

SUR. ING. - 117 4A | LAMY.

Logge: Bandy
T = 6/10/98

8.6.98

Council of Europe

1148/c

AS (1997) CR 6

6/10/98

3. Address by Mr Solana, Secretary General of Nato

01-1248 C sim 7

The Nato Summit in Madrid next July will bring us a major step closer to ~~such a~~ ^{a new} architecture. At the summit, we will take a number of decisions affecting ~~both~~ the future of Nato and of European security at large. First, we will invite one or more countries to start accession negotiations with the alliance. Our goal is to be able to welcome those new members in 1999. The opening of Nato should be seen and appreciated for what it is: a natural part of the wider process of European integration; a means of reinforcing the new democracies and confidence in their destiny; and a means of responding to their sense of belonging.

The countries of central and eastern Europe want to join the alliance for the same reason that members of the alliance do not want to leave it. I see a strong moral obligation for us to help them fulfil their legitimate aspirations. But in order to make sure that enlargement increases security and stability for all of Europe, we will also have to take into account the needs of those who do not join. They will require, on the one hand, that Nato remains an open organisation, as in the past. They will also require, and this is my second main point, a strengthening of the Partnership for Peace.

This flexible programme of practical co-operation is barely three years old and yet it has been a brilliant success. This does not mean, however, that it cannot be improved. We want to widen the scope of co-operation with our partners, particularly in political consultations, as well as in operational planning activities. As a further step in the process, we will work with partners on an initiative to establish an Atlantic Partnership Council as an ^{overarching} framework for our co-operation. Our goal will be to combine in this new ~~organisation~~ ^{body} the best of our achievement in the Partnership for Peace and the North Atlantic Co-operation Council.

But a European security architecture worthy ^{of the} name must be one that gives the largest European state, Russia, its rightful place and enables Russia to make its full contribution. The opening of Nato, therefore, in no sense aims at isolating or marginalising Russia. We know that in the long run we will not be able to achieve increased security in Europe without Russia, let alone against it. That is why, and this is my third point, we aim to reach agreement with Russia on the foundations of a strong, stable and enduring security partnership. We want an agreement that will suit our common interests and establish a permanent mechanism for consultation and possible joint action. Such an institutionalised partnership is good for Nato, good for Russia, and thus good for Europe as a whole.

Clearly, it will take time to make Russia fully understand that the opening of Nato is not aimed against her, but I am confident that Russia has begun to realise that a privileged relationship with the new Nato serves the new Russia better than ~~the~~ gradual retreat into self-isolation. Progress is possible. Our successful co-operation in Bosnia is a positive example on which to build. The process has just begun.

Let me say fourthly, that we will also work on our relationship with Ukraine. That country occupies a crucial place in Europe. An independent, stable and democratic Ukraine is of strategic importance for the development of Europe as a whole. In view of this goal, improved relations between Ukraine and Russia are as important as Ukraine's ^{trial} partnership with Nato.

Let me, in the fifth place, tell you that we will enhance our Mediterranean dialogue. Our dialogue with non-Nato countries in the Mediterranean underlines the importance we attach to strong and friendly relations with the countries of this important neighbouring region. The stability and security of Europe is closely connected to that of the Mediterranean as a whole.

Last but by no means least, the Madrid Summit will be putting the finishing touches to Nato's new command structure. It will improve our capability to carry out Nato's new missions of crisis management. At the same time, it will contribute to the building of a European security and defence identity. Our new structure will be smaller and more streamlined, and will provide the alliance for the first time with an expressly organised capability to deploy peacekeeping forces in a crisis area.

From the outset, the new structure is designed to operate with the participation of non-Nato countries. It will reflect also the growing responsibilities of the European allies within Nato. It will demonstrate that Nato is responsive to the realities of the European integration process.

That is our agenda for the months ahead. It is ambitious, to be sure, but we must be ambitious to keep pace with the changes around us and to forge a stable security architecture for a new wider Europe - a goal that we share with the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe played a leading role in spreading democratic values and practices to the countries of central and eastern Europe since the political watershed of 1989. It has given a powerful incentive to the process of democratisation and reform among those countries, as has the alliance.

Through our co-operation and outreach, we have ensured that Europe has a basis of a common security culture. We attach particular importance to a close relationship with Russia and we welcome the fact that Russia has become a member of the Council of Europe.

The Atlantic Alliance was established to safeguard the freedom of our peoples. We have a common heritage founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. The Council of Europe has been and will be at the forefront of entrenching those principles throughout Europe. In that sense, Nato and the Council of Europe have a common agenda and vision. Thank you very much for your attention.

THE PRESIDENT.- Thank you very much Mr Solana for your most interesting statement. Members of the Assembly have expressed a wish to put questions to you. I would remind them that questions must be limited to 30 seconds, and I shall be strict. Colleagues should be asking questions and not making speeches. We will group the questions, and I shall call several colleagues to put their question and the Secretary General will answer them together. Otherwise, we do not have the slightest chance of getting through the list. I call Mr Oliynik to put the first question.

Mr OLIYNIK (*Ukraine*) asked about the enlargement of Nato. He was particularly concerned about the possibility of a new risk of confrontation through the creation of new dividing lines in Europe.

THE PRESIDENT.- The next question is from Mrs Belohorská.

Mrs BELOHORSKÁ (*Slovakia*).- Should we, as Europeans, confine our responsibility to security issues, or do we need to solve the questions of the enlargement of Nato? Are not those questions putting pressure on relatively stable situations in central Europe?

THE PRESIDENT.- Thank you. The next question is from Mr Gotzev.