



THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL

OF THE UNITED STATES

REMARKS BY NICHOLAS BURNS, UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE FOR
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, TO THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES
GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SERIES

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UNITED STATES

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THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT.

MR. KEMPE: (In progress) -- that I can imagine for the Atlantic Council's new Global Leadership Series, which is going to headline U.S. and European and occasionally other senior policy makers who are tasked with making some of the most difficult decisions of our time, which is a confusing and critical time of change, and I'm sure we'll hear a lot more of that from our speaker in a few minutes.

I'm pleased to say there are also a lot of people in the audience who have had similarly challenging jobs, many of them Atlantic Council board members, so I'd particularly like to greet the directors here from the Atlantic Council. Let me also extend a personal thanks to someone who has had one of those jobs, the former general counsel of the U.S. Treasury, David Aufhauser, who's now general counsel for the Americas of UBS, and he and UBS are generally -- are generously supporting this speaker series.

Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns is, in my opinion, one of America's top strategic thinkers. He also happens to be the United States' undersecretary of state for political affairs. That's the third ranking official in Department of State. It also means he's responsible for U.S. policy in every region of the world. In short, that means that you deal with a lot of matters that would seem to extend beyond the reach of U.S.-European relations, but I think part of the point of what you're going to say tonight is that's not the case at all -- in

fact, U.S.-European relations' future is dealing with global issues and we'd better get used to it.

After an opening statement that you'll make, we're going to engage in Q&A, and heaven knows there are a lot of issues on the plate. Here's a very incomplete quick list. Vladimir Putin -- and many of us -- some of us in this audience were in Munich listening to him -- has been outspoken in his criticism of U.S. policy. And the Russian head of rocket forces has interestingly said Poland and the Czech Republic will be on the target list, so we've got some Russian issues to discuss. Another deadline has passed on Iran's nuclear problem and program, and Tehran is sending signals of defiance and compromise. That's been an area of close U.S.-European cooperation. Questions of Kosovar independence are coming to a head. Afghanistan being considered as a testing ground for the alliance, and many worry about the level of allied political commitment there. That's just a short beginning of a very long list, all of which you're in some way responsible for, or in the forefront of being responsible for.

So I knew Nick very well in Brussels where I was serving as the Wall Street Journal Europe's editor and he was ambassador to NATO at a time when there was an alliance crisis that you deftly and unflappably -- characteristically, one could say, unflappably dealt with. You've always made tough jobs look effortless, and they haven't got any easier, and I've always thought that could be because you were a lifelong fan of the Boston Red Sox, which trains one for difficult problems. (Laughter.) But with that, Nick, I'm delighted to introduce you and turn the floor to you. Nick Burns, undersecretary of state for political affairs. (Applause.)

MR. BURNS: Thank you very much. Fred, thank you very much. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's a pleasure to be here with all of you. Pleasure to be back at the Atlantic Council, especially with good friends like David Atchison, and all of you who played such a big role in forming this council and keeping it going over the years.

You've chosen a good person in Fred Kempe. He was a really outstanding editor and correspondent for the Wall Street Journal Europe for about 20 years, and was one of the leading voices, especially during the transatlantic crisis of 2002 and '03, arguing for patience and arguing for perspective. And I was so pleased when Fred was named to his current position. I'm a great supporter of the Atlantic Council. So congratulations to all of you who had the foresight to choose someone like him, and thank you very much for coming out this evening and braving the Washington traffic to be here, even on time.

I wanted to say how much we appreciate at the State Department the work that all of you do here at the Atlantic Council. We need institutions outside the government to argue for American engagement in the world, and for a purposeful and serious American engagement, and this institution has stood for that for a very, very long time. We also need, obviously, to focus this year on America's evolving role with Europe and the changing agenda -- in fact, I would say the **complete transformation of the U.S.-European agenda in recent years**. And I'd like to focus on two important but I think under appreciated, perhaps by the press and other observers, developments in our relations with Europe.

First, the United States has acted with great determination, and I think with great efficiency and results, in reaffirming our partnership with Europe over the last several years. I was ambassador to NATO in 2002 and '03 during that very difficult time when we had a major transatlantic difference over whether or not the United States should go into Iraq -- a difference over the role of the United States and the European countries in fighting the war on

terrorism on a global basis -- maybe even a difference about the nature of what an alliance was, and whether countries should act independently of that alliance or whether they should not. That was a very serious and profound disagreement. A lot of us participated in it.

But we've made a major effort over the two years that have transpired since that time to reaffirm the NATO alliance, reaffirm our partnership with the European countries, and I think I can say with great confidence today, and I would think most European diplomats would say the same, that that alliance is now back together again. France is our leading partner in dealing with the crisis in Lebanon, trying to defend the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Siniora in Lebanon. Germany, France and the United Kingdom are our leading partners in trying to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state.

Europe and America are the two parts of the world arguing that the Balkans now should finally be able to achieve the results that they missed in the early 1990s of peace and stability -- of unity and of inclusion in a Europe that's whole, free and at peace in the words of our 41st president, George Herbert Walker Bush. It's time for the people of Kosovo to know what their future is going to be. It's time for those in Bosnia and Herzegovina to be able to rise -- go beyond the Dayton Accords and to build a modern constitutional state, and Europe is our great partner in that. And so I think we've been successful -- Europeans and Americans alike in returning to the alliance, and returning to the solidity of the transatlantic relationship, which for we Americans is so important for our role in the world.

Secondly, there has been a very dramatic and undeniable shift in the European-American relationship, perhaps the most important in the century, and I think its impact is likely to be felt for a generation to come. And that is that the United States' policy towards Europe is no longer about Europe. It's about the rest of the world. And the U.S.-European alliance is no longer about the divisions in Europe, as it certainly was over the course of the 20th century. It's about what we together have to do to be effective and purposeful around the globe in all the regions of the world.

Think of it this way. Between April 1917, when Woodrow Wilson put a million American soldiers into Belgium and France to help and win the first world war -- between that time and April, May and June of 1999, when President Clinton rescued, along with our NATO allies, one million Kosovar Albanians from Milosevic' ethnic cleansing, United States' policy around the world was centered on Europe. It was centered on the divisions in Europe, on the two world wars that we had to fight, on the Cold War that millions of American GIs fought for a generation. And if you asked any American diplomat -- any American member of the Atlantic Council -- for the last five or six decades what area of the world was most important -- most vital for American national interest, it was certainly Europe. It was the epicenter of America's global and strategic thinking. It's why we stationed millions of young men in Europe from the spring of 1944 until the present day, and certainly through that time in 1989 and '90 and '91 when the East Europeans liberated themselves from communism and when the Soviet Union fell. It's why NATO was created, and now that Europe is nearly whole, free and at peace, our European policy can focus for the very first time on what the United States and Europe can do together on a global basis.

Think of it another way. Europeans have just experienced roughly a millennium of internal divisions, internal disunity, and internal warfare. And their achievement of a Europe that is united and peaceful and stable is truly one of the great achievements in world history -- certainly in modern history. It's their achievement. We Americans were their indispensable partner,

especially over the last century or so. And in that sense I think that we in America can take some satisfaction in looking at the course of our entire foreign policy history over 230 years and say, "What we accomplished with the Europeans from the First World War onward was one of the great chapters in American foreign policy." We created with Europe a single democratic space that is unique in the history of the modern world that defines our true political cultures, it defines our political philosophies, it defines who we are as two peoples. It's extraordinary achievement and it's a common achievement -- a free world in a democratic space in North America, in Western and in Central Europe.

And now that we've created that free world, for us it really is in our self-interest -- and here I think we get to the defining feature of modern American diplomacy -- it's in our self-interest but it's also our responsibility with the Europeans to see what we can do to bind ourselves together in a common global strategy. And that has been an evolution for some period of time, but we've been slow to articulate, Europeans and Americans together, just what that agenda is. And so I think this represents the single most important, most significant change in America's relations with Europe. It means that the entire agenda of how we deal with the European Union, what we ask NATO to do and what we ask NATO to be in the world, and especially what we do with the larger countries of Western Europe -- the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and certainly now Poland. This agenda defines our bilateral relations with all those people.

I wanted to say that at the beginning, because I think this change is important for all of us as Americans. It continues to mean that America has to be engaged in the world -- that we can neither seek solace and isolationism as we have done so often in our national history, and we certainly can seek no solace in unilateralism, which is a recipe for failure in our foreign policy in a globalized world where we need friends and we need allies to be successful in confronting all the challenges that are facing us. If you would agree with me that that's the great change that has taken place over the last 10 or 15 years, but is just now becoming apparent, especially to those of us who work in government who have to deal with bilateral and multilateral agendas, **then what's the specific agenda for Europe and America in 2007 and beyond?**

I would break it down into **two areas**. First, there's some **remaining work that needs to be done in Europe to fulfill this fantastic opportunity that we've had in the last generation to see Europe become truly united and peaceful and stable, and there's one part of Europe that has not received the benefits of that vision, and that is the Balkans.** Second, **what is the global agenda that is right now driving NATO and the U.S. and European Union as we seek to work together in the world?** A word on both. This is a -- this will be a year of transformation and change in the Balkans. It's the year when we are going to face **the final status for Kosovo.** It was nearly eight years ago when the NATO leaders led by President Clinton, Prime Minister Blair and others decided we had to intervene in the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians to save those people, and to turn back for a second time in a decade the armies of Serbia led by Slobodan Milosevic. We did so successfully, and the people of Kosovo have now waited nearly eight years to discover what would happen to them -- would they live in an independent country, would they continue to be associated within a greater Serbia -- Serb state, and the answer will come in just about four to five weeks' time when President Martti Ahtisaari, the U.N. negotiator, reveals to the Security Council what is the result of his negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina. The United States is committed to support President Ahtisaari. We've been leading an international effort to set up his negotiations, and I think around the middle part of March -- the end of March you'll see a very vigorous debate at the United Nations about the future of Kosovo, and we hope

that one will be of peace, and a peaceful transition to a better future for the people of that province.

We also have some work to do to try to still the forces of irredentism and of violence that unfortunately are part of the fabric of Balkan political life in our time. There are still some Serbs who believe that the Serbs should unite themselves -- the Serbs in Serbia, in Kosovo and in Bosnia, and that kind of irredentist force which was so destructive when Yugoslavia broke up 10 or 15 years ago cannot be allowed to return to be a political force in the Balkans. The Dayton Accords were a uniquely creative instrument to stop a war in the fall of 1995. But now 12 years later -- nearly 12 years later they cannot be the way that the people of Bosnia Herzegovina organize themselves for the next 10 years. There has to be an effort made by the people of the region to modernize the Dayton Accords, and to allow Bosnia Herzegovina to become a modern state in constitutional and legal and political terms. Those two objectives, along with bringing Croatia and Albania and Macedonia into NATO in 2008 or '09, those would be the initiatives that we should take to bring the Balkans into association with the European Union and NATO, and to finally break down the institutional and national barriers that have retarded the progress of the people of the Balkans, compared say to the peoples of Central Europe, and to give them a future in NATO and the E.U. that would solidify for the people of the Balkans the same advantages that the West and Central Europeans have had since the end of communism 15, 16 years ago. That's an important priority for Europe. It's also an important priority for the United States.

The second intra-European issue that is so much a part of our current agenda is what to do about Russia, how to relate to modern Russia, how to be a partner with Russia, but also how to protect NATO and the European Union and the states of Central Europe from whatever dangers may lurk in the future. You've all seen the extraordinary -- you've heard about or saw the extraordinary speech that President Putin gave at the Wehrkunde Conference in Munich two weeks ago. You've seen this unusually unwise and irresponsible statement by the Russian general staff about targeting the Czech Republic and Poland because they have the temerity to negotiate with the United States a missile defense agreement. Our response to that has been that we need to seek a balanced relationship with Russia. We need to take account of what is working in our relationship with Russia, but also to be very clear about where we disagree with the Russian leadership -- whether it's on the lack of democracy inside Russia itself, the declining fortunes of the democrats in the Russian political spectrum; whether it's on Russia's attempts to we think be overbearing at times in their relations with their neighbors, or whether it's the recent Russian reaction to our attempt to establish a modern missile defense system in Europe, not aimed at the Russians themselves, of course, but aimed at the threats that emanate from Iran and other countries to the south of Russia. A balanced picture of the U.S.-Russian relationship would take account of the following. That on the two major issues that we face globally -- our ability to defend ourselves against terrorist threats, and our ability to restrain countries from becoming nuclear powers -- Russia is one of our strongest partners worldwide. And on the first, Russia's been a victim of terrorism, the United States has been a victim of terrorism, and we have achieved a degree of cooperation with the Russians in terms of intelligence and counter terrorism work which has been, frankly, vital to our abilities to be successful in countering terrorist groups worldwide.

On the second, the Russians are working with us in the six-party talks in North Korea. You saw the success we had there last week. The Russians have been a good partner in Security Council debates about Iran, and in our successful passage of a Security Council resolution just before Christmas in December of 2006 to impose Chapter VII sanctions on Iran. Russia has argued that countries should be responsible stewards of their fissile material and

nuclear warheads. So in these two important respects, the United States' global interests do coincide -- intersect quite nicely, and on a favorable basis with the Russian Federation.

But in other areas, we see that the Russians and our government -- perhaps other governments in Western Europe -- are going -- are operating at cross-purposes. We believe that Georgia should have a right to define its own -- to define its own future. We believe that Georgia should have the right to seek membership or association with international organizations like NATO in the future if that is what Georgia elects to do, and if Georgia, of course, at some point in its future history meets the requirements of NATO membership. We believe that Moldova should be allowed to overcome the internal divisions that have held that nation back since the breakup of the Soviet Union in December 1991. And we certainly believe that the three Baltic countries -- Estonia and Latvia and Lithuania, now members of both the European Union but especially of NATO -- have a right to live in peace, and free of the harassment that is sometimes afflicted upon them by the Russian Federation. We're concerned about the lack of democracy inside Russia itself, the declining fortunes of those who stand up for democracy in Russia. So I know that President Putin put a number of criticisms before the world audience about United States foreign policy.

We have been equally clear about when we disagree with the Russian Federation, and that's our responsibility to do that -- to define a modern relationship in those terms, to be frank about what's working and to thank the Russian Federation when we are able to achieve things together, whether it's on counterterrorism or counter proliferation, but to be equally frank that when there are challenges in the relationship, we face those challenges and we disagree with the Russians publicly when they do things that are profoundly not in our interest and against the interests of our friends in Europe. This is an important relationship, obviously, for the future.

Russia is going to have to understand that NATO will continue to exist. NATO will continue to grow. We will continue to add members to the NATO alliance, and the strength of NATO will be based on our common will and our ability to project NATO as a force for peace and for stability as it certainly is in its Afghan mission. And Russia has to understand that NATO is not and has not been, for the history -- for the many years since 1989, '90 and '01, directed at all against Russia, but is the one uniquely unifying force for peace and stability in Europe itself. NATO enlargement -- and if you read Ron Asmus and Greg Craig's op-ed in The Washington Post yesterday, NATO enlargement has brought so many positive benefits to the Europeans, as well as to the North Americans over the last 15 years that we think NATO's vocation has to be strong in the future.

We have invited Russia into a NATO-Russia partnership five years ago in Italy. It has worked well at points, but it's been sometime disappointing in a lack of a strategic engagement. That was apparent in the Russian reaction to our plan to establish a very small number of interceptors in Poland and at radar sites in the Czech Republic, to have some capacity to deter the looming missile threat from Iran and other states in the Middle East that all the European countries and the United States face. To think that in this day and age a member of the Russian general staff would threaten two NATO countries because they have the temerity to consider negotiating this agreement with us is really quite astounding. Secretary Rice said today when she was asked about this in Berlin, "It was profoundly unwise for that statement to be made, and we hope that the Russians will think twice about such statements in the future."

So those two issues -- relations with Russia and relations -- our efforts to try to solidify progress in the Balkans -- are part of the remaining business

that the Europeans and Americans have to do to create this unified democratic space that is the strategic objective of both of us as we look to the future.

There is also a global agenda, and I would just list five challenges for the United States and Europe as we operate globally, as we seek to have an integrated approach to the rest of the world for 2007 and beyond. And these five challenges encompass the most important priorities for the United States, and I think right now they're at the heart of the transatlantic relationship.

The first great challenge for us is to be successful in Afghanistan. This is an American and European joint venture to assist the Afghan government, the Afghan people, and the neighbors of Afghanistan, such as Pakistan and India, to be successful in trying to beat back the tactical attacks of the Taliban and al Qaeda, to help bring humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan, and to help rebuild this country which had to live under such a difficult regime for 25 years prior to the American intervention in October, 2001.

The United States has 27,000 soldiers in Afghanistan. Secretary Gates has said we'll maintain very strong troop levels. We've just asked the Congress for \$11.6 billion in American military and economic assistance to Afghanistan for the next two years. That is an extraordinary leap over the amount of money that we've spent in Afghanistan over the past five years, which totals \$14 billion. It does show that the U.S. is in this for the long haul, that we believe we can be successful in Afghanistan, but it's going to take a major effort. And that effort has to come from the Europeans as well. We have to see the infrastructure of the country rebuilt, we have to see the Europeans be willing to put their troops into combat situations.

NATO has now had to face an existential crisis of sorts. We are fighting in Kandahar, Oruzgan, in Helmand and Paktia provinces, United States military forces, with the Dutch and the Canadians and the British and the Estonians and the Romanians. But most of the other NATO allies are deployed to the west and to the north. When we have a firefight, as we did -- a major firefight with the Taliban in September -- and need tactical reinforcements, it's incumbent upon the NATO allies to come to the support of those NATO allies engaged in the combat. That did not happen in September. And too many of our allies have said that they're quite willing to be garrison troops in the northern and western parts of the country that are relatively quiet and peaceful, but not willing to come down to where the Taliban is crossing the border in great numbers and where al Qaeda is also taking on the American-Afghan and those NATO allied forces that I named. We need to see that effort from the Europeans. We need to see more European soldiers in Afghanistan, more European money devoted to the task of rebuilding the country, and we are absolutely confident that with that type of cohesive and strong -- cohesive and strong and unified Western effort, we can give the type of support to the Afghan government that the Afghan government requires to be successful.

The Taliban does not represent, in our judgment, a strategic threat to the government of Afghanistan, but it does represent a threat in Kandahar, in Helmand, in Oruzgan, in Paktia provinces. To the young girls who are trying to go to school and the Taliban is trying to -- to intimidate them from going to school, through the assassination of local political leaders that the Taliban has been engaged in, we have to repel that, along with the Afghan forces. We have the capacity to do it, but Europe has to join us in that effort, and that has been our message at the last two NATO meetings that Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates have attended. That would be a first challenge for our relationship.

A second would be to see a combined U.S.-European effort to confront the four great interlocking challenges that confront us in the Middle East. The extraordinarily difficult challenge that we have in Iraq, number one. Number two, our common interest in convincing, cajoling, sanctioning the Iranian government so that they do not have the capacity to become a nuclear weapon state and do not have the capacity to become the most dominant state in the region, which is clearly the ambition of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Third, to project the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Siniora in Lebanon against the axis of Hezbollah, Syria and Iran, who want to destabilize that government and actually drive him from power and put Hezbollah on the throne.

And fourth, to support the effort that Secretary Rice began this week in Jerusalem, and that is to see if progress can be made between Israel and the Palestinian leadership in the nearly 60-year effort by every American administration to try to seek a final peace between Israel and the Palestinians and to create the Palestinian state that the United States believes is necessary for peace and stability in the Middle East. Those are the four crises that confront us. We need European political and economic support on every one of them, and the Europeans are involved in every one. But we need a degree of unity and of cohesiveness in our approach to be effective in all of them.

And I think, as a career diplomat, in nonpartisan terms. No matter what happens in our elections in the fall of 2008, the next American administration will have to face these four issues, just as the last two, President Bush and President Clinton, have faced them as well. That would be a second challenge for the U.S.-European relationship.

A third is to confront the myriad of problems, but also opportunities that are presented to Europe and the United States in Africa. This is a new area of cooperation for both of us. And I think frankly it's one of the most welcome changes that I've seen in American national security thinking. I was away in Europe, serving in Europe with some people in this audience between 1997 and 2005, and when I returned, the greatest single change that I observed in the way our government thought about the world was that we now thought about Africa as a national security concern. We thought of African countries and the African Union as national security partners, and we thought that our vital interests were engaged. And that's why we have promoted this \$15 billion global HIV/AIDS program, which is primarily focused on 10 countries in Africa. It's why we have nearly quadrupled American development assistance to Africa in the last five years. It's why we now think of the African Union in Addis Ababa as a regional actor that is critical if we want to be successful in Sudan, in Darfur, or in Somalia or in lots of other problems in the continent.

And it's why Europe and America need to think of strategic engagements with Nigeria and South Africa and Uganda and Kenya and Tanzania and Senegal and Congo, some of the leading countries of the continent. They are our national security partners. And so whether it's on disease prevention, HIV/AIDS prevention, poverty alleviation or conflict resolution, Europe and America have a common interest in doing what we have to do to help the Africans overcome these problems, because these problems do represent -- do have a long-term impact especially on Europe, but also on the United States of America.

And I would just say, in terms of our African agenda, two short-term priorities. Can we take advantage of the very surprising and very effective Ethiopian military offensive to drive the radical Islamists out of Mogadishu and out of power in Somalia, to see an African regional peacekeeping force go in, as it is in the next few weeks, to Somalia and then to see it succeeded by a United Nations peacekeeping force. And we just voted in the Security Council yesterday

to authorize that force, to provide the people of Somalia with some long-term stability which they have been denied, now going on 20 years.

Second, can we be successful in using our combined European and American political influence on the government of Sudan to convince that government that we must have a combined African Union and U.N. peacekeeping force in Darfur to stop the genocide that is currently underway. It hasn't stopped. We have reports every week of humanitarian abuses, of rapes, of killings of the citizens of Darfur by the Janjawid and allegations of complicity at certain times by the government of Sudan itself. We have an opportunity with Europe to press that agenda on the Sudanese government and it's one that we have to do with a great deal of determination and speed in the coming months. And so Africa would, in my view, be a third challenge and opportunity for the United States and Europe.

Fourth, support for the United Nations. If you go anywhere in the world, any region of the world, any country in the world, the United Nations is playing, in many cases, a major role -- in some countries, the indispensable role. And it's going to be up to the wealthiest contributors to the U.N. system to -- the permanent members of the Security Council, to lead the way in helping Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to revitalize the United Nations, to reinforce its ability to be effective in peacekeeping. We just talked about Africa. Whether it's in Congo or Sierra Leone or Cote d'Ivoire or Sudan or Somalia, it's the United Nations that people are calling on to be an effective instrument of international peacekeeping. And to be successful in peacekeeping, you need trained soldiers. You need finance, you need training, you need logistical support, air support, airlift support, and most of that comes from the NATO countries, from the European and North American countries in NATO. So a combined effort by Europe and America to reinforce what Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon is trying to do to rebuild U.N. peacekeeping, and to make the U.N., as it must be, a leading instrument of the international community around the world. That's certainly a priority for the United States. I know it is for the European countries who have always been devoted supporters of the U.N.

And **fifth** and finally, I would say that **the U.S.-European agenda will ultimately, in the next generation come down to the following proposition: Can we engage and work together productively on the great multilateral challenges posed by our age of globalization?** If the coming agenda in the world is not the traditional agenda of war and peace but the multilateral agenda of global climate change and of international crime cartels and international narcotics cartels and trafficking of women and children and global terrorism and its juxtaposition with chemical and biological and nuclear weaponry -- if those are the greatest global challenges that we're going to face on a national as well as international basis, well then we need a joint American and European strategy to be effective in confronting all those challenges.

And there is a positive side to globalization -- the extraordinary multiplier effect of the information age in lifting people out of poverty, as we've seen in India and China, And the ability to prevent diseases and to deal with global afflictions like HIV/AIDS pandemics. There's a positive side in our capacity to be successful, but the dark side are those problems like global climate change and terrorism and crime and narcotics. And no matter what our power is as a country, Germany or the United States or Spain or France or Italy, none of us can attack those problems alone, certainly not the United States of America.

And so it means that we Americans have to reengage with the rest of the world and we have to speak to the agenda of the rest of the world. And as I traveled in Brazil and Argentina two weeks ago and the Middle East two weeks before that, this is the global agenda. This is what people are talking about

in their parliaments, in their newspapers, as they discuss their political futures. And America needs to be part of that global agenda. We need to lead it, and our natural, indispensable partner is going to be the countries of Europe, because they do have the capacity and they have the vision to attack these problems with us and to overcome them in the future. And that, I would say, would be one of the great challenges, not just for 2007 but for the next 10 or 15 or 20 years to come. Can we be effective multilaterally? And can we Americans recognize that this multilateral agenda is very much an American agenda, but also one that we have to act in concert with the Europeans to be successful?

Having said all that, it's an exciting time for our two continents. It's a hopeful time, if you look back over the last 20 years and how much we've accomplished, and I'm very proud to be part of an effort with our European partners to be working in all of these issues and very pleased to have the support, Fred and David and all of you who've done so much for the Atlantic Council, to have this institution help us to define this agenda, to drive it forward, and to gain the necessary support in our own society so that we can be successful together with Europe. I think it does represent **a new age in the U.S.-Europe relationship, and one that is promising, but also one that has great consequences for success or failure.**

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. KEMPE: Nick, I think that all one can say after that sort of tour de force is thank you for choosing the Atlantic Council to give what I think everyone in the audience would say is a, by any measure, truly important foreign policy speech with great strategic sweep. And for our purposes, really laying out a new way to look at the Atlantic relationship and new challenges that the Atlantic relationship is going to be called on to serve, it certainly underlines what we are going to try to do here, which is energizing the Atlantic community for 21st century global challenges. That's what we wanted to do, so that was terrific that you laid that out as compellingly as you did.

I'm going to go right to questions, but just sort of review quickly what we heard here. First of all, we did hear that the relationship is no longer about Europe; it's about the rest of the world. We heard that it was still about Europe in two respects, which is the Balkans and Russia, and you went in some good detail on both of those and, I thought, quite interestingly on Russia, showing how much positive is happening even as we're hearing other things. So perhaps some will want to go more deeply into that.

In terms of the global challenge, Afghanistan you listed number one. The three interlocking challenges of the Mid-East. Africa, where we certainly want to do some more work, I think was very interesting in the way you pointed that out, particularly the challenges of Somalia and Sudan. Support for the U.N., number four, and then the multilateral challenges dealing with climate change, international crime, narcotics. It was a real sweep. So rather than taking up my own time with the questions, though I have a bunch, let me go straight to the audience and see what questions we have here. And then if you could identify yourself as well, please.

Q Yes. I'm Peter Probst. I'm a counterterrorism consultant --

MR. KEMPE: Hold on one second.

MS. : Can you hold on a second -- (laughter).

Q Okay, thank you. I'm Peter Probst. I'm a counterterrorism consultant. And one of the challenges that wasn't addressed but interests me considerably is the growing Salafist influence in North Africa and the Muslim ghettos of Europe. How do you see us and the Europeans countering the pernicious efforts of some of these organizations to apparently destabilize some of the societies of Europe? And what you see our respective roles being?

MR. BURNS: Well, I had a perspective on this when my family and I lived in Belgium over the last four years, 2001 to 2005. I saw the extraordinary influence that the Muslim populations are now exercising, politically and socially, in that society. And it's replicated in many other West European countries. And I think I should start by saying, in my judgment, the great majority of Muslims who are coming from North Africa -- mainly from North Africa, but also from the Middle East -- to Europe are there for the right reasons, the reasons why all of our relatives came to the United States: they want peace, they want jobs, they want education for their kids, they want hope for the future. And I think for the most part, most Europeans would tell you that the great majority of Muslims in Europe are law-abiding people who want a better future for themselves. They want a future in the countries in which they are now residing. And the Europeans don't need a lot of -- European governments don't need a lot of public advice from me, but obviously one of the challenges they face will be integrating this population successfully in their societies. Some countries are doing it more effectively than others. But it's a major challenge for these societies.

There is a slim majority among these immigrant -- immigrants to Western Europe who do represent a threat to the Europeans and also to us. We found that out on 9/11. When you look at the biography of most of the hijackers involved in 9/11, they were in Europe for considerable periods of time. And so that has resulted in a very dynamic initiative between Europe and the United States to try to work on counterterrorism cooperation together. It resulted just after 9/11. Secretary Colin Powell came up to -- came out to Europe, I think, within six weeks and made an agreement with the European Union that, in addition to the hard side of the fight on terrorism -- the military side -- there were four things we had to do well to be successful in countering the more radical elements -- al Qaeda and the other Salafist groups -- that are present in Europe, in the Middle East and, in fact, in our own country.

We had to have good counter -- we had to have a good intelligence cooperation, which I think we've largely achieved with the West European countries. We had to have effective judicial cooperation; you've seen the extraordinary efforts that Spain and Italy and Germany and France have gone to to take terrorists off the streets. We had to prevent the terrorists from laundering their money through our financial institutions, which al Qaeda had been successful in doing. Hezbollah's tried to do it with Iranian support. I think we've had limited success there, but we need -- we can do more. And fourth, we had to have a united diplomatic front.

And we felt that those four areas of cooperation were every bit as important as the military solution to counterterrorism. In fact, probably in the long term, in countering global -- the global effect of al Qaeda and some of these other groups, it's probably more important than what we could do militarily.

I think it's one of the success stories of the U.S.-European relationship over the last four or five years. We in the United States have not given the Europeans enough credit for what they have done, for the difficult decisions they've made in their parliaments to toughen up and tighten up their

counterterrorism legislation. And I think we've got -- it's -- certainly the Europeans are our most important global power in that respect.

Q But I don't see any efforts in terms of --

MR. KEMPE: Excuse me.

Q -- combating Salafist ideology.

MR. KEMPE: We've got to move back to him. We've got a question in the back.

Q Thank you.

Ambassador Burns, it's Steve Clemens of the New America Foundation. I want to commend you, because these are complicated times in foreign policy and I think you've made the case for an enlightened American engagement almost better than many of your other colleagues in the process. So we should thank you.

My question is this. Although Ambassador Bolton is not thrilled with the agreement in North Korea, it seems like an equilibrium of interests in Asia clicked and a product was produced. If you look at that as a template, that template seems sort of like what we did in Afghanistan with the Bonn conference in 2002, in which Iran was a very active participant. Jim Dobbins, Ryan Crocker, Zal Khalilzad were dealing with the Iranians regularly. It's often not talked about, but it happened in this administration. Why is this administration, in your view, rejecting that kind of template when it comes to a regional arrangement in dealing with Iraq? It seems very un-Nick Burns-like -- (laughter) -- and I'm just wondering what comments you have on that.

MR. BURNS: Steve, you're trying your best to get me in trouble. (Laughter.) Thank you very much.

Steve, I would just -- I would just -- I'll start where you began, and that is to say we achieved a significant diplomatic victory last week. Now, it's not total. It may not be final. And in the words of President Reagan, we need to trust but verify the North Koreans will implement the six-party agreement. But why was that achieved? It's because we actually decided to act multilaterally in this case, with the assistance of China, Russia, Japan and South Korea, to integrate the political forces and political interests of all those four countries -- along with ours -- and to convince the North Koreans they had no alternative and no exit door but to negotiate with us and compromise and to agree to dismantle their nuclear program.

The Chinese, I think, were the major factor in the last few months. After the missile test of July and the nuclear test of October 9th, the Chinese began to use their influence with North Korea in a way that we had not seen before. And that, we think, made a critical difference in convincing the North Koreans to come back to the table.

We also engaged the North Koreans directly. We have a -- we had a great, skilled negotiator in Chris Hill, career Foreign Service officer. He met with the North Korean deputy foreign minister four or five times between mid-November and mid-February, and that produced, I think, the kind of self-interest that the North Koreans had to bring to the table. Now we have to see them implement it over the next 60 days. All of us who've watched the North Koreans over the last few years would be naive to think this is going to be easy to have this agreement implemented. But so far, so good.

I think it does provide a template I would say for Iran more than for Iraq. And we've essentially developed the same framework. We, over the last two years, have supported, first, the European effort to negotiate with the Iranians to convince them not to become a nuclear weapons power. When Ahmadinejad unilaterally walked out of those talks with the Europeans in September of 2005, we then put together an alliance of the major European countries, Russia and China. And we have offered them a choice: You can negotiate with us, as Secretary Rice said again today when she was in Berlin -- she would be at the negotiations with the Iranian foreign minister if they accept our terms, the P5 terms -- You can negotiate with us, but if you refuse to negotiate, you're going to be sanctioned and we're going to raise the cost to you of what you're trying to do on the nuclear front, which is exactly what's happening.

You've now seen this extraordinary set of moves over the last two or three months, which have put the Iranians on their back foot. The U.S. Treasury Department has sanctioned two Iranian banks. They no -- can no longer deal in dollar transactions. The European Union has reduced their export credits from 18 billion to a significantly lower number. You've seen three major European banks decide they're not going to do business with Iran at all. I think Iran's worried about the reaction of the financial markets. We've seen the United States deploy two carrier battle groups to the Gulf -- not in the provocative way, not meant to provoke any kind of military conflict with Iran, but to show the Iranians there are limits on what the Iranians will do to flex their muscles in the Middle East.

I think the Iranians are now clearly on the defensive. They're clearly isolated. They have four friends in the world: Syria, Belarus, Venezuela, and Cuba. And with friends like that -- and you have countries like Egypt and Brazil and India voting against Iran in the IAEA Board of Governors -- I think we've created the kind of diplomatic pincer movement -- diplomatic construct that is going to drive the Iranian government to the negotiating table. And that's our hope, because we do have a certain faith that this patient, long-term application of diplomacy can succeed, and we do not think a military conflict with Iran is either desirable or inevitable.

Q Quick follow-up on China. You talked about what China did in terms of bringing a breakthrough in North Korea, going beyond what they'd done before, putting pressure on the North Koreans. How do you square that with Africa and Chinese foreign policy, particularly in Sudan? Are we seeing the emergence of a different sort of China on the world stage?

MR. BURNS: Well, we hope so. A very smart guy, our former deputy secretary of State, Bob Zoellick, said about two years ago that it ought to be one of the objectives of the United States to try to work globally with the Chinese government on political issues, on trying to diffuse conflicts, but that China had to have a stakeholder mentality. China had to understand that it does sit on the unofficial global governing board of the world. It is one of the most important global powers, but it often didn't act like that. It often followed a more mercantilist foreign policy. So we saw in the case of North Korea that China was willing to put aside some of its prior interests and really use its influence to push hard on the North Koreans to compromise. Will we now see that in Sudan? The Chinese government has a 40 percent stake in the state oil company of Sudan. You'd think the Chinese government would have influence. President Hu Jintao was in Khartoum two weeks ago, and the Chinese announced that he had advised President Bashir to allow a greater peacekeeping force into Darfur.

We'd like to see the Chinese to be purposeful and more directed. And those are two good examples -- North Korea on the positive end, Darfur maybe on the questionable end, where the jury's out -- where we'd like to see the Chinese work with us, work with the Russians, work with the Europeans in common cause to use our combined influence on an integrated basis to have the kind of impact we need to have.

MR. KEMPE: I think I've seen two questions up here. Sir?

MS. : Are we going to do a close-up?

Q Christoph Marschall. I am the U.S. correspondent of the German daily Der Tagesspiegel.

I think a lot of my colleagues in Europe -- self-power Europeans would have loved the last part of your speech: climate change, aging societies -- we are from Venus, not from Mars, if I may rephrase it that way. (Laughter.) But they would have missed here one thing.

MR. BURNS: What would Bob Kagan say? (Laughter.)

Q They would have missed one thing: the European Union. You didn't -- you spoke about Germany, about France, about Poland, bilateral cooperation, not the European Union. And this is not a criticism when I state this; I think that is very typical for a speech in the United States when, as the Middle East Quartet met two, three weeks here ago, it was Javier Solana at the table, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, nobody asked any question to them. They were as important as the flowers on the table. (Laughter.) And when you follow the news from Berlin today, you will find that everybody reports that Condoleezza Rice is meeting her German colleague. No, she is not meeting her German colleague; she is meeting the foreign -- the president of the European Union at the moment because that is the role why -- Germany has this at the moment. So what has to happen in Europe that the U.S. takes, finally, the European Union seriously and not only as a wannabe player? And what has to change here -- (laughter) -- that the American public also does that?

MR. KEMPE: Christoph, I'm so glad we have a preview of your column for tomorrow. (Laughter.)

MR. BURNS: Christoph, I try. Maybe I -- I obviously need to work on my --

(Cross talk.)

MR. BURNS: I need to work on my rhetorical skills. I've tried to toss several bouquets in the direction of the European correspondents during my speech. I said that we -- you know, that we obviously were very pleased with what we've had to do in terms of counterterrorism cooperation with Europe. There's no question that the emergence of the European Union is one of the great historical accomplishments of our time. No question about it.

I lived in Greece and saw the tremendously positive impact the EU had had on Greek life. And what the EU's been able to do in terms of infrastructure development in Greece, you've done that across the continent, particularly for the newest members in Central Europe and Southeast Europe. So I think we in our government, I can tell you, have a deep appreciation for the European Union. We know that the EU is a member of the Quartet. When I talked to Secretary Rice this evening, she said she had a Quartet meeting with the EU and Russia and the United Nations.

So let me just give you some free advertising. We're deeply aware of how important the EU is. But I would hope that -- and let me just return the favor. We have Ambassador Hunter here, our former ambassador to NATO. I'm also a former ambassador to NATO. There's two-wheel talk these days of NATO in the European political consciousness, if I might say that. You know, NATO is the defense of Europe. There is no other defense in Europe on a continental basis and no capacity to defend Europe outside of NATO. And now NATO's the expression of what Europe and America can do together. We ended two wars in the Balkans in the '90s and kept the peace for a decade, and now we are the single most important instrument in whether or not Afghanistan will succeed or fail.

And so I'll make a deal with you. If we Americans will talk more about the glories of the EU, that you remind your European readers about the importance of NATO in the transatlantic relationship. I'll be happy to --

MR. KEMPE (?): Is that a deal, Tagesspiegel? (Laughter.)

MR. BURNS: Put it in your column tomorrow.

MR. KEMPE: There was a question here, the gentleman there, and then there was one just behind you.

Q Dana Marshall (sp) with Hunter and Williams.

MS. : Okay. Hold on a second.

Q Dana Marshall (sp) with Hunter and Williams. And Nick, it's wonderful to see you again.

I'm tempted to ask about our days working on Russian energy, but I'll save that question for another meeting. The question I have, though, for you is, I applaud the administration for its seeking those very large and stepped-up numbers for Afghanistan and for the strategic dialogue that you so much -- so well led with Pakistan to find ways that we could really move in many of the economic directions there. We're going to have a real test to see whether economic development that is spurred by those assistance monies -- and let's say the hope for reconstruction opportunity zones, those facilities which will hopefully step up exports to the United States -- to see whether that kind of economic development and job creation will really have an impact on taking away an incentive for people to sort of do the wrong thing for their way of life.

I wonder, in your mind and in the mind of other senior people in the administration, how do you see that working out? How likely is that, what mechanism? And how many people are really likely to say, you know, I'm not going to be a terrorist. I'm going to work in a garment factory because that's a better deal for me. How does that work out for you and how much can we convince, let's say, the Congress that has a real phobia about textile deals to open this up so that this kind of thing can happen?

MR. BURNS: Yeah. I think that is a really pertinent question, because it gets to the heart of one of the major challenges that I think we have between the U.S. and Europe. We've been successful in two areas -- the U.S. and Europe -- in Afghanistan with a lot of help from Pakistan, India and some of the Arab states in the last five years.

First, we've been able to keep the Taliban at bay. You know, the Taliban are coming out in great numbers. And they are being produced, of course, indigenously, those fighters, but also across the border from Pakistan. We have

to expect a spring offensive. The spring offensive should be our offensive. It should be a counter offensive against the Taliban. That's how we see it in our government and that's what we'd like the European governments to join us in doing.

Second, we've done a fair job of helping President Karzai to rebuild, and frankly to create the infrastructure that any society needs to function. Afghanistan may have been the one country on earth with the weakest infrastructural support, say, five years ago. But now we are succeeding -- Japan, Italy, the United States, Germany -- together to build one national road from Kabul to Kandahar around the Herat and back to Kabul, and to build lots of secondary roads and to build schools, and to build hospitals. And this was vital for the Afghan people. I think we've done rather well in those two areas: military and infrastructure support.

What are the challenges? One thing is what you point out: job creation. Now, we can't do that on our own. That has to evolve, of course, as the Afghan economy evolves. But there has to be an international effort to give some short-term hope to the young men of Afghanistan -- particularly those in the Pashtun area, particularly those who live on the border with Pakistan -- that the better way forward for them would be to build their country rather than try to fight their government. And we have put forward in the United States to our Congress some ideas for funding that would meet that short-term employment need. And I think the European governments have an interest in joining us in that.

And finally I would say where we haven't done well is that we haven't devised an effective way to help Afghanistan to keep it from becoming a narco state. You know, at the worst time in Colombia in the early '90s when the narcotraffickers nearly took over the country, only about 5 or 6 percent of the GDP of Colombia was involved in narcotics trafficking. Right now it may be that fully 35 percent of the Afghan economy is tied up in the poppy trade.

They had the largest poppy crop in history produced last year in Afghanistan, and that is making its way to markets in Russia and Western Europe -- heroin from that poppy crop. And so we have a direct self-interest in the U.S.-European relationship in trying to help President Karzai and his government devise a more effective way to deal with this. It starts with eradication, which the Afghan government has been unwilling to do and many European governments have been unwilling to support it. It gets to alternative incomes, crop substitution. There's a panoply of things that need to be done, but we haven't arrived there yet and that's the remaining challenge for the U.S. and Europe in working with the Afghan government.

Q I'm Stanley Kovo (sp) with the Cato Institute.

At the beginning of the last century, Europe was divided into two alliances: The Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, and we know how that ended. The Cold War -- two alliances ended with the disbandment of the Warsaw Pact. We said, "We're going to expand NATO" and we did. The Russians and Chinese looked at this and said, "Okay, we're going to form our alliance." It started out as the Shanghai Five, now the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It's been expanding. A few years ago, India and Iran, Pakistan were accepted as observer members. They have said they want to be full members. The Indian foreign minister just hosted his Russian and Chinese counterparts. They issued a communique stressing the importance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Is the world now dividing again the way Europe divided 100 years ago? And this dispute over the Balkans, which the Russian foreign minister said when he

was here, is the major issue of difference -- difference of principle -- between the United States and Russia?

MR. BURNS: I don't believe so.

MR. KEMPE: I think that's an interesting question, because the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has been something that has not been much followed and written about, but there does seem to be some smoke there.

MR. BURNS: I think the world is much more complex than some kind of neat division into a Cold War II -- a division into various blocks. I see shifting alliances, depending on the issue -- shifting alliances in multilateral organizations, shifting regional alliances. We're as active today with China on conflict resolution and political cooperation in Asia as we have been at any time since 1949.

You mentioned India. India is an observer in the Shanghai organization. India is becoming one of our most important strategic partners on a global basis. The Indian foreign secretary is here. We have three-and-a-half hours of talks, he and I, today about what we're doing in all parts of the world. And I think finally fulfilling the promise that the two greatest democracies in the world have always had since partition in 1947 to become global partners.

I think it's one of the most important strategic initiatives begun by President Clinton in the '90s, continued now by President Bush, that the United States is undertaking. So I don't see a block system emerging. And I think the Russians need to understand something that is abundantly clear: NATO is not a threat to Russia.

I remember back when I went out to NATO as ambassador in September of 2001. And there was a lively debate in Washington, D.C. and across this country: Should we invite Russia to join NATO? And a lot of leading strategic thinkers said that we should. President Putin answered that in October 3rd, 2001 in a speech in Brussels. He said, "We don't want to be part of NATO. We want to be a partner." So we developed for Russia a NATO-Russia council, which we inaugurated in the spring of 2002. We haven't made the best use of that, but there's no reason and no excuse for the Russians to think that somehow the expansion of the greatest democratic alliance in history to give the people of Eastern Europe and the people of the Balkans confidence is a threat to the Russian Federation. It is not.

So I don't think we'll see a block system emerging. In fact, I think you'll see a closer U.S.-China relationship in Asia and Pacific and a global partnership with India. And I hope we can continue the global counterterrorism and global counter-proliferation agenda with Russia that is so important to both of our countries.

Q So if Putin came back now and said, "We changed our minds. We're interested." Would NATO be open to this?

MR. BURNS: I learned a very important lesson as a State Department spokesman: Never answer a hypothetical question. (Laughter.)

MR. KEMPE: Okay. We've got time for -- let's take two -- let's take three quick questions, very quick questions and then I'll have Nick give final answers to them. And we'll take the questions all in a row.

Q Richard Weitz, Hudson Institute.

Follow-on to the previous question: Aside from reassuring the Russians that NATO is no longer a threat, what possible reactions, policies, statements, et cetera, might the administration take regarding Russian -- possible Russian interest in withdrawing from the INF treaty and the CFE treaty?

Q Number two?

MR. KEMPE: Yes, please.

Q In your review of Europe, I would like to know where you see Ukraine as fitting in.

Q Hershel Vonnegut (sp), German colleague of my European German colleague. (Laughter.)

I take it as a fair point that the Europeans should talk more about NATO and the Americans should talk about the European Union. I had to ask the last question with a sort of retrospect, but since you were the high-ranking NATO official and diplomat and phrased the coin "close-to-death experience" of NATO in 2003, it'd certainly be honest not to go back, but to include in the analysis that the problem for many European leaders that they don't dare to talk about NATO anymore is the Iraq experience. And then how do we overcome it so that we don't end up in similar conflicts in Afghanistan, which is -- right from the start has always been the war, or the good war also for the Europeans -- for all Europeans.

MR. BURNS: Well, thank you very much.

On the Russia question, on INF and on missile defense and CFE, the Russians are going to have to decide what the Russians want to do. Frankly, we've heard more in public from the Russians than we've heard in private. We've certainly heard more complaints in public from the Russian leadership over the last few years and few weeks than we've heard private complaints.

And so I did sit down with one of my Russian counterparts this morning, a deputy foreign minister, and said, "Look, we're willing to engage. Let's engage on a constructive basis." The missile -- the very modest missile defense proposal that the administration has put forward to go into the Czech Republic -- and they had willingly come forward to work with us on this, by the way -- is not in any way shape or form a threat to Russia. Russia has thousands of nuclear warheads. We're talking about setting up 10 or 11 interceptors clearly designed to cope with a looming, longer-term threat from Iran and other states in that part of the Middle East. The Russians know that. This is not destabilizing. It's not a threat to Russia. It is ludicrous to assert anything like that.

So you saw our secretary of State today, and others, say, let's get serious about the debate here. And let's talk about the issues we agree with. If the Russians want to talk to us about INF or CFE, we'd be happy to do that.

On the second question concerning Ukraine -- Ukraine's a state that is going to have to define its own way forward. We in NATO have opened our door to Ukraine. We've had a NATO-Ukraine relationship for about 10 years. The Ukrainians are going to have to decide whether they're going to walk through that door. We're not going to force them to it. And NATO membership has to grow from within a public's own political debates. The Ukrainian president and prime minister have said they're not ready for that. So we're happy and content to have a partnership with Ukraine.

But what's very important to us is that Ukraine remain a sovereign state and a free state, and hopefully a democratic state in the future. It's a country that has not seen the benefits of what the Hungarians and Slovaks and Romanians and Bulgarians have enjoyed -- free market growth and the emergence of a true democratic political system -- because they haven't made that kind of national commitment. The Ukrainians have been off and on in their commitment to both economic and political transformation. They have to make those decisions, but we very much want to treat the Ukrainians with the respect they deserve as an independent and sovereign country, and hope that all of the countries make the same choice.

And finally, I'd say on NATO and the future of NATO, there is nothing whatsoever in our U.S. and European experience in Iraq that should, in my judgment, form the debate about NATO's future. We've made a lot of very good decisions in NATO in the Balkans and in Afghanistan -- and NATO is in Iraq. And NATO is helping to train the Iraqi armed forces, which is after all is the ultimate exit strategy for all of us that the Iraqis will be capable and well-trained to protect their streets and protect their borders.

So I don't believe that Iraq has been an unduly divisive issue at NATO itself. In fact, we've had a much larger vocation in Afghanistan. And if anything, the message that Americans would like to impart to Europeans at this time -- very respectfully -- would be to say, we cannot allow NATO to fail in Afghanistan. It is the first combat mission that NATO has ever undertaken since 1949. The Kosovo mission was an air mission. It's the first ground combat mission. And we're on the line and we're on the hook. And frankly, we need to see a stronger effort from our European allies in terms of troops, money and equipment -- helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft -- so that all of us, all 26 of us, will be successful in helping the Afghan government.

I think Secretary Gates has taken a series of decisions that have not really been commented on very much in our press, because we tend to focus so much on Iraq. He has said that we'll keep now 27,000 American forces in Afghanistan. He's kept extra troops there. The president has come forward with this very significant request for \$11.5 billion over the next two years in economic and military assistance.

For those Europeans who feared that somehow the United States, because of our -- because of what we must do in Iraq would decline in our commitment to Afghanistan, I think we've answered your fears. We're in for the long haul, but we need you to be with us and we need to see the same commitment and the same inclination to take on the Taliban and al Qaeda directly in combat, because they're taking the combat to us. We need to see that kind of support -- all the European countries.

I said in my remarks, and I meant this, this is an existential issue. An alliance like NATO cannot and will not survive unless it's all for one and one for all. And if the Americans, the British, the Dutch, the Canadians, the Estonians, and Armenians are willing to put combat troops into southeastern Afghanistan, all of the European countries should follow and be willing to make that same commitment, in my judgment.

MR. KEMPE: First of all, I think the presentation you made here was important -- terrifically significant for the Euro-Atlantic community. The Q&A, excellent questions, interesting answers. You're always going to be left with 100 questions you wanted to ask. The question of, what did Vladimir Putin really mean in Munich? We don't have time to ask that anymore. And Iran, what will it really take?

But I think the one thing that I want to close with, before we all thank you, is this European Union question -- which I think hangs about there -- because you're really talking about going forward in a way that won't work, unless the European Union steps forward. And certainly, we at the Atlantic Council have been advocating this for a long time. And so one of the key questions, and I hope we can follow this up in our global leadership series with a European speaker here is, what will that take? What will it take for the Europeans to be the other part of this picture? And I think that's a real question that's left hanging out there. Perhaps we can come back at that some other time.

But thank you so much for taking the time. And let me thank you on behalf of the audience. (Applause.)

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