

POLITICAL

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NATO Parliamentary Assembly

SUMMARY

of the meeting of the Political Committee
Hall Ternes, Palais des Congrès, Paris, France

Saturday 27 May 2006

ATTENDANCE LIST

Chairman	Markus Meckel (Germany)
Vice-Chairman	George Voinovich (United States)
Chairman of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships	Karl A. Lamers (Germany)
Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations	Assen Agov (Bulgaria)
President of the NATO PA	Pierre Lellouche (France)
Secretary General	Simon Lunn
Member Delegations	
Belgium	Daniel Bacquelaîne Théo Kelchtermans Philippe Mahoux François Roelants du Vivier
Bulgaria	Nikolai Kamov
Canada	Raynell Andreychuk Percy Downe Marcel Proulx Pavel Svoboda
Czech Republic	Per Kaalund
Denmark	Tiit Matsulevits
Estonia	Sven Mikser
France	Martine Aurillac Loïc Bouvard Jean-Pierre Demerliat Philippe Vitel
Germany	Rainer Arnold Ernst-Reinhard Beck Kurt Bodewig Volker Bouffier Klaus-Jürgen Jeziorsky Hans Raidel Kurt. J. Rossmannith Anita Schäfer Bernd Siebert Rainer Stinner Jörn Thiessen
Greece	Ioannis Papantoniou Antonis Skillakos
Hungary	István Simicskó
Iceland	Össur Skarphéðinsson
Italy	Lamberto Dini Giovanni Lorenzo Forcieri Gianstefano Frigerio
Latvia	Guntis Berzins
Lithuania	Juozas Olekas
Luxembourg	Colette Flesch

Netherlands	Hendrik Jan Ormel Bart van Winsen
Norway	Marit Nybakk Jan Petersen
Poland	Marian Pilka
Portugal	Rui Gomes Da Silva José Lello Jorge Neto Henrique Rocha de Freitas Renato Sampaio
Romania	Norica Nicolai Mihail Popescu Mihai Stanisoara Ioan Talpes
Slovakia	Jozef Banás
Spain	Rafael Estrella José Cruz Pérez Lapazarán
Turkey	Inal Batu
United Kingdom	Derek Conway Bruce George Jimmy Hood Paul Keetch Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale Peter Viggers
United States	Ben Chandler Norm Coleman Joel Hefley Mike Ross Gordon Smith Tom Udall Ronald L. Wyden

Associate delegations

Albania	Leonard Demi
Armenia	Aleksan Karapetyan Mher Shageldyan
Austria	Walter Muruauer
Azerbaijan	Gudrat Hasanguliyev Siyavush Novruzov
Croatia	Kresimir Cosic Marin Jurjevic Velimir Plesa
Finland	Ilkka Kanerva Kauko Juhantalo Suvi-Anne Siimes
Moldova	Iurie Rosca
Russian Federation	Valery Bogomolov Mihail Kapura Vasiliy Klyuchenok Yuliy Kvitsinskiy Victor A. Ozerov Vladimir Vassiliev Vladimir Zhirinovskiy

Sweden
Switzerland
The FYR of Macedonia¹
Ukraine

Peter Jonsson
Theo Maissen
Slobodan Casule
Andriy Shkil

Mediterranean Associate delegations

Algeria

Ahmed Issaad
Abdelhamid Latreche

Israel
Jordan

Danny Yatom
Ghaleb Al-Zoubi
Adel Shureideh

European Parliament

Angelika Beer
Elmar Brok
Paulo Casaca
Ana Maria R.M. Gomes

Parliamentary Observers

Bosnia and Herzegovina
Japan
Kazakhstan

Halid Genjac
Masataka Suzuki
Rashit Akhmetov
Zhandarbek Kakishev
Toktarkhan Nurakhmetov

Interparliamentary Assembly

Assembly of the WEU

Theodoros Pangalos

Parliamentary Guest

Assembly of Kosovo

Alush Gashi
Oliver Ivanovic
Hajredin Kuçi

Speakers

Albert Rohan, Deputy Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Future Status Process for Kosovo
James Sherr, Fellow, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom
Bruno Tertrais, Senior Researcher at the *Fondation pour la recherche stratégique* (FRS)

International Secretariat

Steffen Sachs, Director
Isabelle Arcis, Co-ordinator
Claire Watkins, Co-ordinator of the CDS and GSM
Claudia Buerkin, Research Assistant
Olga Stuzhinskaya, Research Assistant

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

General Debate

Following the adoption of the agenda for the meeting, Chairman **Markus Meckel** (DE) invited Committee members to submit proposals for the Assembly's possible input for the upcoming Riga Summit. In this context he mentioned NATO's future role and mission, among others. As to the continuing enlargement of the Alliance he emphasised that "Russia should not have a veto in NATO's development". On the nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), Mr Meckel expressed concern about the possible effect of the US and Indian governments' agreement on co-operation in the civilian nuclear area.

Contributions from Committee members to the general debate focussed on NATO-EU relations, the enlargement of the Alliance and its future role, and NATO-Russia relations.

Bart van Winsen (NL) bemoaned the lack of co-operation between NATO and the EU. Describing NATO's Strategic Concept as 'rather old' in comparison to the EU Security Strategy, he called on NATO to discuss a new security strategy already during the Riga Summit. According to **Rafael Estrella** (ES) the co-operation of NATO and EU member countries in the military field was working well but that it was the political level that lagged behind.

Danny Yatom (IL) proposed to not exclude Mediterranean Dialogue countries, including Israel, from joining NATO. Russian participants warned that Ukrainian and Georgian NATO membership would have a negative impact on NATO's relations to Russia. While **Hendrik Jan Ormel** (NL) recognised 'Russian sensitivities', Mr Meckel responded that the possible membership of Georgia and Ukraine was not a question of NATO's relations with Russia, but primarily an internal matter of the Alliance. The chairman differentiated between future NATO member countries and the co-operation the Alliance has with partner countries in the combat of internationally active terrorist groups. NATO needed to clearly delineate the limits of this co-operation with partners that do not share its values. In a similar vein Mr Estrella emphasised that new members to NATO would have to share the same values as member countries and need to solve their conflicts before joining.

There was consensus that NATO-Russia relations have not developed to their potential. Mr Estrella noted that the lack of progress was 'not only NATO's fault'. Mr Meckel as well as **Mr. George Voinovich** (US) criticised Russia for having used energy deliveries to influence its neighbours. Mr Meckel argued that the switching off of gas supplies was a political move and said that people in Germany were concerned about future reliability of Russia. Russian contributions, too, stressed the need for more co-operation in the security field. However, in contrast to their counterparts from NATO member countries, they saw lack of progress primarily as a result of NATO member countries' shortcomings. **Victor Ozerov** (RU) called for more transparency in NATO's decisions and a better involvement of the NATO-Russia Council. Emphasising that **Mihail Kapura** (RU) argued that economic relations between Russia, Ukraine and Georgia would deteriorate were they to accede to NATO. Russia had always been a reliable energy supplier and would continue to be so.

Guntis Berzins (LV) suggested that the Riga Summit should focus on 1) the strengthening of the EU-NATO relationship to avoid duplication of resources and of efforts; 2) sending a signal to the countries wanting to join NATO, in particular to Ukraine and Georgia; and 3) the need to continue the political and military transformation of NATO. **Slobodan Casule** (the FYR of Macedonia) worried that NATO's transformation and enlargement advanced too slowly compared to the changing challenges posed by terrorism and organised crime. Mr Ormel identified several areas where NATO Allies needed to reach agreement, namely on common funding, changing NATO into a 'global security agency', and Iran. He also called for a debate on ballistic missile defence that should protect all US Allies and not only a selected number. **Ioannis Papantoniou** (GR) considered NATO's major challenge today is to review basic arrangements, namely what role does the UN, and the UN Security Council in particular, have for international security, and what is

NATO's role and mission. **Adel Shureideh** (JO) emphasised that NATO should actively work towards the implementation of UN resolutions for all nations.

Óssur Skarphédinsson (IS) expressed concern that US plans to withdraw its forces from Iceland would leave the country undefended. **Joel Hefley** (US) replied that the U.S. had no intention to unilaterally abrogate the 1951 bi-lateral agreement but that it was looking into other ways of assuring Iceland's defence. **Marit Nybakk** (NO) said Norway was ready to discuss a common NATO solution for the Icelandic issue.

Consideration of the draft General Report on Afghanistan and the Future of the Alliance [068 PC 06 E]

Due to the absence of the General Rapporteur, the draft report was introduced by **Nikolai Kamov** (BG), Vice-Chairman of the Political Committee. The main topics that emerged in the debate were the relationship between ISAF and OEF, the conditions for making the operation a success (notably the fight against drugs and the control of national caveats), and the general outlook on the present state of the operation. As **Karl A. Lamers** (DE) stated that "the Alliance must not fail" and must therefore tackle the issues of national caveats and co-operation with the EU and the UN.

Juozas Olekas (LT), **Paul Keetch** (UK), and **Jan Petersen** (NO) suggested that the report should depict the relationship between OEF and ISAF more positively. Shortly summarising his impressions from the recent fact-finding mission to Afghanistan, **Rainer Stinner** (DE) called the distinction between ISAF and OEF as 'somehow artificial' as ISAF is also involved in combat. He also stressed the importance of integrated efforts that comprise military, economic and development assistance in Afghanistan. Priorities should be given to infrastructure projects, particularly street building, irrigation system and energy supply. **Kresimir Cosic** (HR), another member of the recent mission to Afghanistan, seconded Mr Stinner's recommendations. In addition, he stressed the need to change the mentality of Afghan people to increase local ownership of the state building process. This required a 'more direct communication with the Afghan people'. It was therefore imperative to also increase the civilian presence, including the number of diplomats, he argued.

Inal Batu (TR) noted that the security situation in Afghanistan is still fragile and that international assistance must be continued to stabilise the country and particularly to combat the opium economy. Mr Keetch warned against the negative impact of national caveats that are being imposed on troops.

In Mr Skarphédinsson's view, it seemed that the Alliance has not achieved its goal to build a viable state in Afghanistan. He called for a clear plan to win the hearts and minds of the people and address the lack of co-operation between the different actors. **Jozef Banás** (SK) shared his pessimism about the developments in Afghanistan, and stressed the difficulties in fighting corruption if revenues from smugglers were 100 times the governmental salary. In his view, too much emphasis was put on a central government. **Vladimir Vassiliev** (RU) stated that a 'purely military approach' was not enough and added that Russia was training personnel to combat drug trafficking. He regretted that NATO would not recognise the positive role that can be played by the Collective Security Treaty Organisation in combating trafficking. Mr Ormel said that operations in Afghanistan required clarification in a number of important issues, including tackling poppy cultivation (which, he said, should not be a task of NGOs), and the co-operation between ISAF and OEF, which has improved, but still causes problems in some NATO countries, as OEF is focusing on 'unlawful combatants'. He also pointed to the difficulty for NATO to support a government that did not share the same values as evidenced by the recent debate on conversion from Islam. **José Lello** (PT) pointed to the destabilising role played by countries considered as "friends of NATO" in exerting religious pressure in Afghanistan.

Presentation by Albert Rohan, Deputy Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo

Albert Rohan, Deputy Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo, briefed the Committee on the current state of negotiations between the Serbians and Kosovo-Albanians. Incompatible positions of the two sides on the status question have significantly limited progress in the talks, the speaker informed. The Kosovo-Albanians wanted “nothing less than independence” and the Serbian side wanted “anything *but* independence”. Mr Rohan stated that the Serbian position was unrealistic and needed to change substantially. The Kosovo-Albanian position was forthcoming but also need further flexibility. Both parties still lacked will to negotiate genuinely with a view to find a compromise.

In recognition of the two sides’ incompatible positions on status, Mr Rohan said that the negotiations are currently focusing on reaching agreements in the following five areas:

- decentralisation,
- protection of cultural and religious sites,
- minority rights,
- economic matters, and
- the future international presence in Kosovo.

Progress in these five areas has been mixed, and the positions of both sides generally remained far apart. As to the negotiations, the speaker described the Kosovo positions as ‘basically constructive’, far from being enough. The Serbian approach has been ‘conceptually logical’, but unrealistic. He added that heavy pressure from Belgrade is a major obstacle to active partnership. Slow progress testifies both sides’ lack of political will to move forward, he said.

Mr Rohan reported that most efforts so far had gone into the issue of decentralisation. Agreement exists on the competencies that municipalities should have but not on their number and composition. The Serbs demand the creation of Kosovo-Serb municipalities whereas the Kosovo-Albanians are in favour of ethnically neutral decentralisation. On the issue of the protection of religious sites, parties directly concerned agree on the practical aspect of protecting monasteries and ensuring their functioning. The Serbian negotiators – unlike the Serbian Orthodox church in Kosovo – link this issue to the decentralisation question which complicates a solution. On the issue of minority rights, the Serbian side similarly links the issue to the status of Kosovo and refuse negotiation of this question. With respect to economic development, talks about debt and division of property had been scheduled on May 31st with the involvement of other (international) stakeholders. As to the future international presence, Mr Rohan said that it would have to be based on NATO, but should be as ‘slim as possible’ and designed in a way that ensures implementation of the settlements reached between the two sides. Mr Rohan ended his presentation by noting that a ‘large degree of common ground has been established, based on which he hoped that the two sides can come to an agreement.

The ensuing discussion focused on the timing of the decision for final status. Mr Stinner asked whether the international community could take a decision before the end of the year given the persisting divergence of positions. Mr Casule criticised the time framework of status negotiations as wrong and would send a dangerous message. If Kosovo-Albanians knew that they would obtain their status, why should they compromise, he asked. He deplored that in general the region was not involved enough in the process. Mr Papantoniou emphasised that the time-line should be kept and that new fragmentation in the Balkans should be avoided. **Ilkka Kanerva** (FI) emphasised the need for economic assistance and inquired about Kosovo’s status in the first period while the international community was still present. Mr Rohan responded that the only impediment for the parties to find a solution in 2006 was the lack of political will. Consequently, more time would not change this situation and the Security Council would have to decide on a position.

The speaker denied Mr Ozerov's suggestion that the international community has moved from "first standard then status" to "first status then standard". He said that the implementation of standards was continuing and concrete progress was being made, for example, in the reconstruction of churches. Mr Voinovich emphasised the relevance the EU was attributing to overall regional stability and future NATO accession of Balkan countries. To his question whether if the outcome of negotiations could possibly strengthen nationalist forces in Serbia, Mr Rohan said that the outcome of negotiations could not depend on the possible impact in Serbia. The sooner a solution can be found, the better, according to Mr Rohan, for regional stability in general and there should thus not be artificial delays. In response to **Norica Nicolai's** (RO) question if the Kosovo negotiations could influence other disputes, such as Moldova and Transdnistria, Mr Rohan stressed that Kosovo is no precedent for any other conflict.

Presentation by Alexander Milinkevich, Leader of the United Democratic Forces of Belarus

In a short and emotional address, **Alexander Milinkevich**, leader of the United Democratic Opposition, Belarus, described the post-election situation in Belarus as very complicated but expressed hope for the pro-democratic opposition. Although Mr Lukashenko remains in power, his position is constantly weakening, he suggested. The democratic forces in Belarus carried out a very successful door-to-door campaign during the recent elections, which significantly increased support for democratic change. Concerning the future of the opposition in Belarus, Mr Milinkevich said that the Coalition of Democratic Forces will stay united until its objective is reached. Its main goal for now is to increase pressure on the authoritarian government from inside the country and to lead a large-scale information campaign. The international community should provide moral support (e.g., by issuing statements and letters), assist in gaining access to the free media; express solidarity with those repressed by the regime He also stressed the need to help students from Belarus paying for their studies either at home or abroad. Our country can lose its independence; Mr Milinkevich also spoke on the threat of Belarus losing independence in case the so-called Russia-Belarus union turns into annexation of the latter.

Presentation by James Sherr, Fellow, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, on *Ukraine on its way into NATO?*

Speaking as a private citizen **James Sherr**, Fellow, Conflict Studies Research Centre, at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, offered his views on recent developments in Ukraine and their relevance for the country's relationship with the Alliance. While many promises of the Maidan (the Orange revolution) remain unfulfilled, the Maidan has demonstrated Ukraine's ability to establish democracy, the speaker emphasised. Moreover, this year's parliamentary elections proved that Ukraine could also maintain it. He reminded the audience that the significance of an emerging democracy in the former Soviet Union's second largest republic should not be underestimated. In this context, he noted the preconception that Yanukovich's political forces had a comeback as 'wrong'

Nonetheless, Ukraine has to cope with a number of internal weaknesses and external vulnerabilities. With regard to the former, the speaker stressed the need to move defence reform on to other areas, such as police and law enforcement services. Results thus far are mixed, Mr Sherr said, but added that it is important to continue efforts undertaken thus far. He also underlined the relevance of the energy sector which contributes directly to security and which he considered to be 'even less transparent than in Russia'.

Concerning Ukraine's external challenges, he pointed to the energy dispute with Moscow. The Kremlin is eager to re-establish Russia's primacy in the region and not to recognise the independent Ukraine. President Putin and his entourage believed that it was 'the West' and not Ukrainians who 'defeated' Russian interests in Ukraine.

With regard to NATO's relations to Ukraine, Mr Sherr stressed the need to deliver four clear messages to the country, namely:

- NATO does not hold a view on who holds power, but how they came to power;
- Ukraine must not damage the reforms that have to date taken place;
- Ukraine's political leadership must address the issue of public perception and public support;
- Ukraine must not damage its independence.

On the question of Ukraine joining the Membership Action Plan (MAP) process, Mr Sherr said that MAP participation would provide Ukrainians with the choice of ownership of reform. On the other hand, Kyiv could misinterpret an offer to join MAP as an invitation to join NATO and reduce its efforts to reform. Mr Sherr spoke in favour of inviting Ukraine into MAP because otherwise the 'forces of revenge' who profit directly from the status quo and a lack of will to reform. In addition, if Ukraine did not receive an invitation it is likely to complicate NATO's relations with Russia even more. A 'no' to Ukraine would also send the 'most discouraging signal to the region, Belarus and Georgia included.

Questions and comments following the two presentations primarily centered on ways to support democratic progress in the two countries as well as on Russia's role in the region. Mr Lamers asked about the effectiveness of external pressure on the regime of Lukashenko while Chairman Meckel suggested to lower the Schengen visa regulations for ordinary Belarusian people. Mr Milinkevich agreed that external pressure has effect on the regime and it should continue. On the issue of visas for Belarussians, he thanked Mr Meckel for bringing the positive effect of possible price reductions for different categories of the Belarusian society to the attention of the Committee. Mr Olekas inquired about the democratic forces' plans to participate in the upcoming local elections in Belarus. **Raynell Andreychuk** (CA) stressed that the international community must not only be active during the election period, but provide continuing long-term assistance. Mr Milinkevich agreed with **Bert van Winsen's** (NL) call that the international community must not isolate Belarus. That said, the opposition leader argued against any co-operation with the ruling regime. Rather, he pleaded for increased co-operation with the civil society, even though it is mainly 'underground'. Mr van Winsen also said that Russia could play a positive role in overcoming Belarus' isolation, especially as it currently chairs The Council of Europe.

Vasiliy Klyuchenok (RU) was critical of recent revolutions which, in his view, produced corruption and a negative effects on the societies. He emphasized the need for stable legislative norms that provide a reliable framework for the population. As for Belarus, he said the country is developing in the right direction and the international community should not support any revolutionary moods in the Belarusian society. To this, Mr Milinkevich responded by stressing the importance of a dialogue between the two countries. **Bruce George** (UK) criticised that Russia tends to look at the 'setbacks they have received'. Arguing that some of the Russian colleagues want to dilute the democratic standards towards those of the CIS, Russia also tried to discredit international organisations like the OSCE, as well as independent NGOs. Ms Andreychuk stressed that NATO and other members of the international community should not favour any particular political force in Ukraine but support democratic process, otherwise it could encourage segmentation. To this, Mr Sherr said the country is divided today already. However, the situation should not be seen in 'black and white' and the Party of Regions led by Mr Yanukovich is a significant regional, but not national, force. He expressed optimism that Ukraine will undergo necessary transformation, even though the process of democratisation will be long and difficult.

Consideration of the draft Report of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships on *Central Asian Security: the role of NATO* [069 PCNP 06 E]

As Marco Minniti joined the ranks of the Italian government shortly before the Spring Session, Mr Estrella introduced the draft report on NATO and Central Asian security. In the discussion that followed, Mr Ormel inquired about a possible co-operation between NATO and the Shanghai Co-operation Council organisation which had called upon the U.S. to leave Central Asia previously in the year. Mr Estrella noted that there is no co-operation at this point.

Considering the language of the report too negative on the internal situation **Rashit Akhmetov** (KZ) stressed that the opposition can exercise its political rights in the country and that the government has begun to combat corruption. He added that the level of corruption is lower than in other CIS countries and that Transparency International's 2005 report acknowledges substantial improvements in this area. An example where his country can take up the role as a regional leader is the fight against drug trafficking which is the most dangerous issue facing the region, said Mr Akhmetov. In addition to more regional co-operation on the issue, Kazakhstan is interested in better co-operation with NATO on the ground of common interests. **Inal Batu** (TR) proposed amendments to paragraphs 5 and 8 in the report, which were welcomed by Mr Estrella. As Mr Minniti cannot continue as Rapporteur, Mr Estrella was designated to serve as interim Rapporteur for the Sub-Committee.

Consideration of the draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations *Iran - A challenge for Transatlantic Co-operation* [070 PCTR 06 E]

In the absence of Mr Polenz, Mr Keetch presented the report of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations on *Iran – a challenge for transatlantic co-operation*. Following this, **Bruno Tertrais**, Senior Researcher at the *Fondation pour la recherche stratégique* (FRS), provided additional comments on the subject. On Teheran's nuclear programme, the independent French expert stressed that Iran is at odds with the whole international community and not only with the U.S. As a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Iran is a different case than India and Israel, both of which have not signed the NPT. Mr Tertrais was pessimistic about the success of a new round of negotiations, but conceded that a strategy of applying gradual pressure might convince the Islamic Republic's leadership to give in to international demands. "This is not the time to go wobbly", the analyst warned. Commenting on the report, Mr Tertrais said dealing with Iran should remain in the hands of the UN and, perhaps, the G-8, but not in NATO's. The speaker also discarded the idea that Iran has legitimate security interests as mentioned in the report. In this context he stressed that the Taliban and Saddam Hussein are no longer threatening Teheran. On the contrary, Iran helps terrorist groups and is clearly interested in obtaining nuclear arms for reasons of prestige and political influence in the region.

In the discussion that followed, Mr van Winsen noted that it would be 'too early to offer Iran a security dialogue' while Mr Papantoniou and **Paulo Casaca** (European Parliament) underlined that NATO should not give security guarantees to Iran. He also doubted that Iran would end its nuclear programme unless there is a regime change. A possible option to ease the tensions is to support the opposition, he stressed. Several speakers, including Mr Lello, **Angelika Beer** (DE) and Mr Voinovich, acknowledged that the domestic situation in Teheran is different from what one could conclude of drastic words by president Ahmedinejad. Ms Beer also mused whether the only possible way to convince Iran to abandon its nuclear programme is to give Israel a security guarantee. Referring to the recent US-Indian agreement on civil nuclear co-operation, she said that the West must avoid sending signals that could be seen as 'double standards'. In contrast, Mr Voinovich considered the US agreement with India as 'historic and unique' as it brings India into the global mainstream of the NPT. The US lawmaker also said that he was pleased that the EU-3 have taken on the lead role in finding a diplomatic solution and that the U.S. wants all avenues of

negotiations exhausted. Mr Yatom said that Iran will cross the technological threshold to nuclear enrichment and warned that Iran builds delivery systems that will enable it to hit targets in Europe, too.

Loïc Bouvard (FR) commented that there are no good scenarios with Iran and that 'time is against us'. He considered possible military options as very limited after the 'fiasco in Iraq' and reminded participants that the UN Security Council is divided over how to proceed with Iran. Therefore, only the U.S. is capable of influencing Iran. He concluded by stressing the need to remain united on Iran.

Mr Papantoniou suggested that Libya which opted to abandon its WMD programmes in exchange for international recognition may be a model for dealing with Iran. Reminding Committee members of the traditional pride of Islam, he cautioned against what he considered a 'lecturing tone' of the Sub-Committee report.

Responding to a question by **Jorge Neto** (PT), on whether the conflict with Iran was a clash of civilizations, Mr Tertrais said that only the Pasdaran (Islamic Republican Guards in Iran) would depict it as such. As to Libya as a model, the French expert said that Khadafi conceded after the US-led military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq because he feared military action against him. With the US-led coalition bogged down in Iraq, the situation is now different. There is an alternative to dealing with the challenge posed by Teheran, as Iran is vulnerable to economic pressure. However, the problem is the lack of time available to the international community. Additional comments were made by Mr Klyuchenok, who found the report well balanced, and by **Antonis Skillakos** (GR).

Concluding the lively discussion, Mr Keetch reminded the participants that the Sub-Committee report did not suggest that NATO should play a role in the negotiations with Iran. Rather, the report argues that NATO should play a role in developing a common approach amongst the Allies and perhaps with NATO partners.
