

## Report: “After the Chicago Summit: What Priorities for NATO?”

The Netherlands Atlantic Association organized a meeting on June 6<sup>th</sup> with Ivo Daalder, Permanent Representative of the United States to NATO. In front of an audience of 140, he gave a speech entitled: “After the Chicago Summit: What Priorities for NATO?” The meeting at Sociëteit de Witte was moderated by Dirk Jan van den Berg, chairman of the Netherlands Atlantic Association. After the speech, the audience had the opportunity to ask their questions to Ivo Daalder.

Daalder began his speech by emphasizing the importance of the Chicago Summit. It was the largest gathering of foreign leaders that had ever come to the United States for a summit. No less than 61 countries were represented. Daalder said that the overall outcome of the Summit was positive. “NATO is fit for purpose, ready to take on the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

After this introduction, Daalder moved on to discuss the four main issues that were discussed in Chicago: Afghanistan, NATO’s capabilities, missile defense and the role of partnerships. He underlined that the decisions at the NATO 2010 Lisbon Summit laid the framework for the agenda in Chicago. It was during this latest summit that the Lisbon vision was turned into reality.



Then Daalder spoke about the four main themes, starting with Afghanistan. He stated that the country still is the number one priority for the Alliance. Daalder mostly talked about the success of the mission, claiming that NATO’s strategy for handing over the responsibility to the Afghan forces is successful. As of this day, 75 percent of the people in Afghanistan live in areas where the Afghan military and police forces have the main responsibility for security. The third phase of NATO’s transition program thus has been completed. Daalder concluded that “we are on track.” The last transition will be some time next year.

But what will happen after 2014, when ISAF’s mission ends? Daalder emphasized that from that moment on, a new mission will start: one to train and advise the Afghan forces. In order to carry out this promise, 4.1 billion dollar a year will be made available for the Afghan forces, for a period up to ten years. Most of that money will be provided by the international community, some of it will also be made available by the Afghan government. All these developments will make sure that “Afghanistan will never – and never again – be a safe haven for terrorists.”

Then Daalder went on to discuss the second theme: NATO's capabilities. He took the case of Libya as an example to illustrate the uneven distribution of certain critical strategic military capabilities, some of which are in short supply (e.g. fuelling aircrafts and intelligence). Daalder said that at this point, NATO's capabilities are overwhelmingly produced by the U.S. He emphasized that the Alliance needs to take on more responsibility and that it is time for Europe to step up.

Then Daalder moved on to the question of how the capabilities can be maintained. Here the idea of 'smart defense' comes in. Daalder was positive about the underlying notions of this concept: to combine resources in order to acquire capabilities that one nation alone would never be able to do by itself. The system, however, has its limits. Daalder stated that today 75 percent of NATO's defense spending is paid by the U.S., and 25 percent by all other member countries. This balance is even moving to a four to one ratio. It is therefore that Daalder emphasized that it is imperative to flatten out this curve. "The only way the Alliance will work really well, is if the burdens are shared more fairly than they currently are."



Daalder spoke briefly about the third theme, missile defense. At the Chicago Summit, NATO declared that the organization today will be able to defend a limited area against a limited attack. More precisely, NATO has the capability to provide the defense of territory in Europe against a ballistic missile attack from the Middle-East. The missile defense system should enhance the defense capabilities of NATO. Daalder stated that the system is a first step in a process that by the end of this decade should provide protection throughout NATO's-European territory.

The fourth and final theme discussed by Daalder was that of the partnerships. He stated that NATO has become a hub for a security network that stretches across the globe. Daalder emphasized that NATO requires partners to achieve their security objectives.

On a final note, Daalder discussed the general outcome of the NATO Summit. He concluded that we have seen a new NATO at Chicago, an organization that is "ready, able and willing to deal with the challenges we confront today and tomorrow." Although NATO has changed quite dramatically over the last couple of decades, the organization still is as important today as it was in the early days.

After this last remark, the audience got the opportunity to ask questions to Daalder. One question concerned the shift of focus from the U.S. to the Asia-Pacific region. Daalder responded that the Asia-Pacific region has long been the main focus of the U.S. However, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have resulted in an underinvestment in this area. Now that these wars come to an end, the U.S. will refocus on Asia as a central part of U.S. strategic interest. He furthermore emphasized that it is in everyone's interest – including Europe's – to have a stable Asia.

Another question concerned the growing unrest in the Middle-East, especially in Syria. Will there be any interference from NATO with regard to this area? Daalder acknowledged the problems in the region. However, he stated that it is a difficult and complicated situation, in which military interference is not necessarily the best answer. And since NATO is first and foremost a military alliance, a certain apprehension with regard to interference in the Middle-East is required.

Larissa Versloot

