

From Wales to Warsaw – Adapting NATO’s Setup
Speech by Ambassador Dr Hans-Dieter Lucas at the
“Dr Manfred Wörner Circle at NATO” Luncheon
Brussels, 22 February 2016.

Dear Mr Cooper, dear Mr Krämer,

Excellencies and colleagues,

Friends and members of the Manfred Wörner Circle,

Two years ago, while I was still the Political Director at the Federal Foreign Office, my colleagues and I began preparing for the NATO summit in Wales. At the time, we were concerned that Wales might be filled with tedious discussions about NATO’s identity and purpose, mostly in response to the question: “Do we really still need NATO after Afghanistan?”

Then came the annexation of Crimea – and, as you know, debates and decisions at Wales were completely different from what we had foreseen. Wales became a decision-making summit. For the Alliance, it was a starting point for realignment – not the end of the line. Much has happened since then. Today the picture is clearer and even gloomier than at Wales.

NATO is facing a historically new and dual strategic challenge: On the one hand, we have Russia, the Russia–Ukraine conflict, and other issues in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, there is northern Africa, Syria, Iraq and the threats posed by ISIS.

In addition, the Alliance must keep a close eye on security threats in its wider neighbourhood, in the Sahel region – for instance in Mali – off the Horn of Africa, and in Yemen. There is also Afghanistan, with its still unresolved problems – not to mention various transnational threats to our security: cyber threats, hybrid warfare, and international terrorism.

It is a privilege to address these issues, and in particular the road to Warsaw, in front of such a distinguished audience as the Dr Manfred Wörner Circle.

Looking back at Manfred Wörner’s tenure as Secretary General of NATO, I find his legacy is remarkable: it is most visible in the decisions of the London Summit in 1990 and here in Brussels in 1994 – be it with regard to partnership policy, be it constructive engagement with former adversaries, or be it the acceptance of new military missions beyond Allied territory. His strategic vision has profoundly shaped today’s Alliance and its ongoing evolution and adaptation.

The groundwork that Manfred Wörner has laid, although realized only in part prior to his death, has nevertheless had a lasting impact and is now clearly enshrined in the Alliance’s core tasks as outlined in the Strategic Concept of 2010: Collective Defence, Crisis Management and Cooperative Security. It was clear to Wörner back then, and I believe it is just as true today, 22 years after his premature death, as we face the uncertainties and complexities of today’s security challenges: the Alliance cannot and must not be reduced to any one of these core tasks. This is the only way for NATO to remain relevant and make a difference.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank David Cooper, not only for inviting me and for organizing this event, but more importantly for his untiring work for the Manfred Wörner Circle, whereby he is not

only honouring the work and vision of Manfred Wörner, but also creating a forum for discussion of foreign and security policy issues. And I also thank Rheinmetall for sponsoring this event.

Ladies and gentlemen,

NATO is not engaged in all of the domains I have just mentioned. However, it is to some extent affected by all of these threats, and it will need to adopt a position on them in Warsaw.

Security in the Euro-Atlantic area will undoubtedly remain NATO's core task. The conflict in Ukraine marks a turning point in Euro-Atlantic security, as well as for the Alliance: By annexing Crimea in violation of international law and by destabilizing eastern Ukraine, Russia has called into question this security architecture. With the conflict in Ukraine, the crucial question of how to deal with Russia has resurfaced, also at NATO.

The Western community of states has reacted to Russia's challenge to the European order that Russia herself had signed up to in the CSCE Final Act and the Charter of Paris. We have imposed sanctions on Russia, and, at NATO's Wales Summit, we have refocused on the Alliance's core task of collective defence. The decisions taken at Wales, in particular the Readiness Action Plan, send the clear signal that the security of the Alliance is indivisible. We are bound by our commitment to protect one another.

Since the Wales Summit, we have made great progress on implementing the Readiness Action Plan. I am confident that one of our important messages in Warsaw will be "NATO delivers!" – because the Wales decisions will have been implemented.

Germany has been a key contributor to this success: together with the Netherlands and Norway, we have assumed a pioneering role in establishing the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), providing rotating contributions and a water-borne, land and aerial presence in the Alliance's eastern territory. Together with Poland and Denmark we have also transformed the Multinational Corps Northeast headquarters in Szczecin into a hub designed for all NATO Article 5 activities in the Baltic region and in Poland.

Wales has refocused NATO's attention on collective defence. At the same time, the Alliance also decided not to react to Russia's behaviour and rhetoric by burning all bridges with Moscow. Rather, the Heads of State and Government underscored their commitment to uphold both the rules-based European security architecture, which is founded on the principles of the OSCE, and also the NATO–Russia Founding Act of 1997 as one of its key elements.

NATO bore this in mind while designing its adaptation and assurance measures as part of the Readiness Action Plan. It opted for the principle of responsiveness: rapid deployability of the NATO Response Force, a rotating presence of Alliance assets along the eastern periphery, and increased exercises.

The recently-announced important US decision to fund a substantial set of prepositioned equipment that can facilitate rapid response in the face of a crisis, as part of its increased 2017 budget for the European Reassurance Initiative, has to be seen in this context as well.

At Wales, we also decisively underscored cooperative security as a core task of the Alliance. This also applies to Russia, although short-term progress is not very likely.

That is why we are now working for reviving the NATO–Russia Council at the level of Ambassadors, as a forum for dialogue with Russia. Our efforts are based on the understanding that the NATO–Russia Council is not a fair-weather forum. Rather, it is well-suited to discussing contentious issues with Russia to improve transparency – for instance, the situation in Ukraine – and it is a forum for making each other’s concerns known.

Ladies and gentlemen,

While Wales did map out the direction the Alliance would take, the security environment is evolving rapidly. NATO’s adaptation is not yet complete. At Warsaw, answers to difficult questions must be found: Are NATO’s capabilities sufficient for deterrence? What will the future NATO-Russia relationship look like? What can the Alliance do to help tackle the challenges along NATO’s southern periphery? And what should it do to prepare for hybrid and cyber threats?

Some 5 months before the summit, it is still too early for final answers to these questions.

But I believe three aspects and possible messages will be prominent in Warsaw: First, maintaining cohesion and unity within the Alliance as a prerequisite for effective action; second, successful implementation of the decisions taken at Wales; and, third, the long-term adaptation of NATO, in order to meet new challenges and safeguard NATO’s ability to act and to shape its policy – vis-à-vis threats in both the East and the South. My country takes these concerns seriously. Just as the Federal Republic of Germany could count on its Allies’ support during the Cold War, we are today saying to our eastern and southern Allies: Your worries are our worries, and your security is our security. Both the North Atlantic Alliance and Germany’s security policy are built on this foundation of mutual solidarity, of “28 for 28”, with a 360-degree perspective. We are not simply partners with equal rights; we have equal obligations, too!

Regarding the challenges along the eastern periphery, in Warsaw we will need to decide on what changes are required to NATO’s deterrence and defence posture in response to Russia’s policy vis-à-vis Ukraine and its increased military capabilities. For some time now, the Alliance has observed with concern Russia’s large-scale, unannounced “snap exercises”, its increasingly aggressive nuclear rhetoric and, last but not least, its growing capabilities in the domain of Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD). Defence Ministers two weeks ago had a thorough debate on what this means for our defence and deterrence posture and have tasked NATO’s Military Authorities to come up with concrete proposals by the next Defence Ministers’ meeting in June. It is clear that we must ensure credible and sufficient deterrence and defence, and in Munich Secretary General Stoltenberg indicated what this may entail. At the same time, NATO’s response must be in keeping with its character, i.e. defensive, without contributing to further escalation.

It goes without saying that the answer to the question of how to deal with Russia cannot be purely military. Ever since the Harmel Report was published in 1967, the dual-track policy of deterrence and

defence, on the one hand, and détente and dialogue, on the other hand, is engrained in the DNA of the North Atlantic Alliance. NATO is not only a military, but also a political alliance. This requires using political channels of communication, as well as strengthening mutual transparency and building trust. That is why we need a combination of strength and dialogue. What this means in concrete terms will be discussed in the coming weeks and months. Considering Allies' different narratives, including with Russia, we all need to join in this effort and show good will. However, developments over the past two years make me confident that we will succeed. We want a strong Alliance that is able to defend itself – but we do not want the new Cold War that Prime Minister Medwedew spoke about in Munich last week.

Already at Wales, the Alliance focused on the security situation in the south. Today, developments are even more dramatic than they were two years ago. The refugee crisis makes this all too clear every day. To the south, NATO is facing challenges it cannot counter with measures identical to those it is taking in the east. A number of threats in this region – emanating from actors such as ISIS – stem more from non-state rather than from state actors. The causes – failing governmental structures, terrorism and fundamentalism – are complex and multi-faceted. NATO's traditional toolbox is only partially suitable for addressing these threats.

However, our southern Allies, and they are not the only ones, expect that NATO, as a key security organization, will contribute to increased security along the southern periphery. What exactly that means will need to be decided in Warsaw. Some elements are already now taking shape. It is undisputed that the RAP – which includes the deployable VJTF – is also valid in the south. Only recently, NATO adopted a number of assurance measures for the Alliance member Turkey in which Germany, too, is participating. Turkey is a key member of the Alliance, and considering the threats it is facing from the south, it deserves our full support.

Let me point out two recent decisions with regard to the South that were taken at the Defence Ministerial Meetings two weeks ago. NATO has agreed to use its fleet of AWACS to backfill national requirements, so that Nations' own capacities are freed up for employment in the fight against ISIS. Defence Ministers have also decided to task the Standing Maritime Group 2 to monitor the flow of migrants in the Aegean Sea and to share information with the Turkish and Greek coast guards, as well as with FRONTEX. This is part of a plan put forth by Greece, Turkey and Germany to combat human trafficking and the illegal smuggling of refugees. Both examples demonstrate that NATO can play a role in the South – but they also show that our activities have to be seen as one piece in a much larger puzzle. And so far there seems to be a consensus that the Alliance as such does not have a role in the global coalition against ISIS.

Ultimately, the only way of coming to grips with problems along that periphery is a comprehensive approach that encompasses more than a military response and collective defence. That is why NATO's partnership policy, which is one component of cooperative security, deserves special attention. With regard to Europe the invitation for Montenegro to join NATO underlines that NATO's open door policy is central and more than a slogan. We have also laid out our view regarding the other aspirant countries in our December declaration.

It is clear that, regarding the South, partnership policy means something else. An essential element is about supporting countries' capacity-building efforts in the defence and security sector as well as their training programmes. One example is what NATO is doing to promote Defence Capacity Building in Jordan.

NATO will be all the more effective also in the South the more closely it cooperates with other important actors, above all the European Union and the United Nations. This is due to the limited resources that NATO has at its disposal for partnership policy – but more importantly it has to do with the nature of today's conflicts. The debate over hybrid threats and warfare shows us that we can no longer strictly differentiate between civilian and military threats. To address the full range of civilian and military challenges and risks we face, we must improve cooperation, especially between NATO and the EU. This requires a shared understanding of the challenges, so that in a next step we can combine our civilian and military instruments to create synergies – be it for prevention and stabilization efforts in northern Africa, for preparing to meet hybrid threats, or in the domain of cyber defence. My government and others will work to ensure that the NATO summit advances NATO–EU cooperation – just as the new EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy aims to do.

I am convinced that the renewed focus on collective defence will not render obsolete crisis management, another core task of NATO. This can be seen in Afghanistan, where the Alliance remains engaged in efforts to ensure long-term stability. We would be doing a disservice to Afghanistan, and to NATO's credibility, if we were to exit the country prematurely, leaving it to fend for itself. Events in Kunduz last year showed how fragile security and development there still is. In December, NATO Foreign Ministers decided to sustain NATO's presence in the framework of RSM in Afghanistan at current levels, by training, advising and assisting Afghan security forces during 2016, not only in Kabul, but also in the regions. We must not jeopardize what has been achieved during the past 14 years. That is why the Warsaw Summit will also attempt to map out the Alliance's next steps concerning Afghanistan. In particular, we will need to make sure that sufficient funding is provided to the Afghan security forces, also beyond 2017.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Warsaw will also have to focus on the issue of long-term Alliance adaptation – that is, on the question of how NATO can prepare itself to meet strategic challenges and ensure it remains capable of action.

For this, it must have adequate levels of personnel, materiel and funding. At Wales, Allies pledged to pursue the objective of spending 2% of GDP on defence, as well as 20% of defence budgets on investments, such as new major equipment. Our American friends are right to demand more transatlantic burden-sharing. It is needed for long-term security policy and for Alliance cohesion. However, we also know there will be no sky-high increases in European defence budgets anytime soon. Although Germany is not that close to meeting the 2% Wales defence spending pledge, we do rank well when it comes to output, that is, what we actually make available to NATO. Regarding investments, too, we're on the right track. And like others we have achieved the long-overdue reversal

of a trend: In 2016, German defence spending will increase by 1.3 billion EUR, to 34.3 billion euro. Finally, Defence Minister von der Leyen recently came up with a plan to invest 130 billion euro on defence equipment over the next 15 years.

However, our leverage will remain limited, due to the refugee crisis and the consolidation of public spending. It will be all the more important for Allies to employ their assets more wisely and efficiently. There is, for example, Germany's Framework Nations Concept, an initiative we are pursuing within NATO, together with 16 nations. By developing capability clusters, the Framework Nations Concept substantially contributes to strengthening European capabilities and to enhancing transatlantic burden-sharing. We must decisively move forward with this and other approaches to better use our limited resources.

Adaptation of the Alliance also involves finding responses to the threats of hybrid warfare and cyber-attacks. Preparatory work is under way to produce substantial deliverables by the time of the Warsaw Summit. Both domains are new for the Alliance, and they are highly complex. I will only say here that, in both cases, the principal aim is to strengthen our resilience. This is, primarily, a national task that must first be tackled by every NATO Ally.

Adaptation of the Alliance in no way means that we should throw everything overboard and begin from scratch. The Strategic Concept that was adopted at the Lisbon Summit in 2010 remains valid. The three core tasks that it assigns to NATO are also the legacy of Manfred Wörner's vision: collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. These tasks still reliably guide our actions. In this context, one of the crucial aims at Warsaw will be to find the right balance on the big questions: challenges to the east and to the south, deterrence and defence vs détente and dialogue, as well as burden sharing.

If we succeed in giving balanced answers to these questions, then we will have created a good basis for concerted and effective future action, in line with the core tasks. Only in this way can the Alliance maintain, and ideally even widen, its long-term ability to act and to shape policy as it sees fit.

Continual adaptation also means – and this will remain an issue even beyond Warsaw – that NATO must re-examine its vision of itself, including its “level of ambition”. We should further strengthen NATO's politico-strategic component, so that the Alliance can take earlier and more decisive action – especially with a view to better conflict prevention. This means that NATO must be a place where strategic debates are held, and it must be more closely interconnected, and have more exchanges, with other actors and institutions, such as the EU. All of these efforts are already under way – but here, too, I believe there is room for improvement.

One final word, ladies and gentlemen, on the long-term outlook: For the future cohesion of NATO, the Alliance must absolutely rest on a strong American and a strong European pillar. It is the responsibility of the Europeans to strengthen all aspects of the European pillar – and our North American Allies rightfully expect us to do so. Strength to a large extent depends on unity. It is all the more important for the cohesion of the Alliance that Europe as a whole adopt a unified position on the big issues we currently face. Only this can make Europe capable of action.

I believe especially my last two points, strategic debate and European unity, are very much in the spirit of Manfred Wörner's legacy. On this note, I would like to end. And I am looking forward to your questions, comments and a fruitful discussion.

Thank you very much.