

44th Munich Conference on Security Policy (8-10 February 2008)

Panel: *The Atlantic Alliance: Bucharest and Beyond*

**Remarks by H.E. Radosław Sikorski
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The trouble of speaking as an official is that addressing you one cannot enjoy what Professor Sir Michael Howard, the distinguished British military historian once termed *influence without responsibility*. The reputation of the Munich meeting places a particular responsibility on my shoulders as a representative of a committed member of the most successful alliance in modern history.

Dear Colleagues,

Poland views NATO traditionally. We joined the Alliance in 1999 convinced that it would offer us security through collective defence, which for us is the essence of the NATO. Allied consultations, defence planning and a broad range of relations with NATO partners are our indispensable collective procedures. Although NATO has undergone transformation in reaction to ethnic wars, terrorism and a nexus of asymmetrical threats, we still need the sound basis of collective defense.

It is worth mentioning that Poland joined “out-of-area” effort even before our accession to NATO and have since been among the most active participants. Starting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, through Macedonia, and Kosovo to Iraq and Afghanistan, Golan Heights, Lebanon, Kongo and Chad, our soldiers are always there. And we are

not there in the pursuit of a national agenda but to serve the cause of international peace and stability.

We are there out of solidarity with other Allies and in the service to nations suffering from oppression, lack of good governance or other plagues of our times.

As some of you may know, Afghanistan has a very special place in my own heart. In the 1980s as a journalist covering the Soviet-Afghan war, I spent a long time there, including in Tora Bora, which was not yet so famous. I witnessed and reported the horrors of the war. Today Afghanistan has a prospect for peace and stable development. The whole international community has to do its utmost to help this process. The soldiers of free and independent Poland, serving under the NATO flag in Afghanistan, are the best example of the distance Poland has covered from the time of oppression 25 years ago to its prosperity today.

We have been providing our soldiers and capabilities, believing that today Allied solidarity is tested in remote and mountainous areas of Afghanistan. Our troops operate without caveats and we have twice increased their number to 1600. They will soon be provided with airlift and transportation capabilities that are so urgently needed there. He who gives without caveats, gives twice.

One thing has not changed in the last quarter of century. It is the need for **solidarity** as the source of our actions. Solidarity is a word of symbolic value in Poland. In 2009 we will be celebrating not only the 70th anniversary of WW II, the 60th anniversary of the Alliance, but also 20th anniversary of collapse of communism in Central Europe. The Polish 'Solidarity' contributed decisively to the peaceful transformation of Central and Eastern Europe and helped the reunification of Germany. It is that solidarity by both small and capital letter "S", which transformed Poland into a stable democracy with flourishing economy and led to our membership in the Atlantic Alliance and European Union.

Solidarity must be the *spiritus movens* for the whole transatlantic community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Solidarity is important, not only inside the Alliance. In 1999 Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary were the first countries from Central and Eastern Europe who joined NATO. This marked the demise of the order based on the logic of two opposing blocks, which petrified during the Cold War. Since then the 'open door' policy has become the foundation of NATO's transformation and it is an obvious success story.

Today there are others knocking at NATO's door, reminding us that this policy is as valid today as it was in the nineties. The Alliance cannot turn its back on the countries that share our values and demonstrate sufficient level of political, social and economic reforms. I believe that with the new Government in Kiev NATO has now a promoter of Atlantic integration of Ukraine. It is time to capitalize on our intensive cooperation and upgrade soon our relations. The Bucharest Summit will be the right moment to do so. I also think that the summit should examine Ukrainian plea for participation in the Membership Action Plan. It will also be an opportunity to review NATO's relations with Georgia.

Dear Colleagues,

Let me also raise the issue of Missile Defence, so intensely debated today on both sides of the Atlantic. Given the potential for proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology, it is fair to say that MD is one of the key defence projects of our time. In spite of the fact that it has so far brought some confusion and concern it can actually be a factor for unity within the Alliance and beyond.

We started to negotiate with our American Allies convinced that the system developed by the USA will bring more security for both our countries, for the whole Alliance and its partners. While the US project goes on, NATO should also set its MD programmes on track so that interoperability and complementarity of the systems can be achieved. We would not like either of the two to become hostage of the other. On

the contrary, similar level of security for all Allies can be guaranteed only if the two are properly integrated.

In this regard the Bucharest Summit will be an important milestone. It should provide the right momentum for a review of NATO's work on MD. It will also give us an opportunity to bring under one roof the four parallel projects currently underway:

- 1) Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence;
- 2) follow on to the NATO Missile Defence Feasibility Study;
- 3) the Theatre Missile Defence in cooperation with Russia, and, last but not least,
- 4) American MD project.

Although many issues may still require clarification, the message of the Summit should be that NATO is serious about its collective defence and MD as its essential part.

There is a place for cooperation with Moscow in this scenario. We would like to have Russia as a partner in this project, joining us in efforts to develop a mechanism of cooperation. We would also like to have Russia on board because the threat is global in scope. Even a combined effort by USA and NATO is not sufficient.

MD is central, yet just one pillar of the effective strategy to deal with the threat of WMD proliferation. Diplomacy and effective international non-proliferation regimes are equally indispensable. The Alliance may and **should** foster collective action.

At Bucharest we will be able to send a clear message on this. Meanwhile, we count on a constructive approach by both sides in the dialogue between Moscow and Washington. Contacts we undertook recently with our Russian partners, including my own meetings with Minister Lavrov, persuade me that more needs to be done to reassure Russia that the MD project does not threaten her.

I have landed this morning from Moscow where I accompanied Prime Minister Donald Tusk during his discussions with President Putin, that, as you may imagine, were very interesting indeed. Poland wants to be part of the solution, not of the problem. The decision on the base will be for Poland and the US. But if the MD base have to appear on our territory, Prime Minister Tusk has declared that Poland would be willing to consider – media, please mind not more than that – a mix of monitoring and inspections that would reassure everyone that the proposed facility need be of concern only to the bad guys.

We should also press both parties to conclude negotiations in the field of disarmament and arms control. To achieve stable security relations in Europe and beyond, we need an effective system based on CFE, post-START and SORT agreements.

Colleagues,

Let me also touch on the issue which is bound to play an ever growing role in the security of our countries, namely energy security. Energy is no longer exclusively a national competence, nor is it solely an economic issue related to sustainable development.

International organizations can play a role. Since the 1999 Strategic Concept, where NATO duly recognized the relevance and importance of energy security, discussions in the Alliance have advanced. We need to put in place three elements:

- 1) a mechanism of consultations, and information gathering on energy security among the Allies;
- 2) a platform for consultations and cooperation with NATO partners and other organizations;
- 3) effect oriented distribution of labor within the structures of the Alliance on critical infrastructure protection.

The Bucharest summit should close the period of searching for a NATO role and open the period of engagement of the Alliance in the field of energy security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I certainly have not touched on most subjects on the current and future NATO agenda. I largely by-passed crucial issues, such as:

- military transformation and its link to operations,
- partnership policy within and beyond EAPC area,
- NATO's relations with Russia,
- burning issue of NATO cooperation with European Union,
- NATO's role in the fight against terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

But let me mention one last thing.

In a year from now we will be celebrating the Alliance's 60th anniversary. It will also be 10 years since the last Strategic Concept was adopted in Washington. It is high time to open an honest and serious debate whether this concept is still relevant.

Such a debate should mark - as Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer once put it – a *return of NATO to a genuine culture of dialogue* among its members. Poland would like to see the work on future NATO strategy as a process bringing more unity among Allies and more collective actions. There are obvious pros and cons at this stage but we shouldn't shy away from challenging tasks. Avoiding discussion, producing proxy solutions and daily political guidance are not enough.

It is up to us to shape the security environment and to take the lead when necessary. It takes far-sightedness and courage. It remains our collective responsibility.

The further NATO goes beyond its treaty area into troubled regions, the less room there is for a sectarian approach, and the stronger the need for solidarity both within and without the Alliance. To live up to growing expectations we need more coherence internally. We can above all succeed in Afghanistan only by cooperative effort, political solidarity, and by genuine sharing of responsibility.

Thank you for your attention.