

**SPEECH BY NATO SECRETARY GENERAL LORD ROBERTSON
AT THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

VIENNA, AUSTRIA -- 6 NOVEMBER

Secretary General,
Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Three years ago, almost to the day, I was the first Secretary General of NATO ever to have the privilege to address the OSCE Permanent Council. I have been looking forward to this renewed opportunity to address the Council again.

I am pleased to be here again today because I have good news to tell you. Good news about the ongoing transformation of the NATO Alliance and how it relates to the OSCE's evolution. Good news about the increasingly pragmatic and effective cooperation between NATO and the OSCE over the last few years. And good news about the scope for broadening and deepening this cooperation in the future.

Like the OSCE, NATO is constantly evolving. Our Summit in Prague last November set out a blueprint to steer this transformation, and to bring NATO fully into line with the new security environment – with new members, new missions, new capabilities and new partnerships. With a further Summit in Istanbul next June firmly in our sights, the Allies are now busy implementing that blueprint.

A longstanding objective of NATO is one that we share with the OSCE: to contribute to the consolidation of Europe as a common security space from which wars will no longer start.

Next year will see significant progress towards that goal, when seven countries will join our Alliance. All seven have worked hard -- to implement difficult reforms, and to be providers of security, rather than mere consumers. When they join NATO next year, their efforts will be rewarded. And it will be made clear that NATO's door remains open for additional countries to join.

NATO's approach to security goes well beyond its membership and, like the OSCE, embraces the entire Euro-Atlantic area.

Over the past decade, our Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and Partnership for Peace have been hugely successful in promoting political change, assisting defence reform and fostering a common security culture. We now want to exploit the potential of these fora in the fight against terrorism, which requires the broadest possible international cooperation. We are also encouraging partners to work together regionally to address cross-border problems such as organised crime and illegal migration.

European stability would not be complete without a strong Russia and a strong Ukraine. That is why the Alliance has developed special relationships with those two countries. I visited Moscow and Kiev over the last few weeks to underline NATO's strong interest in further reinforcing these partnerships. I came away heartened by the positive response I received in both capitals.

Finally, European security cannot be dissociated from the stabilisation of the southern shores of the Mediterranean. We are also looking at ways to enhance our relations with the seven countries that participate in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue. Their interest in working with the Alliance has grown as well, in the face of common challenges as the fight against drug trafficking or against terrorism.

But a critical lesson from September 11th is that threats to our security may fester in faraway regions before they suddenly strike at our homes. The NATO Allies have not just taken this lesson to heart -- they have acted upon it. There is certainly no intention to act as a global policeman of the world, but the Alliance is determined to deal with threats from wherever they may come.

So we are modernising our military capabilities, to be able to take action quickly and effectively. We have just launched the first elements of our NATO Response Force, and are implementing a more flexible command structure. And we are taking steps to better protect our populations and forces against weapons of mass destruction.

While we are reinforcing our capabilities, we have assumed responsibilities well beyond our traditional boundaries. By taking over the lead of the international stabilisation effort in Afghanistan, and by extending support to Poland and Spain for their role in the stabilisation of post-Saddam Iraq.

These are both complex operations, not just "out-of-area" but "out-of-continent". But we are determined to see these operations through. We realise that stability in Afghanistan and Iraq is critical to the security not just of the NATO Allies, but of the entire Euro-Atlantic community of nations.

In taking on these new challenges, NATO wants to build on its Balkans experience and success. The success it has achieved in bringing security and stability to South-East Europe and in helping the countries of the region reintegrate into the wider Europe is significant.

This is, of course, not just NATO's success. It is the success of our nations, and our institutions, working together for a common cause. This was not always easy. In the early 1990s there was considerable confusion and even a degree of competition between our efforts. But over the past decade we have learned to play to our strengths, to join forces and to complement each other.

In the Balkans, NATO and the OSCE have cooperated more and more effectively over the past few years. The EU's High Representative Javier Solana, OSCE Chairman in Office Minister Geoana and I formed a hugely successful partnership two years ago to prevent civil war in the FYROM¹. Now, this cooperation on the ground is being reflected in closer links between our organisations.

Earlier this year, NATO and the OSCE, together with the European Union and the Stability Pact, cooperated on the Ohrid Platform for Border Management and Security in the Western Balkans. Just a few months later, NATO and the EU agreed a concerted approach for that same region. And a couple of weeks ago, our organisations fully supported SRSG. Holkeri in his efforts to kick-off the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. We need to remain united to keep this process on track.

These were real breakthroughs; Demonstrations of practical cooperation with a clear sense of purpose. They were major steps forward in the stabilisation of the Balkans. They are models to follow as we deal with similar challenges – weak borders, lawlessness and organised crime, in other regions of the world and starting with Afghanistan.

From NATO's point of view, this institutional rapprochement is only logical.

With the adoption, in 1999, of its Platform for Cooperative Security, the OSCE declared its firm intention to cooperate with other institutions, and made a number of concrete suggestions for doing so. NATO has welcomed the Platform, and my staff and I have been keen to foster a more regular dialogue, to attend OSCE events, and to work towards greater transparency and practical cooperation between our organisations.

¹ Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

I know that, with a view to the Maastricht Ministerial next month, you are working on a new strategy for addressing threats to security and stability in the 21st century. This strategy places great emphasis on cooperation between the OSCE and other international organisations. This is most welcome. It means that NATO's interest in enhanced cooperation with other organisations is matched by a similar desire in the OSCE.

The opportunities for making progress have never been greater. This is because September 11th has had a profound impact on the development both of NATO, and of the OSCE.

The threat of terrorism constitutes a priority area for our institutions. Terrorism finds a fertile breeding ground where there is bad government, where there are dysfunctional institutions, and where there is no respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The OSCE is the standard bearer of these norms, and it has a critical role to play in the new security environment, alongside with NATO and others.

NATO's many activities pertaining to defence reform complement the OSCE's conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation work, and this is another area where I believe we should continue to share information. We should also optimise our cooperation in dealing with such concrete issues as border security, organised crime, and small arms and light weapons.

Geographically, beyond continuing our joint efforts in the Balkans, I see scope for greater cooperation with regard to the Caucasus and Central Asia – strategically important regions where the OSCE has on-the-ground experience. We should also look for synergies in our work in the Mediterranean region.

I sincerely believe that we can, and must be more ambitious. We should also explore how we can work together, for instance in Afghanistan. If we can foster greater security and stability there, we ourselves will also be more safe and more secure.

Some of these ideas may be implemented in the short-term. Others may take a longer time to come to fruition. But one thing is clear: NATO-OSCE cooperation is a strategic requirement – today more than ever before.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, I only have a few more weeks to go as NATO Secretary General. But you also know that my successor is someone with very recent, in fact continuing, OSCE experience.

That is excellent news, for both our organisations. Because it will help to further one of the causes to which I have been dedicated these last few years – that of forging a truly effective partnership between NATO and the OSCE, a partnership that will make the Euro-Atlantic area more safe and more secure.

Thank you.