***From Narrative to Policy – Getting it Right***

1. Thank you to General Mattis for his invitation to be one of the closing speakers at this conference. I'm delighted to be here to offer a few thoughts for the future and draw together some of the themes we have seen today.

2. From Narrative to Policy – Getting it Right will be a key challenge for the Allies. It goes without saying that NATO's Future was an important topic at the 60th Anniversary Summit in Strasbourg/Kehl last month. As you all know, Heads of State and Government adopted a Declaration on Alliance Security and tasked the Secretary General first with leading a Group of Senior Experts to lay the ground for a new Strategic Concept, and then with developing a new Strategic Concept and implementation plan. The work on Multiple Futures will enrich that debate. The really important trick we must take is to feed it into operational policy in a way that will help rather than hinder, and avoid political controversy.

3. So what will the new Secretary General and the group of experts - and indeed the Alliance over the next 12 months - need to consider? No debate within the Alliance can ignore Article 5 of the Washington Treaty on Common Defence. We must keep central to our thinking that any new Strategic Concept must maintain this theme and give clear direction to enable NATO, as a whole, to do the subsequent 'So What' analysis and allow us to focus on what needs to change. The strategic implications of the statements made in the Declaration of Alliance Security are worth considering.

4. In addition to NATO's classic function of common defence, the Declaration describes terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and cyber attacks as threats, and energy security, climate change and instability emanating from fragile and failed states. These are all issues to bear in mind for the future. If the Alliance is to be serious it must follow the emerging and ongoing threats and challenges for the 21st century to inform prudent military - and indeed civil-military - planning. We must also bear in mind that potential adversaries will have studied our operations and doctrine and adapted their own plans accordingly. So we must beat them at their own game. Multiple Futures is an important way of animating this debate.

5. Most of the threats and challenges are self-explanatory. Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction are long-standing and acute threats. We were reminded recently of the threat of cyber attack by the revelation by a Canadian University that a cyber-spying network has infiltrated the computers of 103 countries. There have been even more recent disquieting indications about the extent to which computer networks in the UK have been infiltrated from outside.

6. Energy Security came strongly into focus again this winter, when Russia cut gas supplies to some Allies in its dispute with Ukraine. Climate change is, I think, a new reference in a key NATO document. But it is right to include it. Western emissions are rising faster than we expected, and global warming risks being at the upper end of our forecasts. Global warming may change our environment radically, and if it does, the security consequences, in terms of competition for habitable land and access to water could be dramatic.

7. The list is not exhaustive. I have not, for example, mentioned failed or failing states or economic threats - although there is much debate about them in the think-tank world. None of us yet know the consequences of the current economic and financial crisis. Governments are rightly focused on the problem at the moment, but there is a clear potential threat of instability.

8. In terms of NATO's strategy, the Declaration of Alliance Security specifically mentions Deterrence, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities, as being a core element. But in keeping with the broad approach of the Multiple Futures Project, President Obama's recent speech in Prague hinted that even the maintenance of a credible nuclear capability may some day cease to be a driver for NATO's overall capability requirements. We need to think about the implications of that statement, though whatever we do will have to be the product of negotiations with the Russian federation and other nuclear powers.

9. It is tempting to draw a distinction between our collective defence, embodied in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, on the one hand, and operations outside the Euro-Atlantic area on the other. I think that distinction is superficially attractive, but fundamentally wrong. It would be wrong to focus attention on threats on Alliance territory (to which we see no conventional military threat at the moment) rather than those which might impact on it (as is stated in the Declaration on Alliance Security).

10. As the Multiple Futures work clearly shows, threats occur on both sides of borders: the terrorists who blew up the twin towers at the heart of Alliance territory found their safe haven in Afghanistan, thousands of kilometres away; the same is true for the pirates who disrupt our shipping. Addressing attacks on us at home may require us to operate at distances we are unfamiliar with. And frankly the logistical challenge of operating in, say, eastern Turkey, in Romania or in the High North can sometimes be on the same scale as operating outside Alliance territory.

11. So how do we move these Multiple Futures concepts into practical reality? First and foremost, we need to have the capabilities to deal with all the threats and challenges which face us. Understanding the future character of conflict is essential if we are to configure Alliance forces for greatest utility. We need to avoid having to acquire new capabilities for every conflict merely because we have misunderstood the future character of that conflict. The Multiple Futures Project is a good starting point in helping us to make to the correct judgements on our future force and capability construct.

12. Particularly in these hard economic times, the Allies need to look at how we can achieve economies of scale together, and where we can reduce costs by working together. We need to get cleverer at using multinational approaches. There was a time when multinational approaches were seen, certainly among larger nations, as a last resort. But I suspect we will increasingly see them as the best way of acquiring capability.

13. In particular, we need to do better in coordinating the development of NATO and EU capabilities; there is an extraordinary degree of overlap between the European Defence Agency's Capability Development Priorities and NATO's work. I would like to think the overlap is deliberate; that the EU and NATO have identified the same problems at the same time, and each is bringing its strengths to bear. I fear, though, that that is not the case.

14. Let us suppose we procure the right hardware. The software is also difficult. We have come a long way. Allies agree that their militaries need to be useable, deployable and interoperable, and we have agreed targets for the proportions of our land forces for usability and deployability.

15. Importantly, we have just agreed a new Defence Planning Process. In the past, defence planning has been stove-piped, with each planning domain – logistics, air, land etc – operating almost in isolation. We have now agreed a mechanism enabling us to look at defence planning across all the domains, and to identify and prioritise the capabilities we most need to sustain and also new capabilities we need to develop.

16. The next stage is to ensure that the work of Allied Command Transformation is integral to the NATO defence planning process, so that the rationale behind the capabilities the Strategic Commanders identify as necessary is thoroughly understood by nations, and then apportioned through the defence planning process.

17. Even if we have the right equipment, and the right protocols and procedures to ensure that our different nations' equipment and troops can work together, we need the tools to agree on our goals. This brings us to other NATO processes.

18. For any operation, NATO's commanders produce, and the NAC agrees, an Operational Plan. Some seem to view Oplans as holy writ, never to be adjusted. Yet the sorts of complex military operations we are conducting today require frequent and on-going political-military guidance from the NAC. We are now seeing a Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan being used more proactively to frame the military operation in Afghanistan; at Strasbourg Heads approved a revision of the CSPMP. I dare to hope that in a future operation we might have a Pol-Mil Plan first, and an Oplan second, not the reverse. (And it's right the NAC should concentrate on the PolMil Plan rather than attempting to double-guess the Oplan or the Command Chain).

19. The Pol-Mil Plan for Afghanistan embodies the Comprehensive Approach, now accepted by everyone. The Comprehensive Approach says that we – the Headquarters, the Command Structure and the nations – want to bring to bear all the resources at our disposal, military and civilian, on the problems which face us, and co-operate closely in the delivery of our Missions with other stakeholders, including the international organisations, national governments and NGO's. The EU is for the Alliance a particular case in point.

20. On the military side, we must face up to the challenge of how to deliver the Comprehensive Approach against an adaptive and ruthless enemy. One that is able to think, act or react more quickly than we can. For all the benefits that the Comprehensive Approach brings, one of its biggest vulnerabilities is our inability to respond quickly and decisively across the necessary levers of power. So we must continue to develop our understanding and execution of the Comprehensive Approach to ensure it delivers campaign success.

21. NATO has long experience in pulling together military resources. But one of the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan – and indeed the Multiple Futures work - is the enormous importance of civilian resources too, right from the planning stage of an operation. This has real implications for the Alliance.

22. NATO needs planning capacity to inform the requirement for civilian capability in NATO missions, and to identify gaps in the Alliance's capabilities. It needs civilian advisers to provide input to operational planning to ensure the Comprehensive Approach is applied from the very start of operations. And it needs civilian advisers to help it coordinate better with other actors, and to manage civilian resources deployed through NATO in theatre – not least so that the military can hand over to civilian actors as quickly as possible.

23. There are those who fear that talk of civilian effect in NATO is an attempt to turn NATO into an all-encompassing transatlantic international organisation, doing everything. But this is not what anyone proposes for the Alliance; we have enough on our plate as it is.
24. Instead we should take a functional approach, looking at the task in hand. NATO is most likely to be used in the earliest stages of difficult operations. But in the early stages of an intervention, experience shows that we as NATO nations cannot rely on others to deliver civilian interventions as quickly as we need. So if NATO is to act, and if the Comprehensive Approach is to be delivered, NATO needs some – limited – civilian capacity of its own.
25. Longer-term civilian effect will always need to be delivered through the EU, UN or the World Bank. NATO needs, however, to be able to fill the gap until those organisations are ready to step in, and to work with them in planning once they do engage, and until the security environment is good enough for NATO to leave.
26. One other lesson Afghanistan teaches is the importance of training local Security Forces, both Military and Police. In many cases that is the way international forces will complete their mission, by creating local capacities to maintain and defend a state and its institutions. So has the time come for NATO to look again at its training mechanisms and perhaps establish an operational Command aimed at training not just Allied Forces but those outside too? The same goes for passing on NATO's expertise in Security Sector Reform.
27. Another piece of the software the Alliance needs is of course a well functioning Headquarters.
28. For an international organisation, NATO's headquarters in Brussels is pretty lean, which is greatly to its credit. It does not, though, operate as a coherent whole.

The present Secretary General has made admirable efforts to reform things. Continuing this initiative and making the headquarters work better is one of the major challenges facing his successor, Mr Fogh Rasmussen.

In essence, we need a headquarters organisation that prioritises tasks, delegates responsibility for delivery, and holds those with delegated responsibility accountable.

On the capabilities side, for example, this means ensuring that each major strand of work is led by an identified senior official in the International Staff, who reports periodically, in person, to the NAC; in UK government terms, a Senior Responsible Owner. The new defence planning process will help to bring greater coherence to NATO's efforts, and I welcome the insight that Multiple Futures has provided to the wider Defence Planning debate. But the International Staff and Allied Command Transformation need to drive implementation, and the NAC needs to monitor it.

We also need to continue to improve the management of NATO's common funded resources. For NATO's civil budget, as suggested by the Secretary General and endorsed at Strasbourg, we need to give the Secretary General more freedom to manage.

On the military budget and NATO's Security Infrastructure Programme, we need to be more rigorous at prioritising our expenditure to ensure it is sufficient for the challenges of today without compromising the transformation agenda. And we need to improve NATO's financial planning and programming mechanisms to ensure that we get more out of the common funded budgets at a time when all national spending is under pressure.

We need to look at our Command Structure, too. We have just agreed the outcome of a long review of the Peacetime Establishment. Few of us believe that review asked the right questions or reached the right conclusions. Our Command Structure remains too fragmented and inefficient and above all too static - there must be scope for simplification and streamlining, on both cost and operational grounds.

To conclude, NATO faces some big strategic questions, some important lower order challenges, and some immediate housekeeping tasks. It has, of course, to address all three in parallel. The Multiple Futures work can help, and I hope today's conference will have given some hints about how we can best put into practice the lessons it brings.