



Generalsekretær, ph.d. Lars Bangert Struwes festtale til NATO i anledning af NATO's 70-års-jubilæum

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Deres Kongelige Højhed, hr. forsvarsminister, deres excellencer, officielle gæster, veteraner - mine damer og herrer.

NATO har sikret freden i Europa i 70 år.

NATO blev skabt i skyggen af 2. Verdenskrig, der havde lagt store dele af Europa i ruiner; men allerede i 1946 kunne man se et jerntæppe gå ned og splitte Europa, og risikoen for en ny krig opstod.

Man ville sikre sig imod sovjetisk ekspansion; sikre sig imod europæisk rivalisering og nationalisme ved hjælp af en stærk amerikansk tilstedeværelse og derved skabe europæisk integration.

For at nå dette mål skabte man en alliance, der byggede på to søjler: En kommandostruktur og nok vigtigst en tanke - et ideal.

De fleste kender NATO som alliancen med musketereden i artikel 5, men man skal huske at læse hele - den korte traktattekst - og ikke mindst præambelen.

I denne fortale til traktaten defineres målet med alliancen:

Deltagerne i denne traktat bekræfter på ny deres tillid til formålene og grundsætningerne i De Forenede Nationers pagt og deres ønske om at leve i fred med alle nationer og alle regeringer. De er fast besluttede på at sikre deres folks frihed, fælles traditioner og kultur hvilende på demokratiets og den personlige friheds grundsætning og på lov og ret. Deres stræben er at fremme stabilitet og velfærd i det nordatlantiske område. De er besluttede på at forene deres kræfter til kollektivt forsvar og til bevarelse af fred og sikkerhed. I overensstemmelse hermed er de blevet enige om nedenstående Nordatlantiske Traktat.

Vi glemmer alt for ofte dette forord, men det er det, der har gjort NATO til en overlever. Her fastlægges det, at NATO er et tankesæt, hvor rammen er

- Fred.
- Frihed.
- Demokrati.
- Lov, ret.
- Den enkeltes personlige frihed.

Havde man ikke haft dette forord, ville NATO næppe have overlevet 1990'erne. Så ville man have stået med en kommandostruktur, der skulle håndtere den forsvundne Warszawa-pagt - men man havde meget mere - NATO havde et ideal.

Det gør NATO til en alliance, der kan meget mere end hovedparten af alle tidligere alliancer. Det er en alliance, der i sin grundopfattelse er fredelig, og som er klar til at forsvare sine medlemmers værdier.



NATO har fornyet sig selv ufatteligt mange gange. Man har rent faktisk tilpasset sig tiden, og haft vigtige diskussioner om, hvorfor og hvad man skal gøre.

I artikel 5 i Den Nordatlantiske Traktat står:

Deltagerne er enige om, at et væbnet angreb mod en eller flere af dem i Europa eller Nordamerika skal betragtes som et angreb mod dem alle.

Denne musketered blev aldrig aktiveret under den Kolde Krig, men det var den, der skabte afskrækkelsen. Den 11. september 2001 angreb terrorister USA - kort efter angrebet samledes NATOs stater og bekræftede, at man anså det for et angreb på alliancen.

I solidaritet med USA engerede man sig nu i krigen imod terror. Styrker fra NATO's stater blev engeret i kampene i Afghanistan.

NATO har således genopfundet sig selv mange gange. Man kunne ikke lade borgerkrigen i Jugoslavien fortsætte, man kunne ikke lade terrorister angribe, og i de seneste par år har man heller ikke villet lade pirater hærge havene. Ligesom man har hjulpet med indsats ved jordskælv i Pakistan.

Man har igennem årtier haft en debat om, hvor NATO skulle operere. Skulle man holde sig striks til det Nordatlantiske område eller skulle man operere uden for området. I 1950'erne debaterede man, om man skulle deltage i de franske operationer i Algier i 1960'erne om man skulle deltage i operationer i Vietnam - senest om Afghanistan. Alliancen tilpasser sig sin samtid og overlever derved.

I disse år rettes blikket mod Rusland igen, og i praksis har man bekræftet sammenholdet med NATO's enhanced Forward Presence, hvor man har deployeret styrker i Østeuropa. NATO-staterne har påbegyndt en genoprustning.

Vi har i dag et stærkt NATO, hvor mange medlemslande for første gang i årtier har kamprøvede enheder. Enheder, som man kan stole på, og som træner sammen.

NATO vil igen i fremtiden have diskussioner om, hvor man operer og sammen med hvem. Det er sundt at tage disse diskussioner og tilpasse sig til et skiftende fjendebillede.

Vi er sammen om et ideal om at fred, frihed, fælles traditioner og kultur hvilende på demokratiets og den personlige friheds grundsætning og på lov og ret står i centrum i vore stater.

NATO har kunnet overleve på dette ideal, NATO har villet kæmpe for dette ideal - og vil fortsat overleve på dette ideal.

For mig som generalsekretær for Atlantsammenslutningen er det en ære og privilegium at stå her i dag og markere eksistensen af den længste eksisterende alliance, der arbejder for fred og frihed.

Til os alle...og til NATO især: Til lykke med de 70 år.

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Your Royal Highness; Minister of Defence; Excellencies; official guests; veterans - Ladies and Gentlemen,
For seventy years, NATO has guaranteed peace in Europe.

NATO was founded, when shadows of darkness ruled over Europe - a Continent in ruins caused by the Second World War and divided by the Iron Curtain. War was at high risk.

The Western Powers decided that it was paramount to stop Soviet-Russian expansion into the west; and at the same time, nationalism had to be avoided. Therefore, the Western Powers saw the need for a strong American presence on the European Continent, which eventually would lead to European integration.

In order to establish a safe and secure environment, the Western Powers founded an alliance based on two pillars:

First; a Command Structure.

Second; and probably the most important pillar, an idealistic thought that had to become reality.

Everybody knows NATO as the alliance with the Oath of the Musketeers; but NATO is more than just the words of Article Five. I must emphasise that the preamble of the Treaty is just as important as the rest of the Treaty - if not even more important.

The preamble reads as follows:

The Parties to this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments.

They are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area.

They are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security. They therefore agree to this North Atlantic Treaty.

Far too often, we seem to forget the preamble. It is a shame, because the preamble is the reason for the mere survival of NATO. The preamble clearly establishes that NATO is a mind-set, where the framework is based on:

- Peace.
- Freedom.
- Democracy.
- Rule-of-Law.
- Liberty of the Individual.

Had the Treaty not had the preamble, it is not unlikely that NATO would not have survived the last decade of the last century. Without the preamble, NATO would have been a Command Structure that would have had to handle the now non-existing Warsaw Pact; but NATO had more to offer, because NATO was and still is equivalent to an ideal.



The ideal makes NATO an alliance that has more to offer than any other comparable alliance seen in history. NATO is an alliance that is founded on peace and the will to protect and defend the values of the alliance-members.

NATO is able to renew itself as an alliance. NATO is reborn - not once, but several times. It is possible, because NATO is a forum, where important discussions about what to do can be taken in common respect for a common goal. That is something extremely unique for NATO - a value second-to-none.

Article Five of the Treaty states:

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence

This musketeer-oath was never activated during the Cold War, but the concept was deterrence...right until 9/11 2001 - when terrorists attacked the United States. To NATO, the attack on the United States was an attack on the Alliance; and it was time for the world to see NATO stand firm and united - shoulder-by-shoulder - as one. Together, the Alliance defended the United States.

NATO is reborn. NATO is reborn more than once. The Yugoslavian Civil War should not destroy the peaceful fundament of Europe. International terrorism should not destroy the peaceful fundament of Europe and North America. Fundamentalists and piracy should not impede our freedom. Nature disasters should not prevent peaceful people from the right to live and perform.

Over the years, it has been debated, whereto NATO should be deployed and operate. Was the Trans-Atlantic Area of Responsibility the limits for NATO-operations - or could NATO work beyond the border of the Trans-Atlantic Area of Responsibility? It was debated, whether NATO should engage in the French operations in Algiers back in the fifties; in the US-led operations in Vietnam back in the sixties and seventies; and lately in the US-led operations in Afghanistan. NATO adapts accordingly respecting the past and accepting the present in order to meet the future - and that is the key to NATO's survival as a defence alliance.

These years, NATO is once-again focusing on Russia, which in practice has resulted in NATO's enhanced Forward Presence as a forward deployed defence and deterrence military posture in the eastern part of NATO's Area of Responsibility.

Today, we see a strong and powerful NATO, where member-countries have war-experienced forces - forces that can be trusted - forces that are known to co-operate.

In the future, NATO will undoubtedly debate what to do; where to do it; and with whom. These debates are for an institution such as NATO healthy and developing...making NATO able to adapt the current and future threat.

We stand together with the ideal that peace, freedom, common traditions and culture based on the very fundament of democracy and the liberty of each individual within the framework of Rule-and-Law are the very essence of our states.

NATO has overcome the challenges of time on this ideal. NATO was willing to fight for this ideal; and today, NATO is still defending the member-countries based on this ideal.



For me, as Secretary-General of the Danish Atlantic Council, it is indeed an honour and privilege to stand here today and mark the existence of the longest existing alliance working for peace and freedom.

To all of us...and to NATO in particular: Happy seventy anniversary