably more than anything else. From a military and strategic point of view, the risk or prospect of a conflict in the greater Middle East is more important. When we drafted the white paper in Paris five years ago, the commission was very worried about the prospects of conflict in that area, including in North-Africa. The diplomats in our system were not happy to see us using language of that sort. In their eyes, we were transforming a political problem into a security problem. Two years after the white paper came out, we were at war in North-Africa. We were fighting in North-Africa. These things happen and that is a comparatively minor spinoff of the Arab Spring. In terms of population numbers and risks, Libya is very low on the list. We have a serious problem in the Persian Gulf. Thank goodness that you have a lot of bicycles in the Netherlands, but I would guess that somebody would have to do something about it, whether that problem is one with a nuclear dimension – I think of Iran – or not, we have been at war in the Gulf before. It could happen again. Conditions have certainly not been improved by the fact that the Arab world is undergoing a process of revolutionary change. It is a necessary change and a welcome change, but its strategic consequences are not always particularly welcome.

I did not mention Russia. That is not simply out of diffidence towards my Russian friend Ivanov, but Russia is definitely not in military terms the threat which the Soviet Union used to be. Relations with Russia have been complex, to use a neutral word. I think they will remain complex, too, which will require us to do some prudential things, such as the NATO air defence system in the Baltic countries or in Iceland. We need to do that in a non-provocative way, so that it falls under the category “good fences make good neighbours”. Do I foresee that this will become much more serious? I do not, but here again I refer to the white paper. When we were working on Russia, we tended to express ourselves pretty much along the lines I just did. Again, some of the diplomats were not all too happy to see us underline security dimensions rather than the political and economic dimension. Three months after the white paper came out, two countries were at war, namely Russia and Georgia. These things happen.

Mr Van der Linden: Never waste a good crisis, because a crisis offers a lot of opportunities. In my opinion, the lowering of the defence budget is not the most important problem, because if we use our budget more effectively, we

could do more than we do now or even much more. My question concerns the two-speed Europe. It appears to be the only way to make progress in Europe. Do you also see opportunities in the middle-long term for a two-speed Europe in defence matters? If we want to use the opportunities contained in the Lisbon Treaty, we are told by the people in Brussels that the United Kingdom in particular is terrorizing decisions in this field. Can you comment on that?

My last question is the following. If we look at the long-term interest of Europe, stability, peace and prosperity are among the key issues. We will talk about Russia later on, but we have a much greater interest in a strategic alliance with Russia. Could you clarify why we missed opportunities in the 1990s and in the early years of this century? What was the reason for that? Was it partly due to our loyalty to the United States? Or do you see other reasons?

Mr Van Kappen (chair): In the interest of time management, I take the liberty to ask Mr Knip to put his question before us as well.

Mr Knip: I have only one short question to check if I understood Mr Heisbourg well as he was talking about pooling and sharing. Did I hear him say that pooling and sharing is in reality only possible with a federalization of Europe?

Mr Heisbourg: I will start with the last question. No, that would be shorthand for something that has more than a few nuances. There are limits to sharing and pooling if you are in a system in which member states continue to hold full sovereignty over what they consider to fall into their sphere of competence. I mentioned NATO AWACS during the Libya war. What happened? NATO AWACS is supposedly totally shared and pooled entirely. Planes are licensed in Luxembourg, they are based in Germany and they belong to SACEUR. It is very difficult to imagine anything which is more shared and more integrally pooled. We had a UN Security Council resolution and we had a NATO-decision that this war was going to be run by NATO. One would have supposed that there would have been no problem for a country – Germany in this case – having its air crew continue to function on these aircraft, which are not lethal, which do not wage war in the bloody sense of the word. Yet the answer of Germany was no. We could not have access to these aircraft. The problem was circumvented. Thank goodness, if I may use that expression, we had a real war going on in Afghanistan as well, where Germans flew on AWACS operating in Afghanistan. So the non-Germans were taken out of the AWACS flying over Afghanistan and they were put into the AWACS that were going to fly over Libya. All the Germans who were supposed to have been able to go to Libya were sent to Afghanistan. We will not always have situations where we will have another war at the same time with which we can circumvent a

problem which is entirely of our own making. This is not an example involving sharp shooters. Everyone understands that a sovereign state cannot release its material if it does not agree with the war that is going on. Here we are talking about support aircraft, which were running no military risk and which did not bear a military risk themselves. Plenty of people in Germany tell me that this was an exception and it is not going to happen again et cetera. I do remember that we had similar problems in 1992 to get the Germans to participate in the NATO AWACS over Bosnia. That was eventually handled, but it took a ruling by the constitutional court in Karlsruhe. So it is tricky.

Let me now comment on the three points that Mr Van der Linden made. Never let a good crisis go to waste. I think that was a formula by Rahm Emanuel when he was advisor to Obama, and he was absolutely right. As far as defence cuts are concerned, I agree that defence cuts are not the most important one of the issues that I mentioned and I certainly did not present them as such. Indeed there is an element of opportunity. In our particular case, the timing was not too bad. Yes, we did some hard thinking about integrating into our defence doctrine, into our defence organisation and into our defence material procurement structure the fruits of the evolution in information technology – which is called Mo's law – rather than continuing to emphasize or overemphasize, as we have been prone to do, the cost of the more traditional instruments of war, which we now attempt to multiply by two at every change of a generation, whereas information-related instruments of war have costs tending to follow the law of a division of the costs by two every two years. So yes, there is plenty that you can do, but it is very, very difficult, because you actually have to shut down factories. You have to kill jobs if you want to seize that opportunity.

As for the two-speed Europe and the British, I am not sure I got the word right. Did you use the word “terrorizing”? I see you confirm that, so I actually did hear it right. I thought I heard you say that, but I wanted to make sure. I am not surprised. I am not sure whether I can explain the opinion of somebody in Brussels, but the British are certainly no team players in this field. It certainly does not look as if the British political body is going to become any more European very rapidly. Given the less than stellar manner in which we have collectively been handling the euro crisis, I am not sure that there is going to be a great popular incentive for the British to move back towards new EU-ventures in general.

As for Russia, I agree that we missed plenty of opportunities in the 1990s. Was it American pressure? No, I think it was collective short-sightedness. Where we did have full sight, it also tended to be collective, I would add. Some of the very big symbolic things that we should have done in the very

early years after the end of the Soviet Union vis-à-vis Jeltsin, we simply did not do. We did not do the state visits, we did not do the participation in the ceremonies of the 9th of May, that kind of thing, treating Russia as the leading victor of World War II in terms of sacrifices. That sort of symbolism we missed. That did not come from Washington. It was truly collective. The Americans and the Europeans were less wise on that one than they were, as far as the Americans and the West-Germans were concerned, about the reunification of Germany in 1989/90, where there was a vision and where there was policy.

Mr Van Kappen (chair): Thank you, Mr Heisbourg. I know that there are more questions, but in the interest of time I kindly ask Mr Holman to save his question for later. I see that he agrees to that, thank you very much.

I suggest we quickly move on to our next speaker, Mr Michael Stürmer. He is a historian and has published numerous articles and books on German and European history. He was professor at the university of Erlangen-Nürnberg. He held and still holds visiting professorships at Harvard, the Sorbonne, Toronto and the John Hopkins University. In the 1980s, he was foreign policy advisor to Chancellor Kohl. Since 1998 he is the chief correspondent for the German newspaper Die Welt. Mr Stürmer, the floor is yours.

Mr Michael Stürmer
Die Welt, Berlin



Mr Stürmer: 'In everything military, the Europeans act as if they were inhabitants of a distant star'

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the invitation and let me start by saying that I wholeheartedly agree with most or really all of the things my friend François Heisbourg said, especially on the repercussions and implications of the German decision to abstain in the United Nations Security Council on 17 March last year. That is a decision which will have very long-lasting, deep, political, technical and military effects.

I would like to make one remark on the two-speed Europe. The problem is: where is Germany? As far as monetary virtue is concerned, Germany is in the driver's seat in the two-speed Europe, but where is Germany in the two-speed Europe when it comes to defence? I find it extremely difficult to forecast where Germany is today or where it will be tomorrow or in two years time, when we will most likely have a change of government.

Where are we today? We are in winter and the Arab Spring promises a wind of discontent. There is a war looming over the Greater Middle East that may easily escalate into something more than a surgical strike. India has tested a nuclear-capable ICBM. Russia and China have announced substantial increases in their military budgets. The Seoul Conference on nuclear terrorism has just concluded on a note of uncertainty. In Afghanistan, the west has won all the battles, but no-one dares to speak about victory. Without infrastructure support from Russia, the flight for the exit may well be the road to disaster.

Pirates are at large. Those are just a few headlines, collected at random over the last weeks. Demographic upheavals are taking place. Revolutions in communication and control are well advanced, with no end in sight and no idea of major control regulation. Climate change promises to redraw the maps of the globe and initiate a scramble for the last riches, but also for the last liveable places. Apart from the United Nations, the WTO, the NPT and some more of that alphabet soup, there is little to bring order into a world in turmoil.

The end of history was promised in 1989 and many in high places in this country, in Germany and elsewhere, were willing to believe the nonsense. However, the end of history will not materialize in our lifetime. Security analysts of the old school may be forgiven when they sometimes look back at both the strategic certainties of the Cold War and the discipline it imposed on the alliance and beyond the alliance. Security analysts of today, however, have to cope with the full spectrum of risk and dangers from global terrorism, carried forward by religious zealots, to the proliferation of nukes and missile technology, from old-fashioned civil war to the ill-defined universe of cyber space, cyber crime and cyber war. Today's strategists of course are not to be envied. They have to expect the unexpected. They have to borrow the famous expression from Donald Rumsfeld "do not only explore the known knowns, but also the known unknowns and, worst of all, the unknown unknowns". This requires both a deeper understanding of fallen civilizations, language and history, but also the translation into military hardware. After all soft power alone will not do in many cases. Without the ability and the proven willingness to escalate when it comes to the crunch, soft power may well turn out to be a disappointment. The world of Cold War calculability and crisis management is no more. To continue thinking in Cold-War terms, let alone to prepare armies in Cold-War terms, is not only a waste of time, but leads to dangerous misconceptions, policy and the misallocation of scarce resources.

Before 1990, the great game was global, nuclear and bipolar, akin to a chessboard where both espionage and arms control, but also common sense and the rationale of mutual assured destruction (MAD) helped to keep the world in balance. Today, it is far beyond multidimensional chess. There is no well-defined analogy to describe today's dangers and threats. They are, to be put into American jargon, multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. Historians of earlier centuries, like Henry Kissinger, would however immediately recognize chaos as usual, but in a high-tech, potentially self-destructive global environment. Think of Russia. In 1990, no-one in his right mind would have dared to discuss the widening of NATO beyond the Oder river. When it happened, the Russians got no compensation, but were told that spheres of influence and talk of the new "near-abroad" was old thinking, while to expand

the Western system of democracy and free enterprise was a legitimate expression of new thinking. There was a dangerous imbalance in that key relationship, which persists today. We are paying the price.

The first lesson of strategy is to study your opponent. That has, by and large, been missing from the post-Cold War effort. This omission has, once again, a price. Today the question is whether you can be a good Atlanticist and, at the same time, cultivate civilized relationships with Russia. If not, missile defence made in the US or made in Russia, if incompatible, will create a serious conflict, akin to the missile crisis of thirty years ago, which many in this room will still remember. Or for that matter, how can the nations that have troops in Afghanistan hope to get them out in comfort, without Russia giving more than a helping hand? It is time to understand that a) Russia of today has more in common with Russia of before 1914, and b) that Russia in terms of its strategic interest from oil and technology to security shares some vital concerns with Europe and the West in general. Russia, if you look more closely, has a policy of appeasement and containment vis-à-vis China.

So the first item on the to-do list is to stabilize and improve the relationship with Russia. This is all the more important because of the second item on the list: the US is still the sole surviving super power, but it is dangerously overstretched both in man power and finance. It also is a house divided against itself, a very dangerous matter which manifests itself in the present election campaign. One thing is for sure and it did not need the setting up of a big marine base in Darwin Australia recently to underscore what Obama said on the occasion: we are a Pacific power and we are here to stay. Which means a reversal of the secular decision of 1941: Europe first. The third item: do the Europeans have a clue that the US is no longer willing and able to step in whenever the Europeans are in trouble, Cold War or not? Just remember Libya. On the one hand, the US was unwilling to engage, let alone lead. On the other hand, without US-intelligence and hardware, the Europeans or the willing Europeans would soon have been exhausted, unable to prevail in the Northern-African sands against a third-rate military.

The fourth item. The Europeans altogether and every single nation have failed so far to effect a turnaround, organize leadership and act as a potential leader. Europe is not present at the rendezvous of world powers, except in monetary matters, where crisis management is the best thing on offer and in commercial terms. Pooling and sharing is sold as the panacea at every European summit meeting, and also when NATO has to make ends meet in times of austerity. But pooling and sharing not only requires first of all sharing of first principles, sharing of risk assessment and of “esprit de defense”, but also the willingness to give up certain production lines in favour of others.

Domestic and economic concerns stand in the way of a more efficient procurement. However, important as this may be, the overriding question is political and strategic, within the technical bond and within the military one. How far can aligned solidarity override national idiosyncrasies, such as Germany's strange mix of pacifism and opportunism, so impressively displayed at the United Nations Security Council. And of course there is industrial egotism, waste, duplication, bureaucracy and multiplication. The Europeans in their vast majority continue to see the US as their comfortable and cheap reinsurance system, without much of a need to pay the premium, let alone return the favour. But, as madam Mère used to say when here son's empire was in full swing: "pourvu que cela dure". Europe is not equipped for serious muscular crisis management in Africa or in Asia, nor, if necessary, willing and able to raise the stakes. We used to call that deterrence. There is no leadership structure, not even at Lady Ashton's brief, but there is also outside NATO no serious and well-established military and intelligence framework to rely upon. In everything military, the Europeans act as if they were inhabitants of a distant star, distant from each other and even more distant from the trials and tribulations of the real world. They would be utterly incredulous and shocked to hear what Jefferson said and what was quoted in the invitation here: "we shall hang together or we will be hanged separately". This is not the language you use with the Europeans.

The fifth item. Is soft power the answer? Its great attraction is that it is fairly cheap and in university seminars and senior common rooms all over Europe, it needs political rumours like the end of history. Europe is indeed strong on soft power. It could even be stronger from demography towards creativity, from the social cohesion, from the social contracts throughout most European countries to the balanced combination of wealth, capitalism and the welfare state. But all of the above cannot substitute deterrence and defence, high-class technical and human intelligence and, above all, the willingness to join forces and give substance to the common destiny of Europe and the Europeans in the uncertainties of a world like never before. We talk about national interest, and nations are quite comfortable in their national interest, except that the national interest can no longer be defended on national terms.

The shape of things to come. We have seen unpleasant and often uncontrollable events around us from Iran to North-Korea, from demographic explosions to religious wild fire, from missile technology proliferation to nuclear ambitions, even on the terrorist level. Uncertainties abound and the European public is still in a post-Cold War mood, ill-prepared for the bad news to come. The answer is to redress the balance between national egos and alliance cohesion and to engage in an agonizing reappraisal of challenge and response, to join forces once again, restructure NATO and give the European

element in NATO much more weight. Devise a new system of division of labour and take pooling and sharing seriously, which includes, as I said, first of all the sharing and pooling of intelligence, threat assessment and a means to be in front of the L-curve and on top of any ugly situation.

The relationship with Russia needs a strategic and cooperative approach. Japan and Down Under have assistance to offer. After the Cold War, most of the Europeans raced towards the exits, scaling down their defence efforts, but also neglecting to understand the full array of threats blooming in the now globalized strategic environment and to completely reinvent defence. This has got to stop before the West has to experience blood, sweat and tears in a new Churchillian age. In the days of Helmut Schmidt, calculability was the essence of alliance cohesion. Under Helmut Kohl it was “Bündnisfähigkeit”, amounting to more or less the same thing. To believe that we can safely stumble on as we have done over the last twenty years, always relying on the US as the security lender of last resort, requires more optimism than reality permits. Thank you.

Mr Van Kappen (chair): Thank you, Mr Stürmer. That was a delightful speech. A couple of things have stuck in my mind. One of these is your remark that the end of history will not come in my lifetime. If I understand this correctly, it is quite a consolation to me! The other thing that really struck me is your remark about soft power not being enough. That reminded me of what Roosevelt once said: speak softly, but carry a big stick. I could not agree more, though, of course, my interpretation is not important. Are there any points that need clarification?

Mr Vliegenthart: I have two short questions. Mr Stürmer, you are a known scholar of German politics and German foreign policy. You mentioned German foreign politics and said you were puzzled about what will be happening in the years to come, in the light of a potential change of government after the elections that will take place two years from now. Could you tell us a little bit about the kind of routes German foreign policy might take within the coming years? That is my first question.

My second question is as follows. You advocate a normalisation of the relationship with Russia. Could you be a bit more concrete about which steps this would involve in the coming years?

Mr Stürmer: The course that German foreign and defence policy is most likely to take is that it will continue on the present path, unless we have a right-green government. Paradoxically, a red-green government will probably be

more willing to show loyalty to the alliance. Under the present leadership the centre-right coalition totally underestimated the fact of that momentous decision. It also felt safer with the German public and with the allies, because it was centre-right, in the tradition of Helmut Kohl. Now Helmut Kohl is gone and has used up all the credit the Germans had in the great reunification crisis. You have to build up new creditworthiness. That government thought that credit came free of interest, but it did not. So, in party political terms, it will be more of the same, unless there is a really shocking game changer in the offing, which might happen in the Middle East. It would definitely take something very serious, something I would not even want to imagine, for change to take place.

The second question pertains to Russia. The great mistake that was made in the early 1990s was that we gave the Russians to understand that the old NATO plus the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) would be enough for a long time and that something else would have to be found for the other countries. If you remember, in 1990 the Warsaw Pact was still in existence, though somewhat diminished in credibility and effectiveness. No one present at those negotiations – I was present there – would have dared to raise the question, let alone to discuss the question, of NATO widening to the East.

I have always wondered why we did not learn more from the Congress of Vienna. After all, Henry Kissinger started his political career studying the wisdom of creating a new balance of power at the Congress of Vienna. Something like that broader European dismemberment that brought in Russia as a fully accepted partner – not only as a necessary partner but as an accepted partner in the system – would have been much wiser, in my opinion. The Soviet Union went the way of all flesh and since then, it has been Russia, for better or for worse. If you are a student of Russian history, living with Russia has always been a little difficult, for a number of cultural, technical, geographical and strategic reasons. The solution of the Congress of Vienna was of course not a widening of the West, but giving Poland away to reassure the Russians and make the Tsar a more compatible ally. That was a solution, though a cynical one. They should have come up with something better.

I do not think we really used the chance to transform NATO into something much more political and to make Russia, as far as possible, a partner. I remember a number of things that worked quite well in those days. There was an exchange of general officers between Harvard and the Russian general staff and there was an exchange of general officers between my place and the Russian general staff and the Defence Ministry in Moscow. As far as I am concerned, these things were very useful. There was the Nunn-Lugar amendment, which was confidence building on a very high level and involved

corporation, working on the highest level and deactivating nuclear weapons by the thousands with a lot of money. Together, that would have shown the right way. Given that the Cold War had just about ended or was about to end when this kicked in, I think it was a sign of enormous strategic wisdom on both sides. Why we discontinued that element of wisdom is beyond me. Bill Clinton would have won his second-term election anyway, without all these manoeuvres.

Mr Van der Linden: I have two questions, Mr Stürmer. The previous speaker said that the 25 actions did not change a lot in the world. Can we therefore conclude that we used hard power too quickly and should have used soft power for a longer period of time?

My second question deals with the position of Germany in the two-speed Europe. You said that you do not know where Germany stands with regard to defence. Is that for internal reasons or is it also because other members of the European Union and NATO do not want to see Germany in a leading role in the two-speed defence Europe?

Mr De Vries: Professor Stürmer, you painted a rather gloomy picture of the world. You suggested that it would take a major crisis to stimulate Germany into developing initiatives. If we do not wait for such a major crisis, which will hit us all, where do you think initiatives should be taken? There are some obvious places where one would expect people to spend their days and earn their money thinking about what to do about potential threats. NATO, maybe the offices of Lady Ashton, whose name needs not to be mentioned here are two of the many places where one would expect people to come together, discuss these issues and come up with ideas. Are all of these fora not useful or not effective in your opinion? Is it, indeed, maybe not the end of history but a major crisis that will wake us up? Of course it will take an awful lot of time before we get our act together. Where should we expect initiative? Do you know any government leaders in Europe who might be capable of developing some useful ideas?

Mr Stürmer: You ask me a highly philosophical question: how do nations learn? They learn more through defeat and danger than through victory and triumph. Victory and triumph are close to hubris and lead to nemesis. Great changes in history come about through major crises, whether it is Prussia in Napoleonic days or Germany after the Second World War. We should have learned more from the very dangerous super crisis that we avoided in 1989-1990. If that confrontation had gone wrong, if there had not been enormous statesmanship and good luck, we would have had the mother of all crises.

You say I paint a gloomy picture. Yes, of course, I was not invited here to say that all things are very well and that if they are not yet well, they will work out comfortably. No, I was invited as a doctor to a patient, as my friend Francois Heisbourg said. This patient needs looking after and a lot of medication. I take your remark as a confirmation of what this meeting is all about. We are talking about the serious edge of things.

Are the fora we have not effective? Up to a point they are, but perhaps not enough. We see that NATO needs to be reinvented in many ways. Has enough footwork been done already? Will the leaders understand how urgent this is?

The first question I was asked deals with the relation between soft power and hard power. Hard power is a means to escalate when soft power, in the form of treaties, propaganda, culture, good neighbourly relations or general human reason, is not enough. At that point you need something to escalate, to say: enough is enough, we are getting really angry now and really serious. We call it deterrence. You have to integrate all the elements of soft power in a continuum with the ability to escalate. Of course, it is obvious that you cannot do that on your own; neither the Netherlands nor Germany nor the two together are strong enough to really have a strong voice in serious world matters. Serious world matters could explode tomorrow or in a years' time or sometime this summer, say between July 1 and the American election, somewhere in the Middle East. Do we just want to be spectators or do we want to be prepared and, if necessary, able to draw red lines? Have we really given up except in rhetoric? I was a speech writer long enough to understand the attraction of rhetoric, but sometimes rhetoric is not enough.

The second question is about a two-speed Europe and the role of Germany in that Europe. The interesting and somewhat ironic thing is that after 1990 there was the Schäuble-Lamers Memorandum in which I was also involved. The idea was: now we need to expand and to bring in the nations from the cold. That cannot be done at a stroke. You have a well-established, rapidly developing European Economic Community – at that time the European Community – as well as those countries that have a long way to go, in all kinds of dimensions. That was the idea of a two-speed Europe, with a variable geometry. Also it was clear that the American mission in Europe was accomplished and that sooner or later the Americans would go, unless something terrible, a terrible sea change, would force them to stay in Europe. It could be foreseen, it happened and it continues to happen. The Americans will have one heavy brigade on the European continent in the future. That is the present state of wisdom. Now, all of his could be foreseen. One of the suggestions was that those Europeans who were willing and able to put soldiers in the field, would put together a serious security and defence force. This idea took various

shapes on paper, but never materialized in reality. We have not really progressed. I regret to say that the German decision to withdraw all kinds of elements from the AWACS as well as from the ships from the Mediterranean patrol, takes away the credibility. An alliance is as good as the extent to which the allies can rely on each other. If it is just something to parade in front of NATO-headquarters, then it is a waste of money.

Mr Homan: Mr Stürmer, I have a question on Germany and nuclear weapons. Before the Lisbon summit in 2010, some European countries, including Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, took the initiative to start a debate within NATO about the role of nuclear weapons. This debate focussed on the US forward-deployed systems. A compromise was reached in Lisbon. It was decided that a defence and deterrence post-review should be launched to look for the appropriate mix between conventional defence systems, nuclear defence systems and missile defence systems. I do not think that we will hear the definitive outcome of this review next week in Chicago. However, Germany will replace its Tornado fighter aircraft by Eurofighters over a period of years. As is well-known, the Eurofighter is incapable of performing nuclear tasks. What will Germany's position be, once it is no longer able to carry out nuclear tasks while other countries are still able to do so?

Mr Van Eekelen: I have one comment and one question. My comment is as follows. As far as I am concerned, soft power can only be meaningful if hard power is not too far away. I do not see the two as sequential. In my opinion they have to happen at the same time. This is why I advocate much more activity on the part of Europe in the relationship between civilian and military power and activity. I fear that that is the future. NATO is not capable of doing very much in the civilian field. Europe is. I would be in favour of a civilian military headquarters in Brussels. But, mind you: civilian military. In that way it would not compete with NATO.

Now for my question. Do you really agree with the theme "European defence: Hanging together or hanging separately"? We are not hanging. There is no threat of hanging, together or separately. There is, however, a danger of sinking in the mud together.

Mr Stürmer: Before Germany joined NATO, Konrad Adenauer announced the possession, acquisition and development of German national nuclear weapons. This was repeated in 1990 by Chancellor Kohl, without the German public even realising; I think I was the only one to write an editorial about it. It reflects various things. First of all, the Germans do not like nuclear weapons. They never liked the idea that the Cold War was stabilised by nuclear weapons, nor that the very strange position of West Berlin could only

be maintained through the threat of nuclear weapons and the role of American GI's and especially their families as a kind of hostages, based very near the Iron Curtain or in West Berlin. That was the real substance of Article V. Anybody who today believes in Article V without solid boots on the ground as well as families and American television cameras nearby, believes in something much more theoretical than what we had in the Cold War. Throughout that period the German Air Force had aircraft capable of carrying nuclear weapons, even though it never had access to nuclear weapons.

So for Germany as a national entity it does not make much of a difference. It is very difficult to tell whether for NATO as a whole these 60 systems are a force of reassurance or a problem. That question requires very subtle political analysis. The security of Europe still hinges on the ultimate willingness of the USA to deter any serious attack on Europe, with the inclusion of nuclear weapons. That can be done sea-based as well as air-based. You do not need those 60 systems in Germany. So the question whether this makes a qualitative difference to the change from Tornado aircraft fighters to Eurofighter does not make or break European security, nor the German feeling of reassurance.

I agree with Mr Van Eekelen's remark that soft power and hard power are not sequential but part of the same thing. I do not agree with those politicians who ask what the ultima ratio, the last resort is. You have to think about escalating. The world is always in conflict. Most conflicts are reasonably peaceful, some conflicts are more dangerous and some can be deadly. That is why you need to think, right from the start of a conflict, about where it might lead you and where you want it to stop. Why did the Cold War impose such a discipline on all kinds of conflicts? Because one had to think about every minor conflict, whether in the centre or on the periphery, as possibly having the potential to escalate into something final. Take the aftermath of the building of the Berlin Wall, when the tanks faced each other. This was ultimately about who does and who does not control western Allied passports at Checkpoint Charlie. It was a leading matter and it stopped on the level of tanks facing each other. Thank God that this was where it stopped and that it did not go any further. It was crisis management, brinkmanship on both sides, but still with a certain safety margin.

Can something else happen? Yes, of course. We are at present involved with this kind of brinkmanship with the Iranians. The Americans are in that game and the Israeli are certainly in that game. Some European nations are involved in that conflict. Preventing a major misunderstanding will take very subtle handling of both the more peaceful, soft power-approach and the more hard power-approach.

Mr Van Kappen (chair): Ladies and gentlemen, the big question is what we do now. If Europe is not capable of speaking with one voice, it may very well deny itself its own strategic dimension. If you look at the security environment of today from an intellectual point of view, we have no other choice than to do it together. After having listened to the two speakers, however, it becomes clear that there is a lot of rough water there. So, what are we going to do? Are we going to make sure that Europe really comes together and starts to realise its own strategic dimension? One of the things that stick in my mind is a television interview with one of the members of the Dutch Senate, Mr Vliegthart, who was here earlier. During that interview he said that you can have all kinds of dreams about Europe and about doing things together, but if the population of Europe does not support these dreams – what Mr Heisbourg called the “autoimmune disease” – nothing will happen, despite all your dreams. Nothing will happen if the population of the European nations does not carry these dreams forward. If they refuse to do so, you may have dreams and fantastic ideas, but nothing will happen because of this autoimmune disease.

My prerogative as chairman is that I am allowed to ask one question. I ask Mr Heisbourg and Mr Stürmer what we have to do now.

Mr Heisbourg: If I were a prudent, not really courageous person, I would say that answering that question is the job of the politicians. But since I am a reckless, audacious person, I will try to answer this question, with emphasis on the word “reckless”.

There are two basic points. The first is to realise that the outcome of the euro crisis and the revival of growth in Europe is the biggest thing that we have to get right, the thing that determines everything else. If there is no revival of growth, then practically everything else becomes irrelevant or impossible. In this particular case a defence and security analyst finds himself saying that sacrifices have to be made in his own area in order to get the biggest thing right. Those sacrifices need to be considered in a positive manner.

The second generic point is that our problems notwithstanding, we should do what we can when we are able to make a difference. It may sound very banal but sometimes we forget to think in these very basic terms. People ask me sometimes why Sarkozy was so eager to have Resolution 1973 adopted by the United Nations Security Council and to enter the war in Libya. My short answer to that is: because he could and because he could make a difference. In 1995 in Srebrenica we could but we did not. When I say “we”, I mean all of us, the countries of the contact group, the Netherlands and others. If you can make a difference, if you have the means to do so, you have to do it. Doing so is not

only useful vis-à-vis the specific aim that you are pursuing – in the case of Libya, saving Benghazi and overthrowing Kadhafi – it also helps to build up morale and motivation to deal with the big thing.

What can we do today? I mentioned several things, notably the implementation of the potential of the Lisbon Treaty, because that is controversial in itself. We have an agreement, we have a basis. Through faults entirely of our own we have miscast the whole operation. We did all the wrong things just when we needed to do the right things, on the eve of the Arab Springs. The notion that we entered into the Arab Springs with a minimalist interpretation of the Lisbon Treaty and the corresponding cast of characters was in itself a real opportunity missed. I mention one specific instance where we do not seem to act in a timely manner, i.e. the situation in sub-Saharan Africa. Again I use the collective “we”, I think in particular of the Brussels institutions because it is much more a EU-matter and an African Union matter than a matter of NATO or the UN. The situation there is running out of control. This can have strategic consequences that are similar to those that occurred seventeen years ago when Afghanistan went into the wrong direction. This falls into the category of “something we can do”. We can help the African Union politically, military and economically. We can work with the African Union and with the countries in the region. However, are we doing so? No, we are not, or hardly. Why do we not do it? Mainly because we are not thinking about it. Why are we not thinking about it? Because other matters occur, including the big thing I mentioned earlier on. But once again: the big thing must not prevent us from doing what we can.

Mr Stürmer: I will limit myself to three points. Firstly. Soft power means a stabilised social contract throughout Europe. That is where Germany and the Netherlands and perhaps Finland can display leadership and strengthen the social contract as the decisive element, the basis of soft power.

Secondly, we need to be realistic about the kind of Europe we can aim for. The European Fiscal Compact alone as a pass into the future will not do. It is emotionally cold. Most nations say that they have to do it because of the Germans and that the Germans do not understand; they give the money but otherwise have no heart. This is neither the time nor the basis for a federal Europe. However, this does not mean that we should not aim for a Europe of energy, a Europe of infrastructure, a Europe of education and a Europe first and foremost of defence and security.

Thirdly. Once we have done the two points above, we should do a third thing. Once we are serious about defence we should negotiate a new transatlantic bargain with the United States. The irony is that just before the Cold War

ended, we were engaged in that discussion and rather far advanced in achieving a non-political NATO. That does not mean, however, that we get a NATO on the cheap. Preserve NATO, which for the USA, let alone for the Europeans, is still the number one security framework. It must, however, be more balanced. Besides, not only the Europeans have to better understand the thing but also the Americans. We have drifted too far into the direction of the toolkit, the toolbox, a situation where the Europeans come or do not come and the Americans just shrug their shoulders. This is not a basis. Perhaps – I hope so – all this will happen without major shocks either in the field of the social contract, countries falling apart, democracies tumbling, or, as is now on the cards, a major militarist strategic crisis with all its accompanying problems such as skyrocketing oil prices caused by trouble in the Gulf. This would really upset our society to an extent that we have not yet seen. If you study the 1973 crisis and its aftermath or the 1979 crisis and its aftermath, this would be like 1973 plus 1979 with something on top.

Mr Homan: One of the pillars of Dutch defence policy is international defence cooperation. I think that Mr Heisbourg was somewhat pessimistic on the concepts of smart defence and pooling and sharing. Our minister of Defence is very much in favour of this. For instance two weeks ago he signed a declaration for more cooperation with Belgium and Luxembourg. He is also engaged in talks with the Belgian, Norwegian and Danish ministers of Defence in order to see whether it is possible to collectively procure the successor to the F-16 Fighter. Our minister of Defence is also of the opinion that we should place the concept of sovereignty in a broader context. Sovereignty defined as the capability to act is the best argument for international defence cooperation. I would be interested to hear Mr Heisbourg's comment on this.

Mr Heisbourg: My pessimism is not about the concept of pooling and sharing per se and I am definitely not saying that one cannot or should not do it. I only urge people not to assume that by saying twice as loudly as in the past that we have to pool and share, we are actually going to do twice as much pooling and sharing. We are not, because there are intrinsic problems posed in certain circumstances by pooling and sharing. There are limits to what you can do in this field. NATO has had every incentive since its creation in 1949 to pool and share, to make use of interoperability and to enact a division of labour. There were indeed circumstances in the Cold War where our security situation was intrinsically much more difficult than it is today, and yet we always ran into the limits of pooling and sharing. These limits have not disappeared. That is all that I am saying. It is not because our budgets have been down and because the Americans are retreating to some extent that all of a sudden there is a magic potion out there, called "pooling and sharing", that somehow remains to be discovered.

So, in practical terms, how should we look at the problem of pooling and sharing in the future? First of all, NATO should not forget what it has been doing quite superbly, namely generating interoperability at a tactical, operative and strategic level. Interoperability does not sound as nice as “smart defence” but you can actually describe what it means and you can actually produce and make a really big difference by working towards that end. So I would put that ahead of the pooling and sharing, the driver of interoperability.

Secondly, we are looking for new areas of pooling and sharing as opposed to those areas which are already occupied by pooling and sharing, such as the collective purchase, by Belgium, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands, of F-16's. You are telling me that you are going to do that again. That is great, but it is not new. It is good to continue to do something smart 45 years later. You are, however, not actually doing something new, you are simply avoiding doing something different in the future. There is a lot more to be done. Think of the pooling of training, of schooling, and of support functions. There is a lot more to be done in terms of the cooperation between military assets. I am thinking along the lines of the French-British habit, which is now encased in the 2010 Lancaster House Treaty, but which we actually began dealing with in 1999-2000: the ability to exchange naval ships in order to support each other's carrier task forces. More pooling and sharing can be done, but a wise man will realise that he is not going to solve his basic problem by simply doing more pooling and sharing. At the end of the day he will be confronted with what NATO has been confronted with ever since it was created in 1949. The nature of NATO's member states has not substantially changed since then. So I am not saying that it cannot be done, I am simply saying that it is not new. It is no magic potion.

Weakness of the West?

The future of transatlantic ties

Critics of NATO often argue that the strategic interests of the United States and Europe are diverging. As a result, they argue, the Transatlantic relation is losing in value and relevancy. Europe, it is often heard, has to invest in a strong and capable EU that is strategically independent of the United States and look for partners beyond the United States. An additional criticism is that Europe is unable to speak with one voice and therefore denies its own strategic dimension. As a consequence, some argue, the (non-)bloc disqualifies itself as a strategic partner of the more solid and straightforward United States. The United States, it is often argued, has to look for strategic partners in other parts of the world. Nonetheless, threat perceptions as outlined in the U.S. National Security Strategy greatly overlap with those in the European Security Strategy and those of individual EU member states. While the right of existence of NATO might not correspond any longer to the context of 1949, the new dimension of the Transatlantic link might be that only together the United States and Europe have sufficient critical mass to face the challenges of an increasingly complex security situation. Can the U.S. and Europe do without each other if the goal is to safeguard their vital interests and prevent the decline of the West?

Mr Igor Ivanov

Russian International Affairs Council

Mr Rem Korteweg

Hague Centre for Strategic Studies



Mr Ivanov: 'Attempts to create a common Euro-Atlantic security space have failed in the most spectacular and unambiguous way'

Mr Igor Ivanov
Russian International Affairs Council

Mr President, Mr Chairman, distinguished colleagues. First of all, let me say that I am honoured and pleased to have the opportunity to speak in front of this distinguished audience. Russian-Dutch relations have a long and remarkable history, which goes back to the Middle Ages. In my brief presentation, however, I will not talk about our bilateral relations but rather about the more general matter of European Euro-Atlantic security. These matters affect both our countries and constitutes an important part of our respective political agendas. Let me make myself clear from the very beginning: In the modern world the notion of Euro-Atlantic security cannot be limited to the relations between the United States and its European partners, as was the case during the Cold War. Euro-Atlantic security today should embrace the entire European continent, the US, Canada, and, by all means, Russia. Without taking into account Russia's legitimate interests, without its most active engagement, it would be hard to discuss a truly efficient architecture of European Euro-Atlantic security, an architecture capable of meeting contemporary challenges and threats.

One should also keep in mind that modern security in general and the Euro-Atlantic security in particular is no longer limited to the military dimension only. To provide security to states and societies today, factors such as economic development, social well-being, the state of education, and civil society dynamics are no less important.

Proceeding from these assumptions, let me ask the following question. Are we happy with the current state of the Euro-Atlantic security? Is it something that we would like to preserve for the future? My answer, and I understand the answer of the other speakers as well, is “no”. The current state of affairs does not meet the modern realities and has to be changed. The reality is that today, more than twenty years after the end of the Cold War we do not have an integrated Euro-Atlantic security system. We still have the West and the East. The borderline between the two has moved eastwards, but it has not disappeared. True, we do not have an Iron Curtain any more, our citizens travel all over Europe, internet reaches out to remote corners of the continent and, even more importantly, there are no ideological contradictions that could explain and justify a protracted political conflict.

However, mistrust and mutual suspicions are still with us. Our attempts to create a common Euro-Atlantic security space have failed in the most spectacular and unambiguous way. There might be different views on the question why that happened and who is to take responsibility for this failure. However, the fact of life is that nobody in the West or the East, including Russia, took this task seriously. We never really learnt the lessons of September 11, nor have we drawn proper conclusions from subsequent terrorist attacks in Spain and in the United Kingdom.

We discussed this issue many times with Americans after September 11. It was from my point of view the second lost chance after the end of the Cold War. When we were thinking about forming an anti-terrorist coalition, it was possible to do so, because no state was against. We started to work together, we demonstrated in Afghanistan that it was possible to struggle together. After that, however, the Iraqi history happened in 2003 and that coalition was destroyed. In short, everyone was busy minding their own business. The United States continued to pursue its unilateral world domination strategy, having missed a chance to lead the international community to a new world order. Russia initially fought for mere survival and later on enjoyed an unprecedented energy-based wealth. Europe was too busy managing its geographical expansion and then had to confront a chain of constitutional, political and economic difficulties. The question of the Euro-Atlantic security system remained the pipe dream of a few idealists.

The paradox of Euro-Atlantic security today is that, unlike in the past, we do not have any significant disputes about how we should define security challenges and needs. The question was about challenges and threats. Last year, during the Russian-NATO Council summit in Lisbon, we agreed on the list of common threats and challenges. NATO and Russia agreed on a common

list. That is why we do not have real differences in what threats we have in front of us. We can disagree about specific questions on how particular institutions should work or what issues should get our immediate attention. But when you talk to responsible politicians in Moscow or Washington, in Brussels or Berlin, in The Hague or London, you are likely to get mostly the same assessments and the same conclusions about the majority of security matters.

However, a common Euro-Atlantic security system remains probably as far away from us as it was in the late eighties. In fact, the Euro-Atlantic security agenda has two distinctly different sets of problems. On the one hand there is the unfinished business of the Cold War. The old notions of the twentieth century, deterrence, balance of power as mutual assured distraction and verification, are still with us. Many of the conflict situations in various corners of the European continent, territorial disputes, can be traced back to the Cold War era or even to older times. On the other hand, we have new challenges to the Euro-Atlantic security that became particularly visible only recently. Energy security, migration, international terrorism, communications security and so on. The Euro-Atlantic zone is by no means immune to the numerous destabilization impulses coming from other regions of the world. Some analysts and politicians would say: let us forget about the old security agenda, it is mostly irrelevant and immaterial in the modern world; we should concentrate on the new agenda, which directly affects the day-to-day lives of everybody in the Euro-Atlantic zone. The reality, however, is that the unfinished business of the Cold War seriously diminishes our abilities to deal with the new agenda. If there is no trust between us, if we still stick to the dogmas of the twentieth century, how can we find solutions to the much more comprehensive and sensitive problems of today and tomorrow? We cannot simply bypass old problems. We need to resolve them once and for all.

What should we do now to make a difference? There are many ideas floating around and today, our speakers talked about these steps. Over the past twenty years, a lot of ambitious plans in the field of Euro-Atlantic security have been brought to the table. Frankly speaking, I am not too optimistic about any magic solution that could solve our problems with one strike. There is no institutional deficit in the Euro-Atlantic zone. We already have plenty of organizations in place (OSCE, NATO, CIS, Council of Europe, etc). Likewise, I am not sure that we really need new security agreements to cover all the security problems of the region. In fact, many agreements have been signed already. The question is about the proper implementation. I remember that in 1999, in Istanbul, I signed the Charter for European Security. At that moment we thought that we started a new era in Euro-Atlantic security, but who remembers that charter today? I do not know about the people in this country,

but in my country I think that only few people have read this charter. I can mention many other important and good documents.

In 2009, a unique process was created, called the Euro-Atlantic security initiative. This project brought together former policymakers, diplomats, generals and business leaders from Russia, North America and Europe, to look at options to address the region's faltering security system and to draw a road map of practical actions that would lead to a more secure future. I brought one example of our report, which I will give to the chairman. This is the work of two years. As a result of our discussions and studies, we concluded that the only means of to assure the long-term security of our peoples lies in building an inclusive, undivided, functioning Euro-Atlantic security community, a community without barriers, in which the resolution of disputes takes place exclusively by diplomatic, legal or other non-violent means, without recourse to military force or the threat of its use. Governments within this community would share a common strategy and understanding in the face of common threats and the commitment to the proposition that the best and most efficient way to tackle threats, both internal and external, is through cooperation. In short, we believe that our security problems can only be solved by working together and that we can no longer afford the division from the past to stand in the way of that cooperation. This target is ambitious and reaching it will take decades. However, unless we begin to move into this direction now, the risk of the Euro-Atlantic community retreating to the old patterns of suspicion, confrontation and distrust, is all too real. Maybe the time has come to think about very specific incremental steps that can help us to deal with the limited, but not unimportant areas of the Euro-Atlantic security.

I would like to emphasize the significance of promoting security regimes in Europe. These regimes might cover various security dimensions, such as cyber security, drug trafficking, migration or energy. They can also focus on sub-regional problems, in the Arctic, the Black Sea zone, the Balkans etcetera. We will be able to tackle one issue after another, or to deal with them in a parallel way. In my view, the advantages of the regime approach are evident. First of all, regimes are more flexible than institutions. We do not need to negotiate very complex and ambitious decision-making processes and create multiple layers of bureaucracy. Secondly, the regimes are more democratic. They can embrace any party interested in joining the regime. Maybe in certain cases we can even accept non-state participants. Furthermore, regimes can first be launched, where the conditions are ripe and where there is already cooperation. We can reach out for low-hanging fruits. Later on we can build on our initial successes.

This is not a theoretical idea, because as you will know, we started with so-called regimes or common spaces in our relations with the European Union. We decided to develop common spaces and create common regimes in four areas, among which security, migration and economic rules. The aim is to create the common legal basis for cooperation. It is clear that Russia cannot be a member of the European Union. You and I will not see this during our lifetimes. Nor can Russia be a member of NATO. Only people without knowledge could make such a proposal. It is impossible. It is possible, however, to work together in the same regimes. For example, we were working together in the Balkans during the war there, despite all our differences. We had our troops in Bosnia and in Kosovo. Our military forces cooperated very well; generals from European countries, Americans and Russian generals did the same job in that region. This is only one example. There are a lot of areas where we can start to work together, such as migration and drug trafficking. Different departments and different people can work together in these areas. There is a common threat and a common understanding of how to tackle these problems. These threats are not national, but international and they require international cooperation.

These steps will foster cooperation on practical tasks. We need to initiate new patterns of action and to start a process in which key parties work together. They must be guided by ambitious goals. Two of these are particularly important. The first goal is to transform and demilitarise strategic relations between the United States and NATO on the one hand and Russia on the other. The second goal is to achieve a historical reconciliation, where old and current enmities now prevent normal relations and cooperation. When speaking about this historical reconciliation, I do not only refer to Russia and some of its neighbours, but also to Turkey and Armenia, Moldavia and Transnistria and the communities in Cyprus, for example.

This is something that can be applied to our current debates about missile defence. Today, we mainly speak about missile defence, but, as I said, there are many other issues at stake. That is why I did not start with missile defence. I started with other issues, but it is clear that missile defence also is an issue.

To bury cold war attitudes once and for all and to become genuine strategic partners, NATO and Russia must learn to cooperate at the strategic level. Today, some of my colleagues spoke about strategic cooperation. What does “strategic cooperation” mean? I will give you only one example, but I could mention a lot more. When our European and American partners came to Moscow, they said: We need your agreement on the transportation of our weapons to Afghanistan, in order to be able to fulfil our mission in

Afghanistan. Is that okay? I perfectly remember that this was no easy discussion. Why would we have to do this, if we did not have any partnership with NATO? However, it was important to struggle against a common enemy in Afghanistan. Therefore, it was necessary for us to agree. I asked our American and European NATO partners: If you ask us to permit you to go through Russian territory, for the first time in history, with your weapons, why do you not want to sit down with us to discuss the future of Afghanistan? After that, it would be easier to take such a decision. What will the future of Afghanistan be like? How can we guarantee that there will be a democratic regime there, safe for all of us? How can we struggle together against drugs? How can we stop extremist groups in Afghanistan, etcetera, and etcetera? There were many other questions. You cannot only come to us and say: give me this or that. That is not a strategic partnership. Read the American-Russian statement, signed by president Putin and president Bush in 2002 and 2008. In the first paragraph it says: we are not enemies; we are strategic partners. What does “strategic partnership” mean? It means having a good understanding of what you are talking about. I asked the Americans: do you want to leave your bases in Afghanistan after withdrawal of your troops? They said: yes. We asked: what is the reason? What is the goal of your bases? They did not explain.

The same applied to the enlargement of NATO. I asked three NATO secretaries-general, Robertson, Solana and De Hoop Scheffer: why do you need this enlargement? Okay, it is a democratic organization, so you cannot reject them. After the operations in Afghanistan NATO no longer is a Euro-Atlantic organization. It has become an international organization. Japan and Australia are democratic countries. You can accept them, too, if they ask to join NATO? I got no answer. I said: you do not have or do not want to give an answer. You only cause distrust and misunderstanding of your attitude. When I am saying this, I also say that we in Russia do the same thing, without explaining many steps. I am not only speaking about the United States, but also about Russia. It has to come from both sides.

Despite the current diplomatic impasse, cooperative missile defence offers an avenue to the larger goal of transforming the nature of security negotiations between the Russian Federation and the United States and NATO. In other words, change is possible again. Cooperation between NATO and Russia in the field of missile defence is not only an insurance against a potential intrinsic threat, but also a critical component of building a larger security community. It should not be allowed to fade from the very centre of the security agenda.

Failure to achieve the cooperative approach to missile defence risks to be a game spoiler, with deeply damaging effects, not only on the prospects of

moving towards a more inclusive Euro-Atlantic security community, but also on the future of the security cooperation and the relations between the US and Russia in particular. The consequences of failure are predictable. It would be great, of course, to have an integrated all-European or even global system protecting all of us. If this is not yet feasible, why not try something more modest, but still meaningful? Instead of proclaiming a new crisis in the relations between Russia and the West, we could start working on very concrete matters without giving up our principle position like pooling and sharing information and data from satellites and radars, operating in real time, to provide a common notification of missile attacks. We could resume exercises of joint command-staff exercises on ballistic missile defence. We could continue threat discussions and so on. These forms of cooperation may look trivial and unimaginative, but these are exactly what create trust, eradicate mutual suspicion and, ultimately, pave the way for more ambitious and far-reaching agreements.

Given the recent political developments in major European countries, including Russia, many people would ask questions about how to maintain consistency in our efforts to promote Euro-Atlantic security. Indeed, political leaders all over our continent might be distracted by pressing domestic issues and they might find it increasingly difficult to focus on the foreign policy agenda. However, in the contemporary interdependent world you cannot draw a line between domestic and international agendas. For Russia, stable and cooperative relations with its partners in the West have always been a precondition for a successful modernisation strategy. We need the West as a critically important source of badly needed technologies, business models and best social practices. We know quite well that we can only make full use of this source if we resolve remaining security matters with the West. Therefore, I cannot agree with some predictions that Vladimir Putin's return to the Kremlin will inevitably mean a new level of tension between Russia and the West. More than once, president Putin has demonstrated that he is realistic. He fully understands the pivotal significance of the Euro-Atlantic dimension in the Russian foreign policy. He will firmly defend Russian interests. He is not likely to hide his critical views of the policies of the West, whenever he disagrees with them. But he is definitely not in the business of starting a new Cold War, as some people predict.

We can only hope that this realism and pragmatism will be shared by our Western partners. No matter who is in charge of international affairs in Brussels, in Paris, in The Hague or in Washington DC. When saying this, I am not making a political statement. I say this from my own experience. Besides being minister of foreign affairs with president Jeltsin I was also, for four years, minister of foreign affairs with president Putin. In 2002 we signed the

agreement with NATO, creating the NATO-Russia Council in Rome. It was very difficult, after the war in the Balkans, to convince our Duma and our political forces that it was necessary to create this NATO-Russia Council, because NATO was criticized by all forces in our country for its role in the Balkans. The idea behind creating the NATO-Russian Council was to make the first step to intensify political – not military – relations between Russia and NATO. I think that we started quite well. Subsequently, the process stopped for various reasons. After 9/11 president Bush called president Putin, asking for support in the struggle against terrorism. Putin immediately supported the operation in Afghanistan.

I can mention many other concrete steps that demonstrated that we were ready to start a new policy with the West. Many people, however, only remember president Putin's speech at the Munich conference. I was there in Munich. What he said was: look, for four years we have tried to do our best in our relations with our Western partners. What we got in return was the enlargement of NATO, three times, without any explanation why NATO needed that enlargement as well as the withdrawal of the US in 2002 from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty). Many have been the steps creating real problems for us around Russia, in former Soviet republics. This is not new. If we want to be partners, we have to respect the interests of both sides. We are trying to do that, but you have to do the same. In my view after the "Cold war" we lost three possibilities to start real cooperation and to create a real Euro-Atlantic security community. When we worked in the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative on these proposals for two years, together with many people in Europe and the United States, my question was: why are we so clever now that we are retired? Why did we not do the same job when we were in power? Maybe this happened to many people, but what we are trying to do now is to explain that this is the only way to take small, but concrete steps ahead. Working together, we can develop trust and we can develop our cooperation in the field of security and create this Euro-Atlantic community where we want to live.

Mr Rem Korteweg
The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS)

Mr Korteweg: 'The United States and Europe are confronting a reduction of their global influence but this does not mean that the West has become irrelevant'



Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour to speak to you here today concerning the future of European security, NATO and the changing security environment. This is a rather timely event, as François Heisbourg already pointed out. Not only will the NATO Chicago summit take place this weekend, but the euro crisis is keeping us preoccupied as well, as we anticipate yet another round of elections in Greece. In the next twenty minutes, I will make a pitch for stronger transatlantic cooperation, not because we want to, on the basis of shared values, but because we have to, on the basis of shared interests.

Allow me, however, to take a brief step back. Some forty years ago, in 1973, the then Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, gave a speech to initiate the Year of Europe. While reaffirming the traditional bond between the Atlantic partners, he noted a need for a new impulse to keep the transatlantic partnership strong. 1973, as you well know, was a year in which many things shifted in the world. The Yom Kippur War and the first oil crisis threatened Middle Eastern stability and the removal of the gold standard produced a period of financial turbulence and economic downturn. Also, the end of the Vietnam War triggered a process of self-reflection in the United States about its role in the world. Many parallels can be drawn to the current period. Just think of the revolutions in the Middle East, the doubling of oil prices and resource prices over the past years, the uncertainty over fiscal stability, the euro crisis, the discussions about currency manipulation and the withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan. In 1973, just as today in 2012, the question was

asked whether the United States remained the dominant power in the world and what this meant for transatlantic relations. In addition, the political and economic consequences of the oil embargo created new interest in energy security, climate change and sustainability. New economic powers emerged and Kissinger wondered what this changing constellation meant for the future of the transatlantic alliance. Does this sound familiar?

Although the Year of Europe fizzled because of Watergate, Kissinger did have a point. He recognized that Europe and the United States were drifting apart as a result of different economic interests, demographic growth patterns and geopolitical realities. Left to its devices, this could spell an increasing divergence among the allies. Let me remind you of another event, one which took place more recently. In June 2011, the US Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates, held a speech in Brussels. In this speech he chastised the European allies once again for not investing enough in defence. The problem with this speech was not what the Secretary of Defence said; US criticism of the alliance is as old as the alliance itself. The interesting part was why he said it. Gates signalled a new, more unilateral and more sober tendency in US foreign policy. Europeans were not doing enough to keep the Americans interested in the alliance. Kissinger's speech some forty years ago is interesting as it attests to the notion that the strong bond between Europe and the United States should not be taken for granted but is the product of continuous work. When the West works together, beautiful things can be achieved, if we do not work together, not a lot gets done.

The transatlantic security relationship, however, is showing its age. The two sides of the Atlantic are on a path of divergence. Left to their own devices this will lead Europeans and North Americans to wake up one day and realize that bilateral economic trade relations are the only thing that holds them together. I would argue that the transatlantic relationship is a partnership that must play a crucial role to continue on the path towards global peace and stability, and that it must be reinvigorated. This includes NATO but also reaches well beyond it. The starting point is what we are witnessing at the moment, namely a shift of influence from West to East. This has been mentioned today and I do not think that it needs a lot of elaboration. We have not encountered such a shift during the past 50 years. The two most important factors that influence the future of the transatlantic relationship are how this new, more complex, multipolar world will develop and the state of Western economies.

This changing international context is based on the rise of a multipolar system. Under the burden of fiscal austerity and mountains of sovereign debt, the emergence of a multipolar world is accelerating. In the economic realm, the changing nature of our international system is signified by the prospect of

near-parity of the Chinese and American economies in the next few years – the IMF recently published a report in which it said that this could happen already in 2016 – coupled with the World Bank’s assessment that a mix of currency regimes instead of the US dollar will form the basis for international trade.

The rise of multipolarity has been described by others as a non-polar world, or G-zero world, or No One’s World. A debate is taking place about which poles matter. Does Europe matter or is it the US and China? Where does Russia fit in? What about Brazil, South Africa or India? Some say that it will be a G2 world, with China and the United States calling the shots. European leaders have an ambition to be part of a G3 world. Various centres of influence are emerging, Turkey, Brazil, India are among them. Multipolarity implies that an increasing number of players – both state and non-state – influence the contours of international relations. Things are becoming more complex. In addition, multipolarity implies an increased risk of surprises, shifting coalitions and hedging, as states vie for increasing influence. This decreases the room for error, increases the need for creative diplomacy and adds fundamental complexity to foreign and security policy. Another characteristic of a multipolar system is that formal institutions of international governance are weakened and bilateral relationships start to matter more, as do multilateral relations outside of formal structures. Mr Ivanov’s point about regimes accentuates that. Obviously, this has consequences for NATO.

The current international environment exemplifies, if there has ever been any doubt, that economic strength is a condition for international political influence. It used to be that at university you either studied economics or political science. That is wrong. You need to study both. Geopolitics and economics can no longer be considered separately. The consequences of the economic and financial crisis will depress the ability of Western states to mobilize political will and make the necessary investments, for instance in the field of defence. I will not go into the details as François Heisbourg has dealt quite adequately with this point.

The West, especially Europe but also the United States, are confronting a condition in which they no longer constitute the primary geopolitical and geo-economic centres of the world. I am sure I am not telling you anything new, but I just want to introduce the concept of relative decline. I am sure you have thought about this already. Let me underline, however, that I mean relative, not absolute decline. It is important to take a step back and consider what relative decline means. While economic growth is not a zero-sum game and while the pie can theoretically become larger for everyone, the division of power in the international environment is a zero-sum concept. You cannot have a growth in power of some states that does not go at the expense of

others. This means that if we agree that China and India have become more important politically and have gained more influence internationally, this necessarily has to come at the expense of someone else. Unfortunately, we cannot all become more powerful, for then nothing has changed. The West, again, is not in a process of absolute decline, but we are in the process of relative decline.

This is not merely academics. Accepting that Western influence globally is being reduced is a necessary element in a political discussion about what we have to do, what our strategy is, how we deal with it, what our mitigation strategy is. This is important to note because it has become very fashionable to criticize this group of so-called “declinists”, especially in the United States. The argument about relative decline is, in fact, a lot more sophisticated than simply saying that the power of the US is waning because of its economic frailty. This is, of course not entirely true. The United States will remain the most important power in the world. Now, I would like to warn each and every one of you when listening to politicians and policymakers discussing the concept of decline. This has become a heated discussion, especially in the United States. It is entirely understandable that a politician, in Europe and, particularly, in the United States will not acknowledge that decline is taking place. First of all, it is not in his interest to say so. It is bad politics. You do not win votes by saying that your country is in decline. Secondly, acknowledging a condition of relative decline means acknowledging that the United States, or Europe, or the West, is no longer a superpower or extremely relevant. Especially for the United States, however, the principle of being a superpower has served as the foundation for its foreign and security policy over the past twenty years. President Obama denies the concept of decline, pointing out America’s strengths, whereas presidential candidate Romney calls for a new American century and a more unilateral approach to foreign policy.

The United States and Europe are confronting a reduction of their global influence but this does not mean that the West has become irrelevant. We need to be frank about this and understand what it means. Here comes the optimism. We are able to determine the terms of our own reduced international influence. Look at the British Empire, which was in decline for the better part of 150 years. However, we can only talk sensibly about the terms of our decline if we are willing to confront that reality. This brings me to a strategy I like to call “managing elegant decline”. Elegant decline is not about irrelevance; instead it is about pragmatic realism in a period of change. Relative decline is both a threat and an opportunity for transatlantic relations. For if history is any guide, a global superpower, such as the United States, that confronts a reduction of its own international influence will trigger countervailing internal forces that resist this reality. For example, Britain

immediately after the Great War indulged in a promiscuous overstretch in the Third Afghan War, as well as in crushing the independence movement in Egypt, putting down the Iraqi insurrection, fruitlessly intervening in the Russian civil war, and cracking down on the Congress Party in India. Understandable domestic frustration may lead the declining, yet dominant power to overplay its hand or to pursue reckless policies to reassert its strength. This has become known as Imperial Overstretch and has generally been met by a sudden and often painful moment of reckoning.

Beyond all the numbers, a country's relative decline has important political, psychological and domestic components to it. Those who do not wish to acknowledge this reality and refuse to pursue mitigating strategies, risk digging a deeper hole.

Over the past two centuries the United States has generally only experienced an expansion of its global role, politically, economically and militarily. This has been similarly met by a strategic culture in the US that favours an activist foreign policy, a strong belief in US exceptionalism, as well as a strong belief in American revolutionary values, based on the notion that the United States has a pivotal role to play in promoting democracy and freedom around the world. However, the coming decade the United States will have to confront its limits, not because of the rise of the rest, but because of economic constraints. This is very similar to a situation we confront in Europe. How the US copes with these constraints will say much about the coming era of international as well as transatlantic relations. With decreasing economic power, the United States will have to scale back its international ambitions. Unless this is actually managed, it will lead to endemic friction between the international ambition of the US on the one hand and its ability to influence international affairs on the other. A frustrated superpower is hardly a contribution to global stability. For all purposes, the United States still remains the most powerful nation in the world, but it is also becoming more frustrated. It is this new reality that oddly enough creates the strategic opportunity for transatlantic cooperation. Europe has a fundamental interest in avoiding a frustrated superpower that is either isolationist and withdraws from the world or pursues a policy of unilateralism. Europe must reach out to work together with the United States on issues of common interest.

Transatlantic cooperation, however, is no longer a given. This brings me to NATO. NATO is the bedrock of transatlantic cooperation. Whether it is about security or about political issues, NATO is the foundation of what we have. It is my assessment that in spite of the upbeat news about the upcoming summit in Chicago, NATO has to confront a set of serious problems. Three reasons lie at the root of this. Firstly, the alliance-wide budget cuts are

reducing the overall military capability of the European allies and are increasing transatlantic discontent over the sharing of the burden. In the absence of further integration this will negatively impact the ability of European militaries to contribute to NATO's objectives. Secondly, the emerging multipolar environment is bringing divergent threat perceptions within the alliance to the fore. This in its turn contributes to strategic divergence across the Atlantic and complicates the ability of Europeans to reach agreement on security priorities. Finally, the canary in the coalmine is the end of ISAF, which heralds the end of a common unifying mission and is sure to fuel critique in the coming years over NATO's future. These factors coalesce to create a momentum towards greater divergence rather than convergence inside NATO. Let me briefly look at these three trends.

First of all, the end of ISAF. During the Cold War, allied solidarity was implicit and built around preparations to confront a common foe. In the 1990s the alliance was focused on crisis-management missions. The first decade of the 21st century saw actual combat operations take place. While the eventual outcome of ISAF remains uncertain, 2014 will mark the moment that NATO member states no longer demonstrate solidarity through participation in a high-intensity mission. In fact, we already see some allies running for the exit. In the absence of a sizeable mission on the horizon, or so the argument goes, NATO will enter a period in which alliance cohesion is all but guaranteed. Like the end of the mission in Afghanistan, this will restart the discussion about the relevance of NATO and its future.

The second and related argument is that security interests, threat perceptions and strategic cultures differ substantially between North America and Europe as well as within Europe, making it difficult to preserve cohesion within the alliance. This has troubled NATO for the better part of its history and without a major coalescing threat the security policies of the allies on both sides of the Atlantic will gravitate towards different centres. We already see this as the United States is reorienting towards the Asia-Pacific while the European states remain focused on their immediate neighbourhood.

A post-2014 trend for NATO is that US leadership and US commitment to NATO will be reduced. The US pivot towards the Asia-Pacific, as exemplified in the military-strategic guidance, is the strongest example of evolving threat perceptions among the members of the Alliance. Despite statements underlining that the pivot does not reduce the American commitment to European security, the reduction of America's military presence on the European continent, former Secretary of Defence Robert Gates' speech in Brussels in summer 2011, along with the White House's declared policy to "lead from behind" during Operation Unified Protector all hint towards the notion that Europe's security is more and more becoming an issue for the Europeans.

This pivot should be an issue of concern to European defence establishments. Firstly, it leads to the question what capabilities European militaries need to develop in order to operate effectively, independently from the United States. Professor Heisbourg has commented extensively on this. As European militaries confront reduced defence budgets, such necessary duplication puts an additional strain on defence planners. Secondly, as the United States aims to outsource security affairs in the European neighbourhood to its European allies, the question arises whether the United States will remain willing to sustain a leadership role in the Alliance.

Aside from transatlantic divergence, this is also an issue within Europe. There are massive differences between maritime and coastal European nations which are concerned with security of the global commons, the Southern European states that are focused on stability in North Africa, Central European states that eye developments in Russia, and Turkey, which is concerned over the turbulence and state fragility in its southern neighbourhood. This leads to a distinction between those European allies that favour a focus on collective defence, and those more willing to focus on crisis-management or expeditionary operations. Due to the budget cuts, priorities will have to be set by European countries in those areas that align with their national security perceptions.

The third element is that these budget cuts act as a catalyst in the process of divergence. As Secretary-General Rasmussen mentioned, European defence budgets have decreased by 45 billion US dollars, or the equivalent of Germany. He also said that, post-Afghanistan, NATO risks becoming an alliance that is both weakened, as a result of the budget cuts, and divided, as an emerging gap grows. All major European allies have decreased their defence budgets. Overall, defence spending is not expected to rise above 1.6% of GDP.

It is, however, not necessarily the size of the cuts that matters; it is the scope of the cuts itself. European defence cuts have led to proportional reductions in capabilities, focusing primarily on personnel and high-end military hardware. This will likely yield problems for Europe's ability to sustain longer-term ground-force deployments and take the lead in large-scale high-end operations. We still need the Americans for this stuff. The substantial cuts in personnel and in military hardware imply a downward trend in Europe's military posture. To maintain European capability defence integration is required. This, of course, is the reason for the current discussion about smart defence. It is no longer a question whether there is a "NATO at various speeds". That is already a fact which we live with. The rise of a "multi-tier" NATO, where allies focus on some capabilities and missions, is producing a level of defence regionalization within the alliance that is making alliance solidarity much more difficult.

The three factors I just mentioned are contributing to strategic divergence within the Alliance as well as to defence regionalisation. Defence cooperation is pursued by those countries that share a common outlook or strategic culture as well as a willingness to share political risks. These are likely to be regionally concentrated. As allies seek to identify efficiencies and ways to sustain capability, regionalization can be expected to be the result. Nordic defence cooperation is an important example of this. NORDEFECO brings together Denmark, Finland, Norway, Iceland and Sweden to cooperate in the field of doctrine, capabilities, and training. The Benelux is increasing its cooperation. In addition, there is the initiative of Franco-British cooperation, which focuses primarily on high-end expeditionary operations. And then there is the Visegrad-4 cluster. In other words, what we see is different clusters emerging within NATO. These do not necessarily have the ability to interoperate together, because they do not necessarily combine countries that share a common strategic outlook. This trend of regionalization requires top-down stewardship in order to sustain a common agenda of the alliance. At the moment this is missing.

There is more to it than that, however. On the one hand, NATO is confronting these problems but on the other hand the transatlantic relationship confronts strategic issues that do not involve NATO. We need to start a dialogue inside Europe about what we expect from each other as Europeans and what we expect from the US in the transatlantic framework. Think of the future of emerging economies and about how to bring the emerging powers inside the international institutional arrangements that we have developed over the past 60 years. Think about global economic governance. We need to start working together, to talk to each other about how we see the future of these institutions and to bring in the emerging powers if we wish to sustain the institutions that we have invested in over the past 60 years.

This question is particularly salient for Europe. We in Europe have become uncomfortable with thinking big strategic thoughts. One of the central questions we must consider is how Europe can become a real security producer rather than just a security consumer. We cannot do without the United States, because we share very similar interests with the US. Beyond that, we need US cooperation on some of the topics that are of interest to Europe, for instance global economic governance and the future of the financial system in the immediate European neighbourhood. We need to start a serious strategic discussion.

I would like to finish with several concrete examples where I think that a transatlantic relationship would benefit. Transatlantic ties need to be given a new impulse. We need to change our approach to the United States. We need

to engage in a discussion with the United States about the rise of Asia. We need to formulate our own agenda in Europe on the basis of our own interests. We need to start having a grown-up discussion in Europe about how to strengthen the international institutions that are the foundation of our security and our prosperity. Kissinger sought to strike a new balance with Europe and Europe should now do the same with the United States. Thank you very much.

Mr Van Kappen (chair): Thank you very much, Mr Korteweg. The speakers are now available to answer questions. Whom can I invite to take the floor?

Mr De Vries: My question is: who should do something and why do we not have more success at this very moment? I would like to know from Mr Heisbourg whether it is his feeling that the whole European Commission is failing in its role to fulfil the obligations and the potential of the Lisbon Treaty. Could he please be a bit more specific than you have been so far?

In some recent articles, for instance in the International Herald Tribune, Mr Ivanov pleaded for transatlantic cooperation and for cooperation between Russia and NATO. Why does it not work? Is it on the agenda of Mr Putin? Do you think that the new president of Russia puts this on his agenda? Why do you think it did not succeed in the past? Is it because the United States do not want Russia to talk to the Europeans, or because the Europeans do not trust Russia to talk to the United States only? What are the handicaps and who has to act?

I agree with Mr Korteweg that we have to do many things, but even the powerful group of people in this room is not capable of doing that, if the institutions do not fulfil their roles. So, whom were you referring to when you said: “we” should do something? Everybody agrees that something has to be done, but we need to know the players’ names and numbers.

Mr Heisbourg: The short answer is: yes. The longer answer is: yes, but ... The longest answer is: yes, but who appointed the members of the Commission? Who appointed Lady Ashton? Who decided that we were going to have a minimalist interpretation of the Lisbon Treaty, if it was not the European Council? This is a case of collective lack of leadership. Usually, leadership is a matter of individuals, but failure of leadership is very often collective failure. If the euro zone goes federal, which I assume is necessary if we want to save the euro, then it had better have institutions which are perceived as being representative and legitimate by the man and the woman in the street. After what has been done over the past years by a body that has been lead by

such luminaries as Mr Barroso and Olli Rehn, I do not think anybody will believe for even a minute that this is the sort of leadership that can get us out of the mess we are in. I have not yet met the person who can. Do not get me wrong: Mr Rehn is a good friend of mine and he was a very good Commissioner on enlargement. I assume that the representative institutions, without which we cannot have an acceptable federal euro zone, are not simply going to be the redeployment of the existing European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council. I assume it will have to be a bit different. But you are the politicians and you have to decide what is going to be legitimate and representative.

Mr Ivanov: The first question was: why did we fail? I was a minister at the time and that is why I cannot say that it was my mistake during those years. But seriously speaking I can assure you that we did try to establish a real partnership with the West. That was the decision of our government and we tried to do it. I can give you a lot of examples of our demonstrating that we were ready to go ahead in many concrete fields. From the United States we did not receive the same response. This was true for the Clinton administration, but mainly for the Bush administration. I will give you one simple example. We proposed to create a so-called strategic group with the Americans, including ministers of foreign affairs and ministers of defence: from the American side Mr Collin Powell and Mr Rumsfeld. We had only one meeting. During that meeting, only the ministers of foreign affairs spoke; Collin Powell and myself. Mr Rumsfeld said that we did not need such a dialogue. The idea of the administration was: “We do not need to negotiate with you any new treaties or agreements, we decided to withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty, you may do what you want and we will do what we want.” Well, that is not what partnership is about. It was very strange, because we had a lot of contacts. Putin and Bush held a lot of meetings, but without any concrete results.

At the same time, I once made a proposal to Condoleeza Rice: “I give you this sheet of paper. Let us put down what Russia is doing against your security interest in any part of the world. On the other side of the paper I will put down what you are doing against our interests.” She could not write down any example of something we did against the security interests of the United States. I am sure that the same thing goes for NATO. I may be wrong, but I am totally sure that we never did anything that was against the interests of our European and American partners. At the same time we had problems at our borders in Central Asia and with some former Soviet republics. It is clear that this concerned our interests, because we have many interests, both economic and political, relating to these countries on our borders. That is why it was clear that we wanted to have some presence there. Why would that

be strange? We negotiated with Georgia about the withdrawal of all military bases. We only wanted one thing and asked Mr Saakasjvili to stop what he was doing, because he wanted to repeat what Mr Gamsakhurdia did before in Abkhazia and Ossetia. He started the war. He may blame Russia, but it is internationally recognised that Saakasjvili started the war. My impression is that during the Jeltsin-period the opinion was: “Russia is weak. That is why Russia is not a player in the international arena. That is why we can do what we want and Russia will join us without any precondition and without raising the question of its interests.” This did not work with Putin, however. Not because Putin was tougher, but because Russia started to overcome the crisis and to concern itself with its own interests.

I think that the Europeans can play a more active role. We will continue to negotiate. That is the agenda of Putin: he will continue the dialogue with the West, with the United States and Europe. It will not be an easy dialogue, but the Europeans may play a role. I will explain why. With Europe we share a lot of common interests, more than with the United States. With the United States we do not have an economic interdependence. We have only a strategic concept of security, mainly in the field of nuclear weapons and the ballistic missile system. But as far as Europe is concerned: we live on the same continent. More than 50% of Russia’s trade is with the European Union. Your country is an important economic partner of our country. There are many other common areas, such as migration and education. I think that Europe can play a more active role in this dialogue, without preconditions. The aim is to create round tables where we can sit together and discuss common problems, starting with concrete issues. I repeat that. We have common problems, on which we really can work together.

For different reasons it was necessary to stop the war in the Balkans. We – Russians, Americans and Europeans – sat together around the table, and in two days drafted UN Security Council resolution 1244. For different reasons it was clear that it was in the interest of everyone to stop the war. This means that if we want, we can do it.

Mr Korteweg: I will comment very briefly on the question who is “we”. I would answer that “we” is primarily Europe, whether it is the European Union or the European states. I really think that Europe has dropped the ball on playing a role in this broader strategic discussion, whether that concerns the relationship with Russia, or much broader the global economic governance issues and the future of international institutions. Unfortunately, I have to say that the EU-US Summit is absolutely underwhelming. Our current approach in which we continue to say that human rights matter and that values are important, without following that up with policy options, is making Europe

increasingly irrelevant as an international partner to talk to about how to build global prosperity and security. I am perhaps optimistic, but I actually think that a country like the Netherlands is very well positioned within Europe, as a non-threatening and respected partner, to play a role in initiating this dialogue. Please permit me just one concrete example. So far, Europe has not responded to the American pivot towards the Asia-Pacific region. This was in the cards for the better part of two years. There has yet to be a concrete response to what Europe or European nations think about that. Yes, we say that Asia is important for economic purposes, because we trade with them. But if I am not mistaken, if you look at the major trends of the future, the major political and security problems and challenges are also in the Asia Pacific region. Talking about Asia as an economic issue only, is completely insufficient. It is definitely up to Europeans to pick this up.

Mr Koole: I would like to thank Mr Ivanov and Mr Korteweg for their contributions. Mr Ivanov spoke about the Euro-Atlantic strategic zone. You said that there should be more cooperation and mutual understanding. You gave a lot of examples of what Russia is doing, and then you said that it should also come from the other side. My question is: could you elaborate a bit more on what in your opinion is really happening in Europe now, because you talked about a Europe which is in agony. Maybe there is a two-speed Europe. There is not one Europe. Anyway, Europe does not speak with one voice. When making a plea for more cooperation with the other side, including Europe, what Europe do you have in mind? What do you fear from a Europe which is now in economic trouble? There is also disunity in some respects. From your Russian point of view, what would you like to see developing in Europe, as a counterpart for Russia, to talk with within this common framework of this Euro-Atlantic strategic zone?

My question to Mr Korteweg mirrors more or less my question to Mr Ivanov. You spoke about transatlantic cooperation. At one point you said: you should not study political science or economics; you should study both. As Mr Ivanov said, there are many economic relations between Europe and Russia. However, you did not mention Russia in your speech at all. If you really make a plea for more and stronger transatlantic cooperation, what impact would that have on the relationship with these countries in Europe?

Mr Ivanov: When we signed the agreement about the NATO-Russia Council, Javier Solana was the secretary-general of the European Council. He called me, asking why I signed a military agreement with NATO and not with the European Union. He was angry. I said: "because you still do not have a clear defence and military policy. That is why I do not know what to sign with whom." If you ask me who should be our partner, I would say that the

European Commission and NATO are the best options. However, with the Commission we have some problems. I have to be very frank with you. Sometimes it is easier to speak with different countries. It remains difficult, but is still easier, if you want to resolve concrete issues. We maintain the dialogue with the European Union, but at the same time we think that it is easier to resolve concrete issues with Germany, France, Italy etcetera. With Chris Patten and Romano Prodi on the Commission, for example, we had a very good relation with the Commission. With them, we reached concrete solutions, for example for the transit to Kaliningrad. Lately, however, it has not been easy. That is why we continue to speak with parties that can take decisions and go ahead. If the Commission is strong, it is better to speak with the Commission.

Let me tell you this to demonstrate my point. We created a special embassy, our biggest embassy in Europe, in Brussels, especially to speak with the European Union. I convinced president Putin to have each ministry of our government represented in that embassy, in order to be able to have a direct dialogue with the Commissioners and to avoid duplication. Mr Fradkov, who was later to become prime minister, was the first ambassador of our embassy in Brussels, dealing with the European Union. The dialogue continues, but not very efficiently. We will continue the dialogue, using different channels, not only one.

Mr Korteweg: Do not get me wrong. I do not have such a tunnel vision that I only see the transatlantic relationship as an important relationship for dealing with a multipolar world. I think it is inherent of the notion of multipolarity that you have a fundamental discussion and that you invest in a discussion on the basis of your interests with the partners that matter. Russia is absolutely among them. My focus on the United States delves a little bit deeper because of the history of the relationship between Europe and the United States and the history we have in contributing to the future of international governance and the development of the financial economic institutions. What I would like to see is that this becomes broader than just the transatlantic region and that it also brings in Russia, China, India and Brazil. But if you cannot see eye to eye with the partner with which you have been working for the past sixty or seventy years, by far the closest, you also have a problem in trying to see eye to eye with the partners that perhaps on certain issues stand a little bit further away from you. That is why I would say, as a priority, let us try to fix that transatlantic relationship and to build on it, also for the argument that I think that a frustrated superpower is an extreme liability in the international system. This by no means precludes the necessity of engaging with Russia.

Mr Van der Linden: On the Lisbon agenda, let me first say that I was a member of the European Convention and a member of the Jean Luc Dehaene working group. If you want to reach an agreement with the United Kingdom, you have to negotiate at least at three levels. If you believe that you have an agreement at working group level, you enter the next stage, on the basis of the agreement you have reached at the working group level. When it comes to defence, the European Commission is not the problem. I do not want to blame the European Commission in this field, but the member states, in particular those that did not accept any progress towards a common defence policy. The Lisbon Treaty provides for small steps, to start with. However, we cannot take these steps, because the United Kingdom blocks the discussion in the working groups at ambassadors' level in Brussels.

I would like to thank Mr Ivanov for his contribution. I more or less fully agree with you, from my own experience. When I became a member of the Council of Europe, I had a confrontation with Mr Ivanov in his capacity as minister of foreign affairs, on the credentials of the Russian delegation, as you will remember. I was the leader of the EPP-Group. I promoted the withdrawal of the credentials of the Russian delegation. We had a tough discussion. I became one of the friends of Russia, not because I agree with everything, but because my experience is that Russia has done a lot. When Russia assumed the presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, it did so for the first time in history in a democratic international institution. The president then was Mr Lavrov. It is really worthwhile to make agreements on how to deal with issues. To my mind there is much more to criticize on the European side than on the Russian side. We have to invest in trust. If we do not invest in trust, we cannot achieve the most important relationship for the future, which is in my mind the relationship between the European Union and Russia. The relationship with Turkey is also important for different reasons, but we have to focus on the relationship with Russia. We are not using in a proper way the parliamentary diplomacy, nor the economic diplomacy, that of people to people. Do you agree with me that for Russia one of the most important issues is to ensure the rule of law? Foreign companies considering investments in Russia want to be sure that they can count on the judicial system. I believe that what you said is true, but Russia has to invest in its own judiciary, too, and not only in its military. I am not a military expert. I am a politician. For me, the principle of people to people is much more important than the military. That is one of the weakest elements in the relationship between Russia and the European countries.

Mr Ivanov: I negotiated our membership of the Council of Europe for four years. These were very difficult negotiations. Many Europeans said: Russia is not prepared. It is not a real democracy. They told us that we needed to

develop our institutions. After that they were ready to accept us. My argument was: if I assume obligations, I will do it. If I am not a member, it will be more difficult for me to achieve the same thing. With the obligations of a full membership, we would first of all have the full pressure. People would then come to us and examine what we are doing. We were accepted and thanks to that we do no longer have the death penalty, for instance. In our country 90% of the people are in favour of that. But we are a member now, and we still continue the moratorium on the death penalty. I can give you many other examples. Maybe the reform of our judicial system does not proceed as quickly as we want it to, but if you ask your business people, they will confirm that it goes ahead. When I was the secretary of the Security Council we discussed the matter. Our main threat were not the nuclear weapons of the United States. The main threat to our security at the time was corruption. It is still there and we are taking many steps to resolve this issue. However, it is not sufficient to have good laws. It is necessary to change the minds and the mentality of the people, top-down. This is a process and I agree with you that we have to demonstrate with concrete results that we are carrying out reforms and that we are developing our democratic institutions. I totally agree that we need parliamentary diplomacy and a people to people dialogue. This is where we are failing now. That is why we in Russia now have created a national council on foreign relations. We organised a conference in Moscow on Euro-Atlantic security. We will continue, and that is why I am here.

Ms Vlietstra: I have a question on the same subject. The speech of Mr Ivanov was very interesting. He is convinced of the importance of cooperation within Europe. The same goes for Mr Stürmer. He also spoke about the importance of cooperation between the western and eastern parts of Europe. My question to Mr Stürmer is: do you share Mr Ivanov's analysis? He said that this cooperation has not been very successful until now. What opportunities do you see to stimulate the cooperation?

My second question refers to the word "we" that was used many times this afternoon. It relates to European institutions, politicians and so on. I think that our citizens are also very important. Without their commitment it is a hard job to work on security in Europe. I would like to hear from Mr Heisbourg which opportunities he sees to stimulate politicians in organising commitment by their citizens.

Mr Stürmer: I think that what Mr Ivanov said and what I said is pretty complementary. It is not contradictory. As far as the day to day improvement of trade relations, exchange of students, exchange of experts and so on is concerned, there is a very serious impediment, which is the weakness of the rule of law in Russia. We can see that things are not getting better. Instead,

they are going from bad to worse. That is a very serious hindrance to a real “approfondissement” of the relationships. As far as military and strategic concerns play a role: Russia is a country without friends. Russia has no real options other than the ones it has tried, but not with very great success. Take for instance the relationship with China: this is an uneasy relationship, to put it mildly. There is also an uneasy relationship with NATO and with the Americans. America is still the standard for power and modernity for Russia. Europe is a much closer partner. The Russians are not so impressed by Europe. The Russians are doing business, especially with Germany, a business which is probably going to expand. What we, from a European point of view, would like to see, is the Medvedev version of Russian modernisation, as opposed to the Putin version of modernisation. Medvedev is oriented towards the West and very cooperative, while the Putin modernisation relies much more on the petrol state and on the ability to expand the military-industrial complex into more civilian usage. That is where soft power and hard power merge. There is great potential, but on the European side this requires a wider and deeper understanding of where Russia comes from and what the potential of Russia is, for better or for worse.

On the Russian side I think that a realistic interpretation of Russia’s possibilities is needed. The Silicon Valley now set up in Moscow does not promise to become a great success, simply because the technological and ideological environment is not very favourable to creating that kind of self-sustained development and research that Russia really needs. I think it is symbolic what happened the other day, when this newly developed Sukhoi 100 aircraft, which was accompanied with so much hope, crashed into a mountain in Indonesia. This was probably not due to technical failure, but to some failure of the crew. I do not know and nobody knows, but that was the prestige project and it has suffered a bad fate, not forever, probably, but for the time being. What we would like to see is a more European-style acting and thinking Russia. I do not think that this is impossible, but it requires an effort on both sides.

Mr Heisbourg: On the question as to how we can stimulate discussion among our citizens I would like to point out that I focus on security and defence and not on the broader spectrum. In this field, as in other areas, we see how different the situation is in each one of our countries. It is not difficult to speak to the British citizens about defence. They are interested. The media tend to give attention to defence issues quite frequently. That is a country where you do not have a particular difficulty in engaging the citizens and in securing their approval if needed. In France we have no difficulty in securing approval, but we have much more difficulty in raising interest. The citizens are actually “legitimistes”. They essentially trust the government on defence: do

not bother us with defence, just get the job done. There is much less media attention for defence issues. You will find hardly any mention of defence issues in our political campaigns. Hollande delivered a one hour and fifteen minutes speech on defence issues, because he had to do so at one stage in his campaign. Was there any debate about that? Zilch! There was a little bit of discussion about NATO, but even that was just a matter of glancing blows or references in the debates between the right and the left. In some other countries defence is a turn-off issue. Mr Stürmer told us what the situation in Germany is like. Obviously, there is not going to be a “one size fits all”-type of approach to this issue in the European countries.

The second point is a generic one. In all cases it pays off to demonstrate that security and defence make a difference. Take the Libya case, for instance. People were not terribly mobilized about Libya in France. To most voters it was a very peripheral issue. But people could see that what we did made a difference. They like it or they do not like it, but they do realise: “hey, wait a second, something happened here which would not have happened if we had not got involved.” This can apply to anything from successful counterterrorism measures – getting the bad guys – to military interventions in the forceful modus in Libya or humanitarian and blue helmet operations. In that respect the Netherlands have quite a good case to make.

I talked quite a good deal this afternoon about pooling and sharing. I hardly mentioned division of labour, however, which is a different concept. It is sometimes promoted within the framework of the debate on smart defence. One understands the temptation. First of all, in defence, division of labour will exist spontaneously in a number of cases. Countries which do not have a coastline are not going to have navies. That is a fairly obvious division of labour. You also have more deliberate divisions of labour. Within NATO Europe, for instance, the Netherlands and Belgium are particularly strong in mine hunting and mine chasing as compared to some other countries. But one has to be very careful about division of labour, for political reasons. Let us take for example two comparatively small countries with comparatively small defence budgets, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. These two countries are very much in the division of labour camp. What happens? The Czech Republic, as part of NATO’s division of labour, knows how to do one thing superbly well, namely chemical weapon detection, by means of their CW military units. The Slovaks are very good at military engineering. Is a politician going to be able to explain to his citizens that it is useful and necessary to spend a lot of money on providing a niche competence to an organisation which is more or less dysfunctional and which is doing things which are not necessarily of immediate interest to the citizens of that country? You have to be able to demonstrate that there is a link between what the money is being spent for

and the national interest relatively narrowly defined. If you do not do that, you can always say, like my Czech friends do, “we have to increase our defence spending”. But what happens to defence spending in the Czech Republic? It is going down, because the politicians cannot make the case on the basis of the policy which is followed. Pooling and sharing do not have that political disadvantage. They pose other problems, as I said, whereas division of labour is a pretty slippery road if it means that you end up with a very narrow spectrum of competences.

*At the table, from left to right:
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Mr Hamilton, Mr De Graaf,
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