

**DEFENCE AND
SECURITY**

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Original: English



NATO Parliamentary Assembly

VISIT TO WASHINGTON D.C. AND TAMPA, UNITED STATES

SECRETARIAT REPORT

22-25 JANUARY 2007

International Secretariat

14 February 2007

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Thirty-three members of the NATO PA Defence and Security Committee visited the United States from 22-25 January. Led by Chairman Julio Miranda Calha (Portugal), the NATO legislators met with their colleagues from the US Senate and the House of Representatives as well as with government officials and independent political analysts. The Assembly delegation also visited US Central Command and Special Operations Command headquarters in Tampa, Florida. The discussions focused on a number of key issues, including US “grand strategy”, anti-terrorism, combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the rise of China, energy security and homeland defense.

II. US FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES

2. The Committee met with **Dr Hans Binnendijk**, Director of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defence University, who discussed the need to alter the American “Grand Strategy”. He asserted that the unilateralist policy of the current administration is on the verge of failure and would certainly be reassessed by the next administration, regardless of its political complexity. He cited the experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, which clearly demonstrate that merely changing a regime in a country of concern is not enough to maintain security and stability. In addition, due to ‘neo-con’ foreign policy ventures, the US military is suffering from overstretch.

3. According to Dr Binnendijk, in reshaping the American Grand Strategy, US policymakers can essentially choose from three options, representing three schools of thought:

1. traditional-conservative, which focuses on interests rather than values and emphasises the use of force;
2. progressive-multilateralist, which is more value-oriented and favours international frameworks and alliances;
3. offshore balances, a concept according to which the US deploys its power abroad only when there are direct threats to vital American interests and only in a few areas of the globe are of strategic importance to the US. Offshore balancing prefers to rely primarily on local actors to uphold the regional balance of power, thus preventing the rise of potential hostile powers.

4. Dr Binnendijk argued that the new American Grand Strategy should incorporate elements from all three paradigms in order to effectively address the challenges facing the US in the new security environment.

5. During a meeting with a group of 11 US Congressmen, led by **John Tanner**, head of the Congressional delegation to the NATO PA, Mr Tanner said that the change of the majority in the Congress would not in itself bring about immediate revisions of foreign policy, but it would place that policy under much closer scrutiny. He also stressed that “in no time in history has NATO been more relevant”, a view echoed by other Congressmen who underscored the need to strengthen transatlantic co-operation. The US needed help from its partners, because otherwise the US Armed Forces face serious overstretch issues. Together with their European colleagues, the American legislators also discussed the importance of new challenges facing the transatlantic community, particularly energy, environmental security, the rise of China, and policy in the Middle East.

6. The Committee also met with **Senator John Warner**, a ranking member of the Armed Services Committee. He emphasized the importance of NATO and admitted that his previous

opposition of NATO enlargement had been a mistake, and that the Alliance had greatly benefited from the addition of new members. The Senator also spoke about the Resolution that he and two other Senators had drafted calling for a reappraisal of President Bush's forthcoming build-up of troops in Baghdad. Senator Warner stressed that the Resolution was not binding, but US legislators nevertheless wished to express their belief that the situation in Iraq could be improved without sending more American soldiers there. The Resolution stated that the primary objective of the overall US strategy in Iraq should be to encourage Iraqi leaders to make political compromises that would foster reconciliation and strengthen the unity government, ultimately leading to improvements in the security situation. The Iraqi military should be charged with the primary mission of combating sectarian violence.

7. Responding to the comment from David Crausby (United Kingdom) that the "job in Iraq has to be finished", Senator Warner emphasised that the sponsors of the Resolution do not call for a withdrawal or reduction of the US troops in Iraq, but the job has to be finished in a way that had the best likelihood of succeeding and which respected the views of voters who had made a clear statement in the recent Congressional elections.

8. On the issue of Afghanistan, **Dan Fata**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for European and NATO Policy, said that the US and its allies were making impressive progress carrying out reconstruction projects. A lot is being done on the security side as well. Nevertheless, 2007 is expected to be a critical year in terms of reconstruction, equipping and training the Afghan National Army and combating the Taliban. Frank Cook (United Kingdom) asked if the NATO PA resolution on removing national caveats had been helpful, and Mr Fata responded that this resolution had been mentioned on a number of occasions and indeed was instrumental in demonstrating the acuteness of the problem. He stressed that removing all operationally-restrictive caveats would be enormously helpful in carrying missions in Afghanistan. Asked by Mr Crausby about the problem of stemming narcotics production, Mr Fata said that it was difficult to overestimate the seriousness of this issue and called for both short- and long-term strategies in this field. He also mentioned that 90% of Afghan opium went to Europe, and therefore European countries have an enormous stake in solving this problem.

9. **Jerry Feierstein**, Deputy Co-ordinator for Programs and Plans, Office of the Co-ordinator for Counter-Terrorism, US Department of State, said that the key task was to transform ISAF from a peacekeeping to a counter-insurgency mission. Asked by Sven Mikser (Estonia) about growing Taliban support among the Afghani population, Mr Feierstein said that it might be related to a certain disappointment with President Karzai's policies. However, he noted, the Taliban's extreme ideology did not appeal to a majority of Afghans, and therefore the Taliban could not count on genuine support in the longer run.

10. According to **Kurt Volker**, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, the situations in Afghanistan and Kosovo were, at the moment, the top priorities for the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. These would certainly feature prominently in discussion with Allies at the ministerial meetings on 26 January in Brussels and 8-9 February in Seville. In Afghanistan, Mr Volker said, it is critical to be well prepared for the Taliban's annual 'spring offensive', to continue with police and army training and to co-ordinate better civilian projects. Mr Michael Mates (United Kingdom) asked what was being done to deny Taliban fighters a safe haven in the bordering areas of North-Western Pakistan. Mr Volker replied that the President Musharraf of Pakistan is facing an extremely difficult task in imposing central governmental control, and the US is helping him as much as possible. He noted, however, that it would be very difficult to defeat Taliban forces in the North-Western region without the assistance of the local population. It was therefore necessary to show that there would be benefits from getting rid of Taliban fighters by following military actions with development projects.

11. With regard to Kosovo, there had to be a prompt UN Resolution on the new status of the province, as a delay on this issue was not healthy. The 'Final Status' was not an objective *per se*: the objective was a stable and democratic Balkans, Mr Volker stressed.

12. **Dr Michael Haltzel**, Senior Fellow, SAIS Center for Transatlantic Relations, predicted that the "Ahtisaari Group" would recommend the status of "supervised independence" for Kosovo. He argued that further delays in determining the final status of the province would be counter-productive and lead to outbursts of violence and the rise of extremist parties. Dr Haltzel was particularly concerned that "pro-fascist" and reactionary forces triumphed in the recent parliamentary elections in Serbia. He found it unacceptable that PfP membership was offered to Serbia at this particular time. When asked by Ursula Mogg (Germany) about the implications that the new status might bring to the KFOR military mission, Dr Haltzel said that they should remain in the province at least for some time in order to ensure that the rights of Kosovo Serbs are respected.

III. MILITARY TRANSFORMATION AND THE RIGA SUMMIT

13. Dr Hans Binnendijk noted that the ongoing US military transformation had been too focused on introducing high-tech capabilities, such as 'network-centric' capabilities, that increase strike precision and operational tempo. While these were excellent tools for winning modern wars, they seemed to be less effective when it came to stifling insurgencies and establishing law and order in towns and cities. Dr Binnendijk underlined the need for a more comprehensive approach to transformation, to enlarge the military's repertoire with counter-insurgency skills, and improve the capacity for enhancing stability and reconstruction. Such changes were in fact reflected in the 2006 Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR) and other documents.

14. Dr Binnendijk also discussed the outcomes of the NATO Riga Summit, which he said, "will not go down in history as a great summit" but did highlight four areas where progress had been made:

1. Operational commitments. The key question is whether the resources and troops will be made available to fulfil these commitments. Here the role of parliaments is particularly important.
2. Strengthening NATO's partnerships and improving the interoperability of armed forces;
3. Military transformation of the Alliance. A dozen initiatives in this area were endorsed in Riga, although some of these initiatives were not new.
4. The Balkans. The 'open door' policy was reiterated at Riga. A positive surprise decision – to grant PfP membership to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

15. However, no tangible progress was achieved in certain important areas such as:

1. Energy security;
2. Homeland defence;
3. NATO's new Strategic Concept.

16. The concerns over energy and homeland security were also shared by Mr Volker who was very positive about the role NATO plays in today's world. He emphasised that NATO is becoming more efficient, robust and pro-active; it has successfully engaged in new missions such as humanitarian relief in Pakistan, Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean and logistical assistance in Darfur. The Alliance is also expanding its partnerships and maintaining its 'open door' policy. The NRF is also a tremendous innovation. With respect to drafting a new NATO Strategic Concept, Mr Volker believed that this should only take place when the current process of transformation was finished.

17. Mr Fata provided his assessment of the Riga summit, singling out five major factors that reflect the American attitude towards NATO:

1. NATO matters. NATO is the only existing capable military alliance. In recent years, it has been repeatedly called upon to carry out operations. It is important to retain America's interest in NATO.
2. NATO is transforming. The Alliance seeks to be more expeditionary. An excellent illustration is the decision of 15 countries (14 NATO allies and Sweden) to establish a consortium to acquire strategic airlift capabilities. Next steps might include closer co-operation in the fields of logistics or UAVs.
3. Afghanistan is forcing NATO transformation. The NATO mission in Afghanistan clearly demonstrated what capabilities need to be enhanced.
4. Some Allies are not transforming fast enough. Only seven countries out of 26 assigned 2% of their GDP to defence sector, and two of these are essentially arming against each other.
5. Riga is not an end-point of transition, but just one stop. NATO transformation and enlargement must continue and public support for these processes is vital.

18. **Dr Chantal De Jonge Oudraat**, Senior Fellow, SAIS Center for Transatlantic Relations, presented a more academic perspective on the future of NATO, singling out four schools of thought:

1. The "Realist" or "NATO will disappear" school of thought. The Realists argue that the end of the Cold War has fundamentally changed the strategic landscape; that the US and Europe no longer face shared threats to their survival and therefore they no longer need to stick together.
2. The "Minimalist" line which believes that NATO should focus on its core functions (Article 5) and should not get entangled in global crisis management operations outside of Europe. Many new NATO members in particular value the collective defense aspect of NATO. They believe in the importance of keeping the US engaged in Europe as an offshore balancer against a possibly resurgent Russia.
3. The "Maximalist" position which maintains that NATO should remain in the centre of transatlantic relationship, and that the Alliance should address common challenges such as proliferation, anti-terrorism and failing states.
4. The "Globalist" view, or the "NATO should go global" school of thought which insists that the challenges are global and that for NATO to continue to be relevant it needs to respond to these challenges.

19. Dr De Jong Oudraat thought that all these schools were slightly off-target. The Minimalist position was too weak a foundation to keep NATO alive, while Maximalists and Globalists failed to admit that the particular attraction of NATO in Central and Eastern Europe based on old 'balance of power' type of reasons and not NATO's role in tackling new global security problems.

20. Therefore the speaker argued for a fifth approach: the "Instrumentalist" or "NATO as a toolbox" approach. NATO was no longer *the* strategic forum where the US and Europe decided on key strategic issues. That did not mean that NATO would become irrelevant or had to disappear, but that the organization needed to change and become a more technical and functional organization. NATO had proven to be an excellent peacekeeper and a provider of stability. However, it cannot do these types of operations alone. The speaker argued that the UN was NATO's best partner and that there was a natural division of labour between them. Mr Mikser and Dr Haltzel challenged this notion of "NATO as a toolbox", noting that the United Nations is not the only source of international legitimacy: for instance, in case of an ongoing genocide, democratic nations had a moral right to intervene.

IV. COUNTER-TERRORISM AND HOMELAND SECURITY

21. Echoing what Dr Binnendijk had said about US military transformation, **Mario Mancuso**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism, stated that American military forces are transforming in order to meet new security challenges, particularly the rise of global terrorism. The nature of the enemy - as was realised after the 9/11 attacks - has changed dramatically. Instead of traditional states, the US is facing threats from networks, organisations and even individuals. Before 9/11, Al Qaeda had been viewed as a hierarchical organization, while it was now perceived more as a movement with a “flatter” structure. In practice it was not a religious or cultural movement, but it had a political agenda which included the expulsion of the US and the West from the Middle East and the restoration of the caliphate.
22. Mr Mancuso singled out three key elements in US strategy to tackle the terrorist threat:
1. the defensive facet, i.e., homeland security;
 2. the offensive facet, i.e., attacking terrorist organisations. The speaker underlined that, according to American strategic thinking, the Global War on Terror (GWOT) is not primarily a military struggle. While it includes an important military dimension, GWOT also involves prosecuting the leaders of international terrorism, cutting off its financial support, preventing the emergence of safe havens for terrorists, etc.
 3. the ideological facet, i.e., developing communities of interest and working with Muslims to help counter those who seek to misrepresent Islam in order to pursue their own political and terrorist agendas.
23. The 2006 QDR clearly recognized the need to boost both the numbers and capabilities of special operation forces.
24. Mr Cook and Mrs. Mogg questioned the effectiveness of US efforts on the ideological front, referring to well-publicized cases of mistreatment of prisoners. Mr Mancuso stressed that such cases certainly did not represent the policy of the United States, and -on the contrary – were violations of US policy. Sofia Kalantzakou (Greece), Mr Crausby and Sir John Stanley (United Kingdom) noted that Western countries were not succeeding in winning the hearts and minds of their own Muslim populations. Mr Mancuso partly disagreed with this assessment, pointing out that the overwhelming majority of American Muslims were loyal citizens of the United States, many of them serving, for instance, in the State Department or in the US armed forces, including in Iraq. Nevertheless, he agreed that more needed to be done to integrate Muslim communities living in Western countries.
25. **Dr Esther Brimmer**, Deputy Director & Director of Research, SAIS Center for Transatlantic Relations, stressed that adequate attention must be paid not only to out-of-area missions, but also to homeland defence. Thus Ministries of Interior and first responders were important actors in the domain of international security. She further argued that homeland security is an important subset of the larger concept of societal security, which should not only address issues of physical protection, but also take account of societal cohesion. By cohesion she referred to those values and qualities that bind a community together and are relevant to security - democracy, the rule of law and civil liberties, education, welfare, and pluralism. US security policies must not degrade these features, which are central to what makes the society worth defending in the first place, Dr Brimmer argued. As far as NATO is concerned, the notion of societal security implies that partnership relations can be established only with those countries that share our system of values.

V. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

26. **Colleen Graffy**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, addressed an important issue of public perceptions of the Alliance's role and missions. Noting that many people think of NATO as a primarily military entity and even as a Cold War relic, she urged parliamentarians to contribute more to raising awareness about the Alliance and improving its profile. She also suggested making more extensive use of new technologies such as internet and visuals, and reinvigorating the national Atlantic Councils as important means of reaching young people.

27. Ms. Graffy particularly emphasised the need to reinforce public awareness of the progress made by coalition forces in Afghanistan. Five years on, there was a great deal of good news – from security to education to health care. The population was free and taking advantage of increasing political and economic opportunities. Rights for women had been established, and women held 68 of the 188 seats in the lower house of the parliament. In recent years, more than 500 schools, which serve 40,000 students, had been built. At least 80% of the population had access to at least basic health care, compared to only 8% in 2001. The value of the country's economy had increased three-fold since 2002.

28. Some members doubted if the situation in Afghanistan could be depicted in such rosy terms, while others made some practical suggestions for improving public diplomacy, including engaging English-speaking Afghani female parliamentarians to talk to Western audiences about progress in Afghanistan, and to win over mullahs who were powerful influences on Afghani domestic public opinion. Roland Kortenhorst (The Netherlands) pointed out that, while trying to identify key influencers in the country, one had to be aware of vast cultural differences between people in provinces and Afghani elite living in Kabul. Rasa Jukneviene (Lithuania) noted that the experience of ex-Communist countries could be useful to encourage Afghani people in their efforts to break with the past.

VI. NON-PROLIFERATION

29. **Dr Henry D. Sokolski**, Executive Director, Non-proliferation Policy Education Center, addressed today's most outstanding proliferation challenges - nuclear and missile programmes in North Korea and Iran. With respect to North Korea, Dr Sokolski was doubtful that North Korea could be persuaded to renounce its nuclear weapons, and this could lead to various forms of instability in the region, including war.

30. Dr Sokolski discussed the issue of Iran in more detail, as it directly concerned the transatlantic community. Iran's ballistic missiles already cast a shadow over most of Europe, and he predicted that Iran could have nuclear warheads in up to four years. In addition to directly threatening neighbouring countries, a nuclear Iran could become a model and an impetus for neighbouring countries: the Gulf Co-operation Council, for instance, had declared an interest in civil nuclear power, although there was no convincing rationale for it in the region.

31. The speaker suggested trying a 'cold war' against Iran in order to avoid a 'hot war'. For example, economic sanctions would be a serious blow to Iran whose trade with the EU topped \$25 billion last year. He asserted that the West should not be deterred by Iran's threats to use its vast oil and gas resources for political leverage. The importance of these resources to the global economy was overestimated. The Iranian oil sector was suffering from a lack of investment and output was essentially flat. In addition, international strategic oil reserves were growing, and it was by no means certain that Iran would have access to all its foreign currency reserves. Furthermore, plans were being developed for new pipelines that would transport Persian Gulf oil bypassing the

Strait of Hormuz, the traditional oil route that Iran threatens to take control of in case of a conflict. The potential loss of Iranian oil would not be more than 1% of US GDP.

32. Dr Sokolski therefore argued that the international community could take a firm approach which should apply to any country which violated non-proliferation norms. He also called for an end to state subsidies for new nuclear power plants in the EU and the US.

33. **Sharon Squassoni**, Specialist in National Defence, Congressional Research Service, briefed the members of the Committee on the current status of various international agreements on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including

1. the Proliferation Security Initiative of 2003, designed to interdict illegal shipments of WMD-related material;
2. the Global Threat Reduction Initiative of 2004, which aims to minimize as quickly as possible the amount of nuclear material available that could be used for nuclear weapons;
3. the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism of 2006, designed to build the capacity of willing nations to combat nuclear terrorism;
4. the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership of 2006, which seeks to form an international partnership to reprocess spent nuclear fuel in a way that renders the plutonium in it usable for nuclear fuel but not for nuclear weapons;

34. Ms. Squassoni noted that the Bush administration prefers informal or bilateral agreements to international frameworks. For the current US government, only what states do really matters, not the principles and norms. An excellent example of such a policy is the US-India nuclear deal. The role of the Congress is also important: it passes relevant legislation in the field of non-proliferation, introducing sanctions to Iran and Syria, for example. The 110th Congress is likely to follow developments in Iran and North Korea, and it may also discuss ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and other proliferation-related issues.

35. When asked by Sir John Stanley about the US position towards strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention, Ms. Squassoni referred to the reluctance of the current administration to support any intrusive international verification mechanisms. She predicted that only with the next administration one could expect changes in the US policy in this regard.

VII. ENERGY SECURITY

36. **Gregory Manuel**, Special Advisor to the Secretary of State and International Energy Co-ordinator, said that energy security was one of the top priorities for the current administration as it has important economic, geo-political and environmental implications. A number of US agencies deal with different aspects of energy security. For example, even the Department of Agriculture is involved through its biofuel projects. Thus, American energy policy is essentially an inter-agency endeavour, involving efforts and assets of different bodies. In addition, the academic and private sectors are being increasingly engaged in shaping the US energy policy.

37. Mr Manuel described a number of projects carried out by US agencies and designed to provide alternatives to traditional hydrocarbon fuel. He particularly underscored the prospects of biofuels that provide incredible opportunities for many countries. Thanks to investments in producing this type of fuel, Brazil, for example, has become energy-independent. Nuclear energy also deserves more attention. However, projects designed to secure supplies of conventional fossil fuels, for instance from the Caspian Sea region, also remain a priority for the US.

38. Mr Kortenhorst asked whether the quest for alternative energy sources is hampered by giant oil and gas companies that might feel a threat to their dominance in the energy sector. Mr Manuel

replied that major oil companies, such as Shell or BP, understand new trends in the energy domain and are trying to adapt to them and invest in R&D in new technologies. In fact, Mr Manuel said, these companies prefer the label "energy companies". In reply to a question from Mr Mates on the US position on the Kyoto Protocol, the speaker replied that the Protocol was problematic on many fronts. It was particularly disappointing that the developing world, including China, one of the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, did not have any obligations under this agreement. Therefore, the US believed that Kyoto should not be considered as the only format to deal with global greenhouse gas emissions. For instance, Mr Manuel asserted, the US-India nuclear deal would be more instrumental in reducing these emissions than implementation of the Kyoto objectives by all European countries combined.

VIII. OTHER ISSUES

39. In his presentation, **Kevin Pollpeter**, China Project Manager for Defence Group Incorporated's Center for Intelligence Research and Analysis (CIRA), briefed the committee on the modernisation of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the potential security challenge that it represents to regional stability. He said that the PLA is not yet as advanced as NATO armies, but it is heading in that direction. The Beijing's new military doctrine focuses more on advanced technology, precision, agility and better intelligence, reconnaissance and command and control capabilities. Mr Pollpeter also noted the recent news that the Chinese military had conducted an anti-satellite (ASAT) test against an aging Chinese weather satellite. This test calls into question its longstanding opposition to space weapons. It also caused serious concerns in the US military which relies heavily on reconnaissance and navigation provided by its satellites.

40. The modernisation of Taiwan's armed forces, on the other hand, is stagnating: it is not purchasing modern equipment, the command structure remains archaic, and defence spending is declining. One could even gather an impression that the US cares more about the defence of the island than Taiwan itself does. The US wants Taipei to contribute more: otherwise American military assistance should not be taken for granted. Luckily, in Mr Pollpeter's view, Beijing seems to be "risk-averse", and more focussed on socio-economic domestic issues and reluctant to escalate tensions with Taiwan. The US has to walk a middle road, Mr Pollpeter said, deterring Beijing on one hand and promoting closer ties between the two Chinese countries on the other. In a long-term perspective, the speaker believed some kind of confederation between the two countries might be a feasible solution.

41. **Dr Ariel Cohen**, Senior Research Fellow, The Heritage Foundation, briefed the Committee on developments in the Black Sea region. He emphasised that the region is a patchwork of overlapping civilizations and spheres of influence. The Black Sea basin is a strategic region bordering the Greater Middle East and a key transit route for Caspian oil. European consumers would gain tremendously from pipeline diversification, enhancing Europe's energy security and breaking Russia's transit monopoly.

42. However energy is not the only commodity shipped through the Black Sea. The same shipping lanes are used for traffic in narcotics, persons (including terrorists), conventional weapons and even components for WMD. Therefore the US, NATO and the EU have participated in a number of initiatives to improve security in the Black Sea, such as NATO military exercises. However, there has been regional opposition to these endeavours from regional powers, particularly Russia, on the grounds that these are excessive "Western interference". There is also concern that Russia and increasingly Turkey are looking away from the West. Russia is focused on maintaining regional hegemony and using its energy resources to achieve its foreign policy goals. Further complicating Black Sea regional security are the frozen conflicts in the region: South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia and Transdnistra in Moldova. Until the conflicts are

resolved, ruling elites in these “statelets” will frustrate efforts to establish a lasting peace in the region.

43. In his concluding remarks, Dr Cohen suggested that the West should:
- increase NATO's presence in the region and strengthening co-operation with non-NATO countries, especially Ukraine and Georgia;
 - assuage Turkey's concerns about losing its dominant position in the Black Sea basin,
 - encourage the littoral states, especially Bulgaria and Romania, to take the lead in multilateral regional organisations and initiatives,
 - urge Russia to change its stance vis-à-vis Georgia and push for renewed multilateral talks over the resolution of the frozen conflicts.

44. **Anne Richard**, a Non-resident Fellow, SAIS Center for Transatlantic Relations, discussed the problems with delivering international aid to the US after the Hurricane Katrina disaster. Some of the contributions proved immensely helpful: for instance, NATO organized flights of relief supplies, the Mexican Army ran a canteen in San Antonio, Texas for relief workers and evacuees, and Unicef school kits helped young evacuees. However, the speaker emphasised that the responsible US entities responded to foreign offers in an often unacceptable and embarrassing manner. The US needs to elaborate explicit mechanisms to handle international aid in the future. The State Department should issue a pre-approved list of useful goods and services, developed with input from other agencies and disaster experts. In addition, rules must be developed regarding which regulations (like those governing food inspections and use of doctors from overseas) can be waived during an emergency.

IX. CENTCOM AND SOCOM

45. On January 25, the NATO PA delegation visited the MacDill Air Force Base, which is home to the US Central Command (CENTCOM) and Special Operation Command (SOCOM). **Col Michael Greer** briefed the members on the functioning of CENTCOM, which is one of the five geographically defined unified commands within the Department of Defense. Its area of responsibility stretches from the Horn of Africa to Central Asia, covering 27 countries with 663 million people. This is potentially one of the most volatile regions of the world with 65% of the world's known oil reserves, a multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic groups and rivalries, and only 1% of the world's fresh water. Income per capita also varies greatly. The main challenges for the US military in the region include the training of Iraqi and Afghani security forces and increasingly engaging them in maintaining law and order in their countries, denying Taliban and Al Qaeda people a safe haven, tackling the problem of narcotics in Afghanistan, preventing sectarian violence in Iraq, ensuring maritime security, deterring Iran and further developing humanitarian relief capabilities. Asked by NATO parliamentarians about the Taliban's "spring offensive", Col Greer replied that the US forces are prepared for this and do not expect many surprises.

46. In addition to dealing with many security concerns in the region, CENTCOM has established extensive relations with allied and partner countries. It hosts an impressive number of liaison officers from allied and partner countries. In addition an integrated international staff element, the Combined Planning Group (CPG), was established to directly advise the Combat Force Commander and on long-term strategic military planning. **Col. Georg Pazdrazki** from Germany, presenting an overview of the CPG, compared its work to that of a think tank whose impact on the decision-making process is difficult to assess. CPG experts from 27 countries examine various strategic developments in CENTCOM's area of responsibility, including political, economical, cultural and technological factors, and present their conclusions and recommendations to American military commanders.

47. **LTG Dell Dailey**, Director, Center for Special Operations, SOCOM, introduced the force structure and core tasks of US special operations forces (SOF) which include land, naval, air force and marine components. After the 9/11 attacks, SOCOM is mainly tasked with fighting international terrorism. More specifically, these tasks can include:

- synchronising Department of Defence efforts in the Global War on Terror (GWOT);
- counter-terrorism - measures taken to prevent, deter and respond to terrorism;
- foreign internal defence - providing training and other assistance to foreign governments;
- counter-proliferation of WMD - actions taken to locate, identify, seize and destroy or capture such weapons and related material;
- special reconnaissance to acquire information concerning capabilities, intentions and activities of an enemy;
- unconventional warfare - actions to topple rogue regimes;
- direct action – short-duration strikes to seize, destroy or capture or inflict damage in denied areas;
- psychological operations, designed to influence foreign audiences to regard US military operations in a favourable light;
- information operations, designed to adversely affect enemy information and systems while protecting US information and systems;
- civil affairs operations, designed to facilitate relations between US forces and foreign civil authorities in areas such as infrastructure, education or health care, in order to win the hearts and minds of civilian population.

48. LTG Dailey pointed out that GWOT presents a specific challenge: in traditional warfare it is relatively easy to find and identify a target, but it rather difficult to destroy it. In GWOT, the situation is *vice versa*: targets are hard to locate but once found are relatively easy to destroy. He also stressed the importance of psychological operations, because 21st century warfare is more about will and perception than it is about territory taken or enemies killed.

49. The presentations of LTC Rohm and Col. Smith also dealt with psychological operations (Psyops). NATO parliamentarians were shown several samples of videos and posters conveying anti-terrorist messages for Iraqi or Afghani populations. Although it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of Psyops, it appears that such messages have produced results such as increases in the number of phone calls to authorities concerning terrorist-related information.

50. **Mr Stan Schragger**, Strategic Communication Advisor, SOCOM, spoke about a collaborative SOCOM and STRATCOM project called "Sovereign Challenge", designed to produce ideas for mobilizing international "soft power" assets in order to defeat terrorism. The overall goal was to win over public opinion to the cause of protecting their nation's sovereignty from terrorism, and to encourage nations to put in place policies and mechanisms to counter terrorist activities such as transfers of funds, travel and communications, training, recruitment, and – of course – acts of violence. Mr Schragger highlighted the results of the two Sovereign Challenge conferences that took place in 2005 and 2006, where military representatives from many countries came together to discuss how all nations can address these issues and create a political and ideological climate that is hostile to terrorism. He stressed that terrorism was a global phenomenon, and therefore close cooperation among sovereign nations was crucial. The "Sovereign Challenge" project provided a tool for exchanging information through its conferences and its website.

51. Sir Stanley doubted if stressing terrorism's threat to "sovereignty" was the most effective means of mobilizing opposition to terrorism. Many dictators often invoked sovereignty as a shield to prevent the international community from interfering in their "domestic affairs" and stopping violations of human rights. He suggested using the term "freedom" instead. Mr Schragger agreed with Sir John's point, but explained that by "sovereignty" he meant not so much "state

sovereignty", but rather the sovereignty of the individual, family or community, which chooses to live free from violence and insecurity.

52. The global nature of contemporary terrorism was also emphasised by **Col. Evelio Otero**, International Engagement Program (IEP), SOCOM. The key task of IEP is to develop relationships with military planners in selected partner nations, including placing American officers in partner countries' counter-terrorism planning staffs. IEP provided SOCOM with the mechanism to identify partner nation's planning shortfalls, to help them redress those shortfalls, and to co-ordinate counter-terrorism operations.
