



BRUSSELS FORUM

Media Coverage  
March 20 – April 6, 2009

BRUSSELS FORUM 2009 MEDIA COVERAGE			
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Eurasianet	20-Mar		Georgia: Brussels Forum will bring together Saakashvili, Alsanian and Russia's Lavrov
Real Clear World Blog	20-Mar		Brussels Forum 2009 - Live!
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AFP (8)	21-Mar		No proof' Iran seeks atom bomb: Russian minister
AP (2)	21-Mar		Lavrov calls for new Europe-wide security treaty
AP (2)	21-Mar		US looks for large increase in Afghan police force
AP (30)	21-Mar		World Bank chief urges rich countries to help poorer countries with stimulus
AP (5)	21-Mar		Lavrov: Russia unhappy with NATO security role
Arab Times	21-Mar		Iran 'ready' to change...if US leads the way
Avuncular American (Blog)	21-Mar	Loftus, Gerald	Brussels Forum 2009: Afghanistan & Pakistan
BBC News	21-Mar		Envoy damns US Afghan drug effort
Bloomberg News	21-Mar	Neuger, James G.	Corrupt' Afghan Police Targeted in U.S. Policy, Holbrooke Says
Bloomberg News	21-Mar	Freedman, Jennifer	Zoellick calls 2009 a 'dangerous year' as crisis curtails trade
Civil Georgia	21-Mar		Georgian NSC Chief, Russian FM Exchange Remarks
CNN	21-Mar		World Bank: Global downturn is WWII-like
Deutsche Welle	21-Mar		EU's New Eastern Partnership Draws Ire From Russia
Dow Jones NewsWires (3)	21-Mar	Dalton, Matthew	UPDATE: Zoellick Sees Global Economy Shrinking in 2009
EU Observer (2)	21-Mar	Pop, Valentina	EU Expanding its 'sphere of influence,' Russia says
GEO Television Network	21-Mar		Global Economy to Shrink in 2009: WB
Javno.hr	21-Mar		Rehn: Progress in Croatian - Slovenian Talks
Khabrein.info	21-Mar		No success in Afghanistan unless problem in western Pakistan solved - Holbrooke
Newsnet (Zimbabwe)	21-Mar		Global economy set to shrink
Press TV	21-Mar		Iran not planning to build A-bomb: Russia
Reuters (3)	21-Mar	Brunnstrom, David	U.S. plans major Afghan police boost - Holbrooke
Reuters (69)	21-Mar	John, Mark	Global economy to shrink in 2009: World Bank
RIA Novosti	21-Mar		Russian journalists banned from FM Lavrov's speech at Brussels forum
Russia Today	21-Mar		New security arrangement needed - Russian FM
Slovenian Press Agency	21-Mar		Zbogor Also Discusses Croatia at Brussels Forum
Spiegel Online (3)	21-Mar	Schmitz, George Peter	The New American Determination (also in German)
The New Foreign Policy.com (Blog)	21-Mar	Drezner, Dan	Day two at the Brussels Forum
United News Network	21-Mar		Solana & Lavrov differed over current security structures in Europe
Xinhua (2)	21-Mar		Solana: no big need to revamp European security structures
Xinhua (6)	21-Mar		World economy to shrink by 1-2 percent in 2009: WB
AFP	22-Mar		EU rebuff Russian calls for new security structure
AFP	22-Mar		US envoy unveils outlines of new afghan strategy
AFP (2)	22-Mar		NATO bombing over Kosovo 'right thing to do': US envoy
AFP (8)	22-Mar		Poland urges US to live up to missile shield commitments
AFP/Reuters/TT (2)	22-Mar		Poland Urges US to Stick to Missile Shield in Europe
Al Jazeera	22-Mar		World Bank: Global economy to dive
AP	22-Mar		US wants increase in Afghan police force
AP (2)	22-Mar	White, Aoife	ECB official: euro and US borrowing costs same
Asian News International (7)	22-Mar		No US-NATO force on Pak soil for curbing terror breeding grounds: Holbrooke

Avuncular American (Blog)	22-Mar	Loftus, Gerald	Brussels Forum 2009: NATO At Sixty
B92 (3)	22-Mar		Global economy will shrink 1-2 pct
BelaPAN (3)	22-Mar		Russian foreign minister accuses EU of putting pressure on Belarus over Georgia's breakaway regions
Bloomberg News (2)	22-Mar	Freedman, Jennifer	Worries Voiced over Global Economy
Canwest News Service (2)	22-Mar	O'Neil, Peter	MacKay won't speculate on NATO job
CCTV	22-Mar		World Bank chief on economy ahead of G-20 summit
CCTV (2)	22-Mar		Zoellick warns 2009 a dangerous year
Civil Georgia	22-Mar		Saakashvili on Turkish-proposed Caucasus Stability Platform
CTV Canada	22-Mar		MacKay says focus is on Canada, not NATO job
Daily Times	22-Mar		No incursions into Pakistan: Holbrooke
Dow Jones NewsWires (2)	22-Mar	Cohen, Adam	2ND UPDATE: Almunia: EU Doing What Needs To Be Done For Econ
Ennahar	22-Mar		NATO: Canada's Minister of Defense not candidate
Financial Times (Blog)	22-Mar	Rachman, Gideon	John McCain, up close and personal
Indo-Asian News Service (2)	22-Mar		India major factor in resolving Afghanistan issues: Holbrooke
IslamOnline	22-Mar		Obama courts Taliban with Political Party
MosNews	22-Mar		Russia voices its mistrusts for NATO, calls to replace it
MosNews	22-Mar		Russia downplays Iran's nuclear threat, preaches respect for the republic
MosNews	22-Mar		Russia deliberately unhelpful on Iran nuclear issues - Senator McCain
NDTV.com	22-Mar		India not part of Afghan problem: Richard
Press Trust of India	22-Mar		Heart of the threat' to US, India at west Pakistan: Holbrooke
Press Trust of India (5)	22-Mar		India has critical role in resolving Afghan crisis: Holbrooke
Press Trust of India (8)	22-Mar	Sonwalkar, Prasun	US seeking India's help in resolving Afghan crisis: Holbrooke
Reuters (23)	22-Mar	Brunnstrom, David	Poland hopes U.S. will not let it down on shield
Reuters (29)	22-Mar	Taylor, Paul and David Brunnstrom	Turkey could block Rasmussen at NATO, official says
RIA Novosti	22-Mar		Ukraine welcomes NATO's plans to restart cooperation with Russia
RIA Novosti (6)	22-Mar		Russia hopes to enhance fight against terrorism with new treaty
The News International (2)	22-Mar		Terrorist sanctuaries exist in FATA, Holbrooke says
The Raw Story	22-Mar	Webster, Steven	US envoy: Afghanistan drug war a failure
The Sofia Echo	22-Mar	Bivol, Alex	Danish PM Rasmussen wins US backing for Nato top job - reports
Times of India	22-Mar		India consulted on Af-Pak policy: Holbrooke
United Press International (5)	22-Mar		Lavrov: Russia intent on fighting terror
Xinhua (6)	22-Mar		US official says role of India 'critical' in resolving Afghan problem
AFP (2)	23-Mar		MacKay out of NATO leadership race
AFP (2)	23-Mar		US appeals to allies to help boost Afghan police
AFP (3)	23-Mar		Opium fight a huge waste of money, US envoy admits
American Conservative (Blog)	23-Mar		Jaw, Jaw for Multi-lateral War, War
AP (57)	23-Mar	Lekic, Slobodan and Jan M. Olsen	Danish PM front-runner for NATO top spot
AP (6)	23-Mar		Shaheen returns from Brussels Forum
AP (8)	23-Mar		Canadian Defence Minister Peter MacKay backs off NATO head campaign
AP/AFP (2)	23-Mar	Shah, Amir	Afghans at odds over raid
Asian News International	23-Mar		Mumbai terror attacks, 9/11 perpetrators present in Pakistan: Holbrooke
BBC News	23-Mar		Clip of Holbrooke
Canwest News Service	23-Mar	O'Neil, Peter	NATO front-runner would offend Muslims: Analysts
Canwest News Service (2)	23-Mar	O'Neil, Peter	MacKay mum on prospects for post
Christian Science Monitor	23-Mar	Marquand, Robert	Holbrooke: western Pakistan key to resolving Afghanistan war
Civil Georgia (2)	23-Mar		FM Vashadze: Russia 'Works Actively' to Remove Georgian Leadership
Daily Times	23-Mar	Haider, Ejaz	INSIGHT: A tattered coat upon a stick
EU Observer	23-Mar	Pop, Valentina	Danish leader gets backing for NATO top job
Global Crisis News	23-Mar		World Bank: Global downturn is WWII-like

HotNews.ro	23-Mar		Joaquin Almunia: EU-IMF agreement with Romania will be announced later this week
International Herald Tribune	23-Mar	Erlanger, Steven	U.S. backs Dane for top post at NATO
Kyiv Post	23-Mar		Lavrov: Russia, European Union should cooperate more effectively in fighting terror
MediaFax.ro	23-Mar		Romanian Upper House Speaker, U.S. Senator John McCain Hold Talks in Brussels
Newsroom America	23-Mar		Poland Hopes U.S. Will Continue with Missile Shield
Real Clear World	23-Mar	Stratfor	Motives Behind Russia's Security Proposal
Real Clear World Blog	23-Mar		A Terrorism Thought Experiment
Regional Times (4)	23-Mar		Killers of Benazir Bhutto are in Pakistan: Holbrooke
Reuters	23-Mar		Holbrooke says US plans major Afghan...
Reuters (2)	23-Mar	Taylor, Paul	Debate on inflation could open an Atlantic rift
Reuters (2)	23-Mar	Brunnstrom, David	Poland Seeks U.S. Commitment on Missile Shield
Reuters (5)	23-Mar	Taylor, Paul	U.S. fights fire, Germans fear flood
RTT News	23-Mar		U.S. envoy outlines Afghanistan strategy to NATO, EU leaders
The New American	23-Mar	Mass, Warren	Holbrooke on U.S. plans for Afghanistan
The News International	23-Mar		Holbrooke says western Pak key to resolving Afghan war
The Spectator (Blog)	23-Mar	Davis, Clive	Known Unknowns & Laughter in the Dark
The Times	23-Mar	Charter, David and Tom Baldwin	Obama changes tactics in 'disastrous' war against Afghanistan's heroin producers
Trend News	23-Mar		I not to strive for being NATO Secretary General: Canadian Defence Minister
Trend News (2)	23-Mar	Kirtzkhalia, N.	Turkey's idea on Caucasian Security Platform not well formulated: President of Georgia
Ukrinform (2)	23-Mar		Ukraine to integrate with EU not at expense of relations with Russia
United Press International (3)	23-Mar		Rasmussen seen as next NATO leader
VOV News	23-Mar		Russia unhappy with NATO
Xinhua	23-Mar		EU economic commissioner: stimulus enough for now
A Pakistan News	24-Mar		McCain cautions Obama admin on Afghan
Aero-News Network	24-Mar		Poland Wants US to Honor Agreement for Missile Shield
AFP (2)	24-Mar		US seeks Afghan war exit strategy
AP (61)	24-Mar	Gec, Jovana	Serbia marks 10th anniversary of NATO attacks
BelPress	24-Mar		Andrei Sannikov: "Crisis is time for fundamental reforms"
Bloomberg News (4)	24-Mar	O'Reilly, Cary	U.S. Senator McCain Faults Russia on Iran, Georgia Peace Accord
Curierul National	24-Mar		Almunia: EU-IMF Agreement with Romania to be announced this week
Daily Times	24-Mar		FATA key to resolving Afghan war'
Deutsche Welle	24-Mar		West Favors Dane for Top NATO Post, but Turkish Hurdles Remain
EU-Russia Centre (Blog)	24-Mar		Moscow accuses EU of expanding its sphere of influence
Financial Times (2)	24-Mar	Rachman, Gideon	Leaders who use protection
Financial Times (3)	24-Mar	Rachman, Gideon	The importance of empty words
Hurriyet	24-Mar		"Caucasus Platform not feasible yet"
Investor's Business Daily	24-Mar		Poland Fears Betrayal
Jane Aitken's blog (Blog)	24-Mar	Aitken, Jane	Is your Senator a Filthy Globalist?
MediaFax.ro (2)	24-Mar		Almunia: Romania's Agreement with IMF, EC to be Announced This Week
The News International	24-Mar	Niaz, Anjum	For money's sake!
Washington Post (2)	24-Mar	Applebaum, Anne	For Russia, More Than a 'Reset'
AP (3)	25-Mar	Lekic, Slobodan and Jan M. Olsen	Danish PM front-runner for NATO top spot
Jane's Defence Weekly	25-Mar	Fiorenza, Nicholas	France confirms its re-entry to NATO's military structure
Emportal	26-Mar		SEE should apply Pre-Accession reforms, work together to counter crisis
European Voice	26-Mar	Wyles, John	Lack of co-operation hinders economic recovery
Haaretz	26-Mar	Oren, Amir	Desert storms
Jane's Defence Weekly	26-Mar	Fiorenza, Nicholas	Holbrooke calls for more and better trained Afghan police
Politico	26-Mar	Cloud, David S.	Holbrooke Holds Back
Press TV (2)	26-Mar		Russia: No 'violent solution' possible on Iran



Russian Opinion and Analytics Review	27-Mar		Russian Opinion and Analytics Review
Salem-News	27-Mar		British Envoy Damns US Drug Effort
Financial Times (2)	28-Mar	Stephens, Philip	Towards zero: Obama grasps the nuclear nettle
Xinhua (2)	28-Mar		Afghanistan remains world's largest opium producer
Focus Information Agency	30-Mar		US and Europe still at odds over crisis
New Europe	30-Mar		From Canada to Afghanistan, German Marshall Fund rises to the challenge
Army News Service (3)	30-Mar	Vanover, Christie	NATO 60 years later: leadership addresses challenges
Bonjour L'Estonie (2)	31-Mar		Decision to invite Lukashenka to EU summit hasn't been adopted yet
Pakistanpan's Blog (Blog) (2)	31-Mar	Jamil, Mohammad	Redrawn map of South Asia?
United Press International (3)	31-Mar		Holbrooke: Poppy eradication 'wasteful'
Outlook India	1-Apr	Lehmann, Jean-Pierre	Cacophonous Disunity
Atlantic Business Channel	2-Apr		The Atlantic Dialogue
Intermex Power (Blog)	2-Apr	Lehmann, Jean-Pierre	The G-20 and the Future of Capitalism - Part II
Charter 97	3-Apr		Who would be the first to squeeze the last dictator's hand?
Charter 97 (2)	6-Apr		Iryna Krasouskaya: "I don't cherish any illusions cases of political disappearances will be investigated"
<b>Dutch</b>			
De Morgen Minnenland	20-Mar		Van Rompuy belooft extra bijdrage voor Afghanistan
Deredactie	20-Mar		"Extra Belgische bijdrage in Afghanistan"
Deredactie	21-Mar		De Crem: "Wacht op vragen over Afghanistan"
De Standaard	21-Mar		Van Rompuy belooft extra bijdrage voor Afghanistan
De Standaard	23-Mar	Doornaert, Mia	VS gaan strijd om harten en geesten aan
De Volkskrant	23-Mar	Lanting, Bert	VS staken vernietigen papaver
De Standaard	23-Mar	Doornaert, Mia	Globalistan
<b>German</b>			
Handelsblatt	21-Mar		Moskau irritiert über "östliche Partnerschaft"
Sonntags Zeitung	21-Mar		Solana lehnt Russischen Wunsch nach neuer sicherheitsarchitektur AB
Bieler Tagblatt	21-Mar		Russland hat Fragen zu EU-Ostpartnerschaft
Reuters	22-Mar		USA dringen auf Aufstockung der afghanischen Polizei
Dow Jones NewsWires (2)	22-Mar	Cohen, Adam	EZB/Weber: Reaktion auf Krise kann Abschwung nicht stoppen
Schweizer Radio DRS	22-Mar		Russland bleibt gegenüber den USA hart
Radio Srbija	22-Mar		Scheffer: NATO-Intervention in 1999 notwendig
Spiegel Online (3)	23-Mar	Schmitz, George Peter	The New American Determination (also in English)
Soldatengluck	23-Mar		Brussels Forum 2009 setzt Akzente
CRI Online	23-Mar		EU-Kommissar Almunia sieht keinen weiteren Handlungsbedarf
Handelsblatt	23-Mar	Bonse, Eric	USA und Kanada fordern mehr deutschen Einsatz in Afghanistan
Rheinische Post	23-Mar	Ingenrieth, Anja	Nato-Druck auf Berlin
ARD (Tagesschau)	23-Mar		NATO-General erwartet langfristig die Wende
Reuters	23-Mar		Weber signalisiert Spielraum für weitere EZB-Leitzinssenkung
Spiegel Online	27-Mar	Schmitz, Gregor Peter	Angriff auf Afpakistan
Zeit Online	3-Apr	Bittner, Jochen	Ein Gipfel zum Kuscheln
<b>Italian</b>			
Agenzia Giornalistica Italia	21-Mar		Afghanistan: Holbrooke, USA progettano incremento forze polizia
La Repubblica (3)	22-Mar		Almunia: "Ci saranno altre crisi, anche l'Italia tra i paesi a rischio"
AP (7)	22-Mar		Crisi, Almunia: Non escludiamo ulteriori sostegni a altri paesi Ue
Il Mattino (9)	22-Mar		Almunia: "Italia e Grecia rischiano"
ANSA (7)	22-Mar		Crisi: Almunia, possibili nuove emergenze anche in zona euro
Iris Press	22-Mar		Crisi economica: Almunia, UE Attrezzata per Contrastarla
Il Messaggero	22-Mar		Crisi, Almunia: nuovi rischi per la Ue, La Bce pronta a tagliare i tassi
La Voce	23-Mar	Tregattini, Annalisa	Almunia, possibili crisi in vista. A rischio Italia e Grecia

La Repubblica	23-Mar		Ue: "L'Italia non e' a rischio interpretazioni tendenziose"	
Corriere della Sera	23-Mar		Almunia e la frasi sul "rischio Italia", Gasparri: "Zapatero lo richiami"	
Agenzia Multimediale Italiana	23-Mar		Crisi, Almunia: "Possibili altre crisi, a rischio l'Italia"	
Reuters (5)	23-Mar		Crisi, Almunia preoccupato per Italia e Grecia	
Il Messaggero (2)	23-Mar		Almunia: forse altre crisi nella Ue, ma non ho detto che l'Italia e' a rischio	
Italy Global Nation (3)	24-Mar		Conti Pubblici: Almunia, stampa ha cambiato mie parole su Italia	
Il Giornale	1-Apr	Maciocce, Vittorio	La Fabbrica della Paura	
<b>Japanese</b>				
Nikkei Shimbun	21-Mar		Russian FM called a pan-European new security treaty at a political version of 'Davos'	
<b>Polish</b>				
Polish Press Agency (2)	21-Mar		Sikorski za wiekszym zaangażowaniem UE w Afganistanie	
<b>Portuguese</b>				
Invertia	21-Mar		Brasil insta a EEUU y UE a ser motores de reactivacion contra crisis	
<b>Romanian</b>				
MediaFax	23-Mar		Situatia din Romania, discutata de Geoana cu John McCain si Richard Holbrooke	
<b>Spanish</b>				
Univision	20-Mar		Amorim se reunira' con autoridades de la UE, Belgica, Holanda, y de la CPLP	
El Pais	23-Mar	Martinez de Rituerto, Ricardo	Ira y frustracion entre los aliados de la OTAN	
Prensa Latina	23-Mar		Eurozona registra enorme deficit comercial	
<b>Turkish</b>				
Hurriyet	21-Mar	Gurcanli, Zeynep	Obama Turkiye'ye nicin geliyor (Why is Obama coming to Turkey?)	
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Haber Turk	22-Mar	Ozel, Soli	Bruksel Forumu'ndan Turkiye'ye bakmak	
Yeni Safak	23-Mar		Ignatius's moderation is shaky	

## Avuncular American

An expatriate view of America and the world from Europe by former diplomat  
Gerald Loftus

March 20, 2009

Brussels Forum 2009



BRUSSELS FORUM

Thanks to this nice bank of computers at the Press Center of the Brussels Conrad Hotel, I am, for the first time in my life, live blogging as a "journalist." The 2009 edition of the Brussels Forum, put on by the German Marshall Fund of

the United States (GMFUS), is under way.

*Don't stay tuned* - I can't imagine that I'll be able to type and listen at the same time. And I certainly don't want to Twitter my time away. Right now BBC World's Nik Gowing is conducting the first event of the Forum, taping next weekend's (Saturday March 28) episode of The World Debate. The topic: "*How Relevant is Europe To The US Under Obama?*" It's a relevant topic in its own right, and one that haunts Europeans, who read much into President Obama's seeming downplaying of Gordon Brown's recent visit, or that his first phone call as President was to Mahmoud Abbas and not, say, to Nicolas Sarkozy (poor Sarko is apparently chafing from Obama's letter to his predecessor, Jacques Chirac).

It will be worthwhile watching, this debate of talking heads. "*Mars*" (in the person of neocon Robert Kagan, Iraq war monger now with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) and "*Venus*" (pretty much everyone else, starting with Carl Bildt, the Swedish Foreign Minister) battle over the question of fundamental differences (Kagan) or shared values (everyone else) between Europe and the United States. UK minister Lord Marc Malloch Brown rounded out the European side.

Dr. Anne-Marie Slaughter, Director of Policy Planning at the State Department, is one of the glass-half-full majority. Turning Henry Kissinger's dictum about Europe - "who do I call?" - on its head, she said that she can manage with three - not 27 - numbers: those of the EU troika.

One of the best lines was from Carl Bildt, who knows that to do business in Washington, Europeans certainly need more than the White House or the State Department's number. Illustrative of the Potomac-on-the-North-Sea representation here at the Forum is the presence of a strong US Congressional delegation, including Senators John McCain, Ted Kaufman, Mel Martinez, James Risch, Jeanne Shaheen, and George Voinovich; on the House side, Representatives Alcee Hastings, Darrel Issa, Ron Kind, Ellen Tauscher, and Michael Turner, with staffers from both chambers in tow. Senators Robert Casey and Bob Bennet, co-chairmen of the Codel, also addressed the opening session.



In the audience, some interesting faces, including Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, staying on-message about Russian intervention in his country.

Probably the most substantive presentation was that of European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, who tried to erase the false dichotomy between stimulation and regulation, the roughly respective American and European positions on the world financial/economic crisis. Both are essential, said Barroso, who defended European efforts at injecting sufficient liquidity as equal or greater than those of the US. Barroso reminded the

audience that the European safety net is not only more extensive than that of the US (more generous unemployment benefits; universal health care, etc.), but also lasts longer (unlimited in some European countries vs. 9 months in the US).

All in all, an interesting beginning for the Brussels Forum.

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## Saakashvili, Opposition Leaders Participate in Brussels Forum

Civil Georgia, Tbilisi / 20 Mar.'09 / 13:07

President Saakashvili, as well as Irakli Alasania, the leader of opposition Alliance for Georgia and Salome Zourabichvili, leader of opposition Georgia's Way party, will take part in a high-profile Brussels Forum on March 20-22 involving American and European political and corporate leaders and scholars.

On March 21 Saakashvili will be among the panelists on the topic Georgia – six months after the war, which will also include Mircea Dan Geoana, the president of upper chamber of the Romanian parliament and Eckart von Klaeden, a member of the German Bundestag. The panel on Georgia will be moderated by Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Earlier on the same day, Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and EU's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, will be discussing issues related with Russia at the Brussels Forum.

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**News Briefs:**

**GEORGIA: BRUSSELS FORUM WILL BRING TOGETHER  
SAAKASHVILI, ALASANIA AND RUSSIA'S LAVROV**

3/20/09

Both Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili and opposition leader Irakli Alasania are headed to Brussels to participate in a high-level political and business forum on March 20 to 22.

Alasania, the former United Nations ambassador, whose opposition coalition is now running a plebiscite on early presidential elections to remove Saakashvili from office, is not among the speakers, but is listed as a "participant."

The event will also feature ex-Georgian Foreign Minister Salome Zurbichvili, who heads the opposition party Georgia's Way.

At a March 21 evening session scheduled to be moderated by US State Department Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke, Saakashvili will speak about the domestic economic and political fallout of last year's war with Russia, fulfillment of the ceasefire agreement with Russia, and US-Georgian relations under President Barack Obama.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will also address the forum.

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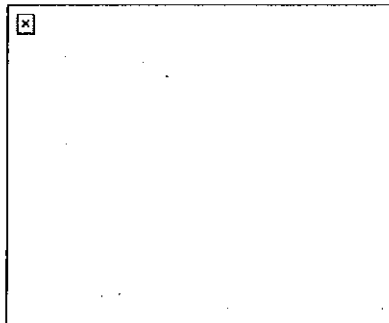
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MARCH 20, 2009

Brussels Forum 2009 - Live!

The good folks at the German Marshall Fund have been kind enough to provide us with a live video feed for this weekend's Brussels Forum 2009.

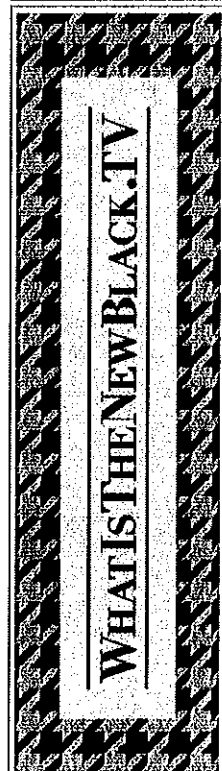
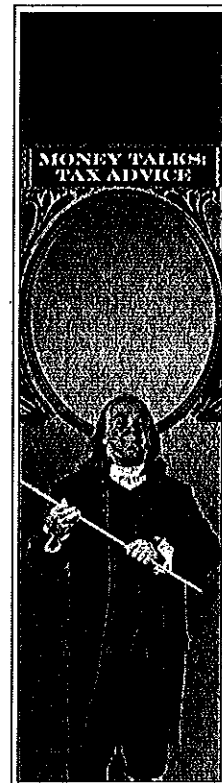
The event is packed with prominent and interesting speakers, such as Richard Holbrooke, Javier Solana, Anne-Marie Slaughter, Robert Kagan and many, many more.



RCW will be doing updates on this event all weekend, so stay tuned!

Posted by Kevin Sullivan at 8:22 AM | Send to a Friend | Email Author | Print | Permalink | Comments

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INTERNATIONAL  
**Herald Tribune**

## **G20 must help world poor or risk unrest says EU and U.S.**

**Reuters**

Friday, March 20, 2009

By David Brunnstrom

Senior European and U.S. officials said on Friday the G20 summit next month must take steps to help developing nations hit by the economic crisis or run the risk of more poverty and insecurity.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's special representative to the London summit said developing nations had initially been considered relatively immune to the crisis as they did not have developed or liberalised banking sectors.

"Now that it's become a real economic crisis, it's hitting them right between the eyes," Foreign Office Minister Mark Malloch-Brown told the annual Brussels Forum.

"It's not jobs only that they are losing but in some cases people are being driven into poverty and terrible conditions."

Malloch-Brown said the summit should help restore economic confidence throughout the world. "The whole world has got to at some point say there are people in charge here... We're going to need a real action plan, or we're going to be in trouble.

"I know there will be a united view between Europeans and the U.S. on this... There is a common view that we have to do something quite significant for them (the poor)," he said.

Anne-Marie Slaughter, director of policy planning at the U.S. State Department, said the rich world needed to help ensure that income in developing countries is maintained.

"It's the right thing to do and it's also the prudent and intelligent thing to do from a security point of view."

Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt said financing huge deficits was soaking up capital and hurting developing nations.

"You can hear this big sucking sound... All of the capital is disappearing, from the Pakistanis, from the Ukrainians, from the Indonesians," he said. "It's a question also of an element of global solidarity when it comes to sharing the capital."

G20 leaders last year agreed in principle to ensure there were more IMF funds available to support emerging economies, while giving them more say in the global financial order.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told Reuters on Thursday he would press world leaders at the summit to keep their pledges of aid to poor nations, but expressed concern the global crisis would sap their resolve.

Ban said that although he had been encouraged by promises from wealthy countries not to reduce their development assistance, he worried they might not fulfil them.



Malloch-Brown said that because global trade has fallen faster than the global economy as a whole has declined, trade was becoming a major focus for the summit.

"The call for free trade to be protected, for monitoring mechanisms to make sure people don't backtrack on their trade commitments, to add in trade finance to make sure we can get the wheels of trade going again, that issue is racing up there to join the stimulus and regulation as the big issue," he said.

(Reporting by David Brunnstrom, Editing by Jonathan Wright)

*Correction:*

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## Day one at the Brussels Forum

Fri, 03/20/2009 - 4:16pm

My observations and reportage from the first day of the 2009 Brussels Forum:

1. The day starts with me being seated next to the CEO of **The Elders**. In a display of profound ~~cordial~~ discretion on my part, I choose not to mention **this blog post** at all.
2. The session opens with German Marshall Fund president Craig Kennedy thanking the myriad donors -- Fortis, Daimler, the Belgian government, the Latvian defense ministry, etc. I think to myself, "how many of these institutions will not go bankrupt this year?"
3. The first session featured Bob Kagan, Anne-Marie Slaughter, Carl Bildt, and Mark Malloch Brown, moderated by the BBC's Nik Gowing. The most revealing thing said during the session was when Kagan confessed, "I don't understand anything that is going on in the economy." This is a big problem with foreign policy wonks -- to many of them know too little about economics (this explains my man-crush on Bob Zoellick, by the way). Props to Kagan for at least admitting this fact.
4. The second most revealing thing about the session was when Gowing offered John McCain a chance to say something/ask a question from the audience, *and he passed*. What a difference a year makes.
5. Beyond that, there was mostly a lot of sniping between Slaughter and Kagan. Slaughter is still moving down the learning curve on speaking in sound bites -- at one point she said "Europe has a plural head, but still one head." Kagan has done this many times before, and was therefore a bit sharper. On the other hand, he did not like being pushed into such an oppositionalist position by Gowing. Afterwards he lamented, "I'm don't want to be the Simon Cowell. I Why can't I be Paula Abdul!"
6. Senator Bob Casey (D, PA) then gave a very long-winded introduction of the congressional delegation. This was boring, except for the fact that *Casey forgot to introduce McCain*. Again, what a difference a year makes.
7. European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso was next on the docket. He tried his best to argue that the EU was doing its part on fiscal expansion, that the just-concluded EU summit was a success, and that the transatlantic partnership was never better. It was, in other words, pretty boiler plate. Later in the evening, Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek undercut each of Barroso's talking points. He described the same EU meeting as "difficult," and challenged the EU to "speak less and participate more." Topolánek then declared that, the "Eurocentric days are over" for the United States.

That's all for now.

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# 'No proof' Iran seeks atom bomb: Russian minister

Mar 21, 2009

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Saturday there was no proof that Iran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon and urged the West to respect and reach out to the Islamic republic.

"There is no proof that Iran even has decided to make a bomb," he told the Brussels Forum conference, alongside EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, who on behalf of world powers has led talks to curb Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

Lavrov said the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), was best placed to monitor Iran's activities and establish whether it might try to covertly develop a weapon under the guise of a civilian programme.

Lavrov said that "as long as the IAEA works in Iran," real concerns it may develop a bomb could be allayed.

Uranium enrichment, a process that the IAEA monitors, is used to make fuel for a nuclear reactor, but at highly refined levels it can serve to produce the core of an atomic weapon.

"To change it to the weapon grade uranium, you need to do manipulations which would be immediately known by cameras," Lavrov said.

His comments come after US President Barack Obama issued a video message to Iran, offering to open a new chapter in relations with the Islamic Republic. The two nations have not had diplomatic ties since 1980.

"This is an example of how people should be self critical even at the top," Lavrov noted about the message.

"Iran must be engaged as a constructive part of the solution and not of the problem," he said.

"It's negotiations, it's respect and it's engagement of Iran in all the areas... including security dialogue with Iran on all the issues in the Middle East, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon."

Russia, a member of the United Nations Security Council, has generally resisted a more hard-line approach against Iran taken by former US president George W. Bush and is helping Tehran build a nuclear power station.

Solana said it was vital for Moscow and the West to work together to encourage the Islamic republic to accept an international offer of political and economic incentives in exchange for suspending uranium enrichment.

"Cooperation on Iran is fundamental. We really have to face the problem of Iran in a coordinated fashion. This one of the most important challenges. If we get that, we will get a tremendous amount of work done," he said.

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Iranian technicians at the Uranium Conversion Facilities (UCF) in Isfahan

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## Lavrov calls for new Europe-wide security treaty

Associated Press  
2009-03-21 06:47 PM

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has called for a new security treaty that embraces the entire European continent saying the current system is unsatisfactory.

Lavrov criticized U.S. efforts to set up a missile defense system in eastern Europe and the European Union for trying to weaken Russia's traditional ties with ex-Soviet states like Belarus.

He says he is uncomfortable with current arrangements and has urged the United States and EU nations to join with Russia to create a new legally binding security pact for the whole of Europe.

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana says the EU and NATO should work more closely with Moscow but rejected Lavrov's call for a new European-Atlantic security treaty.

The two were speaking at a conference Saturday.

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**Herald Tribune**

## US looks for large increase in Afghan police force

**The Associated Press**

Saturday, March 21, 2009

**BRUSSELS:** The United States wants to focus efforts in Afghanistan on boosting the police force, with more recruitment and training to help officers stabilize the country and rid it of extremist insurgents, the Obama administration's envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan said Saturday.

Richard Holbrooke was discussing the new U.S. administration's policy in Afghanistan during a Brussels Forum conference debate on the Afghan war, though the full strategy is expected to be revealed next week.

President Barack Obama has committed an additional 17,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan to break a stalemate against the Taliban and other insurgents. But military advisers to Obama say the U.S. is not winning the fight, and recommend a boost in the number of civilian experts as well as military deployments to combat the insurgency.

Holbrooke said current plans to increase the Afghan police force from 78,000 to 82,000 over four years were "not sufficient." He also said the force was "riddled with corruption."

"We need to devise programs which improve the Afghan government's capability to defend itself, and that means considerably strengthening the Afghan national army and the Afghan national police," Holbrooke said.

Washington is pushing European countries, which have been reluctant to send more troops to fight in Afghanistan, to instead provide more military and police trainers, cash or other expertise.

"We have to figure a way to increase the size and make them better at the same time ... to create the conditions in which the international military presence will do its own job and not replace the police," the U.S. envoy said.

Talks on increasing the Afghan police force are being held as part of a U.S. review on Afghanistan and Pakistan, but Holbrooke rejected reports that the U.S. was aiming to have a force of around 400,000.

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner presented a plan during EU summit talks Thursday to provide a new gendarme police force for Afghanistan.

The EU is considering increasing its police training mission from 180 to 400, and has sent judges and judicial experts to improve the rule of law in the country.

Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski said EU countries that would not provide extra troops should help in other ways. "If you can't give troops, at least give money," he said.

The U.S. will also reconsider how to spend \$800 million currently used in eradicating opium crops, Holbrooke said, acknowledging that those projects were forcing farmers into Taliban hands.

"It is true some hectareage of opium crops has been destroyed, but it hasn't hurt the Taliban one iota," Holbrooke said.

He said more focus and money would be used to expand agricultural jobs, boost irrigation projects and links to markets and promote alternatives to cultivating poppy, such as wheat.

"Rebuilding the Afghan economy is critical," he said.

The U.S. is also considering a stepped up communications war against the Taliban and al-Qaida in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, he said. Counterinsurgency, reconstruction and development are also top priorities.

*Correction:*

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# World Bank chief urges rich countries to help poorer countries with stimulus

Mar 21, 2009

BRUSSELS — World Bank President Robert Zoellick says donor countries could raise up to US\$15 billion if they used just one per cent of their multibillion-dollar economic stimulus plans for new aid to help poorer countries.

Zoellick says the money could be used for food programs, road building or promoting crop growth in the developing world amid the threat of dwindling aid because of the financial crisis.

The World Bank chief is pushing the idea ahead of a gathering of Group of 20 industrialized country leaders in London on April 2.

Zoellick, speaking at a trans-Atlantic think-tank conference today, says the global economic crisis is hitting developing countries hard, resulting in higher child mortality and increased poverty.

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President of the World Bank Robert Zoellick gestures while speaking during a session at The Brussels Forum meeting in Brussels, Saturday March 21, 2009. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/Virginia Mayo

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INTERNATIONAL  
**Herald Tribune**

## Lavrov: Russia unhappy with NATO security role

**The Associated Press**

Saturday, March 21, 2009

**BRUSSELS:** Russia is unhappy with NATO's dominant role in European security and its dealings with neighbors that used to be part of the Soviet Union, the Russian foreign minister said Saturday in Brussels.

Sergey Lavrov said both the European Union and NATO were involved in unfair dealings with Russia's neighbors.

On Friday, the EU promised a hefty program of aid trade and closer political ties to six former Soviet republics where Moscow retains influence □ Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova and Belarus.

"Russian foreign policy is not about fear. It is about fairness," Lavrov said. "We see unfairness in dealing with our partners."

Europe's security should be run by the 56-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Lavrov said during the annual Brussels Forum security conference. "We should give that a try."

The idea has been repeatedly rejected in NATO capitals, which view the 56-member OSCE as unsuited for the task.

Lavrov's reiterating Moscow's demand for a new security compact showed an enduring divide between Moscow and its former foes of the Cold War era □ 20 years after the Iron Curtain came down.

Lavrov said NATO should commit to "legally binding" security arrangements through the Vienna-based OSCE to cure what he called the alliance's appetite "for more and more scenarios" of unilateral actions.

"NATO bombed Yugoslavia without any legal justification," Lavrov said. "This bothers us. NATO takes it upon itself to judge everyone and everything."

After the Cold War, the EU and NATO took in a dozen East European nations that had been part of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact.

Javier Solana, the EU's security affairs chief □ and a former NATO secretary general □ said the NATO security arrangement whereby the United States is the key guarantor of European security "was a very intelligent setup."

"If there is someone who doesn't feel comfortable, he has the right to say it," he said. "I think the Americans and the Europeans are ready to engage the Russians and make them comfortable."

Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili, whose country fought a brief war against Russia in August, said the EU's announcement Friday of the "Eastern Partnership" program with the six former Soviet republics was "an important step forward (to create) stability and in the end prosperity for our region."



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TEHRAN, March 21, (AFP): Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Saturday the Islamic republic is ready to reciprocate if US President Barack Obama changes American attitude towards his country. "If you change your attitude, we will change our attitude," Khamenei said in a groundbreaking address to thousands of Iranians in the northeastern holy city of Mashhad which was broadcast on state television. Speaking a day after Obama offered Tehran a "new beginning" to turn back the tide on decades of mutual animosity, Khamenei - the final decision maker on Iranian strategic issues - said however Iran is yet to see any change in Washington's attitude towards Tehran. "We have no experience with the new American government and the new American president. We will observe them and we will judge," he said. "We cannot see any change. What is the change in your policy? Did you remove the sanctions? Did you stop supporting the Zionist regime? Tell us what you have changed. We can't see change even in the words of the new American president. Change only in words is not enough. Change must be real," Khamenei said.

"The American leaders and others must know that they can't deceive our nation or scare it." Khamenei accused Washington of having had a "hostile" attitude towards Tehran since the Islamic revolution toppled the US-backed shah in 1979. "They supported all the terrorist and opponent groups" against Iran, he said. "We can see the American hand behind these groups. Unfortunately, this support is still continuing," he said, adding that US-backed groups were aiding rebels fighting Iranian security forces along the Iran-Pakistan border. "The new American government wants to negotiate. They say to forget the past and are extending their hand. But if it is an iron hand in a velvet glove, it won't have a good meaning," he said. Highlighting the three-decades old animosity, Khamenei said Iran would not forget American support to Saddam Hussein during the 1980-88 war between Iran and Iraq or the shooting down of an Iranian passenger plane in 1988 by a US warship that killed all 290 passengers on board.

"In all these years, they carried out hostile propaganda against our country, especially in the past eight years," the powerful cleric said, referring to the tenure of George W. Bush. Bush had refused to talk to Iran following the launch by the Islamic republic of a controversial nuclear programme. He also lumped Iran as part of an "axis of evil" along with Saddam Hussein's Iraq and North Korea. Iranian leaders regularly refer to the US as the "Great Satan." In an historic online video message marking the Iranian New Year Nowruz on Friday, Obama urged an end to decades of animosity and offered "honest" engagement with the Islamic republic. In a decisive break with Bush, Obama called Nowruz celebrations a time of "new beginnings" and said Iran could take its "rightful place" in the world if it renounced terror and embraced peace. But Khamenei said that Obama, in his message, had accused Iran of supporting terrorism.

"He congratulated Iranians for the new year, but in the same speech he accused Iranians of supporting terrorism and looking for nuclear weapons," he said. "We don't know who is taking decisions in the United States.. is it the president, or the Congress, or somebody else? But we are acting logically and not emotionally." Khamenei also warned that if Washington does not make changes in its policy towards Tehran, it will be more disadvantageous to it than to Iran. "You put sanctions on our country for 30 years but it benefitted us and we became stronger. We actually thank the Americans for that," he said as the crowd chanted "Death to America! Death to Israel! Khamenei is the leader!" Iranian officials have boasted that the sanctions encouraged them to develop local technologies, including space science that saw Tehran launching its first home-built satellite into orbit last month. The New York Times reported Saturday, citing unnamed officials and diplomats, that among other measures being weighed by the US administration to entice Iran for a dialogue are a direct communication from Obama to Khamenei, and an end to a prohibition on direct contacts between junior US diplomats and their Iranian counterparts around the world.

**Proof**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Saturday there was no proof that Iran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon and urged the West to respect and reach out to the Islamic

republic. "There is no proof that Iran even has decided to make a bomb," he told the Brussels Forum conference, alongside EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, who on behalf of world powers has led talks to curb Tehran's nuclear ambitions. Lavrov said the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), was best placed to monitor Iran's activities and establish whether it might try to covertly develop a weapon under the guise of a civilian programme. Lavrov said that "as long as the IAEA works in Iran," real concerns it may develop a bomb could be allayed. Uranium enrichment, a process that the IAEA monitors, is used to make fuel for a nuclear reactor, but at highly refined levels it can serve to produce the core of an atomic weapon.

"To change it to the weapon grade uranium, you need to do manipulations which would be immediately known by cameras," Lavrov said. His comments come after US President Barack Obama issued a video message to Iran, offering to open a new chapter in relations with the Islamic Republic. The two nations have not had diplomatic ties since 1980. "This is an example of how people should be self critical even at the top," Lavrov noted about the message. "Iran must be engaged as a constructive part of the solution and not of the problem," he said. "It's negotiations, it's respect and it's engagement of Iran in all the areas... including security dialogue with Iran on all the issues in the Middle East, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon." Russia, a member of the United Nations Security Council, has generally resisted a more hard-line approach against Iran taken by former US president George W. Bush and is helping Tehran build a nuclear power station.

Solana said it was vital for Moscow and the West to work together to encourage the Islamic republic to accept an international offer of political and economic incentives in exchange for suspending uranium enrichment. "Cooperation on Iran is fundamental. We really have to face the problem of Iran in a coordinated fashion. This one of the most important challenges. If we get that, we will get a tremendous amount of work done," he said.

#### Message

Iranian-Americans on Friday hailed President Barack Obama's message on the Persian new year as a positive step towards healing the rift with Tehran, while others insisted that the only way forward was to oust Iran's Islamic regime.

"Wow ... that's really nice, fantastic," said Anik Arakel from her home in southern California, where she has lived for nearly 30 years, as she listened to Obama wishing the Iranian people "Eid-eh Shoma Mobarak" as they celebrated Nowruz, the Persian new year. "'Shoma' means 'you guys' and 'mobarak' means 'congratulations'," she explained after watching the video-taped message on the White House website. "Every US president since, I think, Ronald Reagan, has done this ... but never quite like this," Arakel said. Reagan was elected to his first term in office in 1980, the year Washington and Iran broke off diplomatic ties.

Since then, relations between the two countries have remained icy, and Obama sought in his Nowruz message to thaw the decades of distrust and animosity with a direct appeal to the Iranian people for "renewed exchanges among our people." Calling Nowruz "a moment of renewal," Obama addressed Iran's Islamic rulers, saying Washington was committed to pursuing "constructive ties" with Tehran and insisting Iran could take its "rightful place in the community of nations" if it rejected terror and embraced peace. The video was posted on the Internet and a version with Farsi subtitles was distributed to news outlets in the Middle East, where it was due to air at around 8:00 am Iran time (0400 GMT) on Friday, the White House said.

Trita Parsi, head of the National Iranian American Council, said the message was probably "the topic of conversation at every Nowruz gathering in Iran and in the United States among Iranian-Americans." He called the message "unprecedented, extremely positive" and very different to Nowruz messages made by other US presidents, in particular George W. Bush. "Last year, president Bush gave his message to the Iranian people through Voice of America's Persian service and said the Iranian government had declared its intent to get a nuclear weapon, which is not true," Parsi said. Bush had lumped Iran into an "Axis of Evil" with Iraq and North Korea and led international accusations that Iran's project to build a nuclear power plant was a cover to develop nuclear weapons. "This statement by Obama addressed both the people and government and did not try to play one off against the other," said Parsi. "He used the term 'Islamic Republic,' which indicates he's setting aside regime change but not setting aside democratization," he said.

"Actions are going to be needed to move things forward but at this initial stage, when there is

a need for increased trust before something substantive can happen, this was probably the best possible injection of confidence and trust into the process," he said. But Rouzbeh Farhanipour, an activist of the Marze Por Gohar party, which wants a secular Iran, said Obama's message had sent the wrong message. "Some of the people I've spoken to when they called to wish me a happy new year were upset by the speech," Farhanipour said. What upset them was Obama's mention of the Islamic Republic and the implication that his administration has sidelined the idea of regime change, said Farhanipour, insisting that ousting the regime was "the only way forward." "All of us believe that regime change will happen sooner or later. The Iranian people themselves will change the regime, but they need the support of the international community," he said.

The conflicting reactions to the Nowruz message reflected "disagreements, among Iranians, Iranian-Americans, and in policy circles as to whether the US government should adopt a policy of rapprochement and conciliation as opposed to a policy of confrontation" in dealing with Iran, said Babak Hoghooghi, executive director of the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA). But overall, he said, Obama's message, in which the president also lauded Iran's rich culture and quoted 13th-century Persian poet Saadi, was well received. "Iranian-Americans very much appreciate the acknowledgement given by President Obama to the rich culture, history and heritage of Iran, and I am certain the people in Iran will also appreciate that as a gesture of goodwill toward Iranian people all around the world," he said. "All in all, the message was well-crafted and has been well received," he said.

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## Avuncular American

### An expatriate view of America and the world from Europe by former diplomat Gerald Loftus

March 21, 2009

#### Brussels Forum 2009: Afghanistan & Pakistan



## BRUSSELS FORUM

Live blogging before lunch from Day Two of the Brussels Forum, which includes the roundtable on "*Afghanistan and Pakistan: What Will It Take To Get It Right?*" going on right now, with US "Af-Pak" envoy Richard Holbrooke

in the center of things. According to Holbrooke, the key to success in Afghanistan is Pakistan, and the key to Pakistan is resolving the situation in Afghanistan. The Obama Administration, says Holbrooke, looks at the two countries as a pair.

"The heart of the problem is western Pakistan - the tribal areas," said Holbrooke. The Obama Administration approach is regional, he said, and puts emphasis not only on Af-Pak, but also "India, China, and all of Afghanistan's neighbors," stress on *all the neighbors*. Holbrooke on Pakistani sensitivities to drone attacks on their soil - "what drones?" he joked. But he foresees no on-the-ground presence by western forces there.

Despite Holbrooke's emphasis, relatively little attention was paid by the rest of the panel to analyzing the internal situation in Pakistan, though Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid pointed out such stultifyingly frustrating statistics as the Pakistani literacy rate today, "equal to that in 1947" when the Islamic state was founded.

On the panel, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski spoke of avoiding "messianic" goals for Afghanistan. He knows of what he speaks:

As a journalist, Minister Sikorski worked as a war correspondent in Angola and Afghanistan, and won the 1988 World Press Photo prize for one of his photographs taken in Afghanistan.

From Sikorski's comments, it was clear that he was "imbedded" with the Mujahidin during their war against the Soviet Union. His perspective, therefore, is probably unique among EU-NATO ministers, and he is sometimes mentioned as a potential replacement for outgoing NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer.

Holbrooke took issue with a term in one of the questions: "'minimalist goals' - what does that mean?" Holbrooke is very aware of the historic resistance of Afghans to foreign invaders, occupiers, or even well-intentioned outsiders like NATO. If the goal is to "hand Afghanistan back" to its government and people, Holbrooke admits that "we don't yet control" the security situation.

Military-only solutions are out of favor among American, European, and Afghan representatives alike. Afghan National Security Advisor Zalmi Rasoul corrected the notion of an Obama "military" surge - "it's a *comprehensive surge*." FM Sikorski agreed, noting that until Obama came on the scene, military expenditure way outpaced that of development and civil institution-building.

Holbrooke spoke of a "vast program" involving other elements of national power beyond just the military, whose challenges are unprecedented - Holbrooke spoke of the "incredibly difficult logistical trail" that involves trouble spots as varied as Pakistan and Russia and the Central Asian states. He reminded journalists afterwards of the importance of Turkey's readiness to help in the Afghan civilian sector. The special envoy stressed NATO's and Europe's importance in solving the Af-Pak problem, and rejected the "coalition of the willing" approach as an outdated notion.

Holbrooke underlined the power of the new approach, calling to mind the image of his President addressing the Iranian people directly in his Nowruz message. Straight-talking Holbrooke admits that drug-interdiction efforts in Afghanistan are a "total waste of money, the worst I've seen in decades of government service." He sees solutions in "draining the swamp" through expanded agricultural sector job creation programs - he's even picked the brain of the US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who will get involved in upcoming Washington consultations with regional leaders.

How to deal with the Taliban? One questioner, a Danish parliamentarian, said that during a recent trip to the region, her interlocutors said that the West "should not talk to the Taliban." Afghan NSA Rasoul made a distinction between Taliban and other resistance fighters: "we need to leave the door open" to what is not a monolithic movement. But some will have to be fought and subdued. Sikorski deferred to "those who know best the situation, the Afghan authorities," for how best to identify and deal with the disparate Taliban elements.

The Taliban gain adherence, according to Holbrooke, not from their obscurantist program, but from their resistance to foreign forces and "sense of grievance." Taliban PR efforts continue unabated, with nightly broadcasts boasting of beheadings. Holbrooke says that ISAF is not countering Taliban propaganda. "Failures on the civilian side of the international effort - drugs, policing, information - are so enormous," said Holbrooke, that it will require a massive effort to implement the "comprehensive solution."

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
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## Envoy damns US Afghan drug effort

**US efforts to eradicate opium poppy crops in Afghanistan have been "wasteful and ineffective", the US envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan says.**

Richard Holbrooke said the \$800m (£550m) a year the US was spending on counter-narcotics would be better used in supporting Afghan farmers.

He said the US also wanted to see an increase in the numbers and capacity of Afghan police.

The US is currently conducting a review of policy on Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Efforts to eradicate poppy cultivation, Mr Holbrooke told a conference in Belgium - the Brussels Forum - had failed to make an impact on the Taliban insurgents' ability to raise money from the drugs trade.

"It hasn't hurt the Taliban one iota," he said, "because whatever money they're getting from the drugs trade, they get whatever they need whether we reduce the acreage or not."

The US said last month that poppy cultivation had been reduced by 19% last year. Despite the drop, the UN estimates that Afghanistan accounts for 90% of the world's illicit heroin supply.

"The United States alone is spending over \$800m a year on counter-narcotics. We have gotten nothing out of it, nothing," he said.

"It is the most wasteful and ineffective programme I have seen in 40 years."

### **'Corrupt police'**

Mr Holbrooke said much of the money should be redirected to helping Afghanistan's farmers.

He spoke of a "very significantly expanded agricultural sector job-creation set of programmes - irrigation, farmer to market roads, market places, seed."

The Obama administration is currently reviewing US policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan.

President Barack Obama named Mr Holbrooke as his special envoy for the two countries shortly after taking office in January.

Mr Holbrooke also said the US had asked its allies in the Nato-led Isaf to help train thousands more Afghan police.

"The Afghan national police are an inadequate organisation riddled with corruption," he said.

"We know they are the weak link in the security chain, so we have to figure out a way to

increase the size and make them better at the same time."

Senior Nato commanders have warned that there will be a further increase in violence this year.

President Obama has approved the deployment of 17,000 additional troops to fight the spreading insurgency.

Mr Holbrooke said, however, that the heart of the threat facing Nato in Afghanistan comes from western Pakistan, where the Taliban have much support.

But he made it clear that US and Nato forces would not chase insurgents across the border into Pakistan.

"There is a red line for the government of Pakistan and one which we must respect," he said.

Story from BBC NEWS:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south\\_asia/7957237.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south_asia/7957237.stm)

Published: 2009/03/21 19:52:17 GMT

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**Bloomberg.com**

## 'Corrupt' Afghan Police Targeted in U.S. Policy, Holbrooke Says

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By James G. Neuger

March 21 (Bloomberg) -- Fixing Afghanistan's corrupt and undermanned police force will be a key plank in the new U.S. policy to stabilize the country, a top aide to President Barack Obama said.

Calling the Afghan police "an inadequate organization, riddled with corruption," U.S. envoy **Richard Holbrooke** said the 78,000-strong force needs a significant boost in manpower and better training.

"They're the weak link in the security chain," Holbrooke said at a **German Marshall Fund conference** in Brussels today. "We have to figure out a way to increase the size and make them better at the same time."

Previewing Obama's revamped strategy, Holbrooke also said the U.S. favors major investment in agriculture to wean Afghanistan away from the poppy production that finances the Taliban insurgency.

The new U.S. approach, to be outlined in time for an April 3-4 summit of **North Atlantic Treaty Organization** leaders, also zeroes in on drying up terrorist havens in western Pakistan, Holbrooke said.

Obama inherited plans to boost the Afghan police force to 82,000 over the next three or four years, far below the numbers needed to provide order at a time when "the situation is bad" in Afghanistan, Holbrooke said.

Obama hasn't decided on a new target, Holbrooke said. He dismissed as "speculative" an audience member's assertion that the U.S. is aiming for combined Afghan police and army manpower of 400,000.

Holbrooke called on European countries -- criticized by the Bush administration for not providing enough frontline troops to fight the Taliban -- to step up commitments to train the Afghan police.

To contact the reporter on this story: **James G. Neuger** in Brussels at [jneuger@bloomberg.net](mailto:jneuger@bloomberg.net).

*Last Updated: March 21, 2009 11:07 EDT*



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**Bloomberg.com**

## **Zoellick Calls 2009 a 'Dangerous Year' as Crisis Curtails Trade**

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By Jennifer M. Freedman

March 21 (Bloomberg) -- World Bank President **Robert Zoellick** said 2009 will be a "dangerous year" as the global economy wrestles with its first recession in more than 60 years.

The World Bank expects the world economy to shrink between 1 percent and 2 percent this year, Zoellick said today at the Brussels Forum on global geopolitical problems.

"We haven't seen a figure like that globally since World War II, which really means since the Great Depression," he said.

Global trade is set to slide the most in 80 years, with east Asia the hardest-hit region, as demand dries up. The **World Bank** has forecast a 2.1 percent decline in global export volumes this year, the first drop since 1982.

"2009 is going to be a very dangerous year," Zoellick said. "It is indeed serious, and there are issues that go beyond the economic to political and social stability."

His remarks come less than two weeks before heads of state from the Group of 20 industrialized and developing economies gather in London in a bid to shape a coordinated response to the economic slump. Zoellick urged G-20 leaders, who meet on April 2, to create a review process to determine whether further stimulus measures are needed.

"There is a legitimate debate about how the stimulus will be used," he said. "I would suggest some mixture of timely and targeted, but then you've got to build in review processes as you go along. If you are going to have very big expansionary programs, you need to show some fiscal discipline."

The European Union economy will shrink 3.2 percent this year, the International Monetary Fund said on March 19, cutting a January forecast of a 2 percent contraction. Japan's economy is forecast to shrink by 5.8 percent, according to the IMF, while the U.S. is seen contracting 2.6 percent.

To contact the reporter on this story: **Jennifer M. Freedman** in Brussels at [jfreedman@bloomberg.net](mailto:jfreedman@bloomberg.net).

*Last Updated: March 21, 2009 09:55 EDT*



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## Georgian NSC Chief, Russian FM Exchange Remarks

Civil Georgia, Tbilisi / 21 Mar.'09 / 19:49

Sergey Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, said on March 21, that he hoped Georgia would have leaders, "who really would be guided by the interest of Georgian people."

Lavrov made the remarks at a discussion that took place in frames of the Brussels Forum-2009. The Russian Foreign Minister, along with EU foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, was part of a panel discussing Russia's policies, moderated by Philip Stephens of the Financial Times.

Lavrov made the comment after the remarks of Eka Tkeshelashvili, the secretary of Georgian National Security Council, who was in the audience listening to the discussion and who intervened during the question and answer session with the panelists.

"I don't even know if I can have a question in this regard; what can I ask of the representative of Russia in this case," Tkeshelashvili said (she spoke in English).

She said that Russia was the country "which is still at unease of not having the world, which is divided in blocks" and also "at unease" about its neighbors' independence and sovereignty. Tkeshelashvili also said Russia was occupying 20% of Georgia's territories and failing to implement ceasefire agreement.

"I'm sorry... if I was more emotional maybe in my intervention," Tkeshelashvili, who served as Georgia's foreign minister, during the August war, said in the end of her remarks.

"Eka Tkeshelashvili, I understand your emotions," Sergey Lavrov responded.

"I only can say that I hope Georgian people would have leaders who really would be guided by the interest of Georgian people who would not give orders to kill people who they themselves declare to be their citizens, and who would know how to respect their neighbours and to live in peace with everybody," the Russian Foreign Minister added.

Georgia was raised for number of times during the panel discussion, which mainly focused on Russia's foreign policy and security arrangement in Europe.

Javier Solana told Lavrov during the discussion that Moscow should understand also "the concerns" that existed in EU during the August war.

"Javier, on August 2008 you said you were concerned. We were outraged," Sergey Lavrov responded.

"It was a blatant aggression against the international commitments of Georgia to which President Saakashvili is [subscribed] and he was giving orders to kill peacekeepers and civilians," he added.

On Georgia's NATO aspiration, Lavrov said: "Why NATO is still saying that Georgia must be a member of NATO, when the current regime in Georgia used brutal force against all [of] its international obligations."

"Frankly, I don't want to make it a secret – before Mr. Saakashvili gave orders to attack South Ossetia, we have been talking very intensely with Condoleezza Rice," the Russian Foreign Minister said. "And I was making the point repeatedly that why don't you persuade them to sign a non use of force agreement. Why don't you stop providing them with offensive arms? And she told me, don't you worry. And I also said, why are you pulling them into NATO with all this. And she said, don't you worry,

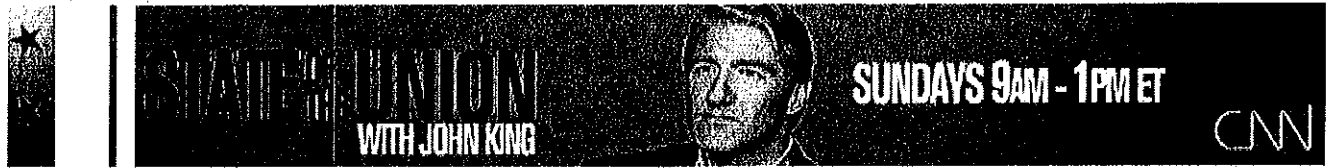
if he [Saakashvili] uses force, he could forget about NATO. Okay, he did use force."

President Saakashvili is also attending the Brussels Forum. He will be among the panelists on the topic: Georgia – six months after the war, later on March 21. Discussion will also include Mircea Dan Geoana, the president of upper chamber of the Romanian parliament and Eckart von Klaeden, a member of the German Bundestag. Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, will moderate the panel.

The session, however, will be off-the-record and closed for the press, as indicated in the agenda of the forum.

Irakli Alasania, the leader of opposition Alliance for Georgia, and Salome Zourabichvili, the leader of opposition Georgia's Way Party, are also participating in the Brussels Forum; they are listed among "participants" and not among "speakers."

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## World Bank: Global downturn is WWII-like

- Story Highlights
- Global economy will shrink up to 2 percent, World Bank chief says
- Nations need to focus on credit, capitalizing banks, Bob Zoellick says
- IMF predicts global economic recovery won't come until 2010

**WASHINGTON (CNN)** -- The global economy will shrink up to 2 percent, and rapidly approved stimulus plans worldwide could spark another crash in financial markets, World Bank President Bob Zoellick projected at a forum in Belgium Saturday.

Zoellick said the World Bank, an international institution that offers aid to developing nations, projects a global economic decline between 1 percent and 2 percent.

That estimate is in contrast with an earlier 1 percent decline projected by the International Monetary Fund, a Washington-based organization formed to stabilize international exchange rates, among other duties.

Global economic recovery won't come until 2010, according to the IMF report. The world's economic powers will struggle to break even in the new year, while developing nations' economies will surge by up to 4.5 percent, the IMF said.

The world has not seen a 2 percent drop since World War II or the Great Depression, according to the World Bank.

Two of the world's largest economies, the United States and China, are struggling with recession and have recently implemented stimulus packages worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

However, Zoellick likened such stimulus plans to a "sugar high," saying they would likely lead to another crash.

"The issue now that is most important are the bad assets, and recapitalizing the banks," he said in a statement. "The reason I use 'sugar high' is that it's like if you have to have stimulus, it gives you a boost, but unless you get the credit system working again, it will drop off."

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21.03.2009

## EU's New Eastern Partnership Draws Ire From Russia

**Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov criticized on Saturday the European Union's new partnership with six former Soviet states, suggesting the 27-member bloc was seeking to extend its own sphere of influence.**

"We are accused of trying to have spheres of influence," Lavrov said during the annual Brussels Forum in the Belgian capital. "What is the 'Eastern Partnership'? Is it a sphere of influence, including Belarus?"

On Friday, after a two-day summit in Brussels, EU leaders approved the new partnership, which would allow the union to increase its aid to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and possibly Belarus by 600 million euros (\$814 million).

"Our dream has come true, we have been able to adopt the Eastern Partnership," said Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg, whose country currently holds the EU's rotating presidency.

Under the scheme, the EU is to negotiate new association agreements -- accords setting terms for cooperation with non-member states -- as reward for democratic and free-market reforms.

The plan envisages the gradual creation of a free-trade zone with the countries. Of the 600 million euros in aid, some 350 million euros will be new funds for strengthening state institutions, border control and assistance for small companies.

### **Giving Belarus a chance?**

The EU's interest in its eastern neighborhood has surged since Russia's August invasion of Georgia. The bloc is now keen to strengthen its ties with its neighbors to counter-balance Moscow's growing assertiveness in the region.

As a gesture of goodwill towards Russia's staunch ally Belarus, EU foreign ministers on Monday extended until December the suspension of travel restrictions for the country's top government officials, including President Alexander Lukashenko,

The EU put the ban into effect in 2006 in response to human rights violations allegedly committed by Lukashenko, whose regime former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice once called "the last remaining true dictatorship in the heart of Europe."

But the bloc put the visa ban on ice in October in a bid to encourage the Belarus president to take a more pro-Western and pro-democracy course as part of a carrot-and-stick policy.

### **A sore spot for Russia**

Lavrov, however, condemned the union's effort to draw ex-Soviet countries closer to the West as meddling into other countries' internal affairs.

"When my good friend Karel Schwarzenberg publicly says that if Belarus recognizes Abkhazia and South Ossetia it could forget about 'Eastern Partnership', is it blackmail or is it democracy at work?"

"After those kinds of statements, we have questions," Lavrov added. "Is it about pulling countries (away) from the decisions that they are supposed to take freely?"

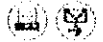
Russia recognized the independence of the breakaway Georgian regions following its short war in Georgia in August to widespread international condemnation. Moscow has been urging its neighbor to follow suit.

The official launch of the EU's partnership with six eastern European countries, which is backed strongly by Poland and Sweden, is set for May 7, although doubts remain about whether Lukashenko will be invited.

"That will depend on the behavior of Mr. Lukashenko and the Belarus government in the coming weeks, but Belarus should be in the 'Eastern Partnership'," Schwarzenberg said on Friday.

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## UPDATE: Zoellick Sees Global Economy Shrinking In 2009

Saturday March 21st, 2009 / 13h32

By Matthew Dalton Of DOW JONES NEWSWIRES BRUSSELS -(Dow Jones)- The global economy will likely shrink by 1-2% in 2009, and international organizations should be prepared to monitor economic stimulus actions being taken across the world to see if more will be needed, World Bank President Robert Zoellick said Saturday.

"I think 2009 is going to be a very dangerous year," Zoellick said, speaking at an event hosted by the German Marshall Fund in Brussels.

The global economic downturn brings with it the threat of political instability, Zoellick said. Moreover, legislatures are becoming more skeptical of proposals by government leaders to spend billions stimulating the economy and shoring up banks, he said.

"On the one hand, it has to be done," he said. "On the other hand, it's a tough political sell."

Many of the economic rescue efforts under way across the world fall off in 2010, meaning that international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank should monitor these stimulus packages to determine if more will be needed.

"I think we need to have a review process to see if more is needed in 2010," Zoellick said.

Governments have been flooding the financial system with liquidity, over the past eight months.

Some policy makers and economists fear these actions could lead to inflation. Zoellick said the challenge for governments will be to withdraw this liquidity from the financial system, once economic growth returns, to prevent inflation.

"Will they withdraw liquidity at the appropriate point?" he said.

"You do need to show some path back to fiscal discipline," he added.

-By Matthew Dalton, Dow Jones Newswires; matthew.dalton@dowjones.com

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Saturday March 21st, 2009 / 13h32

Source : Dowjones Business News

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## EU expanding its 'sphere of influence,' Russia says

VALENTINA POP

21.03.2009 @ 16:17 CET

EUOBSERVER / BRUSSELS - The Eastern Partnership is an EU attempt to expand its "sphere of influence" in the quest for hydrocarbons, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov has said, in Moscow's first major broadside against the new policy.

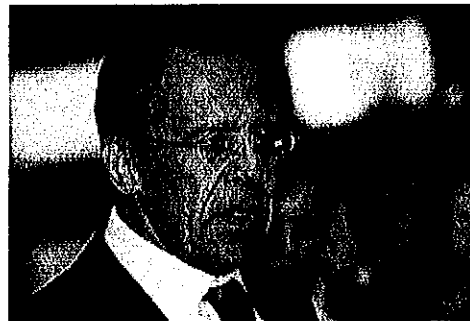
"We are accused of having spheres of influence. But what is the Eastern Partnership, if not an attempt to extend the EU's sphere of influence, including to Belarus," the minister said on Saturday (21 March) at the Brussels Forum, a high-level symposium.

He added that the Czech EU presidency and the European Commission are putting undue pressure on Belarus by suggesting it might be marginalised if it follows Russia in recognising the independence of Georgian breakaway regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

"Is this promoting democracy or is it blackmail? It's about pulling countries from the positions they want to take as sovereign states," Mr Lavrov said.

The EU on Friday formally launched the Eastern Partnership, a €600 million policy to forge closer political and trade links with six former Soviet countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Azerbaijan and Georgia are important for the EU's pursuit of alternative gas and oil import routes from the Caspian Sea region. Belarus also hosts a major gas pipeline system.



Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov sees spheres of influence in Europe (Photo: wikipedia)



The invitation of Belarus leader Lukashenko to an Eastern Partnership launch summit in May and the pace of EU-Belarus rapprochement in the partnership process continue to hang in the balance, however. Czech foreign minister Karl Schwarzenberg in February said it would be "difficult" to make progress if Minsk takes the Russian line on Georgia.

Mr Lavrov's choice of words on Saturday was piquant, with former-Communist EU members often accusing Moscow of blackmailing its neighbours or thinking in terms of Cold War-era spheres.

He said Russia has special relations with eastern European countries because of "hundreds of years of common history" and Russia's open labour market.

Sweden, the co-author of the Eastern Partnership project together with Poland, rejected Mr Lavrov's position as "completely unacceptable."

"The Eastern Partnership is not about spheres of influence. The difference is that these countries themselves opted to join," Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt told EUobserver at the Brussels Forum.

The EU's position on Georgia is not 'blackmail' but "is about upholding the principles of the EU and international law, which Russia should also be respecting," he added.

### **'Appeasement won't work'**

The Lavrov speech should dispel the idea that Russia will agree to a formula of more EU, less NATO for its former vassals, according to EU and NATO-aspirant Georgia.

"Mr Lavrov just confirmed that whatever choices Eastern European countries make, be it NATO or EU, they are not acceptable to Russia. Moscow continues to see the Euro-atlantic aspirations of these countries as an attempt to leave its sphere of influence," Georgian minister for reintegration Temuri Yakobashvili told this website.

"The fact that Russia sees the European Partnership as a zero-sum game proves wrong those who believe that giving up NATO aspirations would solve the problems with Moscow. Appeasing Russia will not work."

Ukraine, home to a large ethnic-Russian minority hostile to NATO expansion, is taking a more nuanced approach.

"There is a difference, NATO has a huge legacy from the bipolar world of the Cold war, which the EU does not have," Ukraine deputy premier Hryhoriy Nemyria said.

"The strategic priority of our country is integration in the EU. This is the way to modernise our country and we welcome the Eastern Partnership policy, because it uses de facto the same instruments as for EU candidates. We know it's not about membership, but membership is also not completely ruled out for the future."

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Saturday, March 21, 2009, Rabi-ul-Awwal 23, 1430 A.H

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**GEO Business**

**Global Economy to Shrink In 2009: WB**

Updated at: 1839 PST, Saturday, March 21, 2009



BRUSSELS: The global economy will likely shrink by 1% to 2% in 2009, World Bank President Robert Zoellick said Saturday. International organizations should be prepared to monitor economic stimulus actions being taken across the world to see if more will be needed, he said.

"I think 2009 is going to be a very dangerous year," Mr. Zoellick said, speaking at an event hosted by the German Marshall Fund in Brussels.

The global economic downturn brings with it the threat of political instability, Mr. Zoellick said. Moreover, legislatures are becoming more skeptical of proposals by government leaders to spend billions stimulating the economy and shoring up banks, he said.

"On the one hand, it has to be done," he said. "On the other hand, it's a tough political sell."

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"Will they withdraw liquidity at the appropriate point?" he said. "You do need to show some path back to fiscal discipline," he added.

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## SEEKING FINAL SOLUTION

**Rehn: Progress in Croatian - Slovenian Talks**

EU expansion commissioner Olli Rehn said that progress has been made during the last few weeks in Croatian - Slovenian talks.

"There has been progress in the talks during the last few weeks and I think that they should continue in order to find a solution for the border issue and enable the continuation of the Croatian accession negotiations" said Olli Rehn, who is participating in the fourth "Brussels Forum", which is being held from Friday to Sunday in Belgium's capital city.

The forum included topics of the main trans-Atlantic challenges - from the financial crisis to climate change, to the future of Bosnia Herzegovina. Participants at the forum include: European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso, NATO chief secretary Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, high EU commissioner for joint foreign and security politics Javier Solana, European expansion commissioner Olli Rehn, European Council chairman and Czech premier Mirek Topolaneck, the Belgian premier Herman Van Rompuy, the Russian foreign affairs minister Sergej Lavrov, and multiple members of the American Congress.

**Legally Croatia is totally correct**

The European Parliament member and respected member of Germany's ruling CDU party Elmar Brok, said for the press that Croatia is totally correct from a legal viewpoint in the Croatian - Slovenian border dispute.

"Looking purely from a legal viewpoint, Croatia is correct, that is what the experts say" said Brok. He added that it is necessary to find a compromise in order to continue the Croatian accession negotiations.

He added that he understands that Slovenia must have a guarantee for free passage for its ships towards the Kopar port, but stressed that "more faith is needed in the EU, because in 60 years of European integrations it has not occurred that ships from one country were blocked by another country. Brok warned about "populism in Slovenia, which could make searching for a solution harder".

Objavljeno: 21.03.2009. u 19:05h

### No success in Afghanistan unless problem in western Pakistan solved -Holbrooke



BRUSSELS, March 21 (KUNA) -- Richard C. Holbrooke, US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, described here Saturday the current situation in Afghanistan as "bad." He noted that the heart of the threat to US, Europe, India and Pakistan itself comes from militant Taliban groups based in West Pakistan.



The US administration would treat Afghanistan and Pakistan "as an integrated whole, as a single theater of war," he told the Brussels Forum.

"You cannot succeed in Afghanistan unless you solve the problem in western Pakistan," he stressed.

Holbrooke said the upcoming international conference on Afghanistan at The Hague on March 31 will "reset the international community and refocus our efforts." He added that the US would be sending 17,000 extra troops to Afghanistan to maintain security for the elections in August.

On his part, Zalmi Rasoul, National Security Adviser, Afghanistan, called on Pakistan to stop support to the "Quetta Shura" -- Taliban Council -- saying that the leadership of Taliban was sitting there.

They were addressing the topic 'Afghanistan and Pakistan: What will it take to get it right' at the fourth annual Brussels Forum, a high-level meeting of influential worldwide leaders to discuss pressing transatlantic issues.

The Forum is organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) with Belgium, Daimler, and the Czech Republic.

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## **Global economy set to shrink**

**The global economy is set to shrink by one to two % this year.**

**World Bank President, Robert Zoellick said the depth of the slowdown is unprecedented since the 1930s great depression.**

**Zoellick proposed that the group of 20 major and emerging economies, whose leaders are due to meet in London next month, establish a review process to see whether further stimulus measures will be needed to kick start recovery.**

**He warned of a fall-off in world trade as countries retrenched into their domestic economies and cited World Bank forecasts that up to 400 000 infants will die this year as an indirect effect of the economic crisis.**

**Zoellick cited some progress in persuading rich countries to help developing states struggling to cope with a slowdown that hit revenues from commodities exports and remittances from expatriate workers.**

**He, however, acknowledged that there was resistance.**

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Thu Apr 02, 2009 | 16:14

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# Iran not planning to build A-bomb: Russia



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says there is no proof that Iran seeks an atom bomb.

Sat, 21 Mar 2009 17:00:42 GMT

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has rejected claims that Iran is developing its nuclear program with the aim of making a bomb.

"There is no proof that Iran even has decided to make a bomb. The West should respect and reach out to the Islamic Republic," he told the Brussels Forum conference on Saturday.

The US, Israel and their European allies -- Britain, France and Germany -- accuse the country of pursuing military goals. Tehran says the only aim of its nuclear program is to make use of the civilian applications of the technology.

Iran denies the allegation that it is seeking to build a bomb and argues that the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) -- to which it is a signatory - grants it the right to a domestic, civilian nuclear industry.

Lavrov said the UN nuclear watchdog was the best-placed international body to monitor Iran's nuclear activities and decide whether the country might try to covertly develop a weapon under the guise of peaceful work.

"As long as the (International Atomic Energy Agency) IAEA works in Iran, it monitors all these centrifuges which produce low enriched uranium for the fuel purpose," he said.

"To change it to the weapon grade uranium you need to do manipulations which would be immediately known by cameras," added Lavrov.

The latest report by the International Atomic Energy Agency stated that Iran has produced a total of some 1,010 kilograms of low enriched uranium (LEU) hexafluoride as of January 31, 2009.

It confirmed that Iran has only managed to enrich uranium-235 to a level "less than 5 percent."

Uranium, the fuel for a nuclear power plant, can serve in military purposes if enriched to high levels. Nuclear arms production requires an enrichment level of above 90 percent.

In order for Iran to build a nuclear weapon, it needs to reconfigure its existing centrifuge enrichment plant at Natanz to reprocess LEU into weapons-grade HEU, or build clandestine facilities without the knowledge of UN inspectors.

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## U.S. plans major Afghan police boost - Holbrooke

Sat Mar 21, 2009 8:19pm IST

By David Brunnstrom

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - President Barack Obama plans a significant increase in the size of the Afghan police force, U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke said on Saturday.

Holbrooke said the Obama administration's initial plan to help boost Afghan police numbers from 78,000 to 82,000 over the next three to four years was now regarded as inadequate.

"Everyone we talked to without exception -- Afghans, insurgency experts, the government, American military -- agreed that was not sufficient," he said.

"So we are looking in conjunction with our allies and friends in the Afghan government at a very significant increase," he told a security conference in Brussels.

"The police aren't very good right now. We know they are the weak link in the security chain," he added. "We need to increase the number, increase the quality and increase the training."

Holbrooke said figures cited by the New York Times of a combined goal of about 400,000 Afghan troops and police officers were "speculative" and Obama had yet to finalise the numbers.

International efforts so far to train the Afghan police force are widely considered as insufficient.

### POLICY REVIEW

U.S. officials said last week the Obama administration was weighing several options as part of a policy review expected this month for Afghanistan, where insurgent violence is at its worst since the U.S.-led intervention there began in late 2001.

Holbrooke said a "vast task" lay ahead to improve the international efforts in Afghanistan.

Washington wants increased focus on alternative livelihoods to the opium farming that is helping fuel the insurgency and will ask the U.S. Congress for "very significantly expanded funding for agriculture sector job creation," he said.

"The failures in the civilian side, from drugs, to agriculture, to police, to information ... are so enormous we can at least hope that if we get our act together ... we can do a lot better," he added.

The Afghan government and its international backers have already announced plans to increase the size of the Afghan army substantially to 134,000 soldiers, from 70,000 in mid-2008.

Among the ideas are scaling back the U.S. mission to focus on counter-terrorism and the training of Afghan forces; making a focused counter-insurgency push in the violent south and east; and pursuing a wider



campaign to protect civilians.

Hundreds of civilian officials from across the U.S. government would be sent to Afghanistan as part of the new strategy in a sort of "civilian surge".

On Thursday, France proposed sending European Union gendarmes to train paramilitary police in Afghanistan as part of efforts to step up training of Afghan security forces.

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# The Washington Post

## Global economy to shrink in 2009: World Bank

By Mark John  
Reuters  
Saturday, March 21, 2009; 8:50 AM

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The global economy is set to shrink by one to two percent this year, World Bank President Robert Zoellick said on Saturday, saying the depth of the slowdown was unprecedented since the 1930s Great Depression.

Speaking at a conference in Brussels, Zoellick referred to a an International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast that the world economy would shrink by one percent this year.

He said: "We in the bank will be coming up with ours again soon, probably in the range of one to two percent ... We haven't seen a figure like that globally since World War Two, which really means since the Great Depression."

The World Bank chief has raised concerns over existing efforts to tackle the crisis, warning of the risk of doing "too little, too late."

He has said that fiscal stimulus without addressing the roots of the credit crunch will be a mere "sugar high" with no lasting impact on the economy.

Zoellick proposed that the Group of 20 major and emerging economies -- whose leaders are due to meet in London next month -- establish a review process to see whether further stimulus measures would be needed to kickstart recovery.

"Out of the G20 process one should have a monitoring system," he told the conference organized by the German Marshall Fund transatlantic think-tank, suggesting a system of reviews on the impact of existing stimulus packages agreed by governments.

"Some of the packages actually withdraw stimulus in 2010. So given the uncertainty of this crisis I think you want to have a review process to see whether more would be needed in 2010."

Zoellick warned of a fall-off in world trade as countries retrenched into their domestic economies, and cited World Bank forecasts that up to 400,000 infants would die this year as an indirect effect of the economic crisis.


"There are issues that go beyond the economics to political and social stability," he said. "If kids don't get proper nutrition in their early years, you lose a generation."

Zoellick cited some progress in persuading rich countries to help developing states struggling to cope with a slowdown that hit revenues from commodities exports and remittances from expatriate workers,

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but acknowledged there was resistance.

"It's hard at a time like this. Everyone is feeling stretched."

(Additional reporting by David Brunnstrom; Editing by Richard Balmforth)

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## Russian journalists banned from FM Lavrov's speech at Brussels forum

**21/03/2009 19:33** BRUSSELS, March 21 (RIA Novosti) - The organizers of the Brussels Forum 2009 have prevented Russian journalists from entering the hall Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke in, a RIA Novosti correspondent reported Saturday.

Despite the journalists' accreditation, the guards did not let the reporters enter the hall without explaining the reasons for the ban, with one of them saying only "You may not be there."

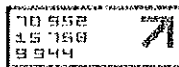
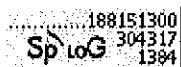
The Brussels Forum is an annual meeting of American and European political and intellectual leaders discussing urgent global problems. Heads of state, EU officials, MPs, senators, academics and commentators of influential publications attend the forum.

This year's three-day session that started Friday focuses on the financial crisis, climate change, energy security and civil freedoms.

The forum is organized with the assistance of the U.S. German Marshall Fund. European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and World Bank President Robert Zoellick are among the participants.

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## New security arrangement needed – Russian FM

21 March, 2009, 18:27

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called on Europe and the U.S. to forge a new security agreement. Moscow isn't happy with the current arrangements, and would like a legal framework incorporated in a security deal.

The idea was put forward by the Russian president last summer but

Europe hasn't shown much enthusiasm for it.

Speaking at the Brussels Forum – an annual meeting of the most influential North American and European political and corporate leaders to address pressing challenges of today – Lavrov called for more legally binding international security agreement.

*"Russian foreign policy is not about fear. It is about fairness,"* Lavrov said adding that Russia notes unfairness of NATO's dealing with Russia's partners. *"NATO bombed Yugoslavia without any legal justification. This bothers us. NATO takes it upon itself to judge everyone and everything."*

Lavrov then went on to call for Europe's security to be run by the 56-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

A similar idea was already expressed by Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev in 2008 and hasn't been greeted with much support. Tatyana Yuryeva, a political analyst from Moscow State University of International Relations doesn't expect Lavrov's suggestions to be greeted with much enthusiasm this time either.

*"The key point of Medvedev's initiative [now voiced again by Lavrov] consists of a suggestion to agree on a new legally binding agreement on European security. But it's very difficult to persuade partners in the West. They prefer political binding not legal,"* Yuryeva told RT.

Speaking after Lavrov, EU security affairs chief and a former NATO secretary general Javier Solana says the existing European security bodies are good enough.

*"The security of Europe has schemes, has organisations, has structures and they are working properly. There is not a big need to pull down the structures of security. I think it is possible to make progress in the short term, by working in an effective manner in the NATO-Russia Council. I think there is room for improvement there,"* he said.

### Democracy or blackmail?

Lavrov also took a chance to lambast EU's policies on Belarus, accusing the EU of

*'blackmail'.*

*“My friend [Czech Foreign Minister] Karel Schwarzenberg has stated publicly, that if Belarus recognizes Abkhazia and South Ossetia, it can forget about the Eastern Partnership. What was that: blackmail or European Democracy in action?”* Lavrov asked.

Meanwhile, according to RIAN, some Russian journalists weren't allowed into the conference room to hear Lavrov's speech without explanation, despite having all the necessary credentials and clearances.

Politics  
21.03.2009 17:22  
EU, CROATIA, BORDER, MEETING

## Zbogar Also Discusses Croatia at Brussels Forum

Brussels, 21 March (STA) - Foreign Minister Samuel Zbogar took part in the 2009 Brussels Forum on Saturday, also meeting on the sidelines the chair of the Croatian national committee for monitoring EU accession talks Vesna Pusic. The pair also discussed the search for a solution to the border dispute between the two countries.

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**SPIEGEL ONLINE**

03/23/2009 12:33 PM

**HOLBROOKE ON AFGHANISTAN**

## The New American Determination

By Gregor Peter Schmitz in Brussels

**Richard Holbrooke, the new US special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, wants to explain Obama's policy on Afghanistan to NATO and the EU. He gave the first details at a conference this weekend in Brussels. One thing is certain: The operation will become more American -- and probably bloodier.**

They were just a couple of words, but they said a lot. Richard Holbrooke was sitting on the stage of the Brussels Forum, addressing high-ranking Europeans and Americans who had gathered at the invitation of the German Marshall Fund. You could have heard a pin drop in the ballroom as the recently appointed US envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan explained the new American strategy in those countries. Holbrooke sighed as he said that this is one of the conflicts where US forces were furthest away from their supply routes. "We Americans," he said in reference to this far-off war. Then he quickly caught himself and added, almost sheepishly, "and NATO."



Getty Images

US Marines in Afghanistan: The operation is set to become more American.

Indeed, the defense alliance seemed almost peripheral during Holbrooke's presentation. Admittedly, he referred to a comprehensive Western strategy, the link between civil society and the military and the need for a more intelligent approach towards the insurgents.

But his underlying signal was one of American determination. The Americans are about to send 17,000 additional troops to Afghanistan and in doing so they're unlikely to pay much attention to NATO structures.

Holbrooke is scheduled to outline the new American strategy in the region to representatives from the NATO and EU on Monday. The White House has commissioned a variety of secret strategy scenarios on this, and the result appears to be that the Afghanistan mission is evolving more than ever into a US mission. And it's likely to become -- at least initially -- an even bloodier operation.

"The situation is bad today, when it shouldn't be, because the international community, including, I regret to say, the United States, perhaps especially the United States, prematurely decided that they were doing OK and refocused their attention on Iraq," said Holbrooke.

He poured scorn on speculation that the West may be preparing a "minimalist" approach to Afghanistan that focuses more narrowly on security and counter-terrorism. "There's nothing minimalist about trying to help a country protect itself against a group of people who are in turn the outer rim of an international terrorist movement," said Holbrooke. "It's a daunting task. Let no one underestimate the difficulty of it. The people of Europe, and the people of the United States, have to decide whether it matters to make this effort."

John McCain, the former Republican presidential candidate, later added that talk of a reductionist approach is "dangerously and fundamentally wrong." Political leaders must convince their citizens that the mission will take years, not months -- and that more soldiers will initially mean more violence, said McCain.

The numbers under discussion are huge. According to a figure cited by the *New York Times*, the US wants to aim for a combined total of about 400,000 Afghan troops and police officers. "I think (these numbers) were speculative," Holbrooke told the forum, but added that there would be "a significant increase, for sure." When Barack Obama took office, Holbrooke said, it was initially planned to increase the total for the Afghan National



Police from 78,000 to 82,000. "Now, everyone we talk to, without exception -- Afghans, insurgency experts, the government, American military -- agrees that was not sufficient." In recent months, US criticism of the state of police training in Afghanistan, which the Germans have helped with, has become louder.

Holbrooke's approach also calls for a new focus on Pakistan, which many of the militant fighters in the region use as a safe haven for operations in Afghanistan. "We must recognize that the heart of the threat to (the West) comes from the people in western Pakistan," he said. "You can't separate the civilian and the military aspects of the war in Afghanistan. And you can't succeed in Afghanistan if you don't solve the problem of western Pakistan."

Holbrooke said that Congress is hoping for more European support on Afghanistan as a result of the financial crisis. "Every member of Congress I've talked to, (says) 'We'll do our part but we hope the Europeans will do more on their side, as well.'"



DPA

Richard Holbrooke at the Brussels Forum: "You can't succeed in Afghanistan if you don't solve the problem of western Pakistan."

But how can extremists in western Pakistan be combated? Operations on Pakistani soil are not an option. Hence more civilian aid to help the unstable country is the only possibility. Ruprecht Polenz, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the German parliament, referred to Berlin aid for an initiative of this kind in Pakistan, which Holbrooke praised. The Pakistan economy, Holbrooke said, is "in terribly difficult straits," adding that "the country (is) in tremendous need of international attention and support."

"The money is there in the budget," said Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski. "If Afghanistan is a priority, we need to prioritize the priority, which is to say concentrate resources (where) they are most needed."

Will more military assistance in Afghanistan from the Europeans also become a priority once again? EU diplomats seem to assume that at the NATO summit in early April, the Americans will not demand new troop contributions, but will want to concentrate on taking care of the hard fighting by themselves. "The American review of our strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan certainly recognizes the importance of policing, of a wide range of activities that are needed to strengthen the institutions in Afghanistan, ... and that is part of the German contribution," Anne-Marie Slaughter, the newly appointed planning chief for the US State Department, told SPIEGEL ONLINE.

But for how long can the political truce hold if the Americans are concentrating their efforts in the hotly contested southern part of the country while German and many other European soldiers participate primarily as police trainers in the secure north? Robert Kagan, a conservative journalist and foreign policy advisor to John McCain during the last election, warns: "While the Americans increase their troop levels, others draw back ... It is not fair if some do the fighting and dying."

But the Germans know that this debate isn't over yet -- including the issue of whether or not Germany should send troops to southern Afghanistan. In one telling scene at the Brussels conference, Volker Stanzel, political director of the German Foreign Ministry, evoked the scope of his country's contribution. "These troops are in northern Afghanistan," he said. "Is there a broad insurgency in the north? No."

To many, it appeared the diplomat was suggesting that this was because German operations there had been so successful. The muttering that broke out was palpable. Stanzel said he didn't actually mean it as a joke. "But it is interesting to see what kind of reactions this sparks here," the panel moderator told Stanzel. An Indian member of the panel jeered: "If the Germans have been so successful in the north, then maybe you should send them into the south."

Holbrooke warned that governments had to make it clear to their populations that the US and other countries are fighting in this distant land because it directly affects their national security interests. It was a line not unlike words uttered once by Peter Struck, who was German defense minister under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and famously said that Germany's security "is also defended in the Hindu Kush."

That was a long time ago, though, and political backing for the mission has since diminished considerably in Berlin. As German parliamentarian Polenz commented: "If you quote this phrase (today), people smile at you. They don't understand it."

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## Day two at the Brussels Forum

Sat, 03/21/2009 - 4:51pm

Day two of the Brussels Forum had more off-the-record events, but here are the juicy tidbits:

1. *Note to the Obama administration:* Indians across the political spectrum are thoroughly underwhelmed with your approach to South Asia to date. Also, they'd like you to cut out the complaints about offshore outsourcing. If not, Boeing is going to feel a world of hurt.
2. Iain Johnston has characterized China as a temporary status quo power. Speaking to the Chinese attendees, there's a lot of "after the crisis" talk - i.e., after the crisis, China is **not** going to be a status quo power. The big question, of course, is whether what China does *during* the crisis constrains its options afterwards.
3. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke, and let's just say that the Russians do not do soft power terribly well in Europe. Lavrov insisted that Russia needed new security structures based on hard law and not "political commitments." Strangely enough, he failed to reconcile this preference with his explanation for what happened in Georgia in 2008. He was pretty contemptuous of his co-panelist Javier Solana, as well as any questioner who challenged him (this included Anne Applebaum and John Kornblum). As a result, a subsequent panel on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Wall mutate into a let's-bash-Russia bitch session.
4. It's kind of difficult to listen to either the Japanese or Russian participants without thinking "demography is destiny, demography is destiny...."
5. Gallows humor from a *Financial Times* employee: he described his niche as, "being in one industry that's f\*\*\*ed writing about another industry that's f\*\*\*ed."
6. World Bank President Bob Zoellick articulated the whispered fears of a great many attendees - if the current set of stimulus packages fails to return the global economy to positive growth by the summer, there is a genuine fear of the next policy steps will be. There's been a lot of protectionism in the past six months, but much of it has been of the ticky-tack variety. Without positive job growth, the fear is that the protectionism will become much more real. The Brazilian Minister for External Relations observed that, "protectionism is a contagious disease." One could envision a 21<sup>st</sup> century version of beggar-thy-neighbor policies in the form of competitive "quantitative easings."

That's all.

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[Home](#)[News](#)[Features](#)[Interview](#)[Report](#)**Solana & Lavrov differed over current security structures in Europe.**

Brussels (UNN) Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana publicly differed on Saturday over the current security structures in Europe.

During the address from Brussels Forum, Lavrov said Russia wanted a new setup for security in Europe as current security organizations were not working.

He urged, The Organisation For Security and Cooperation In Europe has been neglecting hard security issues for quite some time. We want to change the situation. OSCE needs some revamping.

I didn't understand why NATO was pushing Georgia and Ukraine to join the alliance. We don't like that NATO has taken upon itself to judge everything & everybody Lavrov said, by pointing that less than 20 percent of Ukrainians wanted to join NATO and that Georgian leadership was violating human rights of its own people.

On his part, Solana said security in Europe had organizations which were working properly, there is no need to put aside current structures. He said there were three basic pillars of security in Europe, the Europeans, the US and Russia & We are ready to engage with you to make you comfortable in the scheme.

Brussels Forum is an annual high-level meeting of influential North American and European political, corporate and intellectual leaders to address global issues. /UNN

21st Mar 2009, 06:58 am.

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## Solana: no big need to revamp European security structures

BRUSSELS, March 21 (Xinhua) -- European Union (EU) foreign and security policy chief Javier Solana said Saturday that there is no big need to revamp the security structures of Europe as was proposed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

"The security in Europe has schemes, has organizations, has structures that are working properly. For me, there is not a big need to put down the structures of security in Europe," he told a conference in a debate with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

Lavrov said many security arrangements in Europe -- particularly those with regard to hard security -- exist in the form of "political commitments" and are not working. The Russian proposal is to make these political commitments legally binding.

"What we suggest is to get together and to make these principles legally binding if we still confirm these principles," Lavrov told the Brussels Forum organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

He said the proposed new security architecture would also include criteria to resolve conflicts in order to avoid double standards, for instance, on the issue of Kosovo.

The new architecture would also make principles on arms control legally binding. "Arms control is in crisis," he said.

Lavrov argued the current security structures are segmented, with each organization looking after the security of its own members. "They are all about security of clubs or organizations."

He pointed out the security structures which involves Russia --the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the NATO-Russia Council -- are not legally binding bodies while NATO is a legally binding organization. Besides, the OSCE has long ignored hard security issues, he said.

Lavrov said his country cannot understand why NATO is expanding, why the alliance is moving military bases close to Russian borders, why NATO is trying to get Ukraine and Georgia as members.

Solana, however, emphasized there is tremendous room in the NATO-Russia Council that would allow security dialogue between the West and Russia. "I think it is possible to make progress in the short term, by working in an effective manner in the NATO-Russia Council."

Russian President Medvedev floated the idea of a new pan-European security architecture last year. The proposal has met cool reactions in the West. An OSCE summit in the summer would discuss this issue.

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## World economy to shrink by 1-2 percent in 2009: WB

### Special Report: Global Financial Crisis

BRUSSELS, March 21 (Xinhua) -- The world economy is set to shrink by 1 to 2 percent this year, World Bank President Robert Zoellick said at a conference here on Saturday.

Referring to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast, Zoellick said such a worldwide economic contraction was unprecedented since the Great Depression in the 1930's.

"We haven't seen a figure like that globally since World War Two, which really means since the Great Depression," he told the gathering sponsored by the German Marshall Fund transatlantic think tank.

What the world's countries are now doing are "too little and too late" and fall short of effective measures in addressing the roots of the global financial meltdown, said the World Bank chief.

He suggested a system of reviews on the impact of existing stimulus plans undertaken by governments to be established at the upcoming G-20 London summit in early April.

"Some of the packages actually withdraw stimulus in 2010. So given the uncertainty of this crisis I think you want to have a review process to see whether more would be needed in 2010."

Zoellick also called for more efforts to revive world trade and provide continued assistance to poor nations, which suffered a lot in the economic crisis they are not responsible for.



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## EU rebuff Russian calls for new security structure

2 days ago

BRUSSELS (AFP) — EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana on Saturday rebuffed Russian calls for a new security architecture in Europe, insisting that existing bodies like the NATO-Russia Council could do the job.

"The security of Europe has schemes, has organisations, has structures and they are working properly," he said, alongside Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

"There is not a big need to put down the structures of security."

Solana, speaking at the Brussels Forum conference, said that questions of "hard security" could be dealt with in the NATO-Russia Council, where high level talks have been frozen over Moscow's war with Georgia in August.

"I think it is possible to make progress in the short term, by working in an effective manner in the NATO-Russia Council. I think there is room for improvement there," he said.

Lavrov, whose country is concerned about NATO expanding ever closer to its borders, said security in Europe was based around organisations or structures that essentially only looked after themselves, to the exclusion of non-members.

"They are all about security of clubs or organisations," he said, referring also to the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. "We want to change this situation."

Russia last year called for a new, legally binding security pact in Europe to replace what it says are outdated arms control treaties from the Cold War and to help avoid crises such as the war in Georgia.

Lavrov argued that some organisations operated on the basis of political principles while others had binding laws and he called for a list of security standards to be drawn up that would be respected by all.

"What we suggest is to get together and make these principles legally binding," he said. "We also want this exercise to agree on principles of arms control and make them legally binding."

NATO has generally reacted coolly to the Russian plan, which it fears is simply a plan by its old Cold War foe to do away with the 26-nation military alliance, formed 60 years ago to counter Moscow's influence.

Solana acknowledged Moscow's past concerns that the NATO-Russia Council, established in 2002 to discuss issues of mutual interest and air differences, was sometimes "NATO plus Russia, not NATO and Russia".

But he said that today "everybody is on the same footing. I think we have room there to move on."

"There is tremendous amount of space to get that NATO-Russia Council to do much better than it has done so far," he said, noting that there were a lot in the forum's founding act that had not been applied.

"In the hard security basket, I think a lot can be done with the structures we have today if we use them properly," added Solana, who was NATO Secretary General from 1995-1999 before becoming the European Union's top diplomat.

He also expressed optimism that a meeting next month between US President Barack Obama and Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev would help spark some movement on arms control issues.

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NATO froze formal relations with Moscow following Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008



Map





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## NATO bombing over Kosovo 'right thing to do': US envoy

4 days ago

BRUSSELS (AFP) — US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke said Saturday that NATO's air attack on former Yugoslavia a decade ago was "the right thing to do" and had improved the lives of Kosovo Albanians and Serbs.

Speaking at the Brussels Forum conference, Holbrooke -- former envoy to the Balkans -- recalled how 10 years ago this week he had given the final ultimatum to former strongman Slobodan Milosevic to comply or face air strikes.

"I look back on it and I think that sometimes it's necessary to use force, and the result was good in the end," the new US representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan told reporters.

"The people of Kosovo are better off than they were as part of Serbia, and Serbia is better off facing the future rather than working back to a mythic past," he said.

"I look back on that extraordinary last meeting with Milosevic, with a feeling that what we did was necessary and the right thing to do."

NATO launched its bombing campaign in 1999 to halt a violent crackdown on separatist Kosovo Albanians by forces loyal to Milosevic, who later died in a prison in the Netherlands before he could be tried for war crimes.

Kosovo proclaimed unilateral independence from Serbia in February 2008.

It is now recognised by 56 countries including the United States and 22 of the European Union's 27 member states. Serbia is backed by its old ally Russia in its opposition to the move.

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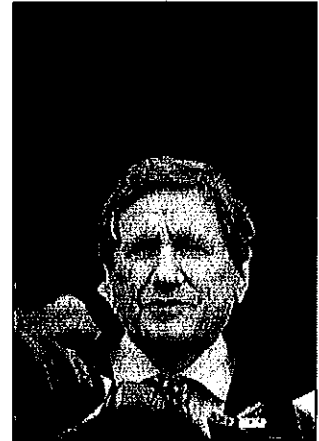
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US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke

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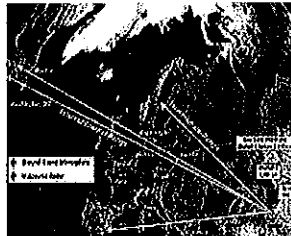
MISSILE DEFENSE

## Poland urges US to live up to missile shield commitments

by Staff Writers

Brussels (AFP) March 22, 2009

Poland urged the United States Sunday to live up to past commitments on missile defence as Washington reviews plans to expand its system into Europe, including basing interceptors in Poland.



But US Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, touted for a top arms control post in the new US administration, said it was more important to counter the real threat from short- and medium-range missiles, while the review takes place.

"We hope we don't regret our trust in the United States," Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said at the Brussels Forum conference to an audience of senior world politicians and experts.

Russia was enraged by the US missile plans -- which the last administration under George W. Bush said was needed to counter a threat from Iran -- but has welcomed the review ordered by President Barack Obama.

"When we started discussing this business with the United States, the US assured us that they would persuade Russia," Sikorski said.

"I am afraid Russian generals and even the Russian president continue to threaten us with the deployment of medium-range missiles," he said.

The United States has been negotiating with Poland and the Czech Republic to install 10 missile interceptors, which would not carry explosive warheads, and a radar system on their territories to expand its shield into Europe.

Russia sees the system, initially meant to be in operation by 2013, as a threat to its security, but Washington denies this and has even struggled to bring Moscow on-board with the system.

Russia had threatened to deploy Iskander missiles to Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave wedged between NATO and EU members Poland and Lithuania, if Washington did not halt the planned extensions.


But it was assuaged by Obama's decision to order a review of the multi-billion dollar project to see whether it is still technically feasible and cost effective. The time needed to conduct it is unclear.

Obama has also offered Tehran a "new beginning" to turn back the tide on decades of mutual distrust.

"Poland has taken a political risk in signing up with the previous administration," Sikorski underlined.

Last month, Polish Defence Minister Bogdan Klich said talks with Washington on the plan, and in particular the stationing of US Patriot missiles in Poland and

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other benefits Warsaw stood to gain, were ongoing.

But Czech officials have said they would be prepared to wait three years for work on the radar base to begin. Polls show the Czech public is largely opposed to the system.

Tauscher, currently being vetted for the job of undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, said it was more important to move ahead with short- and medium-range missile defences.

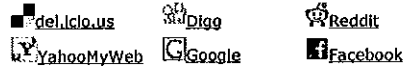
She said that Russia should be brought on board with NATO on such a system and that if the US shield proved feasible and cost-effective, it could be attached if this were acceptable.

"We need to re-assess," she said, noting that the US Congress believes the shield should not be deployed further until it has undergone "three or four more tests".

"The threat is short- and medium-range missiles targeted towards our forward deployed troops, and our allies in southern Europe," she said.

"We need to move in a NATO-ised way. Eventually we will develop a short- and medium-range system, one that will clearly share optics with Russia. We can certainly bolt on a long-range system once it has been tested."

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**MISSILE DEFENSE**

**Boeing And US Army Collaborate On Space And Missile Defense Research**



Huntsville AL (SPX) Mar 20, 2009  
 Boeing and the U.S. Army's Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command (SMDC/ARSTRAT) have launched a joint research-and-development effort to coordinate and fuse multiple types of sensor data in a secure environment for Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) and space situational awareness concept exploration.

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## US envoy unveils outlines of new Afghan strategy

2 days ago

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The United States will call for major efforts to build the Afghan police, fight opium production and boost farm aid in a new strategy to beat the Taliban-led insurgency, a US envoy said Saturday.

US representative Richard Holbrooke said the review would put Pakistan at the heart of efforts to combat the insurgents -- including Al-Qaeda fighters, drug runners and criminal gangs -- but stressed cross-border activity was ruled out as a "red line" for Pakistan's government.

His comments, at the Brussels Forum conference, come just two days before he meets EU and NATO officials in the Belgian capital in a last series of talks about the best way to tackle a problem fuelling international terrorism.

"It's a daunting task and let no-one underestimate the difficulty of it. The people of Europe and the people of the United States have to decide whether it matters to make this effort," Holbrooke warned.

He said the insurgents were operating out of bases in Pakistan, where a fragile government has recently taken over and the army is focused more on fighting India than insurgents in lawless tribal areas.

But he underlined that US and NATO-led forces in Afghanistan would not be crossing the mountainous border to hunt down insurgents, even though US drones have launched missiles at fighters crossing over.

"The heart of the problem for the West is in western Pakistan. But there are not going to be US or NATO troops on the ground in Pakistan. There is a red line for the government of Pakistan and one which we must respect," he said.

Holbrooke also said that the United States has appealed to its allies to help train thousands more Afghan police.

"The Afghan national police are an inadequate organisation riddled with corruption," he said. "We know they are the weak link in the security chain, so we have to figure out a way to increase the size and make them better at the same time."

The European Union agreed last year to double the size of its EUPOL police mission there to some 400 police, law enforcement and justice experts, but the force has been criticised for being too small.

On Thursday, six EU nations agreed to allow their joint gendarmerie team to be used to help bolster the Afghan police. Turkey could also be involved, but the plan still has to be endorsed by the bloc.

Holbrooke said an initial assessment that the Afghan police should grow from 78,000 now to 82,000 had fallen well short of reality, but he played down press reports that 400,000 police would be needed.

He also announced a revamp of US efforts to combat the Afghan opium trade, which has proved a major source of funds for the insurgency.

"The United States alone is spending over 800 million dollars a year on counter-narcotics. We have gotten nothing out of it, nothing," he said. "It is the most wasteful and ineffective programme I have seen in 40 years."

"We want to re-examine it top to bottom," he said.

According to US government figures last month, Afghanistan remained the world's largest opium poppy producer, despite a 19-percent drop in cultivation last year, and it still supplies 90 percent of the world's heroin.

Holbrooke also said the administration would focus heavily on agriculture reform.

He said the plan was to implement "a very significantly expanded agricultural sector job-creation set of programmes -- irrigation, farmer to market roads, market places, seed."

"This is an area of great promise, rebuilding the Afghan economy is critical," he added.

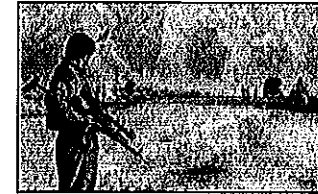
The EU has spent some eight billion euros (11 billion dollars) in Afghanistan for the 2001-2010 period, but Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said the 27-nation bloc can do much more for the economy there.

"Until 2013, we have something like 40 billion euros for all our external activities. We are spending 160 million of that on Afghanistan per annum, that's not going to do the job," he said.

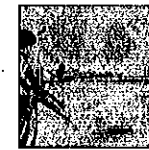
"Europe is the largest economy on earth. We are a developmental super-power," he said.



Photo 1 of 2



An Afghan policeman stops a motorcycle near the site of a suicide attack outside Bagram Air base



Map



22.03.2009

## Poland Urges US to Stick to Missile Shield in Europe

**Warsaw urged the United States on Sunday, March 22, not to give up on the Bush administration's plans to station a controversial anti-missile shield in Poland -- despite continued pressure from Russia.**

"We hope we don't regret our trust in the United States," Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said at the Brussels Forum conference to an audience of senior world politicians and experts.

Russia was enraged by the US missile plans -- which the last administration under George W. Bush said was needed to counter a threat from Iran -- but has welcomed the review ordered by President Barack Obama.

"I am afraid Russian generals and even the Russian president continue to threaten us with the deployment of medium-range missiles," Sikorski said.

But Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, who is expected to become the new undersecretary for arms control and international security in the new US administration, said it was more important to counter the real threat from short- and medium-range missiles, while the review takes place.

"We need to re-assess," she said, noting that the US Congress believes the shield should not be deployed further until it has undergone "three or four more tests."

"The threat is short- and medium-range missiles targeted towards our forward deployed troops, and our allies in southern Europe," she said. "We could certainly bolt on the long-range system once it has been tested and create a suite of systems that have complete coverage for everybody."

### Bitter opposition

Russia has been bitterly opposed to the deployment of a US anti-missile system in Poland and the Czech Republic ever since it was proposed by the former US President George W. Bush. The US had been negotiating with the two ex-Communist countries to install 10 missile interceptors, which would not carry explosive warheads, and a radar system on their territories.

Moscow saw the interceptor system, which was initially meant to be in operation by 2013, as a threat to its own security. Washington always denied this, emphasizing that the system was meant to counter missile threats from states such as Iran.

Russia, in turn, had threatened to deploy Iskander missiles to Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave wedged between NATO and EU members Poland and Lithuania, if Washington did not withdraw the missile shield plan.

But it was assuaged by Obama's decision to order a review of the multi-billion dollar project to see whether it is still technically feasible and cost effective. The time needed to conduct it is unclear.

### Fear of Russia

Warsaw sees the presence of a US shield on its territory as a symbolic security guarantee to

counter an increasingly assertive Russia.

Russia opposed NATO's admission of the three ex-communist countries -- Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary -- in 1999 and is campaigning strongly against Georgia and Ukraine, former Soviet republics, being allowed to join an alliance that Russians still view with deep distrust.

But Sikorski stressed that Poland had taken "something of a political risk" in signing an agreement with the previous US administration.

"When we started discussing this with the United States, the US assured us they would persuade the Russians that it was purely defensive and it would be a non-controversial decision," he said.

Last month, Polish Defense Minister Bogdan Klich said talks with Washington on the plan, and in particular the stationing of US Patriot missiles in Poland and other benefits Warsaw stood to gain, were ongoing.

Czech officials, however, have said they would be prepared to wait three years for work on the radar base to begin. Polls show the Czech public is largely opposed to the system.

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## NEWS AMERICAS

## World Bank: Global economy to dive

The global economy is set to shrink by one to two per cent this year, Robert Zoellick, the World Bank president has said.

Zoellick's comments, made at a conference in Brussels on Saturday, referred to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast that the world economy would shrink by one per cent this year.

"We in the Bank will be coming up with ours again soon, probably in the range of one to two per cent ... We haven't seen a figure like that globally since World War Two, which really means since the Great Depression," he said.

The World Bank chief has raised concerns over existing efforts to tackle the crisis, warning of the risk of doing "too little, too late".

He said that fiscal stimulus without addressing the roots of the credit crunch will be a mere "sugar high" with no lasting impact on the economy.

## Proposal reviews

Zoellick proposed that the Group of 20 major and emerging economies - whose leaders are due to meet in London next month - establish a review process to see whether further stimulus measures would be needed to kickstart recovery.

"Out of the G20 process one should have a monitoring system," he told the conference, suggesting a system of reviews on the impact of existing stimulus packages agreed by governments.

"Some of the packages actually withdraw stimulus in 2010. So given the uncertainty of this crisis I think you want to have a review process to see whether more would be needed in 2010."

Zoellick warned of a fall-off in world trade as countries retrenched into their domestic economies, and cited World Bank forecasts that up to 400,000 children would die this year as an indirect effect of the economic crisis.

"There are issues that go beyond the economics to political and social stability," he said. "If kids don't get proper nutrition in their early years, you lose a generation."

Zoellick cited some progress in persuading rich countries to help developing states struggling to cope with a slowdown that hit revenues from commodities exports and remittances from expatriate workers, but acknowledged there was resistance.

"It's hard at a time like this. Everyone is feeling stretched."

Source: Agencies



Zoellick said G20 nations should implement a system to review stimulus measures [AFP]

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**"There are issues that go beyond the economics to political and social stability"**

Robert Zoellick  
World Bank president

**boston.com**

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## ECB official : euro and US borrowing costs same

**AP** Associated Press

By Aoife White, AP Business Writer | March 22, 2009

BRUSSELS --A top European Central Bank official said Sunday that borrowing costs in the 16 euro nations were "no different" to the United States where interest rates are close to zero.

ECB governing council member Axel Weber also said Europe's response to the financial crisis would not trigger inflation and fears that a euro-zone nation would seek a bailout were "hugely exaggerated."

He said euro-zone short-term borrowing rates are below 1 percent -- lower than the headline rate of 1.5 percent -- while inflation was coming down to 1 percent.

"The real rates are actually no different, neither in the short-term nor in the medium-term, in the euro-zone relative to the U.S.," he told a conference organized by the German Marshall Fund think tank.

Weber, who is also the president of Germany's central bank, said the ECB still had "room to maneuver" on lowering the euro-zone's key interest rate which are "1.5 percent and heading down."

"The European response to this crisis will not be inflationary," he said -- days after a U.S. plan to spend over \$1 trillion to buy up toxic debt made some investors worry that this amounted to printing money and triggering inflation.

He said the ECB's efforts to make money available to banks offset some of the decline in banks' balance sheets as they write down the value of complex securities and derivatives. So far the extra money in the economy was not causing prices to rise, he claimed.

"Once it starts looking inflationary we will tidy the mess," he said of liquidity-boosting operations by the central bank for the 16 euro nations. "We know exactly when to start tightening" by raising the cost of borrowing to curb soaring prices.

Weber said higher bond rates that euro member countries such as Ireland and Greece are facing on billions of euros (dollars) in debt they are offering to investors "is a pricing issue" that reflected their track record of economic management and not a risk that their economies could collapse and they would not pay back loans.

Fears that these countries could need a bailout from other euro nations or the International Monetary Fund were unwarranted and "totally and utterly out of line with fundamentals," he said.

He said those countries had plenty of potential to pay off debt by hiking taxes in future. Ireland's low corporate tax rate has long been a sore point for Germany as it attracted investors away from higher-tax nations.

European Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Joaquin Almunia said European Union governments could not rule out a joint stimulus package that could benefit cash-strapped nations -- like Spain and Ireland -- that so far can't afford to spend to stoke growth.

"Given the present uncertainty, nobody will exclude that further decisions will be required," he said.

Almunia said the joint EU and IMF bailout for Latvia would be updated in the coming days and a bailout for Romania could be announced next week. He said he expected that more EU nations that don't use the euro may also seek bailouts.

EU leaders agreed Friday to double an emergency fund for EU members outside the euro-zone to euro50



billion. ■

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## US wants increase in Afghan police force

March 22, 2009

Obama administration envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke says the US will push for a very significant increase in the numbers of police in Afghanistan.

Holbrooke says increased recruitment and training of Afghanistan's national police will be a top priority of a revamped US strategy in fighting extremist insurgents in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

He says a much larger police force will free up NATO and US troops to concentrate solely on military actions. Holbrooke made the comments during a debate on Afghanistan on Saturday.

He says he is consulting with EU nations and others on how they could contribute trainers to boost the police force.

EU countries are discussing a plan to send a larger police training force to the country.

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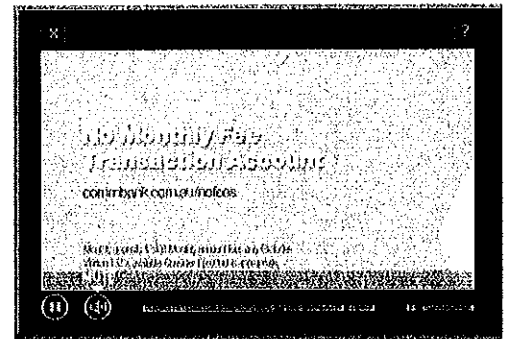
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## **No US-NATO force on Pak soil for curbing terror breeding grounds: Holbrooke**

**Posted: 3/22/2009 11:26:00 AM IST**

**Brussels, Mar.22 (ANI):** Raising serious concerns over the terror safe havens in Pakistan, which are being utilized by different terror outfits to carry out their activities across the world, the US's Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke has said that Pakistan it self should act to tackle this menace.

Holbrooke denied that the US or NATO forces would march-in to Pakistani territory from the Afghan side to take-up the issue.

The heart of the problem for the West is in western Pakistan. But there are not going to be US or NATO troops on the ground in Pakistan, Holbrooke said, adding: There is a red line for the government of Pakistan and one which we must respect.

Addressing the Brussels Forum Conference ahead of his scheduled meeting with the European Union (EU) and NATO officials here, Holbrooke said the Obama Administration has asked ally countries to train more and more Afghan security personnel to establish peace in the country.

The Afghan national police are an inadequate organization riddled with corruption. We know they are the weak link in the security chain, so we have to figure out a way to increase the size and make them better at the same time, The Daily Times quoted Holbrooke, as saying.

He also expressed concern over the increasing opium trade in Afghanistan which has emerged has the major source of financial funding for the extremists, while announcing a revamped US policy to combat the issue. (ANI)

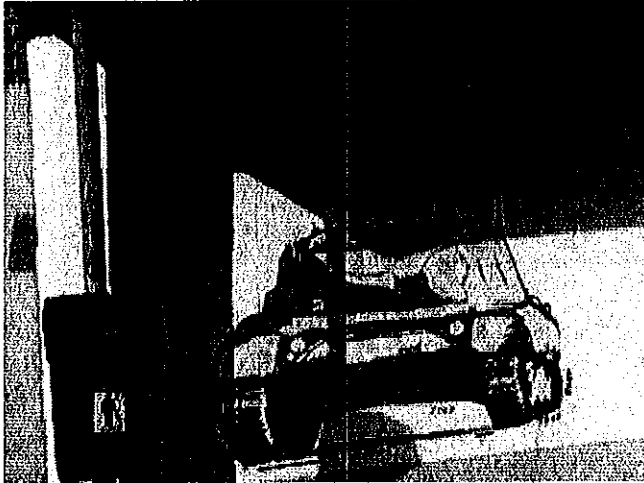
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## Avuncular American

### An expatriate view of America and the world from Europe by former diplomat Gerald Loftus

March 22, 2009

#### Brussels Forum 2009: NATO At Sixty



Blogging live from Day Three - and the close - of the Brussels Forum. In a few minutes, "NATO at 60," with Secretary General Japp de Hoop Scheffer providing opening remarks, will get under way.

NATO, of course, was already on the minds of panelists yesterday in the [discussion on Afghanistan](#) and the ["Conversation With Russia"](#) between the EU's Javier Solana (himself a former NATO Sec Gen) and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Also happening yesterday, pacifist protesters staged ["NATO Game Over,"](#) a quixotic attempt to scale the ramparts (well, chain link fence) of the organization's

headquarters here in Brussels. It was an uneven match: horse-mounted police led the counterattack, and those protesters who resisted arrest were led away handcuffed. But it was a beautiful sunny day on the fields outside NATO, making for congenial press coverage conditions.

This photo of political graffiti ("We Come In Peace"), taken from a commuter train stop near NATO HQ, captures the mood of the peace movement here, which symbolically carried NATO off in a coffin yesterday, 60 being - in their view, shared in certain sectors of political Europe - the overextended life expectancy of an organization set up to defend the West during the Cold War.



## BRUSSELS FORUM

But back to the Brussels Forum. Right now, [Jaap de Hoop Scheffer](#), looking more at NATO's future than its past accomplishments: "NATO has been a Transatlantic bargain," said Scheffer, "but was it viewed as a fair bargain

on either side of the Atlantic?" Americans sometimes resented paying more than the Europeans, who in turn chafed at American interference. But it has held together for six decades. Now Scheffer says "the bargain needs to be extended" to such areas as energy and cyber security.

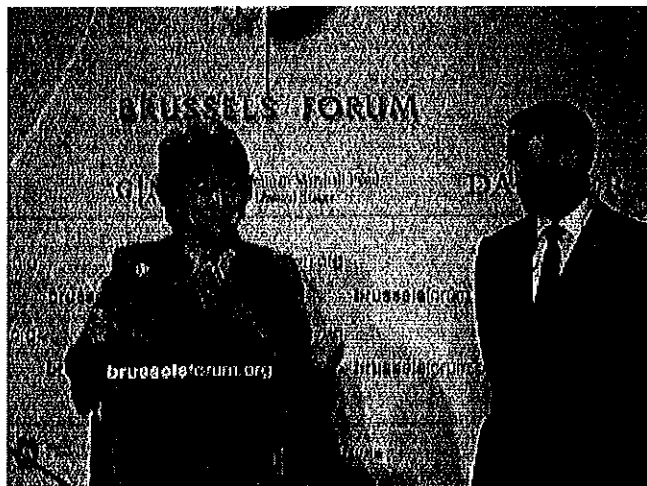
Operational realities - peace keeping, peace enforcement in Afghanistan - cannot be separated, are not even divisible "morally," said the Secretary General. Looking forward to the "big tent" Hague meeting, Scheffer stressed the need for coordinated action. "We need Russia, we need Iran" for regional stability in Afghanistan's neighborhood.

"Stabilize, secure, enable, and leave" - NATO's goals in Afghanistan, according to Canadian Defence Minister [Peter MacKay](#), who joined Scheffer in a panel discussion, along with Polish FM [Radoslaw Sikorski](#), and Congresswoman [Ellen Tauscher](#), Chair of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces and [probable](#) future State Department Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security, which, as moderator Jonathan Marcus of the BBC reminded the audience, was "the scary" John Bolton's old job.

Scheffer tried to justify NATO's branching out into esoteric areas like energy security (concern about the Arctic "high north" and free flows of oil) and cyber security (Russia's 2007 hacking of Estonia). To which Peter MacKay added concern over piracy on the high seas. There was general agreement on the need to modernize the organization to meet new security challenges, though moderator Marcus reminded the panel that many observers feel that NATO risks straying too far from its Article V core.

Given the world economic crisis and pressures on government budgets, will European members of NATO be able to expand defense spending? "This is a time to review priorities," said Sikorski, who said that Poland is "withdrawing from the 'easier' peacekeeping missions on the Golan Heights and in Chad to reinforce the Polish contingent in Afghanistan."

In the Q & A afterwards, the North American contingent of Tauscher and MacKay hedged somewhat on the notion of NATO as a cure-all for problems beyond collective security. That said, Tauscher said that emerging asymmetrical threats, especially in the cyber area, justified NATO focus. MacKay felt that while navigation in the melting Arctic is a legitimate question, NATO is not going to "do climate change." There are already other fora beyond NATO - NORAD and NAFTA in the North American context - for many of these issues. Neither addressed whether European-North American relations are adequately addressed in NATO fora and through what are essentially bilateral relations with the European Union.



Final discussion on the next NATO Sec Gen: MacKay has been spoken of as a potential replacement for Scheffer, but Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen has been touted as the front runner, and possibly the European *and US favorite*. MacKay sidestepped the question, but we were reminded by a questioner that Rasmussen - whose country became the focus for Muslim opprobrium after the publication of those infamous cartoons - may be opposed by Turkey, NATO's only Muslim member state and potentially a key player in a wider regional approach on Afghanistan.

Posted at 11:47 in [Defense](#), [Diplomacy](#), [Europe](#), [NATO](#) | [Permalink](#)


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## "Global economy will shrink 1-2 pct"

22 March 2009 | 20:49 | Source: B92

**BRUSSELS -- Speaking at Brussels Forum Saturday, World Bank President Bob Zoellick warned that the global economy will shrink one to two percent.**

Zoellick also said that the current unregulated stimulus plans around the world will result in another crash, according to a statement from the forum.

Despite a projection by the International Monetary Fund of 1 percent global economic decline, Zoellick said World Bank projections showed 1-2 percent decline, a drop not seen since World War II or the Great Depression.

He also projected trade to fall to a low not seen in 80 years. He emphasized the significant levels of uncertainty and noted that the wave effects of the developing world had not yet been felt.

Zoellick said injecting money into the economy without fixing the credit systems will inevitably lead to another crash, calling it a "sugar high."

"The issue now that is most important are the bad assets and recapitalizing the banks, and the reason I use 'sugar high' was that its like if you have to have stimulus, it gives you a boost, but unless you get the credit system working again, it will drop off," he said.

The fourth-annual Brussels Forum is a high-level meeting of influential worldwide leaders to discuss pressing transatlantic issues. Brussels Forum is organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) with the Federal Authorities of Belgium & the Egmont Institute, Daimler, and the government of the Czech Republic.

Zoellick said transatlantic leadership is possible, and desirable, but that it went beyond the transatlantic allies.

"It's a global system," he said. "This is a global problem."

With Europeans in the audience, Zoellick noted that the current crisis presents a challenge to the euro, a challenge to EU solidarity, and it highlights the division and issues between Western and Eastern Europe.

Zoellick used the example of Ukraine in describing the challenges facing Eastern Europe.

"You've had a political situation in Ukraine where a lot of the parties have been pulled apart as opposed to together," Zoellick said. "To deal with this crisis, you're going to have to have the President and Prime Minister work effectively together.

"I think the best way to do that is for the IMF, for the World Bank, but also for European leaders, to say, if you take these actions, these are the benefits you get."



02 апреля 2009 года  
Четверг, 18:27

## Russian foreign minister accuses EU of putting pressure on Belarus over Georgia's breakaway regions

№ 22.03 // 15:31 // [English](#)

**Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday accused the European Union of exercising pressure on Minsk over the recognition of Georgia's two breakaway regions.**

The minister was speaking at the annual Brussels Forum in the Belgian capital, which was attended by prominent politicians and experts.

"When my good friend Karel Schwarzenberg publicly says that if Belarus recognizes Abkhazia and South Ossetia it could forget about Eastern Partnership, is it blackmail or is it democracy at work?" *AFP* quoted Mr. Lavrov as saying.

Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg warned in February that if Minsk recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states, its participation in the European Union's Eastern Partnership program would be unlikely.

The leaders of the European Union member states, at a March 20 summit in Brussels, endorsed the program that is aimed at strengthening the EU's ties with six ex-Soviet states, which, apart from Belarus, include Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Moldova.

The program is to be launched at a summit in Prague on May 7. The European Union has not yet made up its mind on whether to invite Alyaksandr Lukashenka to the summit.

Moscow recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in August 2008 following Georgia's attack on South Ossetia to regain control of the breakaway region and Russia's subsequent military intervention.

Nicaragua has been the only country to follow Russia's lead in recognizing the independence of the two republics.

Belarus' House of Representatives is expected to consider recognizing South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states on April 2, when the first plenary meeting of its spring session is to be held. The House received a recognition appeal from the parliament of South Ossetia on

December 1 and a similar appeal from the legislature of Abkhazia a little earlier.

Mr. Lukashenka has said on many occasions that he has left this matter to the discretion of the parliament. // BelaPAN

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March 22, 2009

## Worries Voiced Over Global Economy

By BLOOMBERG NEWS

The global economy is on pace to shrink by 1 percent to 2 percent this year, the head of the World Bank said Saturday.

Speaking at the Brussels Forum on geopolitical problems, the bank's president, Robert B. Zoellick, said that 2009 would be a "dangerous year" as the global economy wrestles with its first recession in more than 60 years.

"We haven't seen a figure like that globally since World War II, which really means since the Great Depression," he said.

Global trade is set to slide the most in 80 years as demand dries up, with East Asia being the hardest-hit region. The World Bank has forecast a 2.1 percent decline in global exports this year, which would be the first such drop since 1982.

Mr. Zoellick's remarks came less than two weeks before heads of state from the Group of 20 industrialized and developing economies are to gather in London to discuss a coordinated response to the economic slump. Mr. Zoellick urged G-20 leaders to use the meeting on April 2 to create a review process to determine whether further stimulus measures are needed.

"There is a legitimate debate about how the stimulus will be used," he said at the forum.

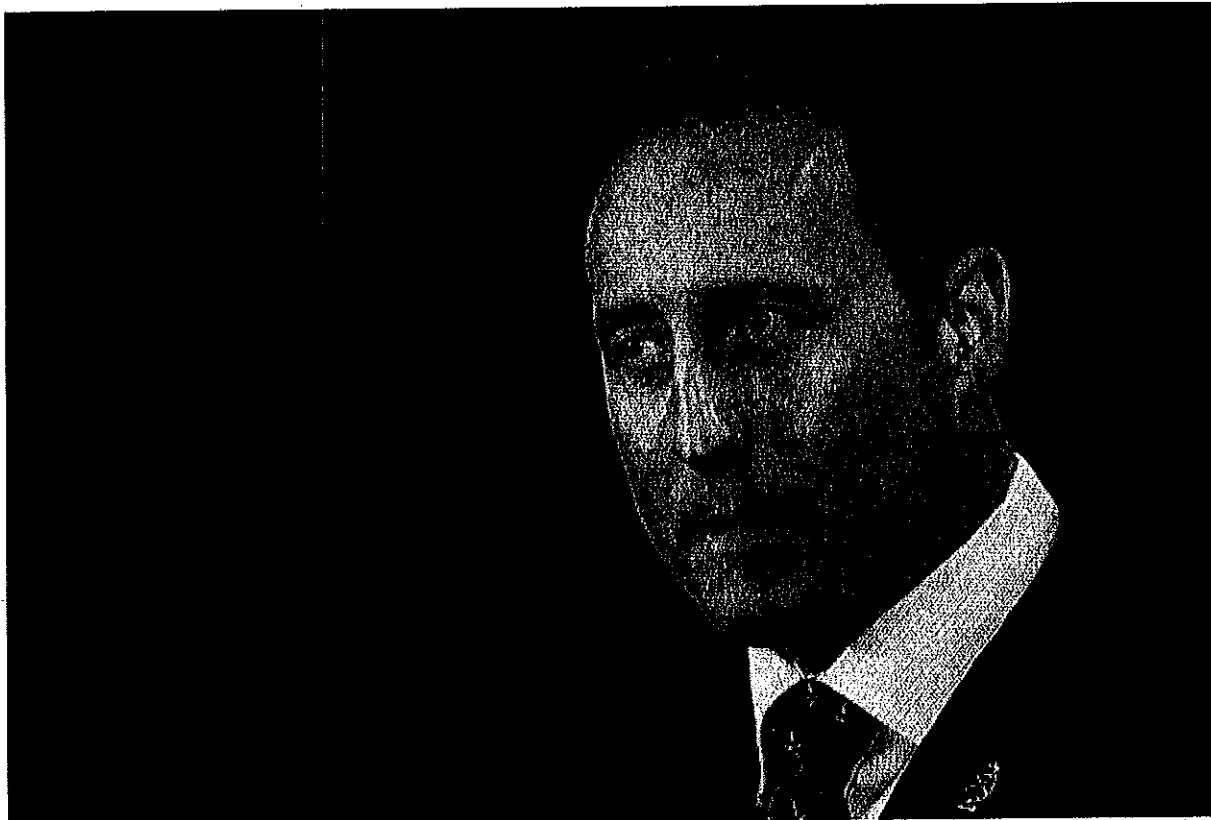
The European Union economy will shrink 3.2 percent this year, the International Monetary Fund said Thursday, cutting a January forecast of a 2 percent contraction. Japan's economy is forecast to shrink by 5.8 percent, according to the fund, while the United States is seen contracting 2.6 percent.

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## MacKay won't speculate on NATO job

BY PETER O'NEIL, CANWEST NEWS SERVICE MARCH 22, 2009



National Defence Minister Peter MacKay at a news conference in January 2009.

Photograph by: Mathieu Belanger/Reuters,

BRUSSELS -- Defence Minister Peter MacKay, at his last public audition for the top political job at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, offered a powerful reminder of Canada's sacrifices for European security amid reports that he won't get the alliance's top job because of his Canadian citizenship.

MacKay, speaking to an influential audience of American and European potentates that included Senator John McCain, spoke of his "pilgrimage" Saturday to the memorial at Vimy in northern France, site of Canada's most famous battlefield victory in 1917.

MacKay also spoke of the risk to all citizens in North America and Europe if Afghanistan, an "incubator of terrorism," falls again into the hands of extremists.

"Canada has 100,000 of its citizens buried on this continent. I called four parents and spouses yesterday as a result of recent casualties in Afghanistan," he said.

"There's so much at stake. We can't fail in Afghanistan, we can't fail in this important alliance. And the world's depending on us."

But MacKay, described Sunday as a "star" by a senior official in President Barack Obama's administration, isn't going to win the NATO post, according to media reports Saturday that cited unnamed U.S. and NATO officials.

A source confirmed to Canwest News Service Sunday that top U.S. officials are telling NATO that Washington is joining France, Germany and the United Kingdom in backing Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen to replace outgoing Dutch diplomat Jaap de Hoop Scheffer.

A new secretary general will be announced at the NATO leaders' summit in France and Germany April 3-4, and MacKay has no other scheduled public appearances.

Some analysts argue that Europe needs one of its own politicians to convince deeply skeptical Europeans to buy into Obama's planned "surge" in Afghanistan.

"I read newspaper accounts. I'm not going to get drawn into the speculation. I'll leave that to others," MacKay told a news conference after his appearance at the annual forum of the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

"All I can say is that Canada is a strong (NATO) contributor, and I think the fact that our nation is even being considered speaks mainly to the efforts of our armed forces, and I really salute their tremendous sacrifice and their tremendous commitment, professionalism, courage, and I include their families in that."

He was asked if the news agency reports indicate Obama has accepted the argument that he needs a European NATO leader to help him sell his surge plan.

"To quote Joe Biden, I don't think anybody's nationality should be a bar to any position, whether it be NATO or any other organization," he said, referring to the vice-president's comment at a recent NATO gathering.

He attempted to downplay suggestions he is pining for the job.

"Look, I learned quite some time ago not to have expectations in politics. I'll answer it this way. I have a tremendous amount of work to do with the Canadian Forces rebuilding effort that we've undertaken in an ambitious way."

MacKay appeared at the conference with Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski, like MacKay a dynamic and ambitious young conservative politician who is in the running for the NATO post. Sikorski has a similar geographic handicap because of Poland's tense relationship with Russia.

Both reiterated the complaints that countries like Canada and Poland are taking heavy losses in Afghanistan's dangerous southern area while others are stationed in relatively tranquil areas.

"As a representative of a country that is in the south, that is in the fray, what we ask of all participants (is) to look at what their capacity is and what their contributions are and marry up them up," MacKay said.

"If they can't send troops, if it's not boots on the ground, is it financial, is it the ability to do more on the humanitarian side?"

MacKay has been a regular attendee at the annual conference, which is viewed by insiders as a crucial forum of influential global power-brokers.

Among the heavy international hitters here this weekend were Richard Holbrooke, President Barack Obama's new special U.S. representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, several European prime ministers and foreign ministers, top U.S. senators, and World Bank President Robert Zoellick.

Among them was U.S. Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, who has been tapped to become Obama's undersecretary of state for arms control and international security.

While this weekend's media reports have contradicted a Washington Post report indicating MacKay was Obama's choice, she repeatedly praised Canada — and MacKay.

"As a North American, the Canadian defence minister is a star for us in our bilateral relationship," Tauscher, who wore a Canadian Forces pin on her lapel at Sunday's conference, told a news conference.

She was asked how NATO can expect to win hearts and minds in the Muslim world by choosing Rasmussen, who has been criticized for his refusal to apologize after a 2006 Danish newspaper cartoon depicting the Prophet Mohammed with a bomb-shaped turban.

Turkey, a predominantly Muslim member of the 26-nation NATO alliance, has voiced concern about the Dane's candidacy.

"My guess is that all of these things will be taken into consideration," Tauscher said.

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World

### World Bank chief on economy ahead of G-20 summit

Source: CCTV.com | 03-22-2009 08:49

World Bank President Robert Zoellick says donor nations could raise up to 15 billion US dollars if they used just one percent of their multi-billion stimulus plans for new aid to help poorer countries.

Zoellick suggests the money could be used for food programs and road building... as well as promoting crop growth in these countries.

The world bank chief made the remarks at a trans-Atlantic think-tank conference in Belgium on Saturday. The gathering comes ahead of the Group of 20 summit in London, early next month. Zoellick noted that the global financial crisis is hitting developing countries hard, leading to increased poverty and higher child mortality. He has also expressed his concern that the global economic downturn is likely to continue adversely impacting the amount of aid provided to poorer countries.

Editor:Zheng Limin

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**Zoellick warns 2009 a dangerous year**

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Source: CCTV.com

03-22-2009 19:12

Special Report: Global Financial Crisis

World Bank President Robert Zoellick warns that 2009 will be a dangerous year because the world economy is likely to shrink by 1 to 2 percent.

Speaking at a Trans-Atlantic think-tank conference in Belgium, Zoellick says the International Monetary Fund forecasts a decline of 0.7 percent that's the first time since 1945. He added there are still risks to the downside.



World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick speaks at the "Battling the Crisis: High Time for Transatlantic Leadership" session of the Brussels Forum conference staged by the German Marshall Fund think-tank in Brussels March 21, 2009. REUTERS/Eric Vidal

The World Bank chief called for more efforts to revive world trade and provide continued assistance to poor nations, which have suffered a lot in an economic crisis they are not responsible for.

Robert Zoellick, World Bank President, said, "There have been some improvements in the credit market with the actions of the Federal Reserve. Countries are starting to take action. But I stand by those words 'it's a dangerous year' and that's why the G-20 has to try to focus on things to be of support not only to the developed countries, but to developing as well."

Editor: Zhang Pengfei

*Related Video:*

WB: Developing countries need billions to fight crisis

## Saakashvili on Turkish-proposed Caucasus Stability Platform

Civil Georgia, Tbilisi / 22 Mar.'09 / 19:11

President Saakashvili said the Turkish-proposed Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform had no "clear shape" yet and consultations were on their "very early stage."

"We always welcome multilateral mechanism," Saakashvili said while speaking at a news conference on a sideline of a high-profile Brussels Forum late on March 21.

He, however, also added: "I think we should not create any mechanism that would exclude European Union or other big players in the region."

"I think there should not be exclusive regional mechanisms; but I think any complementarity to already existing European Union structures, open to any positive actors in the region will be welcome[d]."

He welcomed the approval of, as he put it, "a long-awaited" Eastern Partnership initiative by EU leaders on March 21 -- the program aimed at EU's closer cooperation with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Saakashvili said the initiative was "a step forward for my country and the countries of the region."

"What we are seeing now is not a new sphere of influence -- as one speaker put it this morning -- but we are having a new mechanism for stability, for development and eventually for prosperity of our region," Saakashvili said, referring to remarks made by Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, at the same forum earlier on March 21.

"We are accused of trying to have spheres of influence. What is the Eastern Partnership?" Lavrov said. "When my good friend [the Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg] publicly says that if Belarus recognizes Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Belarus could forget about Eastern Partnership. Is it threatening, is it blackmail or is it democracy at work?.. And then after those type[s] of statements we have questions - is it about pulling countries from the positions which they are supposed to take freely?"

At the same press conference in Brussels, President Saakashvili also welcomed EU leaders' decision to approve in principle proposals on the bloc's energy policy, including on Nabucco gas pipeline. The proposal, some details of which yet need to be hammered out, requires the approval of the European Parliament before becoming law, Reuters reported. Saakashvili said that Georgia "has already secured its own energy independence" and the country no longer experienced energy disruptions.

Saakashvili also said that compared to other countries of the region, Georgia was "doing relatively better, thanks to the fact that we have done reforms in the past."

"Right now despite Russia's occupation and Georgia's post-war troubles, the country is on the move; I think that in overall the mood of the people [despite] the problems is positive," he added.

## MacKay says focus is on Canada, not NATO job



**Defence Minister Peter MacKay gestures while speaking during a session at the annual Brussels Forum meeting in Brussels, on Sunday March 22, 2009. (AP / Virginia Mayo)**

*CTV.ca News Staff*

*Updated: Sun. Mar. 22 2009 10:25 AM ET*

Peter MacKay said Sunday his focus is on his responsibilities as defence minister and not on getting the job as NATO's next secretary-general.

Speaking to reporters in Brussels, MacKay said his priorities include his work reforming the Canadian military, as well as the mission in Afghanistan.

"I have a tremendous amount of work to do with the Canadian Forces," MacKay said, adding he was "very focused on my country."

Canada has 2,500 troops stationed in volatile southern Afghanistan. Canada's military involvement in the country is scheduled to end in 2011.

MacKay's comments indicate that the current front-runner for the NATO job, Denmark's Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, continues to gain support among the organization's 26 member states.

However, MacKay did call for an end to the tradition of choosing a NATO head exclusively from European countries, echoing previous comments made by U.S. Vice President Joe Biden.

NATO's top civilian job has been held by a European since the organization was created in 1949. The top military job is always held by a U.S. general.

The secretary-general serves as chairperson of meetings of NATO ministers and summits, while also overseeing day-to-day operations.

The job calls for the ability to build consensus among members on major security issues, which have increased in recent years.

For example, NATO troops are stationed in Afghanistan, which takes the organization well beyond its original scope.

Decisions must be made via a consensus among all members.

While Fogh Rasmussen is considered the front-runner to replace the Netherlands' Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, whose term ends at the end of July, both MacKay and Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski are also in contention.

On Saturday, a senior U.S. official indicated that Fogh Rasmussen was the favourite, but indicated that Washington has not decided who to support.

There is no written agreement that sets a term limit on the position of secretary-general. However, an informal agreement among NATO countries sets a limit at five years.

*With files from The Associated Press*



Daily Times - Site Edition

Sunday, March 22, 2009

**No incursions into Pakistan: Holbrooke**

*\* Envoy says heart of problem is in western Pakistan, but US and NATO-led forces would not cross the border*

BRUSSELS: The insurgents are operating out of bases in Pakistan, but the US and NATO-led forces in Afghanistan will not be crossing the mountainous border to hunt them, said the US envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan on Saturday.

Richard Holbrooke's comments, at the Brussels Forum conference, come just two days before he meets EU and NATO officials in the Belgian capital in a last series of talks about the best way to tackle a problem fuelling international terrorism.

Problem: "The heart of the problem for the West is in western Pakistan. But there are not going to be US or NATO troops on the ground in Pakistan. There is a red line for the government of Pakistan and one which we must respect," he said.

Richard Holbrooke also said that the US has appealed to its allies to help train thousands of more Afghan police.

"The Afghan national police are an inadequate organisation riddled with corruption," he said. "We know they are the weak link in the security chain, so we have to figure out a way to increase the size and make them better at the same time."

The US envoy also announced a revamp of US efforts to combat the Afghan opium trade, which has proved a major source of funds for the insurgency. agencies

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## 2nd UPDATE: Almunia: EU Doing What Needs To Be Done For Econ

Sun, Mar 22 2009, 13:09 GMT  
<http://www.djnewswires.com/eu>

2nd UPDATE: Almunia: EU Doing What Needs To Be Done For Econ

(Adds quotes, details.)

BRUSSELS -(Dow Jones)- The European Union is doing what is needed to help pull its economy out of a deepening recession, European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs Joaquin Almunia said Sunday.

The E.U. has rejected U.S. calls to expand its fiscal stimulus spending. The bloc in December agreed to spend roughly EUR200 billion to aid its economy. The U.S., by contrast, last month established a \$787 billion stimulus plan.

The E.U. is worried that increased fiscal stimulus will leave its member countries with soaring debt burdens. Under E.U. rules, countries must keep their budget deficits below 3% of gross domestic product.

"We cannot afford to spend the next two decades absorbing the debt" from fiscal stimulus spending, Almunia said during a conference in Brussels hosted by the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Almunia said revamped financial-market rules are the E.U.'s main priority going into the Group of 20 developed and developing nations summit in London on April 2. The U.S. is expected to use this meeting to press countries for more fiscal stimulus spending.

He said the bloc and the International Monetary Fund will announce "next week" a plan to provide balance-of-payments support to Romania. The E.U. and the IMF have already provided similar assistance to Hungary and Latvia, two states that have been particularly hard hit during the current downturn.

Almunia said the euro zone has instruments to help any state struggling financially.

"We have the instruments to avoid having this crisis become a default problem," Almunia said, without adding details.

European Central Bank governing council member Axel Weber, who appeared alongside Almunia at Sunday's conference, said no euro-zone country faces fiscal sustainability problems.

Rumors circulated on Friday that the ECB had created a contingency fund to rescue troubled euro-zone economies, including Ireland and Greece. But E.U. finance ministers and the ECB said Friday that no such fund has been established.

-By Adam Cohen, Dow Jones Newswires; +322 741 1486; adam.cohen@dowjones.com

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(END) Dow Jones Newswires

March 22, 2009 09:09 ET (13:09 GMT)

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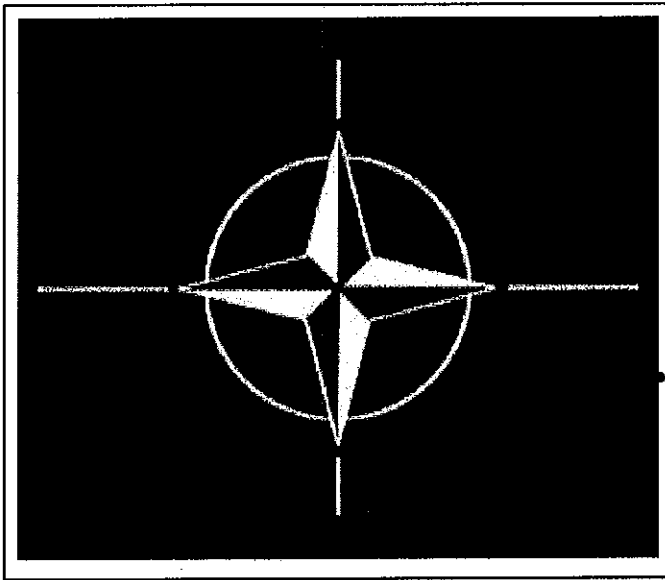
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# NATO: Canada's Minister of Defense not candidate

ennahar

22 March, 2009 09:36:00



**The Canadian Minister of Defense Peter MacKay, that the rumours gave candidate for Secretary General of NATO, appeared to throw in the towel while the Danish Prime Minister is now in favour, according to his remarks reported Sunday by the Canadian media.**

“I have a huge amount of work to do with the

Canadian Forces,” MacKay said in Brussels, adding that he was very focused on his country.

The Washington Post had reported in early March that the U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden campaigned for the appointment of Mr. MacKay to the post of Secretary General for Canada to recognize his important contribution in Afghanistan.

But Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen seems to have every chance to be the next Secretary General of NATO, the United States had decided to support his candidacy, according to statements Saturday of a diplomat from NATO to the press.

The function of Secretary General of NATO is traditionally a European, to counterbalance the weight of the United States in the military wing of the Atlantic Alliance.

The spokesman for the Canadian Minister has also assured that Mr. MacKay had never pretended to this post.

Ennaharonline/ M. O.

FINANCIAL TIMES All times are London time

## ft.com/rachmanblog

### John McCain, up close and impersonal

March 22, 2009 8:25pm

I stood about five feet from John McCain last night, as he gave an after-dinner speech at the German Marshall Fund's Brussels forum. It was odd to see him wandering around the hotel lobby alone and sitting quietly in seminars, and to think that if things had turned out differently ... As for the speech, it was about Afghanistan - and a pretty standard, if well-delivered, version of the case for sticking it out. According to McCain, Nato's credibility is on the line, we can't afford to lose, if we do then the Taliban will come back to power, terrorists will roam wild and free. But we need to level with the public or there will be a backlash. This is going to take years, there will be an upsurge in fighting initially, it's going to be really difficult. Or as Winston Churchill once put it, "I have nothing to offer you, but blood, toil, tears and sweat." Except at the Brussels forum, there is also a rather nice pastry desert.

Standing in the front row while McCain spoke was none other than his pal, Misha Saakashvili, the president of Georgia. In fact, it was something of a coup for the organisers to have both Saakashvili and Sergei Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, at the same event. Lavrov was brusque, aggressive, confident and even funny - in a sinister sort of way. As for Saakashvili, he was more relaxed than I would have imagined given the external and internal assault he has recently been under. And he certainly still has firm supporters. McCain is a long-time backer. But I was struck that Richard Holbrooke, now very senior in the State Department, also spoke very warmly of him.

The forum itself was a bit of a two-headed beast. There were lots of political sessions on the usual subjects: Nato, Afghanistan, Russia, climate change, Asia rising etc. And there were quite a few sessions on the economic crisis. I chaired one with Robert Zoellick, the president of the World Bank. But while the news out of the economic sessions was pretty dire, this didn't seem to impinge much on the deliberations of the political types. As far as they were concerned, it seemed to be geo-politics as normal. But not for much longer, I think.

March 22, 2009 8:25pm in Media | 62 comments

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#### Comments

Sort by oldest first | Sort by newest first

1. But while the news out of the economic sessions was pretty dire, this didn't seem to impinge much on the deliberations of the political types. As far as they were concerned, it seemed to be geo-politics as normal.

..... But not for much longer, I think

it's a given that any change is first very much for the worst .

Posted by: jeannick | March 22 09:07pm | Report this comment

2. It had been mentioned previously the traditional intromission of the great poohbahh at NATO , the position is traditionally given to a suitably groveling European who has demonstrated enough " leadership " a code word in US diplomatic lingo for putting America interests before those of your country .

This year the chosen vessel was the Dane Rasmussen for torpedoing the Franco/German opposition to the Irak war , but an interesting conjunction is making Turkey the wild card

Danemark got bad press with the " Prophete cartoons " and this could make the live of NATO personnel not better in place like Afghanistan , also Rasmussen spoke against Turkey in Europe

There is the added spice that it would be some friendly signal to Moscow , the Danes have been consistently siding with the pro-Bush New Europeans since the US Navy is ritually pissing on the Bear leg .



 Print this page

## India major factor in resolving Afghanistan issue: Holbrooke

<http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/76920>

IANIS

Europe

Sun, 22 Mar 2009:

Brussels, March 22 (IANS) US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke has said India's role is 'critical' in resolving the Afghanistan crisis and President Barack Obama's administration 'closely consulted India every step of the way'.

'India, of course, is the great power of the region, the great emerging in an international context and its views, its role are a critical factor.

And so we consult India closely every step of the way,' Holbrooke told a security conference in Brussels Saturday, the EuAsiaNews reported.

Holbrooke said that he and US military chief Mike Mullen would visit New Delhi after the NATO summit (on April 3-4) was over.

The officials are expected to discuss the results of the strategic review of Afghanistan and Pakistan policy and find out areas where India can help resolving the insurgency problem in the war-torn country.

Holbrooke said the insurgents were operating out of bases in Pakistan, which is more interested in fighting India than insurgents in lawless tribal areas.

'They (Indians) are not part of the problem the way Pakistan is but they're certainly a major factor in resolving,' the US diplomat told the Brussels Forum, the high-level meeting of influential North American and European political, corporate, and intellectual leaders.

'The actual people who pose a direct threat to the countries represented in this room, the people who planned 9/11, who killed Benazir Bhutto, who committed the atrocities in Mumbai, who were terrorising Swat, who probably were associated with the attack on the cricket team in Lahore, who are associated with daily outrages - they are not in Afghanistan. They're in Pakistan. In the western so-called tribal areas, although it also extends down into Baluchistan,' said the US official.

'And you can't succeed in Afghanistan if you don't solve the problem of western Pakistan,' he stressed.

The starting point for the new US administration's approach to the region is going to be to treat it as an integrated whole, a single theatre of war, with very different rules on each side of the border, he said.

'We must recognise that the heart of the threat to the United States, to the European Union, to Australia, to many other countries in the world including India and, I stress, including Pakistan itself, comes from western -- the people in western Pakistan,' Holbrooke underlined.

The fourth Brussels Forum is organised by The German Marshall Fund of the US, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Daimler.

Participants in the three-day forum, which kicked off Friday evening, include heads of state, senior officials from the European Union, US Cabinet officials, Congressional representatives, parliamentarians, academics, and media.

## Obama Courts Taliban With Political Party

By IslamOnline.net & Newspapers

CAIRO — Hoping to turn the tide in the eight-year war, the Barack Obama administration is mulling a package to bring the Taliban into the Afghan political process, including allowing the group to field election candidates and form a political party.

"Insurgencies, like all wars...end when there is an agreement," William Wood, the outgoing US ambassador to Afghanistan, told The Observer on Sunday, March 22.

"There is room for discussion on the formation of political parties [or] running... for elections. That is very different from shooting your way into power."

Washington is also mulling changing the Afghan constitution to pave the way for talks with the Afghan movement.

The package also includes taking senior Taliban leaders off UN blacklists and possible prisoner releases.

Calls for peace talks with the Taliban have been growing as the group mounted attacks against foreign forces and the West-backed Kabul government.

Earlier this month, Obama called for talks with moderate Taliban leaders to help end the Afghan conflict.

The Taliban insist that there would be no talks until foreign troops withdraw from Afghanistan.

"They have said 'No start of negotiations without prior departure of foreign forces.' That's not serious. Let's get serious," said Wood.

Afghanistan's Ulema called Friday, March 20, for Saudi-mediated peace talks with the Taliban to restore stability to the violence-wracked Muslim country.

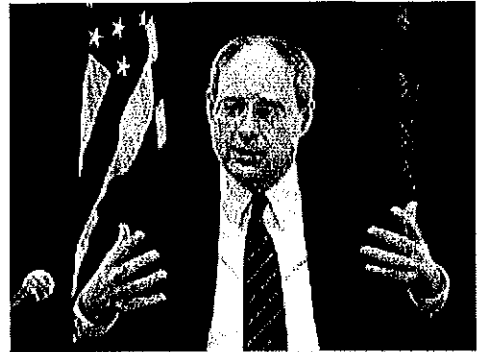
The Taliban, ousted by the US following the 9/11 attacks, have been engaged in protracted guerrilla warfare against foreign forces and the Kabul government for the past eight years.

A recent report by the Senlis Council think-tank said Taliban has permanent presence in more than half of Afghanistan.

### New Strategy

The US shift comes as the Obama administration is set to unveil a new strategy to pacify the war-torn Afghanistan.

The new plan envisages the recruitment and training of a larger Afghan army and police force,



"There is room for discussion on the formation of political parties [or] running... for elections," Wood said. (Google)

reported Agence France-Presse (AFP).

"The Afghan national police are an inadequate organization riddled with corruption," US special envoy Richard Holbrooke told senior world politicians and experts at the Brussels Forum conference.

"The police aren't very good right now. We know they are the weak link in the security chain, so we have to figure out a way to increase the size and make them better at the same time."

The plan also envisages stepping up civilian aid efforts and embarking on ambitious diplomacy across the region.


Polls show Obama's current popularity gives him the leverage to increase US involvement in Afghanistan, but reveal that support for the war may be soft and prone to erosion if the new strategy fails.

Sixty-three percent of those questioned last month in a CNN/Opinion Research poll supported sending more troops to Afghanistan.


But only 47 percent supported the war and 51 percent were against.

In a USA Today/Gallup poll this month, 42 percent said it had been a mistake to send US forces to Afghanistan, up from 30 percent a month ago.






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8 April 2009

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Photo: AP

## Russia voices mistrusts for NATO, calls to replace it

22 Mar. 02:33 PM

Russia is unhappy with NATO's dominant role in European security and its dealings with neighbors that used to be part of the Soviet Union, the Russian foreign minister said Saturday in Brussels, and called for replacement of NATO with OSCE. His suggestion however met no sympathy among European officials.

Europe's security should be run by the 56-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Lavrov was quoted by Associated Press as saying during the annual Brussels Forum security conference. "We should give that a try."

The idea has been repeatedly rejected in NATO capitals, which view the 56-member OSCE as unsuited for the task.

Lavrov repeating Moscow's demand for a new security compact, showed an enduring divide between Moscow and its former foes of the Cold War era, 20 years after the Iron Curtain came down.

Lavrov said NATO should commit to "legally binding" security arrangements through the Vienna-based OSCE to cure what he called the alliance's appetite "for more and more scenarios" of unilateral actions.

"NATO bombed Yugoslavia without any legal justification," Lavrov said. "This bothers us. NATO takes it upon itself to judge everyone and everything."

After the Cold War, the EU and NATO took in a dozen East European nations that had been part of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact.



### Features



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### Minority Opinion



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### Markets

USD / RUR	33.7781
EUR / RUR	44.4993
RTS Index	760.27
RTS-2 Index	543.92
RTS Consumer & Retail Index	97.79

However, EU foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, rebuffed Lavrov's calls, insisting that existing bodies like the NATO-Russia Council could do the job.

"The security of Europe has schemes, has organizations, has structures and they are working properly," he was quoted by AFP as saying.

"There is not a big need to put down the structures of security."

He also added that the NATO security arrangement whereby the United States is the key guarantor of European security "was a very intelligent setup."

"If there is someone who doesn't feel comfortable, he has the right to say it," he said. "I think the Americans and the Europeans are ready to engage the Russians and make them comfortable."

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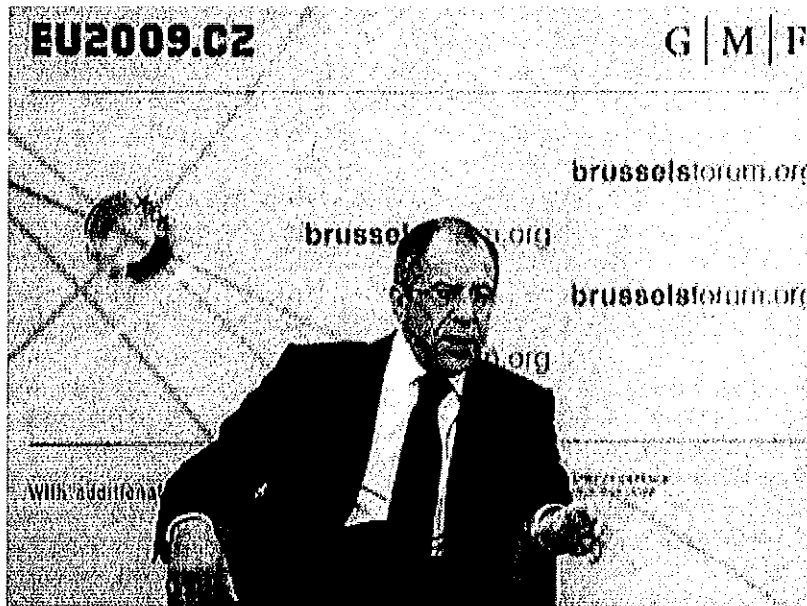


Photo: Reuters

## Russia downplays Iran's nuclear threat, preaches respect for the republic

22 Mar, 02:06 PM

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, said Saturday, there was no proof that Iran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon and urged the West to respect and reach out to the Islamic republic.

"There is no proof that Iran even has decided to make a bomb," he was quoted by AFP as telling the Brussels Forum conference, alongside EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, who on behalf of world powers has led talks to curb Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

Lavrov said the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), was best placed to monitor Iran's activities and establish whether it might try to covertly develop a weapon under the disguise of a civilian programme.

Lavrov said that "as long as the IAEA works in Iran," real concerns it may develop a bomb could be allayed, AFP added.

Uranium enrichment, a process that the IAEA monitors, is used to make fuel for a nuclear reactor, but at highly refined levels, it can serve to produce the core of an atomic weapon.

"To change it to the weapon grade uranium, you need to do manipulations which would be immediately known by cameras," Lavrov said.

His comments come after US President Barack Obama issued a video message to Iran, offering to open a new chapter in relations with the Islamic Republic. The two nations have not had diplomatic ties since 1980.

"This is an example of how people should be self critical even at the top," Lavrov noted about the message.

"Iran must be engaged as a constructive part of the solution and not of the problem," he said.

"It's negotiations, it's respect and it's engagement of Iran in all the areas... including security dialogue with Iran on all the issues in the Middle East, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon."

Russia, a member of the United Nations Security Council, has generally resisted the hard-line approach against Iran, taken by former US president George W. Bush, and is actually helping Tehran build a nuclear power station.

# MOSNEWS.COM

## Russia deliberately unhelpful on Iran nuclear issues - Senator McCain

22 Mar, 02:06 PM

US Senator John McCain, blamed Russia on Saturday for not joining in the international efforts to restrain Iran's nuclear ambitions, and also for failing to stabilize its relationship with Georgia. At a meeting in Brussels, the senator ruled out the possibility of admitting Russia to NATO.

"I think the Russians can help," McCain was quoted by Bloomberg as telling reporters Saturday at the Brussels Forum meeting of leaders from North America and Europe in Belgium. "I have not seen any Russian actions to help" in Iran. "I have seen no sign" that Iran has backed off its nuclear ambitions, he said.

McCain spoke ahead of a scheduled meeting between Russian President Dmitri Medvedev and US President Barack Obama in London on April 1st. Obama is seeking Kremlin support for his policies, including ones on Afghanistan and Iran. US Vice President Joe Biden, said in February it was time to "reset" relations with Russia after they were frayed by the insistence of George W. Bush to deploy an eastern European missile defense system during his presidency.

McCain criticized other recent Russian foreign policy actions, saying he does "take exception" to a failure by leaders in Moscow to adhere to a November peace agreement with Georgia, brokered by French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

"I still hope we can publicly commit to democracy in Georgia and Ukraine," McCain said. "We want freedom and democracy for every nation of the world."

McCain said he doesn't think Russia meets the democracy requirements to qualify as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and that he would be "reluctant" to endorse its membership. He rejected Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's suggestion that NATO should be replaced by the 56-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Print this article 



## India not part of Afghan problem: Richard

NDTV Correspondent

Sunday, March 22, 2009 (Brussels)

US special representative to Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke has said that India is not part of the problem the way Pakistan is.

However, he added that India as well as Pakistan are certainly a major factor in resolving the Afghanistan crisis.

Speaking at a conference in Brussels, Holbrooke said, "The people who planned 9/11, who killed Benazir, who committed the atrocities in Mumbai, who probably were associated with the attack on the cricket team in Lahore... are not in Afghanistan. They're in Pakistan."

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# Press Trust Of India

INDIA'S PREMIER NEWS AGENCY

'Heart of the threat' to US, India at west Pakistan: Holbrooke

London, Mar 22 (PTI) The "heart of the threat" to the US and many other countries in the world including India lies at western Pakistan, a top American diplomat has said, insisting that the Afghan crisis cannot be resolved without addressing the problem of militancy in the restive tribal region.

The starting point for the Barack Obama administration's approach to the region is to treat it as an integrated whole, a single theatre of war, with very different rules on each side of the border, Richard Holbrooke, the US special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, told a gathering in Brussels yesterday.

"We must recognise that the heart of the threat to the United States, to the European Union, to Australia, to many other countries in the world including India and, I stress, including Pakistan itself, comes from western -- the people in western Pakistan," he said.

"The actual people who pose a direct threat to the countries represented in this room, the people who planned 9/11, who killed Benazir Bhutto, who committed the atrocities in Mumbai, who were terrorising Swat, who probably were associated with the attack on the cricket team in Lahore, who are associated with daily outrages -- they are not in Afghanistan. They're in Pakistan." He pointed out that these militants are based in western tribal areas "although it also extends down into Baluchistan." Success cannot be achieved in Afghanistan without solving the problem of western Pakistan, the envoy said. PTI

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**India has critical role in resolving Afghan crisis: Holbrooke**

PTI

Sunday, March 22nd, 2009 AT 12:03 PM

Tags: India, Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, US, Pakistan

**LONDON:** India is a "great power" and has a critical role in resolving the Afghanistan crisis, Richard Holbrooke, the US special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, has said.

Speaking at the Brussels Forum yesterday, Holbrooke said India is "not part of the problem the way Pakistan is but they're certainly a major factor in resolving" the situation in Afghanistan.

The Brussels Forum is an annual high-level meeting of the most influential political, corporate, and intellectual leaders worldwide to address pressing challenges facing both sides of the Atlantic.

Holbrooke said, "India, of course, is the great power of the region, the great emerging in an international context and its views, its role are a critical factor. And so we consult India closely every step of the way and on my first trip to the region I went to India."

He added: "The actual people who pose a direct threat to the countries represented in this room, the people who planned 9/11, who killed Benazir Bhutto, who committed the atrocities in Mumbai, who were terrorising Swat, who probably were associated with the attack on the cricket team in Lahore, who are associated with daily outrages -- they are not in Afghanistan.

They're in Pakistan. In the western so-called tribal areas, although it also extends down into Baluchistan."



# Press Trust Of India

INDIA'S PREMIER NEWS AGENCY

US seeking India's help in resolving Afghan crisis: Holbrooke

Prasun Sonwalkar

London, Mar 22 (PTI) Describing India as a "great power" which has a "critical" role in resolving the crisis in Afghanistan, the special US envoy for the region, Richard Holbrooke, has said Washington consults New Delhi "closely every step of the way".

Speaking at the Brussels Forum yesterday, he said India is "not part of the problem the way Pakistan is but they're certainly a major factor in resolving" the situation in Afghanistan.

The Brussels Forum is an annual high-level meeting of the most influential political, corporate, and intellectual leaders worldwide to address pressing challenges facing both sides of the Atlantic.

Holbrooke said, "India, of course, is the great power of the region, the great emerging in an international context and its views, its role are a critical factor.

"And so we consult India closely every step of the way and on my first trip to the region I went to India," the US special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan said. PTI

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INTERNATIONAL  
**Herald Tribune**

## Poland hopes U.S. will not let it down on shield

**Reuters**

Sunday, March 22, 2009

**BRUSSELS:** Poland said on Sunday it hoped the new U.S. administration would not abandon plans to station a missile defence system on its territory.

President Barack Obama's administration is reviewing U.S. security policy, including the missile shield plan. This has prompted speculation he might shelve a project that has angered Moscow, with which Washington wants to mend ties.

Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said Poland had taken "something of a political risk" in signing an agreement with the Bush administration to host the system.

"When we started discussing this with the United States, the U.S. assured us they would persuade the Russians that it was purely defensive and it would be a non-controversial decision," he told the annual Brussels Forum conference.

"We signed with the old administration; we patiently wait for the new administration, and we hope we don't regret our trust in the United States," he said, adding that Russia had continued to threaten to deploy missiles near Poland if the shield were deployed.

At the same event, U.S. Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, who is expected to be named the new U.S. under secretary for arms control and international security, said the missile system would not be deployed until it had been proven to work.

She said the current missile threat to deployed troops and southern Europe was from short and medium-range missiles, against which there was already a defence capability.

She said NATO needed to develop a short- to medium-range system, something that could involve cooperation with Russia.

"We could certainly bolt on the long-range system once it has been tested and create a suite of systems that have complete coverage for everybody," she said.

NATO member Poland has said it expects the shield project, designed to counter possible threats from what Washington calls rogue states such as Iran, to go ahead eventually after the review and hopes to complete technical talks next month.

Under the deal agreed last year, Poland would host 10 ground-based interceptors, and in return Washington promised to station a Patriot missile battery on Polish territory for a period before the end of 2009.

Warsaw sees that as a symbolic security guarantee to counter an assertive Russia, and U.S. and Polish diplomats say this will go ahead independently of any decision on the missile shield.

Russia opposed NATO's admission of the three ex-communist countries in 1999 and is campaigning strongly against Georgia and Ukraine, former Soviet republics, being allowed to join an alliance that Russians still view with deep distrust.

(Reporting by David Brunnstrom, editing by Tim Pearce)

*Correction:*

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Notes:

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## Turkey could block Rasmussen at NATO, official says

Sun Mar 22, 2009 9:10am EDT

BRUSSELS, March 22 (Reuters) - Turkey could block Denmark's prime minister from becoming the next NATO chief given concerns over his past stance on Turkey and a row over Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, a Turkish official said on Sunday.

Current secretary general Dutchman Jaap de Hoop Scheffer steps down on July 31. His successor is expected to be named at an April 3-4 NATO summit. NATO diplomats and a U.S. source said on Saturday Washington had told NATO allies it would back Anders Fogh Rasmussen as the next secretary general but getting Turkey to agree would be key.

A Turkish official said the Turkish position could be set in coming days, but Rasmussen was "talnted" in Turkey's eyes.

"It may come to the veto," he told Reuters. "We will have to see." NATO leadership positions are filled by consensus among the 26-nation military pact.

The official, who did not want to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue, said Turkey was riled that Denmark allowed a pro-Kurdish militant television station to broadcast from Denmark, and by comments by Rasmussen in 2003 saying that Turkey would never be a full EU member.

"Thirdly, the way that Denmark handled the cartoon crisis didn't go down well at all in Turkey," he said.

"The cartoon crisis has a larger dimension than just Turkey. At a time when NATO is going to assume added responsibility in Afghanistan and Pakistan, having a secretary general with such an objectionable approach to billions of Muslims is not the right approach to the Muslim world."

The cartoon row erupted in 2006 after a Danish newspaper cartoon depicted the Prophet Muhammad with a bomb in his turban were reprinted across the European media.

Rasmussen refused to apologise for the cartoons, which sparked riots and attacks on Danish embassies in several Muslim states, but which Western governments defended in the name of freedom of expression.

The Turkish official said Ankara would prefer to see Canadian Defence Minister Peter MacKay in the NATO job, noting Canadian political support for Turkey in the past.

Speaking on the sidelines of the annual Brussels Forum conference, Mackay refused to rule himself out of the job that has traditionally gone to a European, although he said he had a lot of work to do rebuilding the Canadian armed forces.

"Canada, by virtue of being a ... founding member of NATO is of course very interested in all aspects of NATO, including the leadership, he said.

At the same event, U.S. Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, seen as due to be named the new U.S. under secretary for arms control and international security, called Mackay "a star", but declined to say who Washington wanted in the job. (Reporting by Paul Taylor and David Brunnstrom)



## Ukraine welcomes NATO's plans to restart cooperation with Russia

**22/03/2009 17:32** KIEV, March 22 (RIA Novosti) - Ukraine's minister for European and international integration welcomed on Sunday NATO's willingness to resume cooperation with Russia.

Hryhoriy Nemyrya said at a meeting with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in Brussels that NATO's intention to resume cooperation with Russia was an important step towards strengthening security in Europe.

Scheffer announced NATO's decision to restart cooperation with Russia on March 5, after meeting with foreign ministers from the alliance's member states.

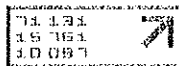
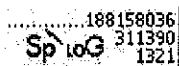
The work of the Russia-NATO Council was suspended by the alliance unilaterally in September 2008, after Russia's retaliation to Georgia's attack on South Ossetia in August.

Scheffer had also said NATO was ready to discuss a proposal by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on the establishment of a new European security system.

Russia's envoy to the military alliance, Dmitry Rogozin, earlier said the work of the Russia-NATO Council could resume later this month. He also said the "period of estrangement" in Russia-NATO relations is "largely behind us."

### other articles

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- 13:31** 17/03/2009      Russia's Medvedev claims NATO expanding to Russian borders
- 18:29** 13/03/2009      Russian envoy accuses NATO of trying to compete with UN



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## Russia hopes to enhance fight against terrorism with new treaty

**22/03/2009 18:41** BRUSSELS, March 22 (RIA Novosti) - Russia hopes to raise the efficiency of the fight against terrorism with a new treaty on security, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

"In a new treaty on security, we want to achieve a new quality of cooperation in the fight against terrorism, non-proliferation of mass destruction weapons and other threats and challenges that we face," Lavrov said at the 2009 Brussels Forum.

The Brussels Forum is an annual meeting of U.S. and European political and intellectual leaders to discuss topical global issues. This year, the three-day forum has focused on the global financial crisis, climate change, energy security and civil freedoms.

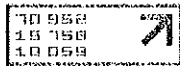
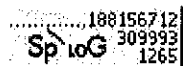
The initiative to work out a treaty on European security was put forward by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in June 2008.

According to Russia, a new treaty should stipulate respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of countries, inadmissibility of the use of force, guarantees for the provision of equal security, basic parameters of control over armaments and reasonable sufficiency in the development of military capability.

The treaty should also include the provision that no state and no international organization may have the exclusive right to maintain peace in Europe.

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# INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

## **Terrorist sanctuaries exist in FATA, Hoolbroke says**

Updated at: 0500 PST, Sunday, March 22, 2009

BRUSSELS: US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke has said India's role is "critical" in resolving the Afghanistan crisis and President Barack Obama's administration "closely consulted India every step of the way".

"India, of course, is the great power of the region, the great emerging in an international context and its views, its role are a critical factor. And so we consult India closely every step of the way," Holbrooke told a security conference in Brussels Saturday, foreign media reported.

Holbrooke said that he and US military chief Mike Mullen would visit New Delhi after the NATO summit (on April 3-4) was over.

The officials are expected to discuss the results of the strategic review of Afghanistan and Pakistan policy and find out areas where India can help resolving the insurgency problem in the war-torn country.

Holbrooke said the insurgents were operating out of bases in Pakistan wherein their sanctuaries exist, which is more interested in fighting India than insurgents in lawless tribal areas.

"They (Indians) are not part of the problem the way Pakistan is but they're certainly a major factor in resolving," the US diplomat told the Brussels Forum, the high-level meeting of influential North American and European political, corporate, and intellectual leaders.

"The actual people who pose a direct threat to the countries represented in this room, the people who planned 9/11, who killed Benazir Bhutto, who committed the atrocities in Mumbai, who were terrorising Swat, who probably were associated with the attack on the cricket team in Lahore, who are associated with daily outrages - they are not in Afghanistan.

They're in Pakistan. In the western so-called tribal areas, although it also extends down into Baluchistan," said the US official.

# the story

## US envoy: Afghanistan drug war a failure

03/22/2009 @ 5:51 pm

Filed by Stephen C. Webster

### Obama plans new agriculture reforms to aid Afghan farmers

US and coalition efforts to eliminate the massive opium poppy trade in Afghanistan have failed under tremendous waste, according to Ambassador Richard Holbrooke.

"The United States alone is spending over 800 million dollars a year on counter-narcotics. We have gotten nothing out of it, nothing," Ambassador Richard Holbrooke said, at the Brussels Forum conference.

"It is the most wasteful and ineffective programme I have seen in 40 years in and out of the government," the new US representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan told an audience of senior world politicians and experts.

Despite an alleged 19 percent decrease in opium poppy production in 2008, Afghanistan remains the world's largest producer of the drug.

Efforts to destroy poppy crops "hasn't hurt the Taliban one iota because whatever money they're getting from the drug trade, they get whatever they need whether we reduce the acreage or not," he said. ... By forced eradication we've all been pushing farmers into Taliban hands."

### Aerial fumigation

One of the eradication methods that was resisted by the US-backed Afghan President amid Karzai but put into place under President George W. Bush's State Dept. is aerial fumigation.

The Bush-era policy of spraying chemicals such as Roundup Ultra to eradicate marijuana, coca and opium poppies was called a "success" in Colombia under US Ambassador William B. Wood, whom the Colombians began referring to as "Chemical Bill."



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The policy of aerial fumigation, one of the widest anti-drug efforts in Afghanistan, began in 2008, just months after the Bush administration appointed Wood ambassador to the country.

Roundup Ultra, one of the most widely used pesticides in the world, has glyphosate as an active ingredient.

"Glyphosate-containing products are more toxic via inhalation than orally," reported the Journal of Pesticide Reform. "Inhalation of Roundup by rats caused 'signs of toxicity in all test groups,' even at the lowest concentration tested. These signs included gasping, congested eyes, reduced activity,' and body weight loss. Lungs were red or blood-congested."

Reported symptoms in humans include elevated heart rate, digestive difficulties, increased risk of miscarriage in pregnant women, severe lung irritation, dizziness and heart palpitations.

The chemical's makers deny its reported adverse effects on human health. However, in 2002, Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA) warned that aerial spraying of the chemical may pose a severe health risk to humans living near targeted sites.

### **A new path?**

Ambassador Holbrooke, speaking to the Brussels Forum, said the new administration plans a different mode of handling year-to-year bumper crops of Afghan poppy.

The administration under President Barack Obama -- who ordered a complete overhaul of strategy in Afghanistan, a review expected to be completed in coming days -- would focus heavily on agriculture reform, he said.

The plan was to implement "a very significantly expanded agricultural sector job-creation set of programs -- irrigation, farmer to market roads, market places, seed.

"This is an area of great promise, rebuilding the Afghan economy is critical," Holbrooke said.



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Thu, Mar 26 2009



# Danish PM Rasmussen wins US backing for Nato top job - reports

Sun, Mar 22 2009 16:12 CET by Alex Bivol 593 Views



1 of 1 Anders Fogh Rasmussen

Denmark's prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen edged closer to being named the next Nato secretary general after the US has decided to back his nomination, world news agencies reported on March 22.

"The United States has made up its mind. It will support Anders Fogh Rasmussen," Agence France Presse quoted an unnamed alliance diplomat as saying.

A report in the Financial Times earlier in March said that Britain, France and Germany have agreed to back the 56-year-old to become the alliance's next top chief diplomat.

Rasmussen has downplayed the media reports in recent months but has never officially ruled him himself out of the race to replace Jaap de Hoop Scheffer when the Dutchman's term expires in July, AFP said. Rasmussen has been Danish prime minister since 2001 and still has two and-a-half-years of his term left to run.

Traditionally, the Nato secretary general is an European, while the top military commander is from the US.

Rasmussen's support for US initiatives in Iraq and Afghanistan is valued by Washington, while the European members of the alliance appreciate his support for closer co-operation between Nato and the European Union.

All reports appear to agree that there remains a degree of uncertainty over Turkey's position on the issue, given how Rasmussen refused to apologise after a Danish newspaper published a series of cartoons in 2005, one of which depicted the Prophet Muhammad with a bomb in his turban, to spark an outcry in Muslim countries.

In another sign that consensus is slowly being built, Canada's defence minister Peter Mackay said that he was focused on continuing the reform of Canada's armed forces, although he did not formally rule himself out.

Another strong candidate for the job, Polish foreign minister Radek Sikorski, is seen as hampering Nato's relationship with Russia. Bulgaria's former foreign minister Solomon Passi, the only candidate to have put his name forward officially, is not seen as a serious contender.

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## India consulted on Af-Pak policy: Holbrooke

22 Mar 2009, 0000 hrs IST, TNN

NEW DELHI: As the US readies its strategic review of the Af-Pak policy, President Barack Obama's special representative for the region, Richard Holbrooke, told a security conference in Brussels that the US "closely consulted India every step of the way".

Holbrooke and US military chief Admiral Mike Mullen will be in Delhi to discuss the results of the strategic review and the steps forward with the Indian government on April 8.

While the strategic review is likely to be unveiled just before the "big tent" meeting on Afghanistan at The Hague on March 31, the contours of the review are becoming clear. The US will also have a presence at the SCO meeting on Afghanistan in Moscow on March 27, which is the first time US and Russia will be working together on this.

The focus of the review will be Pakistan -- to ensure that Pakistan does not provide the safe haven to the Taliban and Al-Qaeda that it has done for the past years. "The international terrorists that we are after, are in Pakistan, not in Afghanistan," said Holbrooke.

The core of the US concern as Holbrooke laid out is something that will gladden many Indian hearts. Describing the Taliban as the "outriders" for Al-Qaeda and its affiliates, Holbrooke took the most comprehensive approach to terrorism. "They are the same guys who did New York, Madrid, London and Mumbai, and even the attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore."

There will be a strong "civilian surge" as well. The counter-terrorism aspects will be ramped up and a more concerted effort on counter-insurgency in the south and east will be made with other alliance members, whose coordination so far has been indifferent at best.

There will be more emphasis on training on Afghan forces, both army and police. The idea will be that more boots -- and shoes -- on the ground will reduce civilian casualties, but more important, a trained police force will secure villages from the Taliban as well as leave the international force to concentrate on liquidating the core of the Taliban-al-Qaeda combine.

The other aspects of the review include ramping up the Afghan police force to well over 100,000. "The police aren't very good right now. We know they are the weak link in the security chain," Holbrooke said. The police training had been largely a European responsibility but they have failed miserably.

Another element will be building up the Afghan economy, specially its agriculture sector. Afghanistan is largely an agrarian economy, but this has been basically ignored in the reconstruction programme. There will be more roads, bridges etc, that will be part of the reconstruction, as well as more schools.

Pakistan will be asked to go after the Taliban and al-Qaeda top leadership who are now residing in places from Waziristan to Quetta and even Karachi. "There will be no international troops inside Pakistan," said Holbrooke, "but Pakistan has to deal with the terrorists."

Holbrooke and Afghan national security adviser Zalmay Rasoul said starkly, "Pakistan establishment has to stop supporting the Quetta shura" for the US-led plan to succeed. "The al-Qaeda is still out there. Bin Laden has been sending out more audiotapes than ever before. And make no mistake, the next al-Qaeda terror attack will be in Europe," Holbrooke said.

There seems to be little emphasis on the "moderate" Taliban. Instead, Holbrooke said there could be no negotiations with the Mullah Omar variety. Instead, there seems to be a shift towards the Indian and Afghan position that invites Afghans to join the process, leaving their guns.

This will put greater pressure on Pakistan, but Pakistan's bluff is being called -- that they don't know where the Taliban leadership is hiding. The Quetta shura is the core Taliban leadership led by Mullah Omar, who has increasingly been calling the shots among the Taliban. Just weeks ago, Baitullah Mehsud of the Tehrik-e-Taliban joined forces with two other Taliban leaders in Waziristan to fight under the leadership of Mullah Omar against the US.

In fact, the peace deals by the Pakistan government in Swat and elsewhere are coming under critical scrutiny, because they are now being seen as being holding measures that gives the Taliban time to regroup and prepare to fight the coming "surge" in Afghanistan.

But ultimately, there's the small matter of security. And as the US review will stress, Pakistan needs to be solved before

Afghanistan can be solved.

Where will India fit in? Certainly, India will be part of the "regional approach" as will Iran, China et al. India has successfully kept Kashmir out of the equation, and Holbrooke himself was careful to stress that Kashmir was between the Indians and Pakistanis. But there will be a greater clamour to ask India to scale down its troop positions on the western border. Pakistan moved large numbers of its troops to the India border after Mumbai attacks -- it now says it will move if India scales down, and India says Pakistan-based terror groups continue to target India in the run-up to elections. Besides, with little satisfaction from Pakistan on the investigations, India is in no mood to give any quarter.

European countries unwilling to put boots are being asked to send trainers and other civilian personnel to Afghanistan as well as to loosen purse strings. This might be difficult in the meltdown but it's becoming increasingly clear that the US and NATO will not be allowed to "fail" in Afghanistan. France will add troops, Belgium will up its presence, Japan will be paying the salaries of every Afghan policeman for the next 6 months... the US is counting its allies in this battle.

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## Lavrov: Russia intent on fighting terror

Published: March 22, 2009 at 1:33 PM

BRUSSELS, March 22 (UPI) -- Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said at an international forum in Belgium that his country wants a treaty that is tough on terrorism.

Lavrov said at the 2009 Brussels Forum that Russia is seeking a new international security treaty that will limit acts of terrorism, as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, RIA Novosti reported Sunday.

"In a new treaty on security, we want to achieve a new quality of cooperation in the fight against terrorism, non-proliferation of mass destruction weapons and other threats and challenges that we face," the foreign minister said.

The three-day forum taking place in Belgium represents an annual meeting of top U.S. and European political and intellectual minds. The financial crisis facing most of the world is among this year's scheduled discussion points, along with climate change, energy security and civil freedoms.

RIA Novosti said Russia is seeking a treaty that will honor a country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, along with preventing any single power from becoming the sole peace guardian for Europe.

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## U.S. official says role of India "critical" in resolving Afghan problem

NEW DELHI, March 22 (Xinhua) -- The United States special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke said on Saturday that the government of President Barrack Obama regards India's role "critical" in resolving the Afghan problem, reported the Indo-Asian News Service Sunday.

The news service quoted Holbrooke as saying at an international security conference in Brussels that the U.S. government is consulting India on Afghanistan "every step of the way".

Holbrooke also said that he and U.S. military chief of general staff Mike Mullen will visit New Delhi after the NATO summit to be held early April in Strasbourg.

Holbrooke told the Brussels Forum, the high-level meeting of influential North American and European political, corporate, and intellectual leaders, that while India is not "part of the problem (of Afghanistan)", it is "certainly a major factor in resolving," according to the report.

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## MacKay out of NATO leadership race

3 days ago

OTTAWA (AFP) — Canadian Defense Minister Peter MacKay appeared on Sunday to call off his rumored bid for the NATO leadership, ceding crucial US support for the job to Denmark's prime minister.

"I have a tremendous amount of work to do with the Canadian Forces," MacKay was quoted by Canadian media as telling reporters in Brussels, adding he was "very focused on my country."

MacKay's candidacy was reportedly supported by US Vice President Joe Biden as a reward for Canada's combat mission in Afghanistan.

However, on Saturday, an alliance diplomat said the United States would support Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen to succeed Dutch diplomat Jaap de Hoop Scheffer as NATO's top civilian official.

NATO secretaries general are chosen through an informal process well away from the public eye, but like all decisions taken by the world's biggest military alliance, they are done unanimously.

The United States is the biggest and most powerful of the 26 allies that make up the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and its backing for the Danish premier would certainly place him as favorite for the post.

However, Turkey is said to be resisting Rasmussen's candidacy.

MacKay's spokesman has said he never sought the job.

However, both MacKay and Biden also downplayed an unwritten rule that the secretary general must come from a European nation in exchange for the top NATO military post always being held by a US national.

When asked about Washington's position, a senior US official would only say: "A number of people at the alliance are looking at Rasmussen as a leading candidate but there's been no decision yet, and it takes a consensus."

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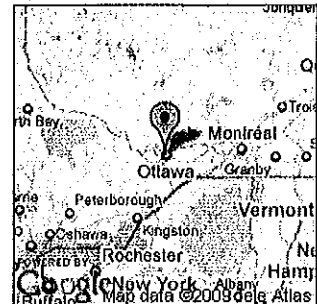
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## US appeals to allies to help boost Afghan police

(BRUSSELS) - The United States has appealed to its allies to help train thousands more Afghan police, the US regional envoy said Saturday, describing the corrupt force as the weak link in the security chain.

New US representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke also said that previous estimates of just how many police the insurgency-wracked country would need proved vastly misguided.

"The Afghan national police are an inadequate organisation riddled with corruption," Holbrooke told senior world politicians and experts at the Brussels Forum conference.

Holbrooke called for "a major effort to increase the size of and improve the quality of the police.

"The police aren't very good right now. We know they are the weak link in the security chain, so we have to figure out a way to increase the size and make them better at the same time."

The EU agreed in May 2008 to double the size of its EUPOL police mission in Afghanistan, to some 400 personnel from around 200 police, law enforcement and justice experts initially.

The aim of the mission, led by Germany, is to help build the Afghan police force, and mentor and advise interior ministry officials but the operation has been criticised as too small by the United States and some NATO members.

On Thursday, six EU nations agreed to allow their joint paramilitary police team to be used to help bolster the Afghan police. Turkey could also be involved, but the plan still has to be endorsed and set afoot by the bloc.

The call comes after US President Barack Obama ordered a complete review of strategy in Afghanistan, as the US and its NATO allies struggle to halt the Taliban-led insurgency, much of it fuelled from rear-bases in Pakistan.

Holbrooke said that an initial assessment that the Afghan police should grow from 78,000 now to 82,000 over three or four years had fallen well short of reality, but he played down press reports that 400,000 police would be needed.

"I thought that the numbers were not the ones that will be exactly ended up with, they were speculative," he said.

"The president has not made final decisions on that, nor have we had final discussions with our close friends and allies, with NATO and the government of Afghanistan, but a significant increase for sure."

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## Opium fight a huge waste of money, US envoy admits

March 23, 2009 - 12:08AM

BRUSSELS: US efforts to combat the Afghan opium trade, a main source of funds for Taliban-led insurgents, have been wasteful and Washington plans to revamp its strategy, a regional envoy says.

"The United States alone is spending over \$US800 million [\$1.17 billion] a year on counter-narcotics. We have gotten nothing out of it, nothing," Richard Holbrooke told senior world politicians and experts on Saturday.

"It is the most wasteful and ineffective program I have seen in 40 years in and out of the government," the new US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan told the Brussels Forum conference.

"We are going to try to reprogram that money. About \$US160 million of it is for alternative livelihoods, and we would like to increase that. We want to re-examine it top to bottom."

The US Government said last month that Afghanistan remained the world's largest opium poppy producer, despite a 19 per cent drop in cultivation last year.

Afghanistan supplies 90 per cent of the world's heroin, much of which emanates from the southern province of Helmand, where insurgents are waging a bloody campaign against Western and Afghan forces. Several districts are outside government control and involved in opium poppy cultivation, which has evolved into a highly lucrative trade for the insurgents.

Mr Holbrooke said some crops had been destroyed but this had no real impact on the insurgents, and may have even been counter-productive.

"It hasn't hurt the Taliban one iota because whatever money they're getting from the drug trade, they get whatever they need whether we reduce the acreage or not," he said. "And by forced eradication we've all been pushing farmers into Taliban hands."

He said the US would focus heavily on agriculture reform. The President, Barack Obama, has ordered an overhaul of strategy in Afghanistan, a review expected to be completed in coming days.

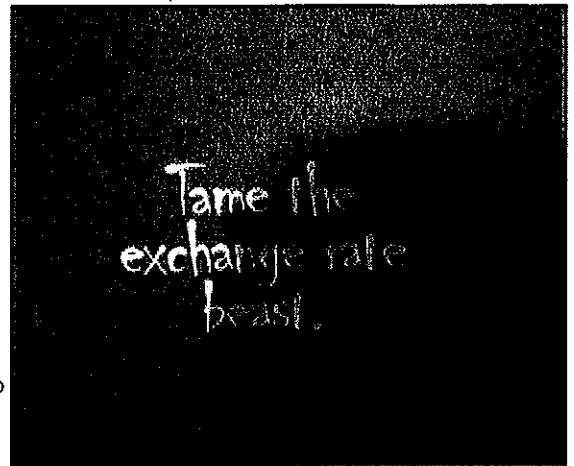
Mr Holbrooke said it was planned to implement "a very significantly expanded agricultural sector job-creation set of programs - irrigation, farmer to market roads, market places, seed".

"This is an area of great promise. Rebuilding the Afghan economy is critical," he said.

**Agence France-Presse**

This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/world/opium-fight-a-huge-waste-of-money-us-envoy-admits-20090322-9511.html>

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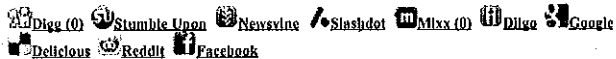




## Jaw, Jaw for Multi-lateral War, War

Posted on March 23rd, 2009 by [Freddy Gray](#)

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Follow [this link](#) for a video of John McCain speaking about Afghanistan to the Marshall Fund's Brussels Forum on Saturday night.

It's predictable stuff: Afghanistan is the vital battleground for human rights and democracy; we need more NATO/U.S. commitment; terrorists see negotiation as a sign weakness; we can only deal with the Taliban by winning; we mustn't give in to "minimalist" temptations on foreign-policy.

What is odd is that, although McCain fulminates against the "minimalists," it is hard to see who exactly these pesky less-war advocates are. You might find some on the blogosphere and elsewhere; but not, it seems, at the Brussels Forum.

Judging from the video clips, it looks as if all the power-shakers at this important conference agreed with a more-not-less strategy, including, emphatically, Richard Holbrooke, the Obama administration's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. McCain's rousing now-is-not-the-moment-for-doubt rhetoric was merely playing to the gallery. In fact, that's probably why he was invited as keynote speaker — to provide a little militarist backbone to an internationalist gathering of bureaucrats determined to up the blood stakes in and around the Hindu Kush. (Holbrooke was honest enough, in fact, to say that he didn't know what "minimalist goals" meant.)

Filed under: [War](#)

### 6 Responses to "Jaw, Jaw for Multi-lateral War, War"

1. **Bill Pearlman**, on [March 23rd, 2009 at 3:21 pm](#) Said:

Correct me if I'm wrong but is not the president the 'black messiah' himself. The preferred candidate of Hamas. What are you worried about.

2. **Dennis Dale**, on [March 23rd, 2009 at 4:20 pm](#) Said:

Bill's designers forgot to write the question mark into his program.

For what it's worth, Holbrooke was on the BBC this morning selling the president's strategy while seeking to lower expectations for Afghan democracy. This latter part would be McCain's so-called "minimalist" strategy. Look for him and others to cite Iraq's "success" as reason not to alter our original goals in Afghanistan—as if our original designs there weren't abandoned in favor of arming ethnic factions against one another.

3. **Philip Giraldi**, on [March 24th, 2009 at 8:56 am](#) Said:

It is clear that the Obamas realize that a purely military solution will not work in Afghanistan, so that is not really being considered except by the usual neocon crowd and wingnuts like McCain.

There are at least two other conflicting narratives coming out of the new administration. One, being put out by Holbrooke and Mullen, is that staying the course with more troops to provide better security to enable reconstruction of the country is the way to go (Iraq lite). That approach assumes that the situation has not deteriorated to such an extent that any reconstruction is impossible, which would seem to be what observers on the ground are saying. It would require a major purge of the current Afghan government, which would be difficult to engineer and would have many unintended consequences. It also does not really address the corruption and narco-trafficking problems.

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## Danish PM front-runner for NATO top spot

By SLOBODAN LEKIC and JAN M. OLSEN — 1 day ago

BRUSSELS (AP) — A Dane who infuriated Muslims by speaking out in favor of freedom of speech during an uproar over cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad and who sent troops to Iraq and Afghanistan is emerging as the frontrunner to be NATO's next secretary-general.

Europeans and Americans are forging a broad consensus over tapping Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who is likely to be named at NATO's upcoming summit in April, according to two NATO officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because negotiations are ongoing.

One obstacle to his candidacy: Opposition by Turkey, a key strategic player in the alliance and its only predominantly Muslim member.

Turkey on Tuesday said Fogh Rasmussen was "unacceptable" because of his statements during the 2006 cartoon crisis, in which Muslims around the world staged violent protests. The Turks also fear Fogh Rasmussen supports Kurdish separatists and wants to keep Turkey out of the EU.

"It is unacceptable that NATO be headed by an individual who has in the past rudely disrespected our values and religious beliefs," said Suat Kinikloglu, the top foreign policy official in Turkey's ruling party.

Turkey wields veto power like all other NATO members; but the two NATO officials said expectations were high that Turkey would eventually go along with the majority view.

Fogh Rasmussen's closest rival is believed to be Canadian Defense Minister Peter Mackay, but he said on Sunday that he is more interested in keeping his current job. Other candidates include Poland's Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski and his Norwegian counterpart Jonas Gahr Stoere.

If Fogh Rasmussen prevails, it would be the first time a sitting prime minister has been chosen as secretary-general. He would likely raise the profile of the organization at a time when it faces the most critical military mission in its history in Afghanistan.

Denmark is one of the few European countries whose soldiers in the 62,000-strong NATO-led force in Afghanistan fight in the most dangerous, southern part of the country alongside American units.

Fogh Rasmussen, a staunch Atlanticist, was also a strong backer of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and deployed troops there.

He speaks French fluently, a key condition in the bilingual organization. French will gain even broader use after Paris rejoins the military structure following a 40-year hiatus.

NATO's chief executive runs the day-to-day business of the alliance and plays an important role in chairing key meetings and summits and setting alliance policy. His main task is to forge consensus on key security challenges, so that member nations can take unanimous decisions as is required by the NATO charter.

Traditionally, the post of secretary-general has gone to a European, while the alliance's military commander has always been an American general.

The new secretary-general is expected to be named at NATO's 60th anniversary summit in Strasbourg, France on April 3-4. But some officials say that if there is no agreement, the choice may be put off until Dutchman Jaap de Hoop Scheffer's term runs out in July.

Trans-Atlantic cooperation in the war in Afghanistan is expected to dominate talks at the NATO summit, with the Obama administration seeking agreement on a new, comprehensive strategy to deal with the deteriorating situation there.

Fogh Rasmussen was prime minister in 2006 when Danish newspaper cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad sparked furious protests across the Muslim world, thrusting the small Scandinavian country into the middle of an international crisis.

Although he received mixed reviews for his handling of the uproar, the center-right leader has gained a reputation both at home and abroad as a deft negotiator in other matters.

In Denmark, he has led a minority government since 2001 with the backing of the nationalist Danish People's Party, whose leaders are known for anti-Muslim outbursts. He has secured their support with stricter immigration rules — without offering them any Cabinet posts.

Internationally, Fogh Rasmussen has helped raise Denmark's profile with a strong commitment to EU cooperation and trans-Atlantic ties. He was lauded as a creative consensus builder during his term as EU president in 2002, when he led arduous negotiations that sealed the entry of 10 mostly eastern European countries into the EU.

De Hoop Scheffer took office in 2004. The former Dutch foreign minister is set to step down after a tumultuous five-year term that saw the alliance confronted with the war in Afghanistan and divisions over relations with a resurgent Russia.

**AP** Associated Press

Map



Jan M. Olsen reported from Copenhagen. Associated Press correspondent Susan Fraser in Istanbul contributed to this report.

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## **Shaheen returns from Brussels Forum**

By Associated Press  
March 23, 2009 5:42 PM

CONCORD — New Hampshire Sen. Jeanne Shaheen has returned from a trip to Belgium, where she participated in discussions on national security, strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan and climate change policy.

Shaheen was invited to the annual Brussels Forum as chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs.

She spent the weekend holding private and public meetings with government officials from across Europe, Asia, Russian and the Middle East to discuss the international financial crisis, NATO efforts in Afghanistan and climate change.

She says all those challenges will require international cooperation and coordination.

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# Canadian Defence Minister Peter MacKay backs off NATO head campaign

3 days ago

BRUSSELS — Defence Minister Peter MacKay said Sunday that he is more interested in keeping his job than becoming NATO's next secretary-general.

His comments suggested that Denmark's Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen is gaining more support among the alliance's 26 member states to be the next head of NATO.

MacKay told reporters he was "very focused at home" on continuing reforms of Canada's armed forces and its current mission in southern Afghanistan. However, he said that previous traditions of picking the NATO head from only European countries should be scrapped, echoing comments made by U.S. Vice President Joe Biden.

Since NATO's creation in 1949, its top civilian job has always gone to a European while NATO's military command is headed by a U.S. general.

"I have a tremendous amount of work to do with the Canadian Forces," MacKay said, adding he was "very focused on my country."

Canada has around 2,500 combat forces stationed in Afghanistan's volatile southern region.

Fogh Rasmussen is seen as the front-runner to replace Dutchman Jaap de Hoop Scheffer as secretary general. De Hoop Scheffer's term ends at the end of July. MacKay and Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski are also in the running.

A senior U.S. official said Saturday that Fogh Rasmussen's bid was gaining momentum, but said Washington was yet to decide who it would back.

The NATO secretary-general chairs the alliance's ministerial meetings and summits and oversees the day-to-day running of the alliance.

The main task is to forge consensus on key security challenges of the alliance, which have become larger than during the Cold War, so that the member nations can take unanimous decisions.

NATO has recently taken on military operations far beyond Europe's borders, most notably in Afghanistan.

De Hoop Scheffer took office in 2004. There is no written limit on the term of secretary general but in recent years NATO countries have informally agreed that the post should be limited to five years.

NATO decisions must be through consensus of all members. U.S. opinion is unofficially heavily weighted by tradition - given its military muscle.

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THE CANADIAN PRESS



Canada's Defense Minister Peter MacKay gestures while speaking during a session at the annual Brussels Forum meeting in Brussels, Sunday March 22, 2009. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/Virginia Mayo

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# Afghans at odds over raid

BY AMIR SHAH

IN KABUL

23/03/2009 1:00:00 AM

US-led coalition and Afghan troops killed five suspected militants in a raid in northern Afghanistan yesterday, the coalition said.

The mayor of Imam Sahib district, Abdul Manan, said it was his house that was raided and those killed were not militants.

The coalition said five people were killed and four others were detained during the early morning operation against a "terrorist network" in Kunduz province, close to the border with Tajikistan.

"During the initial assault of the compound, forces encountered enemy combatants in the courtyard. One militant was killed and one surrendered and was detained," the coalition said.

"When the forces called out for non-combatants to exit buildings on the compound, they were engaged with small arms fire. Forces returned fire and cleared the buildings on the compound, resulting in four militants killed and three suspected militants detained," it said.

Mr Manan said the raid had killed two of his guards, a cook, a driver and another man. He said the forces arrived in helicopters, blew open the compound gates and killed the men inside the compound.

He said he was inside one of the rooms with his wife and children.

The coalition statement said no women or children were present in the targeted attacks.

The deputy provincial police chief, Abdul Rahman Akhtash, said about 300 people had gathered in Imam Sahib later yesterday to protest against the raid.

Civilian deaths in coalition raids has been one of the most sensitive issues between Afghan President Hamid Karzai and foreign troops in the country.

The civilian deaths undermine Mr Karzai's authority and turn local people against his government and the foreign troops that back it.

US and NATO officials say the militants regularly operate out of civilian homes and areas and portray their dead fighters as civilians to stoke public anger. Independent confirmation of what happened in the raid was not possible because of the remoteness of the area.

Earlier, the United States said at the Brussels Forum that it would call for major efforts to build the Afghan police, fight opium production and boost farm aid in a new strategy to beat the Taliban-led insurgency.

US representative Richard Holbrooke said the review would put Pakistan at the heart of efforts to combat the insurgents who include al-Qaeda fighters, drug runners and criminal gangs but he has stressed cross-border activity has been ruled out as a "red line" for Pakistan's Government. His comments come two days before he meets EU and NATO officials in the Belgian capital to discuss the best way to tackle a problem fuelling terrorism.

"It's a daunting task and let no-one underestimate the difficulty of it," he said.

"The people of Europe and the people of the United States have to decide whether it matters to make this effort."


Mr Holbrooke said the insurgents were operating out of bases in Pakistan where a fragile government had recently taken over and the army was focused more on fighting India than insurgents. AP/AFP

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## **Mumbai terror attacks, 9/11 perpetrators present in Pakistan: Holbrooke**

**Posted: 3/23/2009 12:35:00 PM IST**

**Brussels, Mar.23 (ANI):** The US Special Envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke has said that the perpetrators of the Mumbai terror attack and the 9/11 are in Pakistan.

Addressing delegates at the Brussels Forum, Holbrooke said that the assassins of the former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto are also present in the country itself.

They're in Pakistan. In the western tribal areas, although it also extends down into Balochistan, The Nation quoted Holbrooke, as saying.

He said that the United States considers India as an important ally in its 'war on terror' in Afghanistan even though New Delhi is not directly related to the core of the issue.

India is not part of the problem but they're certainly a major factor in resolving the situation in Afghanistan. India is a great regional power, so we consult India closely every step of the way, Holbrooke added. (ANI)

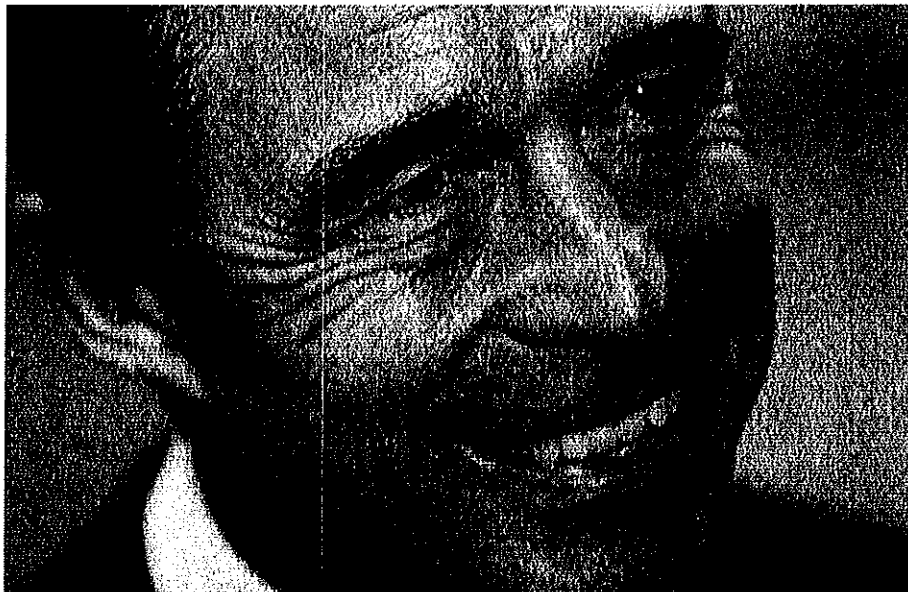
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## NATO front-runner would offend Muslims: Analysts

BY PETER O'NEIL, EUROPE CORRESPONDENT , CANWEST NEWS SERVICE MARCH 23, 2009



Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen criticized attacks on minority religious groups but strongly defended press freedom and refused to see 10 ambassadors from countries with large Muslim populations who asked to see him.

Photograph by: Carl de Souza, AFP/Getty Images

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PARIS — The U.S. and its top European allies will offend the Muslim world by choosing Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen of Denmark as the new political head of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, two analysts said Monday.

A Rasmussen appointment will be viewed negatively in Muslim countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan, where NATO is in a bloody struggle to win hearts and minds, due to his allegedly insensitive reaction to the 2005 cartoons in a Danish publication that mocked the Prophet Muhammad, they said.

Many parts of the Muslim world exploded in anger after the cartoons appeared, with violent protests leading to a number of deaths.

Rasmussen criticized attacks on minority religious groups but strongly defended press freedom and refused to see 10 ambassadors from countries with large Muslim populations who asked to see him.

"Denmark has got a very poor relationship with the Muslim world, and that has been very detrimental," said Ahmed Rashid, the widely-quoted Pakistani author of a scathing book on U.S. policy called *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and*

Central Asia.

"I think that is a critical factor" against Rasmussen's candidacy against challengers that include Canadian Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski.

Sinan Ulgen, chairman of the EDAM Research Institute in Istanbul, said MacKay would be a better choice given the hostile reaction of countries like Turkey, a member of the 26-member NATO alliance.

Turkey has objected to the Rasmussen candidacy, noting both the cartoon crisis and Denmark's tolerance of a radio station that allegedly produces broadcasts sympathetic to the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

"In the years to come the challenges for NATO will essentially be in the regions which have a predominantly Islamic population," Ulgen said in an interview.

Rasmussen "showed blatant neglect of the sensitivities involved during the cartoon crisis, and that is not a particularly good sign" when NATO is dealing with Muslim countries.

President Barack Obama, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other leaders attending the NATO military alliance's summit April 3-4 are expected to announce the replacement of Dutch diplomat Jaap de Hoop Scheffer.

Unconfirmed media reports on the weekend indicated that the U.S. plans on siding with the United Kingdom, France and Germany in backing Rasmussen.

The cartoon crisis has continued to haunt Denmark long after they were published.

Last April a leading terrorist called for revenge by demanding attacks on Danish targets. In June, a huge explosion near Denmark's embassy in Islamabad left six dead and dozens injured.

Both analysts said they expect Rasmussen to prevail over MacKay and Sikorski, who both appeared on a panel in Brussels Sunday that drew some of the world's top diplomats and politicians, including Senator John McCain.

"This is traditionally a European position and a lot of European countries think it should go to a European, and that goes against MacKay," Rashid said.

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# NATIONAL POST

Monday, March 23, 2009


## MacKay mum on prospects for post

Secretary-General

Presented by



Peter O'Neill, Canwest News Service

 Defence Minister Peter MacKay, at his last public audition for the top political job at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, refused to comment yesterday on media reports indicating he is not going to be named next month as the new NATO secretary-general.

Mr. MacKay was on a panel with another leading contender for the job, Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski, at a conference that drew political and governmental heavyweights, including U. S. Senator John McCain.

Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen -- who didn't attend the annual conference hosted by the German Marshall Fund think-tank-- now has the backing of U. S. President Barack Obama's administration, two news agencies reported on Saturday, citing unnamed sources.

The political post in the U. S.-dominated transatlantic military alliance, now held by Dutch diplomat Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, traditionally goes to a European.

"I read newspaper accounts. I'm not going to get drawn into the speculation. I'll leave that to others," Mr. MacKay told a news conference.

"All I can say is that Canada is a strong [NATO] contributor, and I think the fact that our nation is even being considered speaks mainly to the efforts of our armed forces, and I really salute their tremendous sacrifice and their tremendous commitment, professionalism, courage, and I include their families in that."

He was asked if the news reports indicate Mr. Obama has accepted the argument that he needs a European NATO leader to help support -- with troops as well as with money -- his planned "surge" in Afghanistan.

"To quote Joe Biden, I don't think anybody's nationality should be a bar to any position, whether it be NATO or any other organization," he said, referring to the vice-president's comment at a recent NATO gathering.

Mr. MacKay, who at the conference urged European countries to do more to help Mr. Obama's bid to reverse the growing Afghanistan insurgency, told the audience he had to phone the family members of the latest four Canadian soldiers to die in Afghanistan on Saturday.

Mr. MacKay has been a regular attendee at the annual conference, which is viewed by insiders as an important gathering of influential global power brokers.

Among the attendees were Richard Holbrooke-- Mr. Obama's new special U. S. representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan -- several European prime ministers and foreign ministers and top U. S. senators.

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CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

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# Holbrooke: western Pakistan key to resolving Afghanistan war

## The US special envoy told allies at the Brussels Forum that the Talibanization of the region was a top concern.

**By Robert Marquand** | Staff writer of *The Christian Science Monitor*

from the March 23, 2009 edition

BRUSSELS - Ahead of a key April 2 NATO meeting – and Barack Obama's first presidential trip outside North America – US special envoy to Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke says that western Pakistan presents the chief problem in resolving an eight-year war that has divided allies and threatens the standing of an alliance ready to mark its 60th anniversary.

The Talibanization of west Pakistan, in the Swat region that borders Afghanistan, was the greatest surprise to envoy Mr. Holbrooke on his first fact-finding mission to the region last month. It was the top issue he relayed to Mr. Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and National Security Adviser Jim Jones, Holbrooke told the Monitor on the sidelines of the Brussels Forum, a security meeting here.

"A year ago, I visited Peshawar [near the Khyber Pass] and I was asked about starting an Asia Society office there," Holbrooke said. "Last month, people were afraid to go outside after dark and walk their dogs. The change in the situation was stunning. Geopolitically Afghanistan hasn't changed; Pakistan has."

Holbrooke spoke at the Brussels Forum and meets here this week with NATO officials ahead of a much-anticipated Obama strategy for dealing with Afghanistan.

"The heart of the problem for the West is in western Pakistan," the envoy said. "But there are not going to be US or NATO troops on the ground in Pakistan. There is a red line for the government of Pakistan, and one which we must respect."

Holbrooke said the US had twice made "historic mistakes" by leaving – once after Soviet forces pulled out in the late 1980s, and again after the first campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in 2003. The Obama team will take a "regional" approach to the Afghan crisis – and will focus on training and building up the Afghan police force, which he said is "an inadequate and



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deeply corrupt organization ... the weak link in the chain." The New York Times reported days ago that Obama anticipates boosting the Afghan police to 400,000 from current training levels of 82,000 troops. Holbrooke said the 400,000 figure was "speculative" but implied it would be "quite large."

Sen. John McCain (R) of Arizona warned European policymakers at the forum that "minimalist" approaches would be ineffective, and urged US and Europeans to engage in "straight talk" with their publics about a war where "the going will be extremely hard." He later told the Monitor that "it will take a lot more than the 17,000 troops [now being sent] to take care of this job." He added: "a group ... on this side of the Atlantic, and on the other side, want to get rid of as many terrorists as we can," and leave. "We need a long-term commitment." The US is looking for more troops from a Europe leery of sending them. On March 31, Secretary Clinton will hold a "big tent" meeting at The Hague to further sort out the new Afghan strategy.

Holbrooke stated in Brussels, "We are not coming to Europe to hammer on individual countries. But additional troops will be needed. The idea that the US will demand ... that era is over."

The new strategy, Holbrooke says, will attempt to bring in all the regional players -- including Iran and China.

Holbrooke said some \$800 million spent on poppy eradication -- a source of Taliban funding -- was "the most wasteful and ineffective program I have seen in 40 years."

Holbrooke said western Pakistan was filled with jobless young men paid more to join the Taliban than to fight with the Afghan Army, and that the Taliban "give them guns," a prized possession.

He also said that the Taliban-linked leader in Swat, Maulana Fazlullah, has "set up 150 low-wattage FM stations ... just like we saw in Rwanda," implying the stations are a key source of direction -- and effective in convincing local populations that NATO is an occupation force. -

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## FM Vashadze: Russia 'Works Actively' to Remove Georgian Leadership

Civil Georgia, Tbilisi / 23 Mar.'09 / 13:10

Despite Russia's efforts to undermine Georgia's sitting leadership, Moscow will have to deal with it till 2013, when President Saakashvili's second term in office expires, Grigol Vashadze, the Georgian foreign minister, said on March 23.

Vashadze made the remarks, while commenting on his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov's statement, who said at the Brussels Forum on March 21: "I hope Georgia would have leaders, who really will be guided by the interest of Georgian people."

"They are expecting the change of leadership in Georgia. These words [referring to Lavrov's remarks] were said for so many times. They are not only expecting it but they are actively working on it," Vashadze said.

He also said that "if the Russian Federation has the possibility to find a powerbase among the Georgian political forces, of course, it will use this chance."

"I want to calm down Mr. Lavrov: the sitting leadership has been elected by the Georgian people democratically and Russia will have to deal with it until 2013," he added.

Vashadze also said, while commenting on some opposition politicians' remarks that it was possible to normalize ties with Russia, that "not a single ruler of Georgia managed to settle relations with Russia in past 16 years, because of one simple reason: Georgia's statehood is unacceptable for Russia in principle."

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**INSIGHT: A tattered coat upon a stick —Ejaz Haider**

*To be fair to the world and ourselves, if our state had not lost its internal sovereignty and thus worried everyone, we would not have seen these "attacks" on our sovereignty. The thing to do therefore, before we lecture the world on sovereignty, is to reclaim it at home*

While in Islamabad, US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief Leon Panetta told the highest echelons of Pakistani government that Predator attacks inside Pakistani territory will not be stopped.

The report in this newspaper quoted diplomatic and government sources as saying: "He [Panetta] refused to end the drone attacks in Pakistan, saying a number of top Al Qaeda leaders had been killed in the assaults."

This, for now, has put paid to assurances given by the top government leadership that *because* the United States is in the process of reviewing its strategy, it would come around to Islamabad's viewpoint on this issue as well.

Far away in Brussels, Richard Holbrooke, President Obama's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, was quoted as saying at the Brussels Forum that "The heart of the problem for the West is in western Pakistan. But there are not going to be US or NATO troops on the ground in Pakistan. There is a red line for the government of Pakistan and one which we must respect."

What should we make of this?

First, a word about the new US administration's review process, a concept completely misunderstood.

A review means the US wants to have a more effective Afghanistan policy — i.e., it would continue with what it has done, or is doing, successfully and change course only where it has failed. In other words, the US would build on its strengths and address its weaknesses.

If this obvious definition of a review process is accepted, then it should be clear that the US would not agree to stop drone attacks that have proved successful and taken a heavy toll of top Taliban-Al Qaeda leadership.

At this point one must also refer to what Holbrooke has said in Brussels about the red line. This red line has remained effective so far not only because of a technicality but also for concrete operational reasons.

The technicality refers to the problem of justifying foreign troops *on the ground* (like the ground infiltration near Angoor Ada on September 3, 2008 by US special forces) as opposed to "suspected" US strikes from the air.

There are two technical points here, as identified by Ahmer Bilal Soofi, one of our leading experts in International Law. One, airspace violation is less tangible and therefore less serious than ground incursion. Two, even more than that the gravity of the airspace violation has to be seen on the basis of the reaction of the state whose airspace is being violated.

Seen from this perspective, the Government of Pakistan has not done much and consistently except sending in occasional *notes verbales* and summoning the US ambassador only once and that too when Pakistan army troops got killed in an air raid. That summoning had less to do with the violation and was more about the killing of Pakistani troops.

But more than the legal-technical side of it, respect for the red line about ground incursions springs from operational dangers inherent in sending in troops. Ground infiltrations, even when based on credible intelligence, can go wrong because of a number of factors (a discussion of those factors is outside the scope of this article).

Also, if Predator attacks have been generally successful in taking out targets, it makes no sense, both because of legalities as well as operational constraints, to opt for ground infiltration. Put simply, the red line Holbrooke talked about draws respect for three reasons: it would be virtually impossible for any Pakistani government not to retaliate to such incursions into Pakistani territory; ground infiltration will be cost-heavy for invading



troops for many reasons including hostility from Pakistan; drone strikes are relatively easier to live with by Islamabad and they have been effective for the US.

This is why we have one statement by Holbrooke in Brussels and another by Panetta in Islamabad. What works will continue to work; what is risky and untried will remain on hold until what works is working *and* circumstances do not change drastically for US-led forces to take the risks involved in ground infiltration.

Let it be said that were such change of circumstances to come to pass and if the US thought that the cost of inaction on the ground was heavier than acting on the ground, it would act. The red line would be tested at that point and it would then be left to Islamabad to react to the crossing of that line by a foreign government.

So far, however, that point has not been reached. In fact, not entering into Pakistani territory is a policy NATO General Secretary Jaap de Hoop Scheffer also talked about when I met him in Brussels as part of a delegation of Pakistani journalists. Scheffer categorically said that NATO had absolutely no plans to cross into Pakistani tribal areas. This was also voiced by NATO spokesperson James Appathurai.

This said, the question of how Pakistan should react to drone attacks remains. I have often said in this space that I do not believe that these attacks are carried out without the knowledge of the Pakistani government. There is enough evidence to support this assertion. But let us, for the sake of the argument, accept the official version — i.e., we know nothing about them, which is why we have made such a fuss.

To this then we need to apply a simple framework through some questions. Is it correct that we are fighting an enemy in the tribal areas, an enemy that poses an existential threat to Pakistan? Is the United States an ally, despite many areas of friction?

If the answer to both questions is yes, then we need to ask another. If someone is killing the enemies of this state, even if for its own interests, should we be too bothered about that, especially if we may not have the capacity to do what is required? As for the issue of sovereignty, it is a bit more complex than the simplistic construct we put on it whether wittingly or otherwise. Consider.

Sovereignty works at two levels: internal and external. In fact, much before a state invokes it vis-à-vis the outside world, it is supposed to have actualised it internally, that supposition being the basis of the very existence of a state and its claim to being such an entity.

In a situation where a state's writ is being eroded from the inside, any attempt from the outside to restore that writ, far from an invasion of that state's sovereignty, is an action necessary to help it reclaim its internal sovereignty.

It is somewhat intriguing that Pakistanis should consider drone attacks meant to take out the enemies of the Pakistani state as an attack on its sovereignty while that sovereignty, to quote Yeats' take on old age, has increasingly come internally to look like "A tattered coat upon a stick".

To be fair to the world and ourselves, if our state had not lost its internal sovereignty and thus worried everyone, we would not have seen these "attacks" on our sovereignty. The thing to do therefore, before we lecture the world on sovereignty, is to reclaim it at home.

*Ejaz Haider is Op-Ed Editor of Daily Times and Consulting Editor of The Friday Times. He can be reached at [sapper@daillytimes.com.pk](mailto:sapper@daillytimes.com.pk)*

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# euobserver.com

## Danish leader gets backing for NATO top job

VALENTINA POP

23.03.2009 @ 09:27 CET

EUOBSERVER / BRUSSELS – Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen is likely to become the next NATO secretary general, despite Turkey's informal opposition to the move.

The 56-year old leader, who over the weekend became a grandfather, is also said to have the backing of Great Britain, Germany and France.

Canadian defence minister Peter MacKay, who was thought to have Washington's support for the NATO leadership, on Sunday said that he was more focused "at home" on continuing reforms of the armed forces and the mission in Afghanistan.

"Just the fact that our country is being considered speaks for the recognition of what we do," Mr MacKay said at a press conference on the margins of the Brussels Forum, an event organised by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, a Washington-based think tank.

But he also said that "Canada is interested in all aspects of NATO, including its leadership" and that the nationality of the candidate should not be an issue.

US congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, also present at the press conference, called Mr McKay "a star" and paid tribute to the efforts Canada was making for the Alliance. However, she pointed out that she was not speaking on behalf of the Obama administration, although she will soon leave Congress and join the government as an undersecretary for arms control and international security affairs.



Anders Fogh Rasmussen (l) could succeed Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (r) at the helm of NATO. (Photo: NATO)

A US diplomatic source told EUobserver that Washington was not officially backing any of the candidates, but suggested that Mr Rasmussen had more of a chance. "We don't want Canada to feel discriminated against," the diplomat said.

### **Turkish opposition**

Meanwhile, Turkey, also a NATO member, has signalled that it will oppose Mr Rasmussen's bid due to the way he managed the row following a Danish newspaper's cartoon depicting the Prophet Mohammad with a bomb in his turban, particularly his refusal to see Muslim ambassadors.

Ankara also fiercely opposes the Danish-based Kurdish television station Roj-Tv and was upset by Mr Rasmussen's comments in 2003 saying that Turkey would never become a full EU member.

A Turkish official told Reuters that his country was willing to veto Mr Rasmussen's bid. The decision can be only taken by consensus amongst the 26 NATO members and is expected to be announced at the alliance's 60 anniversary summit in Strasbourg/Kehl on 2-4 April.

Turkish opposition could be overcome as part of a deal with Washington, which asked Ankara to send troops to be part of the NATO operations in Afghanistan, a move which would pose diplomatic problems for Turkey and other Muslim countries.

If Ankara does not oppose Mr Rasmussen, it is said US President Obama will in turn drop his demand for Turkish soldiers in Afghanistan.

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# Global Crisis News

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

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## **World Bank: Global downturn is WWII-like**

March 23, 2009 by [Greg](#)



The global economy is set to shrink by around 1 to 2 per cent in 2009 and no recovery is in sight until 2010, according to the World Bank's President Robert Zoellick.

That estimate is in contrast with an earlier 1 percent decline projected by the International Monetary Fund, a Washington-based organization formed to stabilize international exchange rates, among other duties.

Zoellick, said at a conference held on Saturday in Brussels, that the global economic slowdown was unprecedented since the Great Depression in the 1930s.

Zoellick also criticised the stimulus plans being implemented in countries like the US, comparing them to a “sugar high” which would inevitably lead to another crash.

“2009 is going to be a very dangerous year,” Zoellick said. “It is indeed serious, and there are issues that go beyond the economic to political and social stability.”

Zoellick noted that the current crisis presents a challenge to the euro, a challenge to EU solidarity, and it highlights the division and issues between Western and Eastern Europe.

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**2009 - Financial collapse**

for America and her allies will be completed, leading to their demise.

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## **Joaquin Almunia: EU - IMF agreement with Romania will be announced later this week**

de A.C. HotNews.ro

Luni, 23 martie 2009, 13:53 English | Top News

The EU - IMF agreement with Romania will be announced later this week, European Commissioner on Economic and Monetary Affairs, Joaquin Almunia declared, quoted by NewsIn. He declared that negotiations will most probably end this week, in a conference on trans-Atlantic themes organized by the US German Marshall Fund.

IMF representatives are scheduled to meet on Monday with Romania's PM Emil Boc, representatives of all parliamentary political parties and union representatives. Government representatives declared that negotiations will end in about two weeks when the IMF will send a stand-by agreement for a period of two years.

PM Boc announced that the international loan has a preemptive character and will be used to consolidate the central bank reserves and thus maintain the exchange rate at an acceptable level. Almunia declared that other EU member states, non euro zone members could take up a similar loan.

INTERNATIONAL  
**Herald Tribune**

## U.S. backs Dane for top post at NATO

By Steven Erlanger

Monday, March 23, 2009

### PARIS: approach to Muslims

The United States has thrown its support behind the Danish prime minister as the new secretary general of NATO, but must now try to get Turkey to agree, senior American and European officials said Monday.

The current top civilian at NATO is the Dutch diplomat Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who has been pushing the European members of the 26-nation alliance to commit more resources to Afghanistan. His term runs out at the end of July.

Traditionally, a European holds the top civilian post, while an American general holds the top military one.

While most European countries had lined up behind the Danish prime minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 56, the administration of President Barack Obama has been quietly supporting the Canadian defense minister, Peter MacKay, 43, in part because of Canada's significant role in Afghanistan.

But Mr. MacKay appeared to call off his unacknowledged pursuit of the post on Sunday in Brussels, telling reporters that "I have a tremendous amount of work to do with the Canadian Forces."

A senior European official said that it is "up to Washington to deliver Turkey," given that NATO operates by consensus of all its members.

But Mr. Rasmussen has problems, too, with the perception among Muslims that he and his country are insensitive to Islam, a key issue when NATO's biggest immediate challenge is Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The officials spoke asking anonymity, given diplomatic custom, because they are not authorized to speak publicly.

The Turks have objected to Mr. Rasmussen, citing these larger concerns. The Danish problem dates back to the publication in some Danish newspapers of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. Denmark also allows supporters of the P.K.K., a Kurdish separatist group outlawed in Turkey, to operate a television station there.

In 2003, Mr. Rasmussen was quoted as saying that he did not believe that Turkey would ever become a full member of the European Union.

In Brussels on Sunday, a Turkish official told Reuters news service that while Ankara's position was not yet firm, Mr. Rasmussen was tainted. "At a time when NATO is going to assume added responsibility in Afghanistan and Pakistan, having a secretary general with such an objectionable approach to billions of Muslims is not the right approach to the Muslim world," the officials said.

If Turkey did not go along, another senior European official said, there was the possibility of turning to the Norwegian foreign minister, Jonas Gahr Store, 49, who has studied both in the United States and in Paris. In January 2008, he was staying with a delegation in Kabul at a hotel blown up by a suicide

bomber; a journalist traveling with him was killed.

Mr. Store was said by the official to have impressed many of his European colleagues.

The foreign minister of Poland, Radoslaw Sikorski, 46, is also considered an outside possibility for the post, though older members of NATO consider Poland too new a member and too preoccupied with Moscow to head the alliance.

If Mr. Rasmussen or Mr. Store, both of them considered Nordics, got the NATO job, officials said, it might make it impossible for the former Swedish prime minister and current foreign minister, Carl Bildt, to become Europe's foreign minister if and when the Lisbon Treaty, reorganizing the European Union, is adopted.

*Correction:*

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Notes:

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# KyivPost

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World

## LAVROV: RUSSIA, EUROPEAN UNION SHOULD COOPERATE MORE EFFECTIVELY IN FIGHTING TERROR

23 March, 09:29

The quality of cooperation between Moscow and the European Union in fighting terrorism must be enhanced in a new European security pact, said Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

"We seek a new quality of cooperation in fighting terror and nuclear weapons proliferation, and in dealing with other threats and challenges in a new security agreement," Lavrov told EU foreign policy and security chief Javier Solana at the Conversations with Russia forum in Brussels.

"Why must we not remain at the level of current structures while doing so? The answer is very simple. NATO is concerned about its own security and the Collective Security Treaty Organization about its own. Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and of the European Union have their separate defense and security policies. This means that this common job is being done by scattered structures," Lavrov said.

The Belgian forum also discussed a new glance at European security, NATO's enlargement and the necessity to reform the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Security guards barred Russian journalists from entering the conference hall, where Lavrov was speaking, even though all Russian reporters had accreditation badges as members of the official Russian delegation, earlier reports said.

The Brussels forum is an annual meeting of influential American and European politicians. Russia's foreign minister addressed the forum for the first time.

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## Romanian Upper House Speaker, U.S. Senator John McCain Hold Talks In Brussels

Romanian upper house Speaker, Mircea Geoana held talks in Brussels on Saturday with U.S. Senator John McCain and other American officials on the existing climate in Romania, the geographical and political evolutions in the region, as well as on the difficulties triggered by the economic crisis.




The Romanian official attended a panel discussion on the situation in Georgia and the Black Sea region, on the backdrop of the yearly conference of the German Marshall Fund.

Geoana said he extended an invite to U.S. congressmen to visit Romania in order to strengthen the relationship between the two states.

Geoana also met U.S. Special Ambassador to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, with whom he discussed about the situation in Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan area.

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Wed 8 Apr - 9:06am EDT

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**POLITICS**

**Poland Hopes U.S. Will Continue with Missile Shield**

2009-03-23 08:30am

The Polish government said Sunday it hoped President Obama would follow through on plans begun by his predecessor, George W. Bush, to place elements of a strategic missile shield the country.

Currently, the Obama administration is reviewing security policy, including the feasibility of the missile defense shield.

The review has prompted speculation Obama could elect to shelve the plan, which has angered Russia, in a move aimed at healing diplomatic ties with Moscow.

Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said Poland had taken "something of a political risk" in signing an agreement with the Bush administration to host the system.

"When we started discussing this with the United States, the U.S. assured us they would persuade the Russians that it was purely defensive and it would be a non-controversial decision," he told attendees at the annual Brussels Forum conference in Belgium.

"We signed with the old administration; we patiently wait for the new administration, and we hope we don't regret our trust in the United States," he said, noting that Russia has threatened to deploy missiles near Poland's border if the shield goes in.

Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Ellen Tauscher, who is expected to be named the new U.S. under secretary for arms control and international security, said the shield would not be deployed until it had been proven to work.

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# REAL CLEAR WORLD

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March 23, 2009

## Motives Behind Russia's Security Proposal

By [Stratfor](#)

Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski on Sunday blasted Russia's proposal for a new security agreement with Europe and said the Americans should not force Poland into "regretting its trust in them." Speaking at the 2009 Brussels Security Forum, Sikorski was reacting to a proposal that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov presented March 21, intended to create a new treaty to combat terrorism.

According to Lavrov, the agreement would "respect sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of countries, inadmissibility of the use of force, guarantees for the provision of equal security, basic parameters of control over armaments and reasonable sufficiency in the development of military capability." The initiative is meant to prove that no outside state and no international organization has the exclusive right to security in Europe.

Russia's audience for the proposal was the United States, NATO and the European Union. While the treaty is said to be an anti-terrorism agreement, the Poles "and many others" see the true motives behind Lavrov's proposal. The measure looks more like an attempt to re-create circumstances in which the United States is not invited to interfere in Russo-European affairs. It also could be intended to create a situation in which Europe is not allowed to cross into the former Soviet sphere dominated by Russia, since Lavrov's proposal came just days after the European Union decided to launch partnership agreements with many countries in that sphere.

GA\_googleFillSlot("RCW\_Interior\_Middle\_300x250");

EU foreign policy and security chief Javier Solana "who happens to be a former NATO secretary-general" immediately shot down Lavrov's proposal, adding that it is "a very intelligent set-up" for Europe to have the United States as the key guarantor of its security.

But it seems not everyone in Europe is as confident in the U.S.-European relationship as Solana.

The initiative Lavrov spoke of is actually based on a new treaty that Russian President Dmitri Medvedev placed before a select group of his European counterparts in June 2008. During the summer, Medvedev and others were very tight-lipped on what exactly this security agreement entailed and whether it actually could serve as a counter to U.S. and NATO influence in Europe. But at the time, STRATFOR sources said German leaders were considering Medvedev's proposals. The point of that security agreement was to begin fracturing the U.S. hold over Europe and NATO by targeting individual states and pulling them out of Washington's orbit.

Since Medvedev's first push for an exclusive security agreement with certain European states, much has happened: the Russo-Georgian war, another natural gas shut-off from Russia to Ukraine (affecting Europe) and a possible move forward in U.S.-Russian negotiations. The time is ripe for Moscow to again try to create a more permanent structure involving Russia and Europe □□" especially one that counters the United States. Country by country, Moscow is attacking the Europeans' confidence in Washington. In Moscow's view, the Russians have the upper hand now: In the war with Georgia, they proved they are willing to invade a U.S. ally; with the natural gas cutoff, they issued a reminder that Europeans still depend on Russian natural gas; and the ongoing U.S.-Russian negotiations have many U.S. allies concerned about what Washington will barter away.

Solana has discounted the idea that any European country will be interested in Russia's new security deal. However, it seems that some countries might not be quick to pass it up, while others fear the United States cannot follow through on its security guarantees.

*A Stratfor Intelligence Report.*

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# A Terrorism Thought Experiment

By US Foreign Policy

Speaking at the Brussels Forum, Senator John McCain urged the world not to accept a "minimalist" outcome in Afghanistan. It follows an op-ed he co-authored with Senator Lieberman, arguing that the U.S. needs to wage a massive country-wide counter insurgency to shore up our interests.

It's worth stepping back and asking a fundamental question: imagine Sen. McCain gets his way. Imagine the best case scenario for both Afghanistan and Iraq. Imagine a world where those outcomes have been achieved. Then ask: could another 9/11 still happen? (Read Full Article)

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2 Comments | Post Comment



Posted by: Realist Writer  
Comment: #1  
Mar 24, 09:57 AM

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Due to the ease of criminals justifying committing crimes by claiming they are doing so to protest a political action, it's quite easy to commit terrorism.

I always thought Iraq and Afghanistan was invaded purely to form pro-American puppets and prevent any future government from saying America might, might be a destabilizing force. Not stop another 9/11. Stopping a future 9/11 requires destroying America beforehand.



Posted by: Mino213  
Comment: #2  
Mar 24, 06:58 PM

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I think that if Iraq and Afghanistan became model nations akin to post-WWII Germany and Japan, and let's through in Pakistan becoming as tranquil as France, you would still have 9-11 type threats... I believe there was a Tokyo subway gas attack a few years ago from a cult, and Germany certainly incubated some Islamic terrorists. Britain has a problem with Islamic extremism

I don't think that, as realistwriter put it, "Stopping a future 9/11 requires destroying America beforehand."

But attempting to turn Iraq and Afghanistan into western-style democracies is not a solution to terrorism, even if the task itself is possible (of which I am yet to be convinced).

That leaves us with two answer: either it is not possible to prevent another 9-11, or there is some other policy we should pursue short of global empire or Realist-Writers unspecified American-autodeafay

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### Killers of Benazir Bhutto are in Pakistan: Holbrooke

RT Monitoring Desk

BRUSSELS: The people who planned 9/11 attacks, who killed Benazir Bhutto and who committed the atrocities in Mumbai are in Pakistan, said Richard Holbrooke, the US special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Speaking at the Brussels Forum, Holbrooke said that these people are terrorizing Swat and probably were associated with the attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore.

The Brussels Forum is an annual high-level meeting of the most influential political, corporate, and intellectual leaders worldwide to address the challenges facing both sides of the Atlantic.

"They're in Pakistan. In the western tribal areas, although it also extends down into Balochistan," Holbrooke said.

He said that India is "not a part of the problem but they're certainly a major factor in resolving" the situation in Afghanistan.

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related issues.

## Poland Seeks U.S. Commitment on Missile Shield

Monday, March 23, 2009

Polish officials said yesterday that they hoped to see the Obama administration commit to deploying missile interceptors in the European nation, Reuters reported (see *GSN*, March 20).

The Tusk government in Warsaw signed a deal last year with the Bush administration, which planned for the interceptors to be a key component of a European missile shield that would also include a radar base in the Czech Republic. U.S. President Barack Obama has not said whether he intends to pursue the project, but he has made it clear he wants to improve relations with Russia, which has vehemently opposed the effort.

Warsaw took "something of a political risk" by signing the deal, under which it would receive a U.S.-operated Patriot air defense battery and other military support, said Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski.

"When we started discussing this with the United States, the U.S. assured us they would persuade the Russians that it was purely defensive and it would be a noncontroversial decision," he said in Brussels. "We signed with the old administration; we patiently wait for the new administration, and we hope we don't regret our trust in the United States."

U.S. Representative Ellen Tauscher (D-Calif.), also speaking at the Brussels Forum conference, said the system must be shown to function correctly before it can be deployed.

Short and medium-range missiles now pose the greatest threat to southern Europe and troops in the region, Tauscher said. NATO must look to counter that threat, possibly in collaboration with Russia, she added.

"We could certainly bolt on the long-range system once it has been tested and create a suite of systems that have complete coverage for everybody," said Tauscher, who has accepted the nomination to become undersecretary of state for arms control and international security (David Brunnstrom, Reuters/*Washington Post*, March 22).



INTERNATIONAL  
**Herald Tribune**

## Debate on inflation could open an Atlantic rift

By Paul Taylor  
Reuters

Monday, March 23, 2009

**BRUSSELS:** The United States is fighting a fire in the world economy, but Germany and some other European countries fear a flood of inflation as a result.

That clash of cultures is at the heart of a trans-Atlantic debate over whether Europe, with economic contraction certain this year and an end to the recession not yet in sight, should spend more and ease monetary policy to revive growth.

The perception gap could cause lingering resentment between Americans and Germans on the way out of the crisis.

The president of the World Bank, Robert B. Zoellick, sees concern on both sides of the Atlantic, not just in Europe, at the risk of future inflation from the huge additional liquidity created by the U.S. Federal Reserve and soaring public debt.

The current gush of liquidity made the glut after the bursting of the Internet bubble in 2001 look like a desert, he said at the weekend Brussels Forum, a conference of North American and European policy makers and business and opinion leaders.

The sharp fall of the dollar and the jump in the price of gold after the Fed's announcement of a huge purchase of Treasury bonds reflected fears that the United States would try to inflate its way out of the crisis.

"What some political leaders say when you bring this up is: 'Well gee, when we're putting out the fire, can you really worry about the water damage?' In a way, you really do have to worry about both," Zoellick said, advocating a timely pathway back to fiscal and monetary discipline.

The European Central Bank has provided unlimited liquidity for banks to unfreeze credit markets and is weighing following the Fed into unconventional measures like buying bonds to provide an extra monetary stimulus. But Germans are wary because of their traumatic history with hyperinflation in the 1920's, something that contributed to the rise of Hitler.

The president of the Bundesbank, Axel Weber, who is also a member of the E.C.B.'s Governing Council, told the Brussels Forum, "I can promise you: The European response to this crisis will not be inflationary."

"That's why guys like me exist," he said. "I can promise you, once it starts looking inflationary, we will tidy up the mess."

E.U. leaders agreed at a summit meeting last week that they had taken enough fiscal stimulus measures for now and rejected pressure from the administration of President Barack Obama to do more.

German leaders were particularly dismissive of calls to throw more money at the crisis when two stimulus packages adopted in the past five months were still being implemented.

The president of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, made it clear that E.U. countries

would review their stimulus efforts if the economy continued to deteriorate. The European economic and monetary affairs commissioner, Joaquín Almunia, said the high debt levels of many states before the crisis were a constraint on further deficit spending.

"We are concerned by countries whose public debt is increasing very, very fast," Almunia told the forum. "We cannot afford to spend the next two decades absorbing the debt we have created to tackle this very deep recession."

The dispute about how to fight the crisis may have longer-term negative consequences on both sides of the Atlantic — fueling pressure in the United States for trade protectionism and stoking opposition in Germany to helping European partners.

Germans feel they made tough choices in the good times to balance their budget and cut unit labor costs to improve their competitiveness. Now, many feel they are being expected to pay for the fiscal recklessness of other European countries.

Americans are likely to resist paying to revive European or emerging economies through imports.

Lord Mark Malloch-Brown, the British minister in charge of preparing the London crisis summit meeting of G-20 industrialized and emerging nations next week, said there was a big risk if Americans felt that other countries were not pulling their weight in reviving the global economy.

"The most dangerous idea out there is that the world is somehow going to expect the American consumer to ride to the rescue," the former senior U.N. official said. "If that idea is left out there, it's going to lead to protectionism in America."

*Correction:*

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Notes:

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OBAMA SEES "SIGNS OF PROGRESS" ON ECONOMIC CRISIS

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 March 23rd, 2009  
**U.S. fights fire, Germans fear flood**

Post a comment (29)

By: Paul Taylor

Tags: General, economic contraction, EU, Germany, Internet bubble, Paul Taylor, Inflation, public debt, reuters, robert zoellick, treasury bonds, united states, water damage, world economy



Paul Taylor is a Reuters columnist. The opinions expressed are his own --

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The United States is fighting a fire in the world economy, but Germany and some other European countries fear a flood of inflation as a result.

That clash of cultures is at the heart of transatlantic debate over whether Europe should spend more and ease monetary policy to revive growth, with a deep economic contraction certain this year and an end to the recession not yet in sight.

The perception gap could cause lingering resentment among Americans and Germans on the way out of the crisis.

World Bank President Robert Zoellick sees concern on both sides of the Atlantic, not just in Europe, at the risk of inflation down the road from the massive additional liquidity created by the U.S. Federal Reserve and soaring public debt.

The current gush of liquidity made the glut after the bursting of the Internet bubble in 2001 look like a desert, he told the weekend Brussels Forum, a conference of North American and European policymakers, business and opinion leaders.

The dollar's sharp fall and the jump in the price of gold after the Fed's announcement of a giant purchase of long Treasury bonds reflected fears that the United States will try to inflate its way out of the crisis.

"What some political leaders say when you bring this up is: 'Well gee, when we're putting out the fire, can you really worry about the water damage?' In a way, you really do have to worry about both," Zoellick said, advocating a timely pathway back to fiscal and monetary discipline.

The European Central Bank has provided unlimited liquidity for banks to unfreeze credit markets and is weighing following the Fed into unconventional measures such as buying bonds to provide an extra monetary stimulus. But Germans are especially wary due to their traumatic history of hyperinflation in the 1920s, something that contributed to the rise of Hitler.

"I can promise you the European response to this crisis will not be inflationary. That's why guys like me exist," German Bundesbank President Axel Weber, a member of the ECB's Governing Council, told the Brussels Forum. "I can promise you once it starts looking inflationary we will tidy up the mess."

European Union leaders agreed at a summit last week they had taken enough fiscal stimulus measures for now and rejected pressure from the Obama administration to do more.

German leaders were particularly dismissive of calls to throw more money at the crisis when two stimulus packages adopted in the last five months are still being

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European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso made clear EU countries would review their stimulus efforts if the economy continues to deteriorate. European Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Joaquin Almunia said the high debt levels of many states before the crisis were a constraint on further deficit spending.

"We are concerned by countries whose public debt is increasing very, very fast," Almunia told the forum. "We cannot afford to spend the next two decades absorbing the debt we have created to tackle this very deep recession."

The dispute about how to fight the crisis may have longer term negative consequences on both sides of the Atlantic — fuelling pressure in the United States for trade protectionism and stoking opposition in Germany to helping European partners.

Germans feel they made tough choices in the good times to balance their budget and cut unit labor costs to improve their competitiveness. Now many feel they are being expected to pay for the fiscal recklessness of other European countries.

Americans are raging at the greed and irresponsibility of bankers and corporate moguls. But if Main Street resents bailing out Wall Street, it will be even more resistant to paying to revive European or emerging economies through imports.

Lord Mark Malloch-Brown, the British minister in charge of preparing next week's London crisis summit of G20 nations, said there was a big risk if Americans felt other countries were not pulling their weight in reviving the global economy.

"The most dangerous idea out there is that the world is somehow going to expect the American consumer to ride to the rescue," the former senior U.N. official said. "If that idea is left out there, it's going to lead to protectionism in America."

#### BEST COMMENT

March 23rd, 2009  
10:14 am EDT

Germany has done a lot. Germany has absorbed hundreds of thousand immigrants and political refugees from the recent turmoils of the world. When the two Germanys reunited the chancellor said 'we will not have Germans with full rights and some with tentative rights', even though some economic advisers said that there should be some kind of interim economic status for the former East Germans. The next day all of those East Germans took the worthless East Marks out of their mattresses and exchanged them one for one for D-Marks. How much do you think that cost? Germany is the big economic engine that pulls the rest of Europe with it. Germany does a lot in the world. Germany trains the Afghan police. Germany provides immediate emergency technical help when disasters occur around the world, and especially in Europe and Turkey. Germany has health care for all its people (and no, it's not 'socialized medicine'-if you don't like the doctor you have you go find another one), Germany sends injured, overweight, and stressed out people to 'cures', a holistic health care method of dealing with illness that involves fresh air, social interaction, healthy food, and a health maintenance approach-not just drugs and more drugs. You see I am an admirer of Germany. What Germans are afraid of is a currency reform. We have never had a currency reform in the United States. The Germans Grandparents lived through two of these. One day you have the money you worked for all your life, the next day you have nothing, not because of a stock market crash, but because the 'old' money is now worthless. The Germans are afraid that this is where the financial crisis and current situation is heading."

-Posted by QueZen

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March 24th, 2009 4:44 pm GMT - Posted by John

Many of you fear inflation yet you acknowledge the credit markets are frozen. Fearing inflation when credit is tight is truly a mark of the insane right now. As long as credit is frozen (or at least not as fluid as it recently was) you should fear deflation. The German political establishment is misplacing its concerns right now and seems to fear its own shadow. Once credit has eased then they can worry about inflation. Demand-led growth through fiscal spending on short term projects (infrastructure and the like) can be stopped/slowed once economic/employment growth is restored. In this case America & Britain are proceeding in the correct manner while Germany ought to do the same. Germany shouldn't act as if the is identical to the 1920s & 1930s. They have more tools and options today to control the situation than they had back then. The idea that America created this mess alone is also stunningly ignorant. For every borrower there must be a willing lender. The lender nations (Japan, China, Germany, etc) have all pursued mercantilist/protectionist trade policies that necessitate lending to America. Now those nations fear America will essentially devalue its currency to get out of that debt. What did those countries think as their trade surplus bubbles inflated? The answer is, just like the borrowers, they weren't thinking. Now their productive

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## Holbrooke says US plans major Afghan p

President Barack Obama plans a significant increase in the size of the Afghan police force, US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke said on Saturday.



Richard Holbrooke

Holbrooke said the Obama administration's initial plan to help boost Afghan police numbers from 78,000 to 82,000 over the next three to four years was now regarded as inadequate.

"Everyone we talked to without exception -- Afghans, insurgency experts, the government, American military -- agreed that was not sufficient," he said.

"So we are looking in conjunction with our allies and friends in the Afghan government at a very significant increase," he told a security conference in Brussels.

"The police aren't very good right now. We know they are the weak link in the security chain," he added. "We need to increase the number, increase the quality and increase the training."

Holbrooke said figures cited by the New York Times of a combined goal of about 400,000 Afghan troops and police officers were "speculative" and Obama had yet to finalize the numbers. International efforts so far to train the Afghan police force are widely considered as insufficient.

US officials said last week the Obama administration was weighing several options as part of a policy review expected this month for Afghanistan, where insurgent violence is at its worst since the US-led intervention there began in late 2001.

Holbrooke said a "vast task" lay ahead to improve the international efforts in Afghanistan.

23 March 2009, Monday  
REUTERS BRUSSELS

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## **U.S. envoy outlines Afghanistan strategy to NATO, EU leaders**

3/23/2009 4:22 PM ET

As U.S. President Barack Obama suggested the need for an "exit strategy" on Afghanistan, his special envoy to the region, Richard Holbrooke outlined to NATO new review plans to beat insurgents in the strife-torn country.

Speaking to reporters after meeting with NATO chief Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and the 26 ambassadors in Brussels Monday, he said that failure to eliminate opium poppy crops enabled the Taliban insurgents to raise money from the drug trade. "It is the most wasteful and ineffective program I have seen in 40 years," the envoy added.

Holbrooke noted that inadequacies and corruption of the Afghan national police must be fixed to help strengthen local security. According to him, the real threat to NATO's efforts in Afghanistan actually comes from western Pakistan, where the Taliban have significant support.

He denied a report that Washington and its European allies sought to create a new chief executive or prime ministerial role in Afghanistan to sideline President Hamid Karzai.

Addressing delegates at the Brussels Forum, Holbrooke said the perpetrators of the Mumbai terror attacks and the 9/11 as well as the assassins of former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto are present in Pakistan itself.

He also met senior EU officials.

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### Holbrooke on U.S. Plans for Afghanistan

WRITTEN BY WARREN MASS  
MONDAY, 23 MARCH 2009 16:15

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Following a series of informal discussions held in Brussels over the preceding weekend, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke met with NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and the 26 NATO ambassadors at the Brussels Forum on March 23. The prime focus of the talks was NATO's strategy for Afghanistan. Holbrooke gave participants a preview of U.S. plans for continuing the ongoing military operation there.

AFP reported that the series of talks are the last before what is termed a "big tent" international meeting on Afghanistan to be held in The Netherlands in a week. It is expected that by the time of that meeting, a new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan will have been unveiled. The BBC reported that the new strategic plan is now on President Barack Obama's desk and will soon be made public.

The *Financial Times* quoted NATO spokesman James Appathurai, who summarized the purpose of the Brussels gathering: "It is to give the broad lines of the U.S. strategy review as it now stands. I don't know that they've arrived at any final conclusions on which President Obama has signed off on, but their thinking is now very close to the conclusion of the process."

In a BBC interview in Brussels, Ambassador Holbrooke called reports that the United States would be scaling down its goals in Afghanistan "journalist gobbledygook," and stressed that the opposite was about to occur: "Neglect is what happened in the past. That era is over."

"I can guarantee you that this administration will do everything it can to succeed in one of the most difficult situations in the world," emphasized Holbrooke. He stressed that there would be "more troops, more resources, more high-level attention."

During his press interview, Holbrooke said that the "number one problem" in stabilizing Afghanistan was Taliban sanctuaries in western Pakistan, including tribal areas along the Afghan border and cities like Quetta: "Quetta appears to be the headquarters for the leaders of the Taliban and some of the worst people in the world," which he said includes the leader of the Pakistani Taliban Baitullah Mehsud. During recent months, Taliban-controlled militants in northwest Pakistan have attacked truck terminals and convoys supplying the NATO operation in Afghanistan with increasing boldness.

During the Brussels meetings, Holbrooke told reporters from the *Christian Science Monitor* that the extent of Taliban infiltration in northwest Pakistan was his greatest surprise during his fact-finding mission to the region last month.

"A year ago, I visited Peshawar [near the Khyber Pass] and I was asked about starting an Asia Society office there," Holbrooke said. "Last month, people were afraid to go outside after dark and walk their dogs. The change in the situation was stunning. Geopolitically Afghanistan hasn't changed; Pakistan has."

A Reuters news report of March 21 cited Holbrooke's statement at the Brussels conference that President Obama plans a significant increase in the size of the Afghan police force. He said that an initial plan to help Afghanistan increase the number of its police from 78,000 to 82,000 was now considered inadequate. "Everyone we talked to without exception — Afghans, insurgency experts, the government, American military — agreed that was not sufficient," he said. "So we are looking in conjunction with our allies and friends in the Afghan government at a very significant increase."

"The police aren't very good right now. We know they are the weak link in the security chain," Holbrooke added. "We need to increase the number, increase the quality and increase the training." He said, however, that figures cited by the *New York Times* that NATO sought the creation of a combined force of about 400,000 Afghan troops and police officers were "speculative."

Holbrooke also spoke about a plan in Washington to help Afghan opium farmers — whose crop helps fund the Taliban — turn to alternate crops. To achieve this goal, he said that President Obama will ask Congress for "very significantly expanded funding for agriculture sector job creation."

### U.S. Headlines

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During an interview with CBS's *60 Minutes* on March 22, President Barack Obama said the new U.S. plan would contain an exit strategy and include greater emphasis on economic development. "What we can't do is think that just a military approach in Afghanistan is going to be able to solve our problems," he said. "So what we're looking for is a comprehensive strategy. And there's got to be an exit strategy.... There's got to be a sense that this is not perpetual drift."

"Making sure Al-Qaeda cannot attack the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests and our allies. That's the number one priority," Obama said. "In service of that priority there may be a whole host of things that we need to do," Obama added. "We may need to build up economic capacity in Afghanistan. We may need to improve our diplomatic efforts in Pakistan."

Another visitor to the Brussels meeting was Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who warned European policymakers at the forum that "minimalist" approaches would be ineffective. McCain urged American and European leaders to engage in "straight talk" with their citizens about a war where "the going will be extremely hard." The former presidential candidate told the *Christian Science Monitor* that "it will take a lot more than the 17,000 troops [now being sent] to take care of this job." He added: "a group ... on this side of the Atlantic, and on the other side, want to get rid of as many terrorists as we can," and leave. "We need a long-term commitment."

A March 21 *Financial Times* article reporting about the Brussels Forum carried a headline that seems almost amusing to those who understand the dynamics behind U.S. foreign policy: "McCain refuses to attack Obama's foreign policy." The article noted: "In an interview with the *Financial Times*, McCain, who retained his Senate seat when he became his party's nominee, repeatedly declined to criticize Mr. Obama's foreign policy stances, including the decision to explore the possibilities of talks with Iran."

One could attribute the naïveté implicit in the *Financial Times'* seeming surprise that Senator McCain has not criticized his former rival's foreign policy to the fact that the newspaper is London-based, but most U.S.-based newspapers would probably take a similar perspective. That we are not similarly surprised by McCain's acceptance of the Obama foreign policy stems from years of observing that U.S. foreign policy is made more at 58 East 68th Street in New York, than at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington.

For those who have just joined our sphere of thinking, the former address is the home of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), an 88-year-old organization that has dominated U.S. foreign policy for generations. Since the 1940s, the strategically important post of secretary of state has been held virtually without interruption by CFR members — Dean Acheson, John Foster Dulles, Christian Herter, Dean Rusk, William P. Rogers (who joined the CFR after leaving office), Henry Kissinger, Cyrus Vance, Edmund Muskie, Alexander Haig, George Shultz, Lawrence Eagleburger, James Baker, Warren Christopher, Madeleine Albright, and Condoleezza Rice. While present Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is not a member, Bill Clinton is.

Is John McCain opposed to the internationalist foreign policy orchestrated by the CFR? A policy that places the interests of bodies such as the UN and NATO over the interests of the United States? A "background" profile posted on the CFR website, "Foreign Policy Brain Trusts: McCain Advisers," provides us with some clues: "McCain receives advice from several generations of Republican strategists and former top foreign policy officials such as Henry Kissinger and Richard Armitage, often grouped in the realist camp of foreign policy, as well as William Kristol and Robert Kagan, leading neoconservative voices." Both Kissinger and Kagan are CFR members, and the article points to McCain's partiality to what could be described as an "interventionist" foreign policy.

As for Richard Holbrooke, whose influence over foreign policy cannot be underestimated, he is nothing if not a CFR heavyweight. Holbrooke has a long history of State Department assignments, one of the best known being his brokering of a peace agreement among the warring factions in Bosnia that led to the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords — which coerced reluctant parties into an artificial settlement of the dispute. Following that deal, President Clinton announced the deployment of 20,000 U.S. troops to Bosnia to serve as an "Implementation Force" (IFOR) for the agreement.

A true internationalist and Wall Street insider, Holbrooke is a member of both the CFR (of which he is a member of the board of directors) and the Trilateral Commission. From 1985 until 1993, he served as managing director of Lehman Brothers, and in 1999, he was sworn-in as the 22nd U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. In 2001, Holbrooke left his UN post to become a counselor at the CFR and became chairman of its Terrorism Task Force.

One indication of the continuity of CFR influence from administration to administration, even when the political party designation changes, is that George W. Bush's Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, has continued on in that role in the Obama administration.

In January 2004, Gates co-chaired a Council on Foreign Relations task force on U.S. relations towards Iran.

And the "change" part of Barack Obama's foreign policy will be ... ?

Photo of Richard Holbrooke: AP Images

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**Holbrooke says western Pak key to resolving Afghan war**

Updated at: 0500 PST, Monday, March 23, 2009



BRUSSELS: Ahead of a key April 2 NATO meeting – and Barack Obama's first presidential trip outside North America – US special envoy to Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke said that western Pakistan presents the chief problem in resolving an eight-year war that has divided allies and threatens the standing of an alliance ready to mark its 60th anniversary.

The Talibanization of West Pakistan, in the Swat region that borders Afghanistan, was the greatest surprise to envoy Holbrooke on his first fact-finding mission to the region last month.

It was the top issue he relayed to Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and National Security Adviser Jim Jones, Holbrooke told the Monitor on the sidelines of the Brussels Forum, a security meeting here.

"A year ago, I visited Peshawar [near the Khyber Pass] and I was asked about starting an Asia Society office there," Holbrooke said. "Last month, people were afraid to go outside after dark.

The change in the situation was stunning. Geopolitically Afghanistan hasn't changed; Pakistan has."

Holbrooke spoke at the Brussels Forum and meets here this week with NATO officials ahead of a much-anticipated Obama strategy for dealing with Afghanistan.

"The heart of the problem for the West is in western Pakistan," the envoy said. "But there are not going to be US or NATO troops on the ground in Pakistan. There is a red line for the government of Pakistan, and one which we must respect."

Holbrooke said the US had twice made "historic mistakes" by leaving – once after Soviet forces pulled out in the late 1980s, and again after the first campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in 2003.

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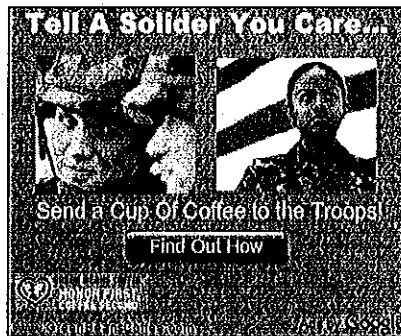
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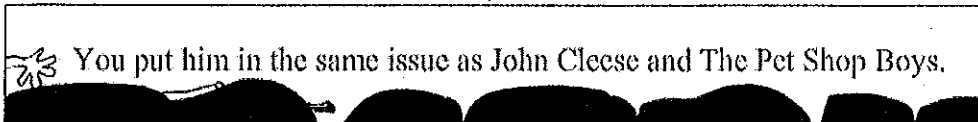
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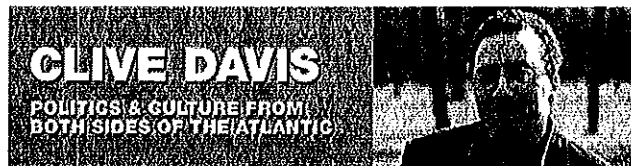
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## Known Unknowns & Laughter In The Dark

MONDAY, 23RD MARCH 2009

All right, I have to admit that a blogpost entitled "Day one at the Brussels Forum" might not seem all that promising, but Daniel Drezner's dispatch from the conference does include this nugget:

The most revealing thing said during the session was when [Robert] Kagan confessed, "I don't understand anything that is going on in the economy." This is a big problem with foreign policy wonks -- too many of them know too little about economics (this explains my man-crush on Bob Zoellick, by the way). Props to Kagan for at least admitting this fact.

And there's this:

The session opens with German Marshall Fund president Craig Kennedy thanking the myriad donors -- Fortis, Daimler, the Belgian government, the Latvian defense ministry, etc. I think to myself, "how many of these institutions will not go bankrupt this year?"

Oh, and a bleak sign-of-the-times quip from an FT apparatchik:

He described his niche as, "being in one industry that's f\*\*\*ed writing about another industry that's f\*\*\*ed."

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# TIMES ONLINE

From The Times

March 23, 2009

## Obama changes tactics in 'disastrous' war against Afghanistan's heroin producers

David Charter in Brussels and Tom Baldwin in Washington

President Obama is planning an overhaul of the ineffective anti-drugs policy in Afghanistan as Washington prepares to announce the non-military side of its strategy to defeat the Taleban.

Richard Holbrooke, the US envoy to the region, announced at the weekend that Congress would soon be asked for funds to rebuild the Afghan economy, in a joint approach with Mr Obama's appeal to Nato for more forces to join the 17,000 extra troops that he has already promised. The US also wants to boost the Afghan police.

The biggest disaster, according to Mr Holbrooke, is the botched antinarcotics programme that has failed to stop Afghanistan supplying most of the world's heroin. Mr Obama is expected to announce his strategy for Afghanistan this week before the 60th anniversary summit of Nato in April.

Britain was put in charge of tackling the drug issue under the Bonn agreement of 2001 but has struggled through a lack of resources. British sources have welcomed the US switch from crop eradication to creating alternative livelihoods.

"The United States alone is spending over \$800 million a year on counter-narcotics. We have gotten nothing out of it, nothing," Mr Holbrooke told the Brussels Forum on Saturday. "It is the most wasteful and ineffective programme I have seen in 40 years."

"What we're looking for is a comprehensive strategy," Mr Obama said last night in a television interview. "And there's got to be an exit strategy."

According to US government figures, last month Afghanistan supplied 90 per cent of the heroin in the world. "By forced eradication we are often pushing farmers into the Taleban hands," Mr Holbrooke said. "We are going to try to reprogramme that money. About \$160 million is for alternate livelihoods and we would like to increase that."

Senior British officials will welcome a shift in US policy in Afghanistan, saying that they have argued for an approach that puts more emphasis on providing alternative sources of income for farmers.

"Our response is that this is about bloody time," a British diplomat said. He complained that ever since Britain was given responsibility for the policy it had been pulled in different directions.

Mr Holbrooke confirmed that the US had no plans to send troops into the lawless tribal areas of Pakistan, which he considers the root of the terrorist scourge, and suggested that Nato should turn its attention to anti-propaganda measures.



(John Moore/Getty Images)

Destruction of poppy crops is 'often pushing farmers into Taleban hands'



## Turkey's idea on Caucasian Security Platform not well formulated: President of Georgia

23.03.2009 12:52

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Georgia, Tbilisi, March 23 / Trend News N. Kirtzkhalia /

Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili considers Caucasian Security Platform suggested by Turkey as raw material.

"Caucasian Security Platform suggested by Ankara has not been well formulated yet but we always welcome multilateral mechanisms," Saakashvili said at a press-conference within Brussels forum.

"This idea is raw. Consultations are at the initial stage yet," the President said.

Saakashvili said that he does not think it is necessary to create such mechanisms which will exclude the European Union and other big players in the region. "I think there must not be any exclusive regional mechanisms. But I think that any addition to already existing organizations of the European Union which will be opened for all positive players in the region can be welcomed," Georgian President said.

Ankara proposed itself as a mediator in peace settlement in Caucasus in August 2008. Ankara suggested an idea of Caucasian Security Platform, the organization in which Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia might have entered.

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## **I not to strive for being NATO Secretary General: Canadian Defence Minister**

23.03.2009 10:31

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Canadian Defence Minister Peter MacKay stated that he would like to stay at his position and he would not strive for being NATO Secretary General, RBK reported with reference to Associated Press. I would like to concentrate on improving Canadian military forces, including their reformation and Canadian military contingent's fulfillment of its mission in Afghanistan, he said. □□

Privileges of NATO current Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer expiry in July 2009. Danish Defence Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski and Canadian Defence Minister, after statement of U.S Vice-President Joe Biden that NATO Secretary General is not obliged to be representative of European country, were considered among the most possible pretenders till the last moment.



President to send draft constitutional amendments to Venice Commission      European Parliament I


2009-03-23  
UKRINFORM

### Ukraine to Integrate with EU not at expense of relations with Russia

KYIV, March 23 /UKRINFORM/. Ukraine stands firmly on the way of a more close integration with the EU, but we will not do it at the expense of our relations with Russia, Vice Prime Minister Hryhoriy Nemyria said during his speech at the Brussels forum, UKRINFORM reports with reference to the Media Liaison Department of the Cabinet's Secretariat.

In addition, he repeated that Ukraine considers the Eastern Partnership initiative as an instrument for intensification of relations with the EU and other neighboring states and intends to actively participate in realization of this initiative. "A new Eastern Partnership imitative should become an instrument thanks to which the civil society in Ukraine will be strengthened, the life standard of the Ukrainian citizens will be improved and new markets will be open for our state", the Vice Prime Minister noted.

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## Rasmussen seen as next NATO leader

Published: March 23, 2009 at 12:57 PM

BRUSSELS, March 23 (UPI) -- Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen appears next in line to become the NATO secretary-general, analysts said in Brussels.

Rasmussen, who reportedly has the backing of Britain, will likely get the job over Washington's preferred candidate, Canadian Defense Minister Peter MacKay, and would succeed Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the helm of the alliance, the EU Observer said Monday.

McKay told a press conference at the Brussels Forum event Sunday that he is more focused on Canada's ongoing armed forces reform and its mission in Afghanistan.

"Just the fact that our country is being considered speaks for the recognition of what we do," he said, adding, "Canada is interested in all aspects of NATO, including its leadership."

Turkey, however, has signaled it would oppose Rasmussen's bid because of how he managed the controversy over a Danish newspaper's cartoon depicting the Prophet Mohammad with a bomb in his turban -- specifically, his refusal to see Muslim ambassadors, the Observer said.

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Updated : Monday, 03/23/2009 - 8:50 AM

Russia unhappy with NATO

**Russia is unhappy with NATO's dominant role in European security and its dealing with neighbours that used to be part of the Soviet Union, the Russian foreign minister said over the weekend in Brussels.**

Sergey Lavrov said both the European Union and NATO were involved in unfair, dealings with Russia's neighbours.

On March 20, the EU promised a hefty programme of aid trade and closer political ties to six former Soviet republics, Ukraine Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova and Belarus.



Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov

Europe's security should be run by the 56-nation Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Lavrov said during the annual Brussels Forum security conference.

The idea has been repeatedly rejected in NATO capitals, which view the 56-member OSCE as unsuited for the task.

Lavrov's reiterating Moscow's demand for a new security compact showed an enduring divide between Moscow and its former foes of the Cold War era-20 years after the Iron Curtain came down.

Lavrov said NATO should commit to "legally binding" security arrangements through the Vienna-based OSCE to cure what he called the alliance's appetite "for more and more scenarios" of unilateral actions.

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana rebuffed Russian calls for a new security architecture in Europe, insisting that existing bodies like the NATO-Russia Council could do the job.

Lavrov, whose country is concerned about NATO expanding ever closer to its borders, said security in Europe was based around organisations or structures that essentially only looked after themselves, to the exclusion of non-members.

Lavrov argued that some organisations operated on the basis of political principles while others had binding laws and he called for a list of security standards to be drawn up that would be respected by all.

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## EU economic commissioner: stimulus enough for now

### Special Report: Global Financial Crisis

BRUSSELS, March 23 (Xinhua) -- The European Union (EU) has done enough for now to stimulate its economy, EU Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs Joaquin Almunia said on Sunday, without ruling out further moves.

"We cannot afford to spend the next two decades absorbing the debt" from fiscal stimulus spending, Almunia told a conference in Brussels organized by the German Marshall Fund.

The United States has been calling on the EU countries to step up their economic stimulus efforts so as to support demand for the good of a world recovery.

But EU leaders rejected any additional stimulus after they concluded a two-day summit in Brussels on Friday, worried that more government spending will push deficits high beyond the EU limit.

Under the EU rules, member states should keep their deficits below three percent of their gross domestic product (GDP).

Almunia said that what the EU has to do now is to implement the stimulus packages already planned, but he did not rule out further moves.

"Given the present uncertainty, no one will exclude that further decisions will be required," he said.

Concerning the Group of 20 (G20) developed and emerging economies summit in London on April 2, Almunia said reform of the global financial system would be the EU's main priority.

Trans-Atlantic divergence emerged ahead of the G20 summit, with the EU focusing on financial reform while the U.S. on more economic stimulus.

The summit, a follow-up to the previous one in Washington last November, is a

key global bid to work out of the financial and economic crisis.

Addressing the same conference, World Bank President Robert Zoellick warned on Saturday that 2009 will be a "very dangerous year" for the world economy.

"2009 is going to be a very dangerous year," Zoellick said. "It is indeed serious, and there are issues that go beyond the economic to political and social stability."

Zoellick said the World Bank expects the world economy to shrink between 1 percent and 2 percent this year, worse than the latest forecast released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"We have not seen a figure like that globally since World War II, which really means since the Great Depression," he said.

The IMF forecast on Thursday that the world economy will contract between 0.5 percent and 1 percent this year.

Zoellick warned that injecting money into the economy without fixing the credit systems will inevitably lead to another crash, calling it a "sugar high."

"The issue now that is most important are the bad assets and recapitalizing the banks, and the reason I use 'sugar high' was that it is like if you have to have stimulus, it gives you a boost, but unless you get the credit system working again, it will drop off," he said.

Zoellick proposed that the G20 should establish a review process to determine whether further stimulus measures are needed.



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# A Pakistan News <>

McCain cautions Obama admin on Afghan

Tuesday, March 24, 2009 at 3:03 pm

As the Obama administration prepares to unveil a new Afghan strategy, leading Republican Senator John McCain has cautioned against reducing US role in Afghanistan, arguing that the approach may have "catastrophic consequences."

"I am concerned, however, by calls in some quarters both in Washington and in Europe for the coalition to adopt a 'minimalist' approach to Afghanistan," McCain said in his speech at the Brussels Forum in Belgium over the weekend.

Supporters of this course caution that our citizens are tired of war, and that an ambitious long-term commitment to Afghanistan may be politically unfeasible, McCain said according to a copy of the speech release by his office in Washington.

"The political allure of such a reductionist approach is obvious. But it also dangerously and fundamentally wrong and leaders on both sides of the Atlantic should decisively and unambiguously reject it," McCain said.

A narrow short-term focus on counter terrorism, by contrast, would repeat precisely the mistakes the US made for years in Iraq prior to the surge, with the same catastrophic consequences.

There is a need to show the Afghan civilians that we are on their side, committed to staying and protecting them from the insurgents, he said.

The best way to generate the intelligence necessary for successful counter-terrorism operations, and to split reconcilable insurgents from their irreconcilable brethren.

"Only this will enable us to turn the tide, to embark on path of successful reconciliation, and augur the day when our fighting men and women can withdraw from that country in success," he said.

Our words also resonate in the very region we are trying to affect and rhetoric about trimming our sails in Afghanistan, or that diminishes the importance of success there, exacerbates suspicions, already widespread in South Asia, he said.

"These doubts about our staying power deter ordinary Afghans from siding with our coalition against the insurgency," McCain warned.

“Just as importantly, they are a major reason why some in Pakistan are reluctant to break decisively with insurgent groups, which they view as integral to a hedging strategy, in order to position Pakistan for influence the day after the international community gives up and leaves,” he said.

(With inputs from Agencies)

( This post is from an independent writer. The opinions and views expressed herein are those of the author and are not endorsed by APakistanNews.Com.)

**Top News**

**UPDATE Poland Wants US To Honor Agreement For Missile Shield**

Tue, 24 Mar '09

**State Department Appointee Expresses Misgivings About Proposal**

Statements recently made by President Barack Obama, as well as a California congresswoman leaving her job for a position in the US State Department, have left officials in Poland at something of a loss.



Last week, US Representative Ellen Tauscher was asked to serve as undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, under Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Tauscher -- described by CNN as a moderate Democrat -- recently questioned the decision to build several missile interceptor bases throughout Europe, including one in Poland to ostensibly counter ballistic missile threats from the likes of Iran.

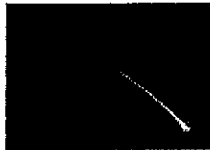
"We need to reassess" the need for those bases, Tauscher said recently, reports Agence-France Presse. "The threat is short- and medium-range missiles targeted towards our forward deployed troops, and our allies in southern Europe."

Tauscher also says any missile defense system should undergo "three or four more tests" before being deployed.

Those proposed bases have caused friction in the already strained diplomatic relationship between the US and Russia. The Bush administration took a hard line in response, stressing the bases were in Russia's best interests as well... but the Obama White House has expressed some wavering from that view, **as ANN has reported.**

That has caused concern from Polish proponents of the shield. "We hope we don't regret our trust in the United States," Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said this weekend at the Brussels Forum conference to an audience of senior world politicians and experts.

Sikorski also expressed fear of Russian reprisals against Poland for its support of the missile shield, particularly if those defenses don't come to fruition. "When we started discussing this business with the United States, the US assured us that they would persuade Russia," Sikorski said. "I am afraid Russian generals and even the Russian president continue to threaten us with the deployment of medium-range missiles."



"Poland has taken a political risk in signing up with the previous administration," he concluded.

In response to US plans to deploy the missile shield throughout Eastern Europe, Russia has threatened to deploy Iskander missiles to Kaliningrad, which is nestled in between Poland and Lithuania.

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 **THE AUSTRALIAN**

April 01, 2009 07:27am AEDT

## US seeks Afghan war exit strategy

Correspondents in Washington | March 24, 2009

Article from: [The Australian](#)

**PRESIDENT Barack Obama said yesterday the US must have an "exit strategy" for Afghanistan even as it expands its military, diplomatic and economic fight against the Taliban insurgency.**

"What we're looking for is a comprehensive strategy," Mr Obama said in an interview aired yesterday on US network CBS's 60 Minutes.

"There's got to be an exit strategy," he said. "There's got to be a sense this is not a perpetual drift."

Mr Obama's comments came after his envoy to the region, Richard Holbrooke, said the US was planning an overhaul of the ineffective anti-drugs policy in Afghanistan.

Mr Holbrooke said on Saturday that Congress would soon be asked for funds to rebuild the Afghan economy in a joint approach with Mr Obama's appeal to NATO for more forces to join the 17,000 extra troops he has promised. The US also wants to boost the Afghan police force.

The biggest disaster, according to Mr Holbrooke, is the botched anti-narcotics program, which has failed to stop Afghanistan supplying 90 per cent of the heroin in the world.

"The US alone is spending more than \$US800 million (\$1.1billion) a year on counter-narcotics. We have gotten nothing out of it, nothing," he told the Brussels Forum.

"It's the most wasteful and ineffective program I have seen in 40 years. By forced eradication we are often pushing farmers into the Taliban's hands.

"We are going to try to reprogram that money. About \$US160 million is for alternative livelihoods, and we would like to increase that."

Mr Obama is expected to announce his strategy for Afghanistan this week before the 60th anniversary summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in April.

The President told 60 Minutes the decision last month to send 17,000 extra US troops to Afghanistan -- largely to head off a spike in violence before elections in August -- was the most difficult he has had to make since taking office.

"You know, I think it is the right thing to do. But it's a weighty decision because we actually had to make the decision prior to the completion of the strategic review we were conducting," he said.

The strategy is expected to rely on a major expansion of Afghanistan's own security forces, wooing "moderate" insurgents, stepping up civilian aid and embarking on ambitious diplomacy across the region.

US commanders have said as many as 30,000 additional troops are needed to overcome a stalemate in parts of Afghanistan. But some analysts caution against a gradual Vietnam-like escalation in a country historically hostile to outsiders.

Adding to the intrigues in Afghan politics is an explosive report by British newspaper The Guardian that claims the US will soon install a prime ministerial figure in the Afghan Government.

Whoever fills the new executive post will work alongside President Hamid Karzai, rather than challenging his power. The role is aimed at countering the corruption and incompetence that has made the Afghan Government far less effective than the West had hoped.

AFP, The Times

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## Serbia marks 10th anniversary of NATO attacks

By JOVANA GEC – Mar 24, 2009

**BELGRADE, Serbia (AP)** — Air raid sirens sounded across Serbia on Tuesday to mark the 10th anniversary of the NATO bombing that ended Belgrade's rule in Kosovo.

Officials denounced the raids, which NATO carried out to force then-President Slobodan Milosevic to halt his onslaught against separatists in the former Serbian province.

"The attack on our country was an illegal act," Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic said. "Serbia cannot forget those tragic days."

Classes in Serbia's schools opened with a minute of silence for the victims. The government held a special session dedicated to the anniversary and ministers planned to lay wreaths at bombing sites throughout the country.

The ceremonies illustrate continued anti-Western sentiment in Serbia over the NATO air war, which forced the country to relinquish control over Kosovo to the United Nations and NATO.

Later Tuesday, about 1,000 hard-liners chanted "We Want Guns" and booed the mention of NATO during a rally in downtown Belgrade. Hundreds of riot police deployed nearby to prevent unrest similar to that which followed Kosovo's declaration of independence last year. In that violence, nationalists demolished the city center, and smashed and set fire to the U.S. and other Western embassies.

Incidents also were reported after the rally Tuesday. Police said a group of demonstrators clashed with police, who detained 24 of them. Three policemen and two demonstrators were injured, police said. Witnesses said the nationalists smashed the window of a McDonald's restaurant in central Belgrade.

Kosovo declared independence with the backing of the United States and most EU nations. But Serbia has vowed never to accept Kosovo's independence.

President Boris Tadic reiterated Serbia's position at the U.N. Security Council on Monday. He said the bombing was a "tragic" event when Serbs were "accused and bombed collectively."

NATO launched the air raids on March 24, 1999.

The alliance destroyed many of Serbia's roads, bridges and factories before Milosevic conceded defeat in June. Cvetkovic asserted Tuesday that 2,500 civilians — including 89 children — and 1,002 soldiers and policemen were killed.

But independent assessments have put the number of civilian casualties far lower. Human Rights Watch estimates that about 500 civilians died as a result of the NATO campaign.

The U.N. estimates that about 10,000 people were killed in Kosovo alone in fighting between guerrillas of the ethnic Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army and Serbian forces loyal to Milosevic. Another 800,000 people were displaced during the 1998-99 war.

Milosevic was charged with genocide by a U.N. tribunal for the atrocities committed there and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia. He died in 2006 while on trial.

NATO officials in Brussels declined to comment on the anniversary.

But in his address at the annual Brussels Forum security conference on Sunday, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer described the decision to bomb Serbia as "controversial but nevertheless necessary."

In Kosovo, Prime Minister Hashim Thaci hailed the bombing anniversary as "a great historic day." He said that the NATO intervention "opened a new chapter in Kosovo's history ... the chapter of freedom and the building of meaningful democracy."

But there is still a divide in Kosovo. Thousands of Serbs marched in the northern city of Mitrovica to mark the anniversary, and Serbian Orthodox priests held a service for the victims. No violent incidents were reported.

Milosevic's followers still hold considerable influence in Serbia, whose current government includes ministers from the Socialist Party that Milosevic founded.

The Socialist Deputy Prime Minister Ivica Dacic spoke Monday at a pro-Milosevic gathering in Belgrade denouncing the NATO bombing as a "criminal act" designed to strip Serbia of its right to Kosovo. Milosevic's brother Borislav Milosevic was also present.

In a rare criticism of the anniversary ceremonies, pro-Western Liberal Party leader Cedomir Jovanovic said the government was not making it clear that the bombing was "the consequence of (Serbia's) irresponsible policies, policies full of crime and mistakes" under Milosevic.

*Associated Press Writers Nebi Qena in Kosovo and Slobodan Lokic in Brussels contributed to this report.*

**AP** Associated Press

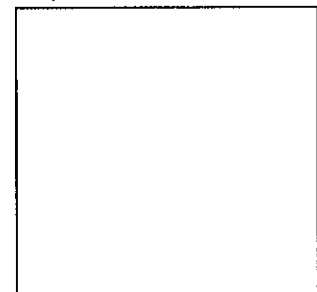
Photo 1 of 2



Serb children release pigeons, as a symbol of peace, in Zvecan, just outside Serb-dominated part of ethnically divided town of Kosovska Mitrovica, in Kosovo Tuesday, March 24, 2009. Air raid sirens sounded across Serbia Tuesday to mark the 10th anniversary of the start of NATO's bombing, as officials denounced the attacks that killed more than 3,000 people and ended Belgrade's rule in Kosovo. More than 10,000 people were killed during the war in Kosovo, which erupted when Serbia launched a crackdown against the province's ethnic Albanian separatists. The conflict ended in 1999 after NATO bombed Serbia for 78 days. (AP Photo/Zvekl)



Map



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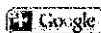
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## Latest news from Belarus

Mar 24 2009

### **Andrei Sannikov: "Crisis is time for fundamental reforms"**

World balance will be changing, governments will be changed, influence of the states, which have been in shadow, will be growing in the world during the crisis.

Among other things this was a forecast of participants of Brussels Forum 2009 that gathers the political, economic, and intellectual elite of the world.

Our country was represented at the Forum by Andrei Sannikov, leader of the civil campaign "European Belarus", and Iryna Krasouskaya, leader of the initiative "We Remember". We are speaking with Andrei Sannikov about Brussels Forum:

**– What singles out the Brussels Forum 2009 from other events of this kind?**

– This forum was unique because in fact it has become a part of the world anti-crisis effort. The leading politicians and analysts were discussing possibilities for joint trans-Atlantic settling of the world burning problems.

The format of the Forum implies an interactive discussion with the audience. It is organized in such a way to make maximal use of all numerous participants, that's why there are morning discussions and discussions that last long after midnight. A part of sessions are open, but many of them are held according to the Chatham House rule, restricting spreading of information about view of certain participants. It is made for a discussion to be maximally free.

**– There are so many top officials at the Forum. Do they follow the general rules?**

– Yes, the rule of free discussion applies for everyone. I saw many presidents and ministers strongly criticised, when their views were being challenged. These officials, however, didn't behave in their ordinary way and didn't search for words.

*Andrei Sannikov and Lithuanian foreign minister Vygaudas Ušackas*

**– What issues are of great concern for the world's leaders?**

– A key issue of Brussels Forum was the global financial and economic crisis. Most participants touched this matter, moreover the EU anti-crisis summit ended on the day when the Forum opened. **José Manuel Barroso** opened the Forum and shared his estimation of the summit. It was clear that the European Union is actively looking for ways out of the crisis not only in the EU member states, it also demonstrated a global approach. 50bn euro aid to the non-EU states proves it.

*European Commission President José Manuel Barroso*

World Bank President **Robert Zoellick**, for example, made more disappointing forecasts of the world economic development than the International Monetary Fund. It sounded like a call not to wait for a miracle but, basing on the worst, to look for the most effective ways of crisis tackling.

In some weeks, NATO member states will gather for their summit, dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the organization, so NATO theme, further transforming of the Alliance was also actively discussed at the Forum. The democratic world faces new challenges, above all energy security, and NATO will have to find its role in these questions.

– **Are there any concrete conclusions of the Forum?**

– There is no final communiqué. The Forum objective is a comprehensive detailed discussion of the global issues ahead of the important international events.

It is forecasted that world balance will be changing, new governments will be formed in many countries, influence of the states that have been in shadow will be growing in the world in the crisis.

– **This year, Belarus has been paid much attention at Brussels Forum for the first time...**

– A whole session was dedicated to Belarus for the first time. Lithuanian foreign minister **Vygaudas Ušackas** and I spoke in the frames of this dissuasion. The Belarusian section was also attended by Latvia's President **Valdis Zatlers**, OSCE Secretary General **Marc Perrin de Brichambaut**, leader of the Belarusian initiative "We Remember" **Iryna Krasouskaya**, officers of foreign ministries of the EU states, officials and members of the European Parliament.

*Andrei Sannikov and Latvia's President Valdis Zatlers*

The situation in Belarus is of great concern. Some changes have been noticed in the relations between Brussels and Minsk during the last months. The European Union opens more and more new channels not only for communication, but also for cooperation. The same cannot be said about the Belarusian authorities. We all know well that the regime continues to use the same methods to control the situation, they are repressive ones. It concerns not only the opposition, but also entrepreneurs, managers at state-run enterprises, public figures, leaders of independent trade unions. So, it can be said that Europe has great expectations and hopes for changing of the situation in Belarus, but the practical steps, made by some European officials, are not always appropriate for the situation and lead to contrary results.

In general, there is an impression that European politicians have their own approaches to Belarus, European officials – the others, and politicians of individual countries – their own ones, and these approaches not necessarily match. Someone wants sincerely to help Belarus, someone wants to use Belarus in fighting against Russia, someone doesn't care about Belarus and wants just to keep his or her post. Those who support a dialogue with Lukashenka's regime don't have an answer only to one question: "How is it possible not to notice political repressions in Belarus?"

– **Why was none of the Belarusian officials invited to Brussels?**

– Perhaps, it is because Belarusian officials got used to take part in meetings on agricultural campaigns and are not ready for free discussion. But I don't exclude that if the Belarusian authorities demonstrate that their intentions to democratize the country are serious, they may be invited for the next forum.

– **Was including of Belarus in the Eastern Partnership program discussed at the Forum?**

– The decision, taken in relation to the Eastern Partnership program, can be called intermediate, because the program and its participants are being discussed now. It is discussed by the EU member states and potential participants. Belarus evokes more and more questions, for its participation in the Eastern Partnership program will be senseless without carrying political and economic reforms. By the way, **Javier Solana** in his conversation with **Sergei Lavrov** said speaking about Russia that the EU policy was based on three fundamental principles: security, economy, and respect of human rights.

*EU High Representative Javier Solana and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov*

– **Was possibility of invitation of Lukashenka for the EU summit in Prague discussed?**

– It was discussed, of course, it's possible to say that he is many people would not like to see him in Prague.

– **What meetings did you have in Brussels?**

– I had talks with European and American politicians, public figures, MPs of Lithuania, Hungary, and Germany. We discussed the situation in Belarus with Latvia's president **Valdis Zatlers**, who, by the way, pays much attention to the Belarusian minority in Latvia and helps Belarusians, living there. I met with Czech Vice Premier **Alexander Vondra**, who admitted that the Czechia as the EU president found itself in a difficult situation in connection with Belarus's participation in the Eastern Partnership. We had a meaningful conversation with MEP **Elmar Brok** and Swedish MP **Urban Ahlin**, who does Belarus for quite a long time.

Iryna Krasouskaya and I met with Senator **John McCain**, former US presidential candidate. He is interested in the situation in Belarus, supports efforts of the democratic forces. The senator sent his wishes to former political prisoner **Mikhail Marynich**, in whose fate he took active part, and assured us that a position of the United States towards Belarus didn't depend on a party in power.

*Andrei Sannikov, Iryna Krasouskaya, and Senator John McCain*

*Andrei Sannikov and Senator John McCain*

A meeting with a western businessman, working in Belarus at the airport became a "tuning fork" of Brussels Forum for me. We spoke about the crisis, and he suddenly told me crisis was the best time for him, because he was a crisis manager. He can reveal his talents and work in the most effective way. I asked him what Belarus could expect from the crisis. He said the consequences would be very serious. But if to deal with the situation in the country from the point of view of a crisis manager, this is the best time for fundamental reforms, both political and economic. In his view, the current political system of Belarus won't allow finding a way out of this hard economic situation. But if there are crucial changes in power, Belarus not only will overcome the difficulties, but also will become one of the leaders in Eastern Europe.

**Notice of the Charter'97 press center:**

**Brussels Forum** is an annual high-level meeting of the most influential North American and European political and intellectual leaders, organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

More than 200n people took part in the Forum 2009. Among them are the President of the European Commission **Jose Manuel Barroso**, NATO Secretary General **Jaap de Hoop Scheffer**, OSCE Secretary General **Marc Perrin de Brichambaut**, the former candidate for presidency in the US senator **John McCain**, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy **Javier Solana**, World Bank President **Robert Zoellick**, Latvian President **Valdis Zatlers**, President of Georgia **Mikheil Saakashvili**, Belgian Prime Minister **Herman Van Rompuy**, White House Counsel **Gregory Craig**, Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs **Carl Bildt**, Foreign Minister of Russia **Sergei Lavrov**, Czech Prime Minister **Mirek Topolanek**, Vice Premier of the Czech Republic **Alexander Vondra**, Ukrainian Vice Premier **Grigory Nemirya**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic **Karel Schwarzenberg**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania **Vygaudas Usackas**, Foreign Minister of Slovakia **Miroslav Lajčák**, Foreign Minister of Poland **Radoslaw Sikorski**, Minister of Defence of Belgium **Pieter De Crem**, US senators **Robert Casey**, **Robert Bennett**, **George Voinovich**, **Mel Martinez**, **James Risch**, congressman **Alcee Hastings**, congresswoman **Ellen Tauscher**, head of the Senate of Romania **Mircea Geoană**, Special US Envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan **Richard Hallbrook**, and other international leaders.

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March 2009

M T W T F S S

# Virtual Collector

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Tuesday, March 24, 2009

## U.S. Senator McCain Faults Russia on Iran, Georgia Peace Accord



by Cary O'Reilly  
 Bloomberg, March 21, 2009

March 21 (Bloomberg) -- Russia isn't helping international efforts to rein in Iran's nuclear ambitions and has reneged on promises in Georgia, U.S. Senator John McCain said after a foreign policy speech in Brussels.

"I think the Russians can help," McCain told reporters today at the Brussels Forum meeting of leaders from North America and Europe in Belgium. "I have not seen any Russian actions to help" in Iran. "I have seen no sign" Iran has backed off its nuclear ambitions, he said.

McCain spoke ahead of a scheduled meeting between Russian President Dmitri Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama in London on April 1. Obama is seeking Kremlin support for his policies, including on Afghanistan and Iran. U.S. Vice President Joe Biden said in

February it was time to "reset" relations with Russia after they were frayed by the insistence of George W. Bush to deploy an eastern European missile defense system during his presidency.

McCain criticized other recent Russian foreign policy actions, saying he does "take exception" to a failure by leaders in Moscow to adhere to a November peace agreement with Georgia, brokered by French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

"I still hope we can publicly commit to democracy in Georgia and Ukraine," McCain said. "We want freedom and democracy for every nation of the world."

McCain said he doesn't think Russia meets the democracy requirements to qualify as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and that he would be "reluctant" to endorse its membership. He rejected Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's suggestion that NATO should be replaced by the 56-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

### Cold War

The Arizona Republican senator, who lost to Obama in the November U.S. presidential election, said while Russia and the U.S. have disagreements, he doesn't believe either country is seeking to reignite the Cold War.

"I see friction," McCain said. "We have issues between ourselves and the Russians. I don't see that these issues can't be resolved over time."

In his speech, McCain said NATO must win the war in Afghanistan and he encouraged alliance member nations to be more transparent in discussing with the public the cost and likely duration of the conflict before victory is achieved. "We can and must win the war in Afghanistan, but will fail without a new strategy," he said. "I'm concerned about calls in some quarters, both in the U.S and Europe, to adopt a minimalist approach to Afghanistan."

"The political lure of such a reductionist approach is obvious, but it's also dangerously and fundamentally wrong," McCain said.

The Brussels Forum is an annual meeting of American and European political and corporate leaders to discuss economic, security and other foreign policy issues.

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Posted by Lord Vader at 1:51 AM  
 Labels: Georgia, McCain, Media: Bloomberg, Ukraine

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## **Almunia: EU-IMF agreement with Romania to be announced this week**

**Curierul Național**

The EU-IMF agreement with Romania will be announced during this week, said in Brussels the European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs Joaquín Almunia, the NewsIn correspondent transmits.

"We are negotiating and I hope we will announce an agreement with Romania next week," on Sunday said Almunia at the Brussels Forum, a conference on transatlantic issues organised by the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

On Monday, at the Victoria Palace, IMF representatives met with Prime Minister Emil Boc, leaders of the parliamentary political parties with at their seats, but also with trade unions. Government representatives say the negotiations will be finalised within two weeks, after which, in early April, the IMF will send the Government a letter of intent for a two-year stand-by agreement. Premier Emil Boc announced that the loan that Romania would contract from the EC, the IMF and European banks - amounting to some 19 billion dollars, according to Minister Radu Berceanu - had a preventive character and would be used to consolidate the BNR reserve and, implicitly, to support the leu-euro rate at an acceptable level and to re-launch crediting.

"Together with the IMF, we have approved a financing programme for Hungary, which has recently been supplemented and continues. We also approved together with the IMF a programme with Latvia, which will be supplemented in the following days, under terms established with the new government," Almunia reminded on Sunday.

The Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs added that other EU countries, non-members of the euro zone, could resort to an IMF-EU aid, the available fund having been supplemented by European leaders to 50 billion, on Friday.

This week the European Commission will announce its recommendations on Romania's convergence programme. As, last year, Romania registered a budget deficit of 5.2% of gross domestic product (GDP), above the 3% limit established in the Stability Pact to be applied to both the countries in the euro area and those who wish to join it, it is very likely for the European executive to also make a recommendation on the excessive deficit procedure, as with Ireland, France, Spain, Latvia, Greece and Malta.

Within the negotiations for a possible loan from the IMF and the European Commission, the Government takes into account a forecast of 1.5 to 3% economic contraction, and a budget deficit of maximum 4.2% of GDP in 2009, government sources told NewsIn on Sunday.

Articol salvat de pe [www.curierulnational.ro](http://www.curierulnational.ro), ediția din 24 Martie 2009. Acest articol este proprietatea Curierul National și nu poate fi reprodus fără acordul scris al acestora.

Daily Times - Site Edition

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

**'FATA key to resolving Afghan war'**

LAHORE: Western Pakistan presents the 'chief problem' in resolving the eight-year war in Afghanistan that has divided allies and threatens the standing of an alliance ready to mark its 60th birthday, according to US special envoy Richard Holbrooke. Holbrooke's comments came in an interview with Christian Science Monitor. The 'Talibanisation' of Swat and the Tribal Areas was the greatest surprise to Holbrooke on his first fact-finding mission to the region last month. Holbrooke told the Monitor on the sidelines of the Brussels Forum that it was the top issue he relayed to US President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and National Security Adviser Jim Jones. daily times monitor

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**Trans-Atlantic Relations | 24.03.2009**

## **West Favors Dane for Top NATO Post, but Turkish Hurdles Remain**



*NATO's secretary-general post traditionally goes to a European*

**Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen looks like the top contender for NATO's civilian head, but Turkey might exercise its veto against the Dane because of a cartoon controversy that had inflamed the Muslim world.**

The United States gave its blessing to the appointment of Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen as the next NATO secretary general in Brussels over the weekend, paving the way for him to take over the trans-Atlantic alliance's top civilian job in August.

Washington also enjoys strong support for the choice of Rasmussen from its three biggest European allies in the alliance -- Germany, France and the UK.

Although Rasmussen, 56, declined to publicly comment on the possibility of succeeding Dutch diplomat Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, he never officially ruled himself out as a candidate for a post that has traditionally gone to a European.

### **Dane favored by US and Europeans**

Rasmussen is regarded as a loyal US ally and also appeals to Europeans for supporting closer ties between NATO and the European Union.

An analyst at the London-based European Council for Foreign Relations told the AFP news agency that the Danish prime minister has long enjoyed US support from politicians of all stripes.

"Rasmussen was at the head of the list for the former Bush administration, just as he is for the current Obama administration," analyst Daniel Korski said.



*Danish caricatures inflamed passions in the Muslim world*

"The Americans want someone who will continue to push for military engagement in Afghanistan," he said, pointing out that Denmark has some 750 soldiers stationed in the volatile southern part of the country where the Taliban insurgency is most active.

US and European support however does not guarantee that Rasmussen will become the appointed successor to Scheffer.

### **Turkish opposition possible**

The main snag to Rasmussen's nomination, which needs to be approved by all members of the 26-nation alliance, is possible opposition to his candidacy from



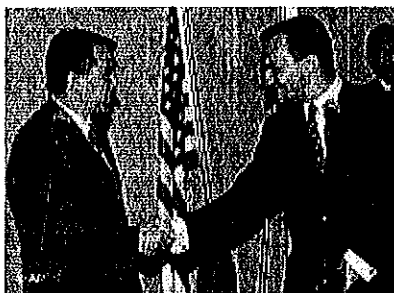
Turkey, a secular nation that is predominantly Muslim.

Denmark had outraged Muslims around the world in 2005 when the widely circulated *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper published a series of cartoon caricatures depicting the Prophet Mohammed as a terrorist.

Rasmussen, who has been prime minister since 2001, had refused to apologize for the cartoons invoking the right of the press to freedom of expression. The controversial cartoons, which were later republished by media around the globe, had sparked riots and attacks on Danish embassies in the Muslim world.

### Cartoon controversy

"The cartoon crisis has a larger dimension than just Turkey," a Turkish official, who requested anonymity, told Reuters. "At a time when NATO is going to assume added responsibility in Afghanistan and Pakistan, having a secretary general with such an objectionable approach to billions of Muslims, is not the right approach to the Muslim world."



Poland's foreign minister (right) is an unlikely candidate

Turkey has also attacked Denmark for failing to revoke the broadcasting license of a television station that Ankara has accused of being a mouthpiece for Kurdish rebels opposed to the government. Adding fuel to the fire, Rasmussen had publicly stated in 2003 that he opposed full EU membership for Turkey.

"It may come to the veto," Reuters quoted the anonymous official as saying. "We will have to see."

The chances for other candidates for NATO's number two position, however, are dwindling.

### Polish candidate viewed as antagonistic to Russia

Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski was rumored to be a favorite for secretary general post, but the appointment of a pro-American Polish national is viewed as antagonizing Russia at a time when NATO is seeking better relations with the Kremlin.

Russia has been bitterly opposed to the deployment of a US anti-missile defense shield on Polish territory.

Turkey had favored a Canadian for the post, since Ottawa supports Ankara's bid to join the EU. However Canadian Defense Minister Peter MacKay ruled himself out as a candidate on Sunday.

### Canadian ruled out

MacKay's rumored candidacy had the apparent support of US Vice President Joe Biden as a reward for Canada's role in combat missions in dangerous southern Afghanistan. His spokesman, however, told reporters that the Canadian never sought the post even though Biden had downplayed an unwritten rule that the secretary general come from a European nation in exchange for NATO's top military post going to an American.

The choice for the number two position as secretary general is expected to be named at the April 3-4



NATO summit, but getting Turkey to agree to the choice of Rasmussen would be the key.

*Scheffer's successor should be announced at NATO summit*

*df/sms/afp/reuters/*

**Moscow accuses EU of expanding its sphere of influence**

24 Mar 2009 — EUROPE

Russia has criticised the European Union for forging closer relations with the six former Soviet republics by establishing the new East-oriented policy – the Eastern Partnership. Speaking at the Brussels Forum, an annual high-level conference, on 21 March, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov suggested that by reaching out to its Eastern neighbors, the EU was seeking to extend its own sphere of influence. "We are accused of trying to have spheres of influence," Lavrov said, referring to the comments made by EU leaders after Russia invaded Georgia in August 2008 and then recognised its two breakaway regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as independent states. "What is the 'Eastern Partnership'? Is it a sphere of influence, including Belarus?" he asked rhetorically. Turning to Belarus and Minsk's stance on the independence of the two Georgian breakaway regions, Lavrov accused the EU of meddling in other countries' internal affairs. "When my good friend Karel Schwarzenberg publicly says that if Belarus recognises Abkhazia and South Ossetia it could forget about Eastern Partnership, is it blackmail or is it democracy at work?" Lavrov asked rhetorically. "Is it about pulling countries [away] from the decisions that they are supposed to take freely?" he added.

Source: [Europolitics](#)**Your comment**

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# Business Spectator

**COMMENTARY**  
GIDEON RACHMAN, FINANCIAL TIMES

9:06 AM, 24 Mar 2009

## Leaders who use protection

The world's finest diplomats will spend weeks drafting and redrafting the communiqué that will be issued at the end of the Group of 20 summit in London next week. But why do they bother?

To understand the emptiness of the exercise, you need only look back at the communiqué issued after the G20's first summit in Washington last November. The leaders solemnly declared: "We underscore the critical importance of rejecting protectionism ... We will refrain from raising new barriers to investment or to trade in goods and services." To emphasise their determination, they 'instructed' their trade ministers to complete the Doha round of trade negotiations by the end of 2008.

And what has happened since then? Naturally, the Doha round has not been completed – not even close. In fact, a World Bank study issued last week showed that 17 of the countries that signed up to the G20's Washington declaration have since taken protectionist measures.

Some of what has happened is plain-vanilla protectionism – raising barriers to imports. Last week Mexico announced it would increase tariffs on \$US2.4 billion of US goods – in retaliation, say the Mexicans, for an American decision to stop Mexican trucks using US highways.

The Congressional decision on Mexican trucks is an example of the more indirect forms of protectionism that make up about two-thirds of the measures spotted by the World Bank. These include new export subsidies announced by the European Union for farm products; and tax rebates for exporters pushed by China and India. The Obama stimulus plan also included Buy American clauses.

So why should we believe the next communiqué issued from the London summit on April 2? On past form, its very first line will be a fib. The communiqué will begin, "We, the leaders of the Group of Twenty ..." In fact, there will be about 25 leaders assembled in London.

While it is tempting to heap scorn on the leaders of the G20 for their insincerity, it is more important to work out what is going on. Why are the world's leaders issuing these statements on trade, and then failing to stick to them?

The answer is that they are caught in a squeeze between an abstract commitment to free trade and practical politics. Almost all the leaders who will turn up in London know protectionism is a bad idea. But they are under pressure from angry voters to protect jobs at home, and to guard against scheming foreigners.

As economic conditions worsen, so this tendency to look for foreign scapegoats will intensify. Speaking at the German Marshall Fund's Brussels Forum last weekend, Robert Zoellick, president of the World Bank, remarked that: "A meaningful discussion on trade in the US Congress is about as toxic as it gets." Celso Amorim, Brazil's foreign minister, pointed out proudly that President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil had recently refused to sign some protectionist legislation placed before him. But he acknowledged Mr Lula da Silva might find it difficult to repeat the performance, if similar legislation is re-presented this year.

The politicians who will assemble at the G20 can feel the protectionist pressures mounting. Some

say they fear a 'spring of unrest' as unemployment increases – to be followed by a 'summer of protectionism". The World Bank's Mr Zoellick warns that any such development would be disastrous – "We are very far from the 1930s," he says, "but what would move you in that direction would be a large dose of protectionism."

The world is already seeing big decreases in trade. Both Japanese and Chinese exports are down more than 20 per cent year-on-year. Places that have thrived as gateways for globalisation, such as Singapore, are facing particularly harsh recessions. This year is likely to see the sharpest contraction in global trade for 80 years.

So far, however, the process of deglobalisation has been largely led by the private sector. Consumers are cutting their spending and so are businesses. But if the world's political leaders start deliberately increasing barriers to trade, they will deepen and worsen the economic crisis – and risk making the process of deglobalisation a permanent shift.

Most political leaders know this – and so they are still a little embarrassed about direct measures to increase tariffs. So a new wave of protectionism will take indirect forms.

One thing to watch out for is 'green protectionism'. The US Congress is discussing the imposition of 'carbon tariffs' on countries that do not emulate American efforts to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide. Last week Steven Chu, new energy secretary, seemed to endorse this idea.

The new protectionism is always liable to be justified as 'retaliation' for the bad faith of foreigners. That is why open disputes at the G20 – or failure at the climate-change negotiations later this year – would be dangerous. Any such failure would lead to recriminations, which would then make it much easier for world leaders to embrace protectionism, on the old playground principle of 'you started it'.

It will be tempting to laugh, if and when the communiqué from the London summit contains the familiar pledges to avoid protectionism and to complete the Doha round. But it is probably important that world leaders at least promise to follow the path of virtue – even if they know that they may sin. Failing to pay homage to free trade would be a very bad sign – and might open the door to much more rampant protectionism. Sometimes empty words matter.

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## The importance of empty words

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By Gideon Rachman

Published: March 24 2009 02:00 | Last updated: March 24 2009 02:00

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## **Domestic 'Caucasus Platform not feasible yet'**

Hürriyet Daily News

**ISTANBUL – The Caucasus Security and Cooperation Platform proposed by Turkey has not been well formulated yet, Trend News Agency quoted Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili as saying yesterday during a press conference at the Brussels Forum.**

Saakashvili said such mechanisms should not exclude the EU and other big players in the region. "This idea is raw. Consultations are at the initial stage yet," he said.

24 Mart 2009





## INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY\*

March 24, 2009

### Poland Fears Betrayal

**Alliances:** The U.S. has expressed a willingness to barter away missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic. Now the Polish foreign minister says he hopes his country doesn't regret trusting the United States.

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The Brussels Forum is a privately organized high-level meeting of the most influential North American and European political, corporate and intellectual leaders to address pressing challenges currently facing both sides of the Atlantic.

One of the pressing issues discussed at this year's conference was whether the U.S. is serious about bartering away plans for missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic in exchange for vague Russian promises of using its influence on Iran regarding its move toward developing nuclear warheads to put on its long-range missiles.

On Sunday, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski noted that Poland had taken "something of a political risk" in agreeing to the deployment of 10 ground-based interceptors on its territory. "When we started discussing this with the United States," he said, "the U.S. assured us they would persuade the Russians that it was purely defensive and it would be a noncontroversial decision."

Now we are wishing the Iranians, whose missiles our ground-based interceptors are designed to intercept, a Happy New Year and suggesting to the Russians that if they can do something about Iran's nuclear and missile programs, we would reconsider our missile defense plans and saw off the limb our Czech and Polish allies have climbed out on.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates did not ease our allies' fears when he said at a NATO meeting in Krakow, Poland, on Feb. 20, "I told the Russians a year ago that if there were no Iranian missile program, there would be no need for the missile sites."

This comment came not long after Russian President Dmitry Medvedev threatened to deploy SS-26 Iskander missiles in the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad, situated between our NATO allies Poland and Lithuania, targeting the Polish site.

The Poles and the Czechs, who have known true freedom for only a short time after enduring both Nazi and Communist oppression, have experienced the consequences of diplomatic betrayal — first at Munich and later at Yalta.

They sense another betrayal coming in a deal with a belligerent Russian aggressor willing to wage war with the former Soviet state of Georgia, as well as threaten the Ukraine and use the Ukrainian pipeline to starve energy-dependent Europeans of natural gas.

"We hope we don't regret our trust in the United States," Sikorski said to an audience of senior world politicians and other leaders.

At the same event, Rep. Ellen Tauscher, who is expected to be named the new U.S. undersecretary for arms control and international security, repeated the administration line that a missile system would not be deployed until it was "proven" to work. It is easier to give away an "unproven" system.


Missile defense has already proved to be eminently workable and successful. According to the Missile Defense Agency, since 2001 there have been 37 successful hit-to-kill intercepts out of 47 attempts, an astounding 80% success rate. We've even shot a decaying and dangerous spy satellite out of the sky.

Former Missile Defense Agency Chief Gen. Trey Obering III has said that after dozens of successful missile intercepts, "Our testing has shown not only can we hit a bullet with a bullet, we can hit a spot on a bullet with a bullet."

Unilaterally scrapping European missile defense could shatter the NATO alliance as we retreat to a Fortress America behind our own ground-based interceptors and Aegis-equipped missile defense destroyers and cruisers.

The basis of NATO's purpose and existence — collective security — would be shredded as we showed a willingness to sacrifice allies for diplomatic convenience. Either we all hang together or we all hang separately.

Our Polish and Czech friends have to wonder: Are we the next Georgia? Are we about to trade away the trust of our allies and our collective security for another empty promise of peace in our time?

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## Is your Senator a Filthy Globalist?

Posted March 24th, 2009 by Jane Altken

Unfortunately mine is.

I can just imagine the list of names of members of NGOs that were present at this 'summit'. Welcome to a return to the oligarchy.

Shaheen returns from Brussels Forum

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) - New Hampshire Sen. Jeanne Shaheen has returned from a trip to Belgium, where she participated in discussions on national security, strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan and climate change policy.

Shaheen was invited to the annual Brussels Forum as chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs.

**She spent the weekend holding private and public meetings with government officials from across Europe, Asia, Russian and the Middle East to discuss the international financial crisis, NATO efforts in Afghanistan and climate change.**

**She says all those challenges will require international cooperation and coordination.**

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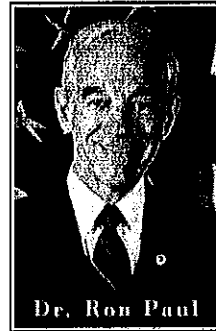
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### "Climate Change"

On March 25th, 2009 Dave\_In\_Ann\_Arbor says:

I so love how the global warming fraud has morphed into "climate change" now that there's mounting evidence that it's all a lot of horse ca-ca.

But they need some pretext to control our breathing, so they will keep finding something scary sounding to describe imaginary



Dr. Ron Paul

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### Almunia:Romania's Agreement With IMF, EC To Be Announced This Week

Date: 24-03-2009

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Joaquin Almunia, E.U. Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, said Sunday in Brussels that the financial agreement between Romania and the International Monetary Fund and the E.U could be announced this week. "We are negotiating, and I hope we will announce an agreement next week, with Romania," Almunia said Sunday during a the Brussels Forum hosted by the German Marshall Fund of the United States. (www.mediafax.ro)

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# INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

## US asks India to support Pakistan's anti-terror efforts

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

WASHINGTON: The United States on Monday asked India to support Pakistan's anti-terrorism efforts as Washington acknowledged the top Pakistani leadership's courageous steps to deal with the problem affecting the South Asian region.

"As President (Asif Ali) Zardari and the Pakistani government take courageous steps needed to confront and eliminate extremists, India and the US must work together with all our international partners to support them and facilitate democracy," Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg said.

Speaking at Washington's Brookings Institution, the US diplomat said it is important for New Delhi to be supportive of Pakistan's efforts. "I think it will be important for India to make clear that as Pakistan takes steps to deal with extremists on its own territory that India will be supportive of that," Steinberg underscored.

He noted "there is obviously a complex history between the two countries but we will encourage India to see that it has a big stake in the efforts that we will be advocating to work both with Afghanistan and Pakistan." - APP

News Desk adds: US President Barack Obama said last night that he wanted a clear "exit strategy" from Afghanistan for the US military, as he prepared to pour an extra 17,000 troops into the country.

The influx of US troops — part of a general review of US policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan — echoes the military surge credited with turning around the situation in Iraq. It also emerged last week that the US wishes to hold talks with moderate elements in the Taliban. In a television interview, Obama made it clear that there had to be limits to America's ambitions and commitments in Afghanistan.

"What we can't do is think that just a military approach in Afghanistan is going to be able to solve our problems," he told the CBS TV channel's 60 Minutes. "What we're looking for is a comprehensive strategy — and there's got to be an exit strategy. There's got to be a sense that this is not a perpetual drift."

Obama's statement comes as a White House review of the US policy on the region nears its conclusions. US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke was briefing the Nato allies on the likely changes.

After talks with Nato Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Holbrooke was due to brief all the 22 alliance ambassadors on the challenges posed by the Taliban insurgency. "It is to give the broad lines of the US strategy review as it now stands," Nato spokesman James Appathurai said. "I don't know that they've arrived at any final conclusions on which President Obama has signed off on, but their thinking is now very close to the conclusion of the process."

Over the weekend, Holbrooke said Washington had appealed to its allies to help train thousands more Afghan police as the focus moves away from military confrontation. "The Afghan national police are an inadequate organisation riddled with corruption," he said. "We know they are the weak link in the security chain, so we have to figure out a way to increase the size and make them better at the same time."

The biggest disaster in the seven years, Holbrooke added, was the botched anti-narcotics programme that failed to stop Afghanistan supplying most of the world's heroin. Britain was put in charge of tackling the drug issue under the Bonn agreement of 2001 but has struggled through a lack of resources. British sources have welcomed the US switch from crop eradication to creating alternative livelihoods.

"The United States alone is spending over \$800 million a year on counter-narcotics. We have gotten nothing out of it, nothing," Holbrooke told the Brussels Forum on Saturday. "It is the most wasteful and ineffective programme I have seen in 40 years."

# INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

For money's sake!

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

By Anjum Niaz

The writer is a freelance journalist with over twenty years of experience in national and international reporting

Rejoice, celebrate and kill the fatted calf. This mood energizer is not about the chief justice, but the windfall expected our way. The Obama administration plans giving us 1.5 billion dollars a year as spending money. And it will not ask us for receipts; nor will it demand anything in return. It is gratis! Hold on. There's more. For starters, a tranche of \$5 billion bonanza can arrive to stall our rotten decline. Additionally, Pakistan's military will get over \$300 million annually to fight terrorists. If our military fails, there will be questions asked, conditions laid. Lest you take me to be a grasping moneybag and that too from Uncle Sam, consider what options we have with our country running on empty. The bald truth is that Pakistan needs hard cash to fight the 'religious' thugs and prevent it from becoming 'Thug-istan.' America is the only one willing to dole out the dollars. Our fair-weather 'Friends' who meet at fancy capitals from time to time have promised us but so far delivered little. We hear it's because of the 'trust deficit.' Put simply the 'Friends of Pakistan' consortium worries whether the money they gift will filter down to the poor or get pocketed by the people at the helm.

Forensic evidence of money laundering by our top leaders has established their guilt in international courts of law. For 'democracy's' sake, the Americans and the British have disingenuously found a laxative to de-worm the black into white money. The one-time treatment goes by the name of NRO or the National Reconciliation Ordinance. It's the most loathed acronym countrywide. For our rulers, it's manna from heaven, nay the west. Obama and Brown are gung ho on making 'democracy' work in Pakistan. The hands-on management is fully involved in day-to-day domestic and international matters lumbering out of the Presidency, the Governor's House Lahore and the Raiwind palace. Hillary Clinton is the glorified governess, if you please. Her assistant, Ambassador Anne Patterson, the flinty-eyed nanny, is tasked with keeping a strict watch on Zardari's, Taseer's and Sharif's minute-to-minute movements. The troublesome three are acting like spoilsports. The only adult around them is COAS Kayani. Admiral Mike Mullen, the US military chief has taken a shine to General Kayani. They have long tele-conversations where confidences are exchanged. Kayani is seen as the "key to US strategy in the region." But some warn America not to put all their hopes in one hamper. "It's a complete replay of what took place with Musharraf," says Christine Fair, a senior political scientist with Rand Corp. "We have a love affair with whichever chief of army staff is in office at any one time until they thoroughly disappoint."

Individuals! That's the malignancy killing institutions. The cancer is metastasizing rapidly. To every American and Pakistani, Zardari is the government, Nawaz Sharif is the Punjab and Kayani is the army. Period. And of course, the PPP is Asif Ali Zardari, again.

Where individuals matter more than institutions, that country is called a 'banana republic.' "The word is occasionally applied to governments where a strong leader hands out appointments and advantages to friends and supporters, without much consideration for the law. A banana republic can also be used to describe a country where a large part of its economy and politics are controlled by foreign powers or even corporations." This description borrowed from Wikipedia fits us well today, doesn't it? A week after the PPP got the highest votes last year, Asif Ali Zardari put his loyalists in key positions. The first of a string of broken promises by the president was to Amin Fahim whom he had vowed the premiership. To follow was the N-League resignations from key cabinet posts because the chief justice had not been restored. The resignations came at the cost of the country. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar had begun work on the budget, he suddenly quit leaving the treasury to a clueless Naveed Qamar. That proved disastrous. Zardari meanwhile was roundly rewarding loyal supporters with appointive public offices that most didn't deserve to hold. This is so nineteenth century-ish thinking: "that to the victor belong the spoils". While the developed world today recognizes the "merit system" our Pakistani rulers continue the systematic sacking of merit.

Nobody focuses on our scorched institutions begging for funds. Most are dead. But nobody wants to conduct a post-mortem. Nobody, and that includes America, wants to hear the voice of ordinary Pakistanis and what they want. Ask the man on the street how to spend the \$1.5 billion and he will show Zardari how to fix things. The president and his party don't have to be Ivy Leaguers with Ph.Ds in economics (And do stop calling it "economical"! ). Ask an ordinary housewife and she'll tell Shaukat Tareen and the IMF how to husband money.

Yes, yes, we know the Americans are sending truckloads of money our way. That's the best news coming out from Washington after a long time. But what we don't have are shake and bake recipes on how to spend money wisely and well. Of course, our rulers know how to pocket it!

We seek transparency. The president must end power games. He should instead invite proposals from economic experts, the intelligentsia and the initiated layman on drafting and executing a budget for the people, of the people and by the people. That's democracy. Governor Salmaan Taseer should return to his business empire and give up his dream of making Punjab a PPP bastion. "If he is to have any chance of turning his administration round Mr Zardari needs to put in place an able executive team and cut loose toadying cronies," says the Financial Times. When things finally fall in place, the president's "Cheshire-cat grin" will be better-served. Until the wheels of governance begin moving, Mr President, hold off that smile.

"I wish Hillary Clinton injects an antidote against corruption, lying, sycophancy, nepotism, favouritism, injustice, fund siphoning and human smuggling," writes an emailer who thinks that unless the Americans genuinely and sincerely guide our leaders to serve the people (no lip service, please!) the thugs will take over. The fear is giving Ambassador Holbrooke a migraine. Recently at the Brussels Forum, he bracketed the terrorists who planned 9/11; killed Benazir Bhutto; attacked Mumbai, terrorized the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore, under one umbrella. "They are in Pakistan. They are terrorizing Swat."

Then there is the Wall Street Journal, which recently carried a report which said that while General Kayani's popularity may have surged among US officials for putting "experienced, nonideological officers in charge of two of Pakistan's most important security arms: the Inter-Services Intelligence and the 60,000-strong Frontier Corps, a paramilitary force that is taking the lead in battling the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Pakistan's tribal areas," the reality on the ground is somewhat different. A very knowledgeable insider told me recently of reports of a tug-of-war in Peshawar between the paramilitaries and their cousins in khaki – for reasons that have to do with performance on the ground and perception of this performance by the ultimate powers that be.

"It's pretty clear that we've got to really be dealing with Institutions and with the government as a whole," US officials continue mouthing such brain-numbing phrases. "We can't just say 'this guy is our man.'" Until Americans actually match this message by starting to notice the little 'guy' on the street who is the corner stone of 'institutions' in Pakistan, their money will go to waste.

There's a quiet revolution taking place in our society (maybe the Americans haven't noticed?) The disenfranchised and the disempowered millions are adopting the hijab and the beard. At Islamabad's fashionable watering holes, you see women fully veiled with just the slit of their eyes showing eating ice cream and enjoying a family outing while caring two hoots about the political shenanigans of our rulers. This class of modestly dressed and conservatively mannered middle rung is interested in providing a better future for their children. Oblivious of Mullen, Mueller, Panetta and their likes, the ordinary Pakistani wants the basic necessities of life.

Surely this is not asking too much of President Zardari and our money-masters, the Americans?

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# The Washington Post

## For Russia, More Than A 'Reset'

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ROLL OVER TO OPEN

By Anne Applebaum  
Tuesday, March 24, 2009; A13

"*Press the reset button.*" Is there any phrase more enticing in the modern lexicon? We all know what it means: Press the reset button, watch your computer reboot, and presto! A nice, clean screen appears, and you start again from scratch.

Yes, it's a wonderful feeling, pressing that reset button. Unfortunately, it is also a deeply misleading, even vapid, metaphor for diplomatic relations. First deployed by the vice president -- Joe Biden told a security conference in February it was time to "press the reset button" on U.S. relations with Russia -- it was then repeated by the president, who spoke of the need to "reboot" the relationship as well. Earlier this month, Hillary Clinton even presented her counterpart, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, with a red "reset button" to place on his desk. Despite an unfortunate mistranslation (the Russian word on the gift actually meant "overcharge," not "reset") they smiled and pressed the button together for the cameras.

It would be nice, of course, if U.S.-Russia relations really had been frozen as a result of irrelevant technical complications and could begin afresh. Unfortunately, while America may have a new president, Russia does not. And while America may want to make the past vanish -- as a nation, we've never been all that keen on foreigners' histories -- alas, the past cannot be changed. The profound differences in psychology, philosophy and policy that have been the central source of friction between the American and Russian governments for the past decade remain very much in place. Sooner or later, the Obama administration will have to grapple with them.

Anyone who doubts the truth of this need only look at remarks Lavrov himself made last weekend in Brussels, where he presented a vision of the world utterly unchanged by the events of Jan. 20. Speaking to past and present policymakers -- several of whom had helped dismember the Warsaw Pact and expand NATO in the 1990s -- he offered his own version of those developments, as well as of some more current. Among other things, he said, or implied, that the West lied to Russia; that NATO remains a threat to Russia; that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe should replace NATO as the primary Western security organization; and that, by the way, Russia has plenty of potential clients for its gas in the Far East should its Western clients ever become problematic. As for Russia helping to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons -- an Obama administration suggestion -- Lavrov's only comment was that "there is no proof that Iran even has decided to make a nuclear bomb."

The transcript of his remarks, and those of other Russians attending the same conference, do not capture their snide tone, or the scorn with which they dismissed suggestions that Russia's neighbors might have wanted to join NATO because they were afraid of Russia. To return to the metaphor: If that is how the Russian government sounds after pressing the reset button, I'm not sure that the technical complications that caused the screen to freeze have gone away.

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Nor is this true of Russia alone. Any president can legitimately call for a fresh start in his relations with the world, and none more so than this president, who replaces an unpopular predecessor. Sooner or later, however, Barack Obama will also have to make hard decisions about regimes that oppose U.S. policy for reasons deeper than dislike of George W. Bush. If Russia persists in its occupation of Georgia, do we accept it? If Russia uses its energy policy to blackmail Europe, do we go along with that, too?

The rest of the world is no different. It's a fine thing to open diplomatic relations with Iran or Syria -- I've always thought it extremely stupid that we have no embassy, and thus no resident intelligence officer, in Tehran -- as long as we remember that talking itself is not a solution: Sometimes more "dialogue" reveals deeper differences. It's also a fine thing for the president to issue greetings on the occasion of the Persian new year, but that might not dampen the popularity of Iran's nuclear program among both adherents and opponents of its current government. What then?

I do realize that these are early days. The traditional, deadly struggle between the State Department and the National Security Council for influence is only just getting underway, and the president has other things on his mind. But the gift of a "reset button," however translated, was a not a good beginning. If this administration thinks it can transform America's relationships with Russia or anyone else with the flick of a switch and a change of rhetoric, it is living in a virtual reality, not a real one.

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## Danish PM front-runner for NATO top spot

By SLOBODAN LEKIC and JAN M. OLSEN — 1 day ago

BRUSSELS (AP) — Denmark's prime minister tops the list of contenders to be NATO's next secretary general, officials said Tuesday — but his candidacy has run into stiff opposition from Turkey where anger still festers over Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen was said to enjoy broad support from both Europeans and Americans over others such as Canadian Defense Minister Peter Mackay, who said Sunday he's more interested in keeping his current job.

But Turkey — a key strategic player in the alliance and its only predominantly Muslim member — voiced objections Tuesday to Fogh Rasmussen over his stance in favor of freedom of speech during the 2006 cartoon uproar.

Turkey also fears Fogh Rasmussen wants to block Turkey's EU membership bid and supports Kurdish separatist rebels.

The 12th secretary-general of the alliance — who will succeed Dutchman Jaap de Hoop Scheffer — is expected to be named at NATO's 60th anniversary summit in Strasbourg, France.

Trans-Atlantic cooperation in the war in Afghanistan is expected to dominate talks at the April 3-4 summit, with the Obama administration seeking agreement on a new, comprehensive strategy to deal with the deteriorating situation there.

Two NATO diplomats, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of ongoing negotiations, said a broad consensus was forming around Fogh Rasmussen.

Denmark is one of the few European countries whose soldiers in the 62,000-strong NATO-led force in Afghanistan fight in the most dangerous, southern part of the country along with American units.

Fogh Rasmussen was also a strong backer of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and sent troops there.

He was lauded as a creative consensus builder during his term as EU president in 2002, when he led arduous negotiations that sealed the entry of 10 mostly eastern European countries into the EU.

De Hoop Scheffer took office in 2004. He will step down in July after a tumultuous five-year term that saw the alliance confronted with the war in Afghanistan and divisions over relations with a resurgent Russia.

NATO's chief executive runs the day-to-day business of the alliance and plays an important role in chairing key meetings and summits and setting alliance policy. The secretary-general's main task is to forge consensus on key security challenges, which have become larger than during the Cold War, so that the member nations can take unanimous decisions.

Traditionally, the post of secretary-general has gone to a European, while the alliance's military commander has been an American general. NATO has recently taken on military operations far beyond Europe's borders, most notably in Afghanistan.

*Associated Press Writer Jan M. Olsen contributed to this report from Copenhagen.*

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
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## France confirms its re-entry to NATO's military structure

**Nicholas Fiorenza** *JDW NATO and EU Affairs Correspondent*  
Brussels

The French government has sent a letter to NATO confirming that it will rejoin the alliance's integrated military structure, NATO spokesman James Appathurai confirmed to *Jane's* on 22 March.

France's re-entry into the military structure will be one of the highlights of the NATO summit in Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany, on 3-4 April.

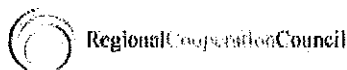
In a speech to the German Marshal Fund's Brussels Forum conference on 22 March, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said: "The return of France to NATO's integrated military structure will strengthen the alliance and help reduce the ambivalence in the NATO-EU relationship."

France is in discussions with NATO about the possibility of taking command of Allied Command Transformation (ACT) in Norfolk, Virginia, and Allied Joint Command Lisbon: one of three NATO operational headquarters. ACT leads alliance transformation efforts and has until now been led by the commander of the US Joint Forces Command under a dual-hatted arrangement.

Former French president Charles de Gaulle withdrew France from NATO's military structure in 1966, but the country remained a member of the alliance's political structure with a French ambassador serving on the North Atlantic Council: the organisation's highest decision-making body.

France is, however, part of the alliance's integrated air defence and French generals have been commanders of NATO forces in the Balkans and Afghanistan since the mid-1990s. An earlier attempt to rejoin the integrated military structure at that time failed because the United States blocked French attempts to command NATO's Joint Force Command Naples and also because there were disagreements within the cohabitation government of French President Jacques Chirac and Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin after the June 1997 elections.

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## SEE should apply Pre-Accession reforms, work together to counter crisis

26. March 2009. | 07:06 ▶ 07:16

Source: EMportal, Fena

**During the meeting, held as part of consultations between the RCC and the European Commission (EC), Secretary General Biscevic briefed Commissioner Rehn of the current situation in South East Europe (SEE) in light of the ongoing financial crisis and economic recession.**

South East European countries aspiring to join the EU should apply the necessary pre-accession reforms, continue with regional cooperation and mutual assistance, and decouple accession talks from bilateral issues, concluded Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Hido Biscevic and EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn at a meeting in Brussels yesterday.

During the meeting, held as part of consultations between the RCC and the European Commission (EC), Secretary General Biscevic briefed Commissioner Rehn of the current situation in South East Europe (SEE) in light of the ongoing financial crisis and economic recession.

“Impact of the crisis on SEE could be particularly harsh given that the region is still in transition and has yet to complete peace, which is why an EC assistance is a necessity”, said Biscevic.

“We have further established an active cooperation with the current Czech and future Swedish EU Presidencies in developing a strategic concept and projects in the priority areas of energy, infrastructure, transport and electricity, which are to serve both as a platform to counter crisis effects and an incentive to continue with necessary reforms in SEE.”

Commissioner Rehn said that the EC and the international financial institutions (IFIs) have been working to ensure that measures be taken to respond to current social and economic difficulties in SEE. He informed that the EC is mobilizing 150 million euro within the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) in order to fund a Crisis Response Package and finance measures that will help alleviate the crisis in SEE.

Additionally, the EC is preparing a programme under IPA Multi-beneficiary 2009 to release around 80 million euro for support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), energy efficiency and competitiveness, as well as for banking sector supervision and regulation, said Rehn.

He encouraged the RCC Secretary General and the organization to continue to develop, with the EU Presidency, the idea of having the SEE countries work together on large-scale development projects that would engage IFIs funding, remedy social consequences of the economic recession and give additional incentive to continued reforms.

Secretary General Biscevic informed Commissioner Rehn of the preparations for the RCC Annual Meeting and the Summit of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECPP) to be held on 4-5 June 2009 in Chisinau, Moldova.

The RCC Secretary General also met with Janez Potocnik, EU Commissioner for Science and Research, to discuss

preparations for the Ministerial Conference on Developing Regional Research Strategy for the Western Balkans, to be co-organized by the RCC and the Czech EU Presidency in Sarajevo, on 24 April 2009.

The two officials agreed that development of concepts of Trust Based Societies and Knowledge Based Economies was an essential tool for accelerated development and modernization of societies.

During the visit to Brussels, the RCC Secretary General took part in the Brussels Forum 2009, organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

As the successor of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the RCC is intended to foster regional cooperation and support European and Euro-Atlantic integration in South East Europe.

Its work focuses on six priority areas: economic and social development, energy and infrastructure, justice and home affairs, security cooperation, building human capital, and parliamentary cooperation as an overarching theme. The RCC is based in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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# Lack of co-operation hinders economic recovery

By John Wyles

26.03.2009 / 04:40 CET

**US jibes about fiscal policy do more harm than good but the G20 meeting next week should not descend into a shouting match.**

Of all the complex and confusing issues that have been thrown up by this economic crisis, the most frustrating is the question of whether the European Union and its member states need to spend more to revive the economy.

Larry Summers, US President Barack Obama's chief economic adviser, was both mischievous and misguided to raise the question. The Nobel prize-winning economist Paul Krugman poured salt on the wound with the observation that: "Europe has fallen short in terms of both monetary and fiscal policy: it is facing at least as severe a slump as the United States, yet is doing far less to combat the downturn."

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Europe will suffer more than the US this year, with a 3.2% fall in output. Europe does appear to be spending a lower percentage of its gross domestic product (GDP) on economic revival than the US, and possibly spending it in the wrong areas.

After last week's (19-20 March) European Council meeting, José Manuel Barroso, the European Commission president, claimed that Europe will spend between 3.3 and 4% of GDP on economic revival in 2009 and 2010 compared to about 5.5% in the US. The EU's mantra is that the fiscal stimuli are "timely, targeted and temporary" and do not need to match US outlays because we are also supporting consumption through pensions, health and unemployment benefits that are far more generous than anything available in the US.

So what percentage of GDP would be a big enough stimulus? Nobody knows. Much depends on how the stimulus is distributed and how long the recession lasts – two related variables.

Jean Pisani-Ferry, director of the Bruegel think-tank in Brussels, calculates that the EU's real stimulus is worth only about 0.9% of GDP this year and its value is undermined by poor co-ordination between member states whose measures are not concentrated on actions likely to yield quick improvements.

Government leaders are pleading for more time to allow their measures to take effect. Those measures were planned and adopted last November, when governments were expecting the recession to bottom-out and a recovery to begin in the second half of this year. But the IMF and many others now doubt that the green shoots will sprout before the middle of next year. With unemployment rocketing over the next few months, asking voters to hang on for another year may not be politically sustainable.

If the European economic stimuli are weaker, and they probably are, it is because of worries about debt. Germany is setting the tone, with a commitment to a rapid reduction of the budget deficit once economic growth has been restored.

"If you do not have a credible policy on the deficit then people will expect higher taxes and save instead of spend," Axel Weber, president of the Bundesbank, told the German Marshall Fund's Brussels Forum. France and Italy give the impression of sharing this view, with the latter exaggerating the volume of its fiscal stimuli. With a deficit that is already above 100% of GDP, Italy has very little room for manoeuvre. The Italian economy entered the recession in poor shape and will exit it no better off.

Its predicament is shared by some other member states inside the eurozone (Portugal, Greece) and outside (Hungary, Latvia, Romania).

A decade or more ago, one of Weber's predecessors at the Bundesbank was forever worrying about the survival prospects of monetary union in the absence of a matching political union. The lack of any real powers over economic policy at European level puts an enormous burden on co-ordination between member states, requiring strong political leadership. Europe has been weak on both co-ordination and leadership.

Krugman argues that this structural defect also explains the weaknesses that many have alleged in the approach of the European Central Bank (ECB). The ECB cannot be as bold as the US Federal Reserve because it does not have the fiscal power of a unitary government behind it. European central bankers scarcely try to conceal their irritation at such allegations.

Next week's G20 meeting must not be allowed to become a shouting match between Europe and the US. Nor must it become bogged down in the minutiae of possible regulatory reform of financial markets.

What the G20 should do is agree principles to be applied by multilateral institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank that will save the weakest nations from economic collapse and the strongest from serious civil strife.

John Wyles is a partner in the Brussels consultancy GPlus Europe.

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Last update - 22:19 26/03/2009

## Desert storms

By Amir Oren

BRUSSELS - Speaking here early this week at the annual Brussels Forum sponsored by the German Marshall Fund, Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski described the departure of the Polish infantry battalion on the Golan Heights. For more than 30 years now, dating back to the era of the Warsaw Pact, Poles have served in the United Nations observer force (UNDOF) along the southern part of the line separating Israel and Syria. Now the Polish battalion is needed for a tougher military mission: in Afghanistan. From the end of this year, the Golan's southern sector will thus have to manage without this force, as will the UN monitoring force in southern Lebanon (UNIFIL), where the Poles have infantry and logistics units.

Sikorski is a candidate to replace outgoing NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, and he is involved in a competition that will peak ahead of next week's celebrations marking that organization's 60th anniversary. His prospects are poor. Canadian Defense Minister Peter Mackay is also in the running, but the leading candidate is Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen. All three men are considered friendly to Israel, something quite exceptional at the moment.

The international arena has wielded an influence on Israel's five wars with Egypt in the first 25 years of its existence, and on the absence of war in the 35 years since, including the 30 years of the peace treaty. NATO's relations with the seven countries of the organization's Mediterranean Dialogue did not, however, prevent one member, Mauritania, from downgrading its relations with Israel after the recent Gaza operation. The attitude toward Israel by Egypt, the senior Arab participant in that dialogue, is marked by suspicious envy.

UNDOF and UNIFIL operate according to decisions passed by the UN Security Council. The source of authority of the multinational force that supervises the Sinai demilitarization is a tripartite agreement between Egypt, the United States and Israel. In NATO the secretary general is always a European (a Canadian is also acceptable), and the military forces' supreme commander is American. In the Sinai multinational force the opposite is true: The director general is American, the military commander is not.



The U.S. Army took the Sinai force very seriously in its first years: The infantry battalion it contributed came from regular divisions. But in the past decade the Americans have lost their patience. Israel-Egypt relations looked stable and the infantry was needed in Iraq and Afghanistan. The paratroopers were taken out and replaced by National Guard reservists.

What the Poles have decided to do in the north, the Americans are already doing in the south, but with one difference: The Polish units will be replaced by troops from India or Ghana. Israel wants the Sinai force to stay on, to avoid any changes in the agreement with Egypt. Israel cannot, however, prevent a decision by Cairo to violate that accord unilaterally.

Here, for example, is a scenario drawn up by Israeli brigadier generals: Hundreds of Palestinians are killed in clashes with the Israel Defense Forces in Gaza. The population cries out for help, Egypt sends units to assist the Gazans and some Egyptians are killed by Israeli fire. In response, armored and other forces from the Second Army (in the north) and from the Third Army (in the south) are deployed across the Suez Canal's bridges and tunnels.

In the Egyptian-Israeli agreement, the Sinai Desert is divided into three zones of reduced military presence. The fourth zone, D, a narrow one, lies on the Israeli side of the border. The main concern in the escalation scenario is not that the Egyptian army would enter Zone C next to the border, from Rafah to Sharm el-Sheikh. The Israeli challenge would be to come up with a limited response to a violation. Potentially such a violation would take place in Zone A, between the Suez Canal and a line in Sinai to the east, which is demarcated on the agreement map. In this zone, Egypt is allowed to maintain a mechanized force consisting of three infantry brigades, plus an armored brigade, seven field artillery battalions, 230 tanks, 480 armored personnel vehicles and 22,000 personnel.

### **Basic assumption**

Israel's basic assumption is that Egypt will not risk souring its relations with Washington, mainly for economic reasons. (The U.S. Embassy in Cairo recently stated proudly that thanks to American aid, 99 percent of the Egyptian population is hooked up to the power grid.) Along with the international reaction to the killing and destruction in Operation Cast Lead, Israel must take into account the possibility that a similar operation to deter Hamas will deteriorate into a crisis with Egypt.

And what will Israel do if the Egyptians violate Zone A? Will it go to war over the deployment of four or five divisions, instead

of the one permitted? Show restraint? Try to mitigate the crisis by diplomacy with American mediation? One possibility is a violent encounter between two armies which, for the first time in the Israeli-Arab conflict, would have the benefit of Western equipment and organizational expertise.

The Egyptians would also bring to such an encounter three decades of joint training with the Americans and units from dozens of other armies (i.e., the biannual Bright Star maneuvers). The IDF, which until the treaty with Egypt was built for desert combat, would have to discover anew if it is indeed suitable for this. The Egyptians are liable to turn out to be a bitter, deadly foe.

Under the peace with Egypt, Israel got embroiled in the Lebanon war in June 1982, only a month and a half after the IDF completed its withdrawal from Sinai and razed Yamit, an Israeli town in northern Sinai. Since then, April 24 has been a national holiday in Egypt, Sinai Liberation Day. Thanks to the peace with Egypt, Israel was spared large-scale wars and an intolerable burden. Amid the waves of IDF budget cuts, Southern Army Corps HQ, staffed by experienced officers preparing for an Egyptian surprise, was eliminated. The IDF regretted this move and decided to reestablish the corps. A chart presented to GOC Southern Command Yom Tov Samia at the end of the 1990s, when he was preparing the Gaza Division and the command's units for another clash with the Palestinians (after the September 1996 disturbances), shows he devoted two-thirds of his time to Gaza, and divided the rest between the Negev and Arava borders and preparations for a Sinai encounter with Egypt. That is still the case, more or less. But it may not be if the Egyptian regime changes or if President Hosni Mubarak shifts his policy after another operation in Gaza.

These seem like distant possibilities, but a war in Sinai seemed distant less than a month before the Six-Day War, the War of Attrition of 1967-1970, and the Yom Kippur War. And we must not forget Badr 96, the Egyptian army's large-scale exercise. It was held, possibly not by coincidence, just weeks after Benjamin Netanyahu formed his first government.

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## Holbrooke calls for more and better trained Afghan police

**Nicholas Fiorenza** *JDW NATO and EU Affairs Correspondent*  
Brussels

Richard Holbrooke, the US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, has called for an increase in numbers, quality and training of the Afghan National Police (ANP).

He told the German Marshall Fund's Brussels Forum conference on 21 March that the ANP "are an inadequate organisation, riddled with corruption". While he did not provide numbers, he spoke of a "significant increase" and described previous plans to increase the ANP from 78,000 to 82,000 as "not sufficient".

Holbrooke did, however, express confidence in the ability of the new Afghan interior minister, Hanif Atmar, to deliver on his commitment to improve the police; as education minister Atmar was responsible for educating millions of Afghan girls.

Holbrooke said the United States and Europe should "mesh" their plans to increase their separate ANP training programmes. "I don't think it would be good to have two separate police training programmes," he said.

Appearing with Holbrooke, Afghan national security adviser Zalmay Rasoul welcomed the increase in the size of NATO's International Security Assistance Force by 17,000 US troops. He said the extra troops would bring security to areas where the presidential elections set for August could otherwise not be held, that some would be used to train the Afghan National Army and ANP and that "more troops means less civilian casualties" because they can cover more ground than is presently possible.

Addressing the conference dinner, US Senator John McCain said 17,000 troops were not sufficient to succeed in Afghanistan and called on US and European leaders to commit more, accusing them of pursuing a "minimalist approach". He sees the 3-4 April NATO summit in Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany, as "an opportunity to recommit in Afghanistan". Otherwise, "we risk the reversion of that country to a terrorist safe haven, a terrible setback in the global war against the jihadist movement and an historic defeat for [NATO]".

# POLITICO

## Holbrooke holds back

By: David S. Cloud

March 26, 2009 06:46 PM EST

In the basement of the State Department a few weeks back, Richard Holbrooke whispered discreetly in the ear of Gen. David Petraeus, while a few chairs away Secretary of State Hillary Clinton addressed the press about Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The moment reveals an unexpected phenomenon in the early days of the Obama administration: Holbrooke not being Holbrooke. As the president prepares to formally unveil his Afghanistan strategy Friday, Holbrooke's influence, as Obama's special envoy for the region, is undeniable — but exercised in a restrained style many familiar with his exploits in previous assignments would have thought impossible.

Other than a few news-free television interviews and tame speeches and the usual rumors (later denied) that Holbrooke has run roughshod over State Department bureaucrats, he has been practically invisible by his standards. And those standards include being renowned as one of the premier bureaucratic infighters of his generation, as a treasured source for scores of Beltway scribes and as a fearsome negotiator who goaded warring Balkan leaders into the 1995 Dayton accords largely through sheer force of personality.

Few expected the larger-than-life Holbrooke to adapt so smoothly to his status as an envoy appointed by the president and reporting to Clinton. But he has managed the difficult balancing act so far, not upstaging Clinton and at least for the moment not insisting on being the center of attention.

Part of the reason for Holbrooke's restraint is that the Obama administration is still formulating its new strategy. His role in that review has been substantial but behind the scenes, officials involved say. Once it begins to unfold, Holbrooke's role and visibility is likely to increase. But even then, Holbrooke's penchant for sweeping diplomatic strokes may be curbed as Obama seeks to scale down U.S. goals in Afghanistan.

Holbrooke has become in effect the man in charge of the State Department's South and Central Asia Bureau. On the day after Holbrooke was appointed, an official said, Assistant Secretary Richard Boucher, who runs the bureau, called his staff together and declared that all staffers involved in Afghanistan- and Pakistan-related issues should understand that Holbrooke could call on them whenever he wanted.

That hasn't entirely smoothed over relations with longtime State Department hands, but several said that rumors of sharp disagreements between Holbrooke's small operation and the bureau are overblown.

Holbrooke, officials say, pressed the need for a substantial increase in civilian aid directed at the tribal areas of Pakistan to start radio stations, development projects and other steps to counter the growing influence of the Taliban and militant groups — a position many in the bureau agree with.

Nor has Holbrooke clashed with the Pentagon. They would readily send more U.S. troops to Pakistan to step up training of its forces in counterinsurgency techniques but doubt that will be possible, given the fragile state of the Pakistani government.

"Everybody says what we need to do is send more troops. Holbrooke has said we need more civilian effort, and the Pentagon doesn't mind hearing that at all," an official said.

Holbrooke has knocked heads in private with Afghans and Pakistanis, including senior military and intelligence officials, whose relations had become especially strained in recent years. Simply getting them in the same room to exchange information about the threats that span the Afghanistan-Pakistan border was significant, officials say.

Publicly, Holbrooke has been careful not to appear to be bullying the fragile Pakistani government — or pressing it to accept a greater American presence that could destabilize it further.

"The heart of the problem for the West is in western Pakistan," Holbrooke said in a speech last weekend in Brussels. "But there are not going to be U.S. or NATO troops on the ground in Pakistan. There is a red line for the government of Pakistan, and one which we must respect."

Privately, he had a typically blunt message to the Pakistanis, who have alternated between heavy-handed military operations and ineffective truces with militant groups: "He told them, you're not going to win this thing by only whacking guys or cutting deals. You need to do long-term counterinsurgency," according to an official familiar with the discussions.

Holbrooke also pushed for the so-called "Big Tent" meeting being convened by the United Nations on March 31 at The Hague to bring together all the countries and international organizations with a stake in Afghanistan. Clinton will lead the U.S. delegation at the meeting but Holbrooke will accompany her, officials have said.

Among those invited are Iran and India, countries that Holbrooke is convinced can be helpful in stabilizing Afghanistan. India has promised to show, and Iranian officials have spoken positively about the idea but not formally accepted.

The appointment of a high-level envoy like Holbrooke has prompted Britain and other countries to name their own special envoys for Afghanistan, a trend that U.S. officials hope will translate into greater help.

"Holbrooke is the master of exploiting the connection between the symbolic and the substantive," said one official involved, noting that the conference will force other nations to take on bigger roles in stabilizing Afghanistan and Pakistan. Simply by holding a meeting, the official said, "You force other countries to think through, 'Do we really want to show up without a bottle of wine?'"

Whether all this activity swirling around Holbrooke eventually shows results depends on whether the security situation improves in both countries. Only then will reconstruction programs and efforts to encourage Afghan farmers to stop growing poppies for the drug trade pay off. Going back to Bosnia, Holbrooke has worked closely with the military and is already showing signs of doing so again, officials said.

The stew of problems besetting Afghanistan and Pakistan do not easily lend themselves to a Holbrookian mega-deal of the sort he pulled off in Bosnia, when he hammered out a complex peace deal among the Serbs, Muslims and Croats that solidified his reputation as


an international troubleshooter — and notorious seeker of the limelight.

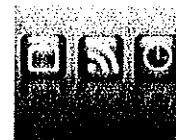
He is convinced that one of the answers to getting Pakistan to devote more attention to the militant threat it faces is to reduce tensions between Pakistan and India, officials say. If that could happen, Pakistan could move more of its troops into the tribal areas and border regions where much of the militant threat exists.

But Holbrooke has also not figured out yet whether he can be successful in reducing India-Pakistan tensions, the officials say. India has long resisted involving outside mediators and Holbrooke has no intention of getting involved in trying to force resolution of long-running disputes, like the Kashmir issue.

"The joke around the department is that 'Holbrooke doesn't do India until he does India,'" said one official.

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US wants closer ties with Russia to cut nuclear weapon stockpile.

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## Russia: No 'violent solution' possible on Iran



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

Thu, 26 Mar 2009 18:26:12 GMT

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says there can be no "violent solution" to Western concerns about Iran's nuclear activities.

In an interview with the Financial Times published on Thursday, Lavrov reiterated his country's opposition to the use of force against Iran to halt nuclear activities conducted by the country.

The US, Israel and their European allies -- Britain, France and Germany -- accuse the country of pursuing military goals. Israel has long advocated a military option to halt Iranian enrichment activities.

Iran, however, denies the allegation that it seeks to build a bomb and argues that the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) -- to which it is a signatory -- grants it the right to a domestic, civilian nuclear industry.

"I certainly believe there is no violent solution to this problem," he said, describing President Barack Obama's offer of better ties with Iran as a "very welcome step".

Obama promised "new beginnings" with Iran in an unprecedented Nowruz message that heaped praise around the world.

The top Russian diplomat also called Iran as Russia's "historic neighbor, historic partner".

Lavrov had on Saturday rejected claims that Iran is developing its nuclear program with the aim of making a bomb.

"There is no proof that Iran even has decided to make a bomb. The West should respect and reach out to the Islamic Republic," he told the Brussels Forum conference.

Lavrov said that the UN nuclear watchdog is the best-placed international body to monitor Iran's nuclear activities and decide whether the country might try to covertly develop a weapon under the guise of peaceful work.

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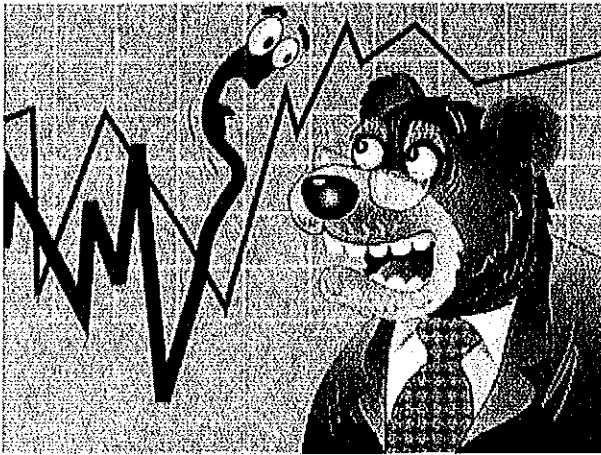
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## ROAR: Russian Opinion and Analytics Review, Mar. 27

27 March, 2009, 17:10

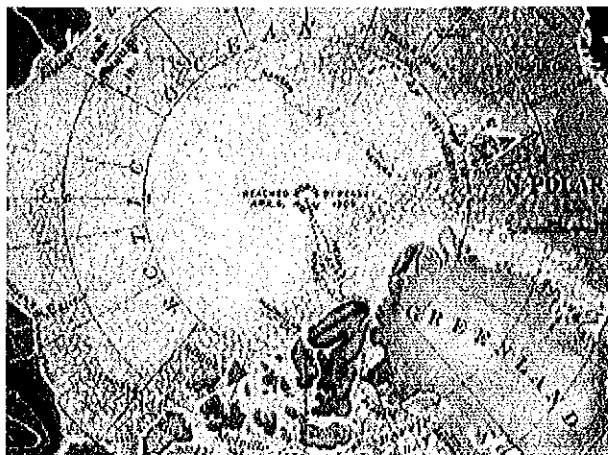
This Friday ROAR presents the picture of the Arctic region as a potential 'hot spot,' a German Minister's view of Russia-NATO relations, and a journalist's impressions from the Brussels Forum.

*KOMMERSANT* writes that the latest moves by the nations bordering the Arctic region and claiming various parts of it are turning the land of permafrost and ice into one of the 'hot spots' of the world. The paper says NATO maneuvers under the Norwegian flag, as well as Russia's new Arctic strategy that includes the creation of Arctic forces in the Russian Army, are signs of a future clash of interests of leading powers of the North Hemisphere in the Arctic region.

The paper points out that not only the interest in mineral resources but the possibility of year-round navigation through the Northern route from Western Europe to the U.S. and Canada resulting from global warming may become a driving force behind the future rivalry of nations with direct access to the region.

In the same issue of the newspaper, former Russian Deputy Foreign minister Andrey Fedorov writes in an analytical column that if Russia manages to prove its rights for its claim in the Arctic region, it may become an important stimulus for the economic development of the country.

The former top diplomat says that in spite of the global financial crisis, the world powers are ready to invest in their Arctic programs. However, he says, there are too many unsettled international legal issues about the Arctic, so at the moment, most of the disputes over the region are limited to negotiations on the status of various parts of the vast Arctic area. So far, he says, the Arctic has been showing signs of being a source of potential international conflicts rather than international cooperation.



The writer says that there is always a possibility that the U.S., Canada, and Norway, already cooperating with each other through NATO and other bodies, may form an alliance opposing Russia's policies in the Arctic region. To be prepared, Russia, which



owns the biggest claim in the region, must be ready to start negotiations, multi-lateral as well as bilateral, in order to define its common interest with the other players, and the differences they have. In that case, it would be much easier to defend Russia's own national interest in the Arctic region.

*NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA* publishes an interview with the German Minister of Defense, Franz Josef Jung, who insists that NATO needs Russia as a true strategic partner and is not going to start any new programs that would jeopardize Russia's interests.

The Minister says that the latest British proposal to create a new 3,000-strong NATO force for Eastern Europe is only a part of the process of strengthening the rapid-deployment forces NATO already has, and that the step will not be aimed against any particular nation, but is a means for tackling unexpected emergencies.

He also says that in his opinion, it is highly possible that the U.S., NATO, and Russia could agree on some form of cooperation in such a controversial issue as missile defense, because the danger it presents is common for all three. Of the situation in Afghanistan, the Minister says that the problem of Afghanistan is a challenge for the whole world community, however, answering it with war would only be counterproductive. So Germany, together with its NATO allies is going to employ a mixed civilian-military approach.

The same paper publishes an article by former Ambassador Victor Trifunov, now an academic with the Institute of the Far East. He writes that the participants of the special conference of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on Afghanistan in Moscow are convinced that if the current allied military operation against the Taliban collapses for any reason, it would be a disaster for Afghanistan itself and for the neighboring countries.

The academic says that for Russia, one of the main areas of concern is the narcotics traffic supported by the Taliban: according to the data presented by the Russian Federal Narcotics Control Service, more than twice the number of Russian citizens die of the effects of heroin addiction in one year than Soviet soldiers died in Afghanistan for the whole duration of the war (9 years).

*NOVAYA GAZETA*'s Alexandr Mineev shares his impressions from the Brussels Forum organized by the German Marshall Fund. The writer says that the forum, planned by its organizers as an event on the scale of Davos and Munich, this time was completely dedicated to Russia as one of the three pillars of European security alongside the U.S. and Europe itself.

The writer points out the opposition of a significant part of the European audience to Russia's idea of a new architecture of European security based on a reformed OSCE instead of NATO. He also writes that Russia's wish to correct the mistakes of its former leadership and put the security arrangements between Russia and Europe in the form of binding legal documents is met with a lack of understanding.

Mineev writes that Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov found himself in Brussels surrounded, if not by enemies, then by highly inquisitive opponents. In spite

of that, continues the writer, the forum raised a few 'theoretical' questions that may in due time move into the practical sphere, such as the question: why shouldn't Russia join NATO? The forum admitted that Russia has never applied for membership, but despite that, the alliance should keep its door open for Russia because, as the German representative put it, 'without Russia the West cannot solve even a single problem of the modern world.'

*Evgeny Belenkiy, RT.*

Salem-News.com (Mar-27-2009 10:59)

## British Envoy Damns US Afghan Drug Effort

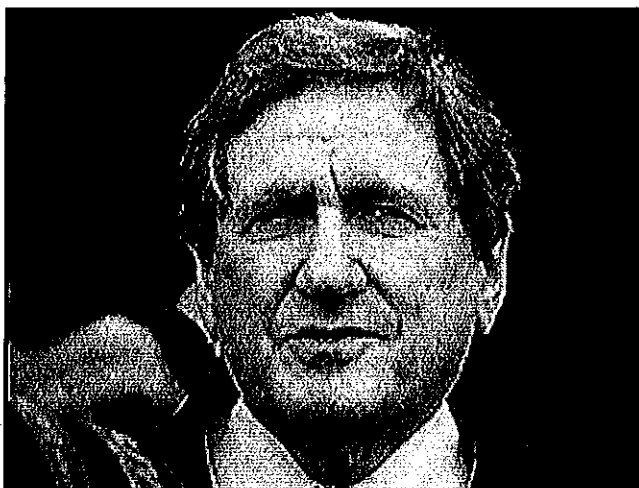
Salem-News.com

**President Barack Obama named Mr Holbrooke as his special envoy for the two countries shortly after taking office in January.**

Mr Holbrooke pulled no punches with his comments on anti-narcotics efforts. Photo courtesy: AFP

(LONDON) - US efforts to eradicate opium poppy crops in Afghanistan have been "wasteful and ineffective", the US envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan says.

Richard Holbrooke said the \$800m a year the US was spending on counter-narcotics would be better used in supporting Afghan farmers.



He said the US also wanted to see an increase in the numbers and capacity of Afghan police.

The US is currently conducting a review of policy on Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Efforts to eradicate poppy cultivation, Mr Holbrooke told a conference in Belgium - the Brussels Forum - had failed to make an impact on the Taliban insurgents' ability to raise money from the drugs trade.

"It hasn't hurt the Taliban one iota," he said, "because whatever money they're getting from the drugs trade, they get whatever they need whether we reduce the acreage or not."

The US said last month that poppy cultivation had been reduced by 19% last year. Despite the drop, the UN estimates that Afghanistan accounts for 90% of the world's illicit heroin supply.

"The United States alone is spending over \$800m a year on counter-narcotics. We have gotten nothing out of it, nothing," he said.

"It is the most wasteful and ineffective programme I have seen in 40 years."

'Corrupt police'

Mr Holbrooke said much of the money should be redirected to helping Afghanistan's farmers.

He spoke of a "very significantly expanded agricultural sector job-creation set of programmes - irrigation, farmer to market roads, market places, seed."

The Obama administration is currently reviewing US policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan.

President Barack Obama named Mr Holbrooke as his special envoy for the two countries shortly after taking office in January.

Mr Holbrooke also said the US had asked its allies in the Nato-led Isaf to help train thousands more Afghan police.

"The Afghan national police are an inadequate organisation riddled with corruption," he said.

"We know they are the weak link in the security chain, so we have to figure out a way to increase the size and make them better at the same time."

Senior Nato commanders have warned that there will be a further increase in violence this year.

President Obama has approved the deployment of 17,000 additional troops to fight the spreading insurgency.

Mr Holbrooke said, however, that the heart of the threat facing Nato in Afghanistan comes from western Pakistan, where the Taleban have much support.

But he made it clear that US and Nato forces would not chase insurgents across the border into Pakistan.

"There is a red line for the government of Pakistan and one which we must respect," he said.

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WORLD VIEW NEWS SERVICE

British Envoy Damns US Afghan Drug Effort

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## Towards zero: Obama grasps the nuclear nettle

Web posted at: 3/28/2009 7:45:39

Source ::: FINANCIAL TIMES

By Phillip Stephens

Fixing the economy, withdrawing from Iraq, overtures to Iran, a plan for Afghanistan, a thaw with Moscow and a bargain with Beijing ... I could go on. The issues on Barack Obama's agenda rush by like station names seen from a fast-moving train. This is a US president who wants to do more than walk and chew gum. Obama is poised to add further to this burgeoning list. He is turning his mind to nuclear disarmament, a challenge that has been recklessly neglected during the two decades since the end of the cold war. If he gets it right, he could transform the dynamics of global security.

US officials tell me that when the president travels overseas nothing is decided until it happens. So I hesitate to write that this latest initiative will be unveiled by Obama when he speaks in Prague on the penultimate leg of his European visit early next month. But, if the scheduling remains tentative, it seems clear that he wants to get more out of this trip than obligatory attendance at the Group of Twentysomething summit in London and at Nato's 60th anniversary get-together on the French-German border.

As I understand it, the White House plan is to try to change the argument about nuclear weapons - by pledging that the US is ready to work towards their eventual elimination. There have been several straws in the wind. Joe Biden, the vice-president, raised the possibility of a "towards zero" policy during his talks with European leaders earlier this month. Ellen Tauscher, the smart US congresswoman from California who is tipped to serve as Obama's arms-control chief, has spoken of a "significant commitment" to safeguard future generations from nuclear conflict. The president, Tauscher said recently, "wants to work towards the elimination of nuclear weapons".

The domestic politics of disarmament are propitious. Four elder statesmen from the world of foreign and security policy - George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn - have for two years been building a formidable cross-party coalition in favour of radical reductions in nuclear arsenals. The best way for Obama to signal that he is serious in his intent would be to announce that he will seek early ratification by Congress of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. Even after his party's gains in both houses last November, the necessary two-thirds majority is not guaranteed. But the timing is unlikely to get any better and, without US endorsement of the treaty, Obama will struggle to secure the moral authority to lead any broader disarmament effort.

A second leg of such an approach would be to open intensive talks with Russia to agree a successor to the strategic arms reduction treaty when it expires at the end of this year. Though Washington and Moscow agreed in 2002 on additional bilateral reductions in their nuclear arsenals, Start provides the essential architecture for verifiable disarmament. A new treaty could provide the basis both for another round of deep cuts in strategic arsenals and for subsequent negotiations on the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons.

A third component might be to open multilateral negotiations on a fissile

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material cut-off treaty - a commitment agreed in principle at the 2000 non-proliferation review conference. The aim would be to put at end to the production of all fissile material and to tighten international supervision of enrichment and reprocessing activities.

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Fourth — though not finally — Obama could announce that he is suspending work on missile defence in Europe. A moratorium would send a signal to Russia that Washington is serious about inclusive security. It would be a costless gesture: General James Jones, the president's national security adviser, is said to have described the system now envisaged as unlikely to work, too expensive and designed to counter a non-existent threat.

Each of these measures — and the aforementioned elder statesmen list several others - makes sense in itself. For all that America's nuclear posture has changed since the collapse of communism, it still owes too much to the doctrine of mutually assured destruction. The danger now is not one of a first strike by a rival superpower. The contemporary threat comes from proliferation, from the insecurity of existing stockpiles, and from the ambitions of international terrorists. The old doctrine of deterrence has limited utility.

So the big ambition must be to restore both credibility and teeth to international arms control regimes. Next year's review conference of the non-proliferation treaty will be a critical moment. Even achieving limited success in strengthening the NPT requires the US to show that the nuclear powers will play their part.

Most people in the US, or for that matter Britain and France, have forgotten that the NPT requires them to work for the destruction of all nuclear weapons, including their own. But that unfulfilled commitment is at the front of the minds of those, such as Iran, striving to build their own capability. Tehran is far from alone in complaining that the NPT has become a device to preserve the nuclear hegemony of the US and its allies.

A speech and a series of pledges will not of themselves change the course of history. Most obviously, Obama will require the agreement of Russia to serious further cuts in its nuclear arsenal. The signs are not all encouraging. Last weekend, I chaired a session of the German Marshall Fund's annual Brussels Forum at which Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, set out Moscow's security stall. The impression Mr Lavrov left on his audience was of a Russian leadership still trapped in the angry politics of grievance. Obama's planned meeting with Dmitry Medvedev, the Russian president, on the margins of the London summit will be an important test of Moscow's intent.

That said, during two short months in the White House, Obama has shown his capacity to shift the boundaries of global debate on security. The central assumption of the Bush years — that the US is invariably the villain — is crumbling. Nothing is guaranteed, least of all a renunciation by Iran of its nuclear ambitions. But the president is opening doors to collective security that have been long slammed shut. For that he deserves serious applause. □

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## Afghanistan remains world's largest opium producer

KABUL, March 28 (Xinhua) -- Afghanistan remains the world's largest opium poppy producer despite efforts by Western countries to stop cultivation in the war-torn country.

Richard Holbrooke, U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, has strongly criticized past efforts by the Americans to combat the opium trade in Afghanistan.

Speaking at a conference in Belgium on March 21, Holbrooke said that despite spending more than 800 million dollars a year on counter-narcotics, the U.S. had got nothing out of it.

"It is the most wasteful and ineffective program I have seen in 40 years in and out of the government," Holbrooke told a conference at the Brussels Forum.

Afghanistan's annual opium production had kept rising from 2001 to 2007, and hit a record high of 7,200 tons in 2007, according to a UN report.

In 2008, the country's opium cultivation dropped by 19 percent to 157,000 hectares, but overall production had declined by just 6 percent due to improved yields.

"Afghanistan's narcotics situation remains very serious," David T. Johnson, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, told the media in February. "Afghanistan still produces more than 90 percent of the world's heroin or opium poppy which, ultimately results in heroin."

"Greater leadership and effort by the Afghan government, both at the central and provincial levels, will be required to combat the corrosive effects of the drug trade which fuels both the insurgency as well as rampant corruption," Johnson said.

In Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, a heartland of the Taliban-led insurgency, the drug trade has become a vital part in fueling the insurgency.

The province accounts for two-thirds of all opium poppy production in

Afghanistan.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates the Taliban earned 100 million U.S. dollars last year from the opium trade. Eradication has been ineffective in terms of reducing production but very costly in terms of human lives, a UN report said.

In Helmand, the largest of 34 Afghan provinces, five districts out of 13 are still controlled by the insurgents, and three others have only a token government presence and foreign troops.

According to the Afghanistan Opium Survey 2008, conducted by the UNODC, the number of opium-free provinces rose from 13 to 18 due to a sharp decrease in drug production in the northern provinces, where security is much better than the country's south.

The UN attributed the progress to good local governance, and drought, which affected poppy growth in the north.

Currently, 98 percent of Afghanistan's opium cultivation takes place in just seven southern provinces, areas where the Taliban insurgency is strongest.

Western officials in Kabul said poppy growers and smugglers worked with corrupt government officials and the Taliban in the lucrative business - about 40 percent of the country's economy.

Having recognized that past anti-drug efforts have not been successful, Holbrooke said the U.S. would now focus on alternative livelihoods to opium cultivation and "significantly expand funding for the agriculture sector to create more jobs."

"We are going to try to re-program that money, about 160 million of it is for alternative livelihoods, and we would like to increase that. We want to re-examine it top to bottom," he said.

In Helmand, where some 8,000 British soldiers are stationed, the British Department for International Development last year offered aid to local farmers in the form of wheat, seeds, fertilizers and expert advice, to persuade them to turn away from opium poppy cultivation.



Johnson said in February, the U.S. has been assisting the governor of Helmand with a concentrated program.

"And we believe it could become a model where we have been able to combine a very robust education and an alternative development program with eradication, and that's ongoing now," Johnson said.

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US and Europe still at odds over crisis

30 ààò 2009 | 13:41

**Athens.** EU and US will cross swords at the G20 meeting that will be held on Thursday in London, the Greek **Kathimerini** daily comments on its front page.

There is an ongoing debate over the best way to deal with the crisis, while the gap between the EU and the US seems unbridgeable. EU leaders agreed at their Council that they have taken enough fiscal stimulus measures for now and they rejected pressure from the US to do more.

EC President Jose Manuel Barroso made clear that EU countries will review their stimulus efforts if the economy continues to deteriorate. Commissioner Joaquin Almunia said the high debt levels of many countries before the crisis were a constraint on further deficit spending.

"We cannot afford to spend the next two decades absorbing the debt we have created to tackle this very deep recession," Mr Almunia told the Brussels Forum.

Europeans will insist at the G20 meeting that they have done enough and will propose to increase the funds of the IMF and to reform the international financial architecture.

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**From Canada to Afghanistan, German Marshall Fund rises to the challenge**

Issue: 827 Posted: March,30 2009



When the German Marshall Fund Brussels Forum 2009 wrapped up, Alia Papageorgiou sat down with GMF President Craig Kennedy at the Conrad Hotel In Brussels, for a chat on the highlights, the lowlights and even how one gets to be the President of the German Marshall Fund. While waiting for the President, she was shown into the green Room of the event as he spent time thanking the staff who helped make the event possible. The initial question to him was inspired by this and hinged on the differences between US and European businesses and how they function.

**Do you think something similar would follow a European Conference?**

I'm sure it does. You know, there certainly are differences, cultural differences, work style differences. But we've been doing this pretty intensively now, one way or another for about a decade and not always big events like this one but other ones and we've learned how to bring together I think the best attributes of both North America and Europe together. It has turned out to be pretty effective. So I would say that we've figured out how to work out a lot of those differences.

**What were the highlights of this transatlantic cooperation, how was the German Marshall Fund's Brussels Forum 2009 for you, was there one part in particular that stands out for you?**

There were a lot of highlights that I'd be hesitant to pick out one. But I'd like to give you three. I thought that Bob Zoellick was just tremendous. Both by himself and when he was on a panel. He showed himself to be one of the smartest people in the United States or Europe on those complicated issues of economics. I thought the session on Afghanistan was maybe the most thoughtful discussion of that very complicated and painful topic that I've ever heard. Some of it had to do with the people that were there, these were serious folks, that have to really work to make things happen there, but I thought that was a very powerful, powerful session.

And, now I'll give you a slightly odd one, I actually thought that the final speech by the Belgian Defence Minister (Pieter Decrem) was one of the more thoughtful and inspiring speeches I've heard in a long time. He talked about the challenges of now, he talked about how hard it was to think about policies, and how sometimes, often, you design policies and it looks smart, like subsidies of bio-fuels and they turn out to be dumb over time, transatlantic relations and a lot of these other things in a philosophical framework that isn't often done.

It was just a very thoughtful smart conversation that was unusual for a politician, he's a very charming guy, and he was really impressive. And I guess the other thing that I would site is, I thought that the discussion on NATO at 60 this morning (March 22) was also another very well done and very good, and I could name so many others, there were just a couple that I thought fell flat, but most of them were really good sessions.

**What remains the big challenge in transatlantic relations?**

I think that the big challenge is how, it's transatlantic but it's not US-Europe. It is on both sides of the Atlantic and I include Canada on the other side, there are very different attitudes to complicated things like Afghanistan, how to deal with Climate Change, how to deal with Africa and aid and development, how to deal with China, and it doesn't break down simply - US VS Europe. On some cases there are groups of American thinkers, policy makers, Canadians, Danes, Poles, that agree, and on others it's a different combination.

I think that the fact is that this world that we're in right now is much more complicated than it ever has been before. There is a bigger diversity of viewpoints, there are more demands on public resources than there have ever been before and that causes real tension, so when you talk about trying to pull together a transatlantic

consensus, or a North American – European consensus on some topic it is inevitably going to be extremely difficult to do. I can take almost any issue and think of 20 of those 28 countries that would agree, but if the eight countries happen to be France, or the UK or Germany or Italy or the United States that disagree, then it's very hard to have action.

One of the things that the Belgian Defence Minister finished with today was this marvelous quote, which basically said, "It's fine to think about the world, but it's more important to act." And action right now is a very, very rare commodity, especially united action. And, I think it will be for a long time, just by the nature of how these cultures, countries have grown.

### **What still drives the German Marshall Fund?**

It is true that part of what keeps German Marshall Fund relevant is that there are divisions, and there are differences that are not simple US VS Europe, they're more complicated. You could see at almost any session at the Brussels Forum, that there was a range of American view points, and a very, very wide range of European opinions on almost everything. Organisations like ours thrive in environments where there is differences and where we can play a role in bringing people together to resolve them or at least minimise them. So in answer to your question if there was perfect harmony across the Atlantic we wouldn't be needed. But there isn't perfect harmony and I don't expect it any time soon.

### **What is your opinion on Turkey's role in International Relations this year?**

Turkey is a very strategic country; there is no doubt about that. There are intense natural advantages that it has because of its location, because of its resources. Politically I think it is going to have a challenging year, no matter how big the victory is for (Tayyip) Erdogan, he's going to find himself with more critics than he ever has before, and that's partially just because this will be his third term in office and its natural for someone who's served for that long to start to generate more criticism, more questioning, more doubts.

I think that there's going to be more pressure on Turkey to define its relationship with the West. Is it a Muslim country in the West? Is it a Muslim country that is between the West and the Middle East? What is it? And where do they want to be? I think sometimes they send out very mixed signals as to where they see that position.

Finally, I think that you will see a lot more activity around the issue of Turkey in the EU, I'm not sure that it will necessarily be aimed at advancing the process but more as a test to Europe and to some extent to test Turkey, to see how they respond as people push and shove around them on these issues.

### **What is it that makes Afghanistan so crucial?**

There's both a simple answer and a complicated answer. The simple answer is that Afghanistan became the home of basically an international terrorist network. It is the fight against terror, it is making sure that that region, and I think that's why our session was crafted as Pakistan and Afghanistan – that that region can no longer become a home to terrorists. I think that's the reason, still.

### **And the actual country? Has it, Like Iraq, become obliterated in the process?**

No. Actually what's interesting is, that when you talk to soldiers in Afghanistan who've served in Iraq, they'll almost always tell you that Afghanistan is a lot more complicated. Now, the complicated reason for what's been going on is a simple one, it has to do with the fact that big powers for four centuries, have thought that occupying Afghanistan is the key to stability in that region.

### **On another topic, how does one get to be the President of the German Marshall Fund?**

By luck! (laughter) It was a simple story, I've worked in basically domestic politics and NGO work in Chicago and I'd gotten to know the German Marshall Fund through that, then I'd done some consulting for them, I had worked at a foundation that funded some projects with GMF, and when they were holding a search for a new President in 1995, the person doing the search thought it would be at least interesting if I was one of the candidates. And he was very clear, he thought there was no chance that I would get the job but he thought it would be worth my time to interview.

I went through the interview process, left, he said don't worry you didn't get the job, and I called my wife in

Chicago and said don't worry you don't have to move, and then when I arrived home that night I opened the door and she said you just had a call and you got the job, and they want to know when you can start! And that was almost 14 years ago.

**And, how have things changed in the last 14 years?**

Well, we've been through a lot of different things. When I first started Europeans were very critical of the United States, because it was at the end of the first Clinton term, he didn't travel much, he wasn't terribly engaged in Europe, then it went through good but complicated times Bosnia, Kosovo, much deeper engagement, then it went through 9/11 covering the intense emotions there, then it went through the Iraq war, and all of the problems and challenges there, and in the meantime there were also trade wars and so forth so its been a pretty interesting period.

**People always ask me in relation to the German Marshall Fund what is its relationship to the Marshall Plan?**

GMF was created as a memorial to the Marshall Plan. The German government did it on the 25th Anniversary of the Marshall Plan in 1972, they used some of the money that had been given to Germany for the Marshall Plan, and very much viewed it as a way of saying thank you to the United States for its generosity. So that's why our name is the German Marshall Fund.

**Is Germany still actively involved in the organisation?**

We have an office in Berlin, we get some support from German sources we do a fair amount of programming there but we also work in lots of other countries in Europe and our biggest office is here in Brussels. So we're very much focused on EU-NATO relations. And this, The Brussels Forum, is the biggest event we host.

**What do you see as the main focus of the year to come in politics?**

You know it's really hard to predict there are some issues that will of course remain important, Iran, Afghanistan, Russia. On Russia I think it's starting to get somewhat better but there's still a long ways to go.

**And NATO and their 60 year anniversary?**

I think I would have been a little bit more challenging today than the Secretary General was (General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer spoke at final closing session of Brussels Forum 2009) I think NATO could go through a period of real soul searching, especially if things in Afghanistan don't improve, or don't improve soon.

## **United States European Command**

### **NATO 60 years later: leadership addresses challenges**

Release Date: Mar 30, 2009

*Christie Vanover*  
*U.S. Army Garrison Benelux*

CHIEVRES, Belgium — Six decades ago this week, a dozen nations came together in Washington, D.C., to sign the North Atlantic Treaty. By doing so, the European and North American countries reaffirmed their commitment to each other, agreeing that if one was attacked, the alliance would take necessary actions to restore and maintain the security of the region.

That commitment still holds true today and now includes 26 - soon to be 28 - member nations.

The NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer recently told the German Marshall Fund of the United States Brussels Forum that, "the Alliance's relevance is more widely accepted than ever before."

However, he added that the 60th Anniversary Summit, scheduled for April 3 and 4, is not just an event to commemorate the history of NATO. "On the contrary," he said, "that Summit is very much about the future of the Alliance."

"Just remember NATO's 50th anniversary in 1999," he said. "That summit took place against the backdrop of a controversial air operation in the Balkans. At its 40th anniversary, in 1989, it even looked as if NATO could break apart over differences of how to respond to the Gorbachev challenge.

"By contrast, today no one seriously argues that NATO's days are numbered. Two new members [Albania and Croatia] are on the verge of joining NATO, and France is about to take its full place again in our integrated military structure. We have never been in greater demand, yet we have never been confronted with bigger challenges," he said.

Army Gen. Bantz J. Craddock, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and commander of U.S. European Command, addressed some of those challenges during a House Armed Services Committee hearing on March 24.

"What keeps me up at night is the concern of some NATO nations that there must be a solidarity in the alliance, and the call for an article 4 or an article 5 force to guarantee sovereignty or to repel attack has to be answered in a positive way quickly," he told the committee.

"That also transcends then into my European Command hat because, obviously as the leader of NATO, the United States will have to respond accordingly," he continued.

"We are the leaders of the alliance. We must be in the alliance. We must be present for duty, visible and that means with forces. That means in the diplomatic mode, the economic mode. We have to show that leadership - day in and day out. We have to build partners, member nation confidence and capabilities and also we have to build non-NATO partners who, in the coming years, want to be a part of the alliance."

In addition to ensuring NATO solidarity among all the member nations, one of the general's immediate concerns is America's force strength in Europe and how it directly relates to NATO. He recommended to the committee that the force remain at its current levels.

He said a draw down below 84,000 would mean "less engagement, less partner nation capability. Exercises will go unfunded and unmet, and we will essentially become absent in the theater where we have been so present before."

That European presence directly correlates to America's footprint on the battlefield. The general said that 87 percent of the allied contribution to Afghanistan and 70 percent of the contribution to Iraq have come from the EUCOM area of responsibility because of the engagement, cross-leveling and partnerships with NATO that have developed year after year.

He added that when the U.S. completes its plus-up in Afghanistan, that the U.S. will consist of more than 50 percent of the force. Those future forces will include the 17,000 that President Barack Obama has ordered to the region.

This spring, approximately 4,000 U.S. troops will deploy to train the Afghan security forces, according to remarks made March 27 by Obama when he introduced his future strategy for NATO's joint mission in Afghanistan.

Craddock said that while the U.S. was training the Afghan National Army, there was no increased commitment to police training. "The United States realized, if we're going to make this work with security forces, we've got to have public security police and national security Army, and that's when the U.S. took over the lead for police training."

Under Obama's new strategy the president said, "Every American unit in Afghanistan will be partnered with an Afghan unit, and we will seek additional trainers from our NATO allies to ensure that every Afghan unit has a coalition partner."

He added that military strength is not the only resource he seeks from NATO. He also is requesting support in creating clearly defined capabilities, support for Afghan elections and a greater civilian commitment to the Afghan people.

"We have a shared responsibility to act - not because we seek to project power for its own sake, but because our own peace and security depends upon it," he said. "And what's at stake now is not just our own security - it is the very idea that free nations can come together on behalf of our common

security. That was the founding cause of NATO six decades ago. That must be our common purpose today."

As NATO evolves and grows, Col. James Drago, commander, U.S. Army Garrison Benelux, said his mission is synchronized to meet the demands and requirements requested by the administration.

USAG Benelux has three indirect reporting garrisons that support the NATO Headquarters in Brussels; NATO's Allied Command Operations at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe near Mons, Belgium, and NATO's Allied Joint Force Command in Brunssum, The Netherlands.

"We are expanding training areas; we are improving quality of life facilities for families whose spouses are assigned to NATO, and we continue to open up our Army operations to our joint forces and international allies, when appropriate," said Drago.

As an example, the Benelux just conducted a joint mission rehearsal exercise with the 650th Military Intelligence Group/Allied Command Counterintelligence to prepare its personnel for an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

"Our garrison has supported NATO since its move to Belgium in 1967, and under the guidance of the Department of the Army and the Installation Management Command-Europe, we will continue that mission to ensure our alliance safeguards the freedom, common heritage and civilization of our people, as was intended by the original treaty signed 60 years ago."

The NATO Secretary General considers the past 60 years a "tremendous journey."

"From a mere piece of paper, the Alliance has turned into one of the world's premier international organizations," he said. "From just 12 member states, we went to 26 - and soon 28. And from a purely 'eurocentric' Alliance NATO has evolved into a security provider that is engaged on several continents, working with a wide range of other nations and institutions.

"A pretty impressive track record, if you ask me. A strong testimony of our collective ability to meet any kind of challenge," the Secretary General added. "And, above all, a very good reason to look to NATO's future with confidence."



## BONJOUR L'ESTONIE

March 31, 2009

### Decision to invite Lukashenka to EU summit hasn't been adopted yet

The Charter'97 press-centre has been informed about that by Andrei Sannikov, leader of the civil campaign "European Belarus". **He is taking part in the high-level conference in Tallinn.**

**The international conference dedicated to the memory of the first Estonian president Lennart Meri is taking place in Tallinn under the auspices of Estonian president Toomas Hendrik Ilves.** Foreign Ministers of the European Union countries, high-ranking European officials and leading experts are taking part in the conference. Belarus is presented at this prestigious forum by the leader of the civil campaign "European Belarus" Andrei Sannikov and the leader of the civil initiative "We Remember" Iryna Krasouskaya.

As said by Andrei Sannikov, it turned out at the conference that no official decision on invitation of Alyaksandr Lukashenka to Prague had been adopted. "It was decided to continue discussion on this issue. Much is to depend on how actions of the Belarusian authorities, and in particular, the situation with human rights, would be estimated by governments of all the EU countries and the European civil society. Europeans are also interested by the opinion of pro-democracy forces of Belarus on the processes taking part in the country," Sannikov said.

The politician has also noted in a positive key that a session dedicated to the situation in Belarus is to be held at the conference in Tallinn, as it was at the recent Brussels Forum.

As we have informed, on March 28 Radio Svaboda informed that Alyaksandr Lukashenka was invited to Eastern Partnership to Prague. According to the report of the radio, under a secret understanding an invitation was to be passed to Lukashenka, but he personally wouldn't come to Prague on May 7. He is to send Foreign Minister or other official instead of him.

March 31, 2009 in [Abroad](#) | [Permalink](#)

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# Pakistanpal's Blog

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## Redrawn map of South Asia?

Mohammad Jamil

In November 2008, Pulitzer Prize winning writer Nicholas Kristoff said in an article published in the New York Times: "There is an increasing belief among Pakistanis including members of the armed forces, that what the US really wants is the breakup of Pakistan, the only Muslim country with nuclear arms". But such an idea is fraught with dangers beyond the comprehension of the big powers, and could make the world a very dangerous place to live in. At the Brussels Forum conference, US representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke said: "The heart of the problem for the West is in Pakistan. The militants are operating out of bases in Pakistan, where a fragile government has recently taken over and the army is focused more on fighting India than insurgents in lawless tribal areas".

Holbrooke has to understand the simple logic and fact that every country takes measures to defend its borders with a view to safeguarding its integrity and stability. If the US can conduct operations thousands of miles away from its borders for the safety and security of America and its citizens, Pakistan is well within its right to defend its borders from the next-door hostile neighbour. To make Pakistan's security perilous, India's RAW has covertly been supporting centrifugal forces in Balochistan. Killing and kidnapping of Chinese, and also made inroads in militants' organizations in Pakistan.

Take the case of terror attack on Sri Lankan cricket team, the rocket launcher and other arms and ammunition were the same as used by Indian army. The objective is to prove that Pakistan has failed to rein in terrorists. India and the US are also opposing any peace agreement in FATA or Swat with tribal elders, so that impression can be created that Pakistan army is either incapable or is not willing to crush militants and terrorists. To cover up the real designs, President Barack Obama has said US objective is to ensure that Afghanistan is no more a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives, and attacks against the American homeland or American interests do not take place. But to tarnish Pakistan's image, a top adviser to the US Central Command, David Kilcullen who advises CENTCOM commander General David H Petraeus on the war on terror said that Pakistani state could collapse within six months if immediate steps are not taken to remedy the situation. In an interview to The Washington Post published on Sunday, he warned that if things spin out of control in Pakistan it would 'dwarf' all the crises in the world today.

Asked to explain why he thought Pakistan was so important, Kilcullen said: "Pakistan has 173 million people, 100 nuclear weapons, an army bigger than the US Army, and Al Qaeda headquarters sitting right there in the two-thirds of the country that the government doesn't control". The same day, Indian Home Minister Chidambaram in an interview to Karan Thapar on 'India Tonight' said: "Pakistan is pretty dysfunctional and perilously close to becoming a failed state". UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown also joined the chorus with Americans and Indians. Writing in The Observer he said: "There is an Al Qaeda core in northern Pakistan trying to organize attacks on Britain, as we know there are a number of networks here". The outgoing US ambassador to Kabul William Wood told the UK's Sunday Observer that America would be prepared to discuss the establishment of a political party, or put up even election candidates representing the Taliban, as part of a political strategy that would sit alongside reinforced military efforts to end the increasingly intractable conflict. Other ideas being discussed include changing the Afghan constitution as part of potential negotiations, taking senior Taliban figures off UN blacklists to establish dialogue and possible prisoner releases. Recently, there was a meeting between Afghan government and representatives of Gulbadin Hikmatyar to explore the option of bringing Pushtun on board. And of course this is the right way of doing it because by ignoring the majority, there can never be peace in Afghanistan or for that matter in the region. It has to be mentioned that America could explore other options but they are blaming Pakistan of great sin if it negotiates with the tribal elders or militants.

It would be appropriate to look into the circumstances in which Pakistan had been sucked in the big-power game. First World War had provided an opportunity to Communist Party of Russia for completing the socialist revolution. After the end of World War II, socialists of Eastern European countries were facilitated by the Soviet forces that were present in those countries to form socialist governments. On the other hand, the US had influence over the western European countries to form a capitalistic bloc. Thus Cold War era started whereby the world was divided in two camps - Western and Socialist. In 1950s, British-trained bureaucracy convinced the then Pakistani leadership that the US could help build Pakistan's army and also other infrastructure

therefore they decided to go with the West and become its camp-follower. The government did not pay heed to Quaid-i-Azam's advice that Pakistan should maintain good relations with all the countries of the world, and joined military pacts with the US and the West. Some call it an error of judgment while others call it inaptness of the bureaucracy.

During 1965 war with India, people of Pakistan understood the meaninglessness of the defence pacts because nobody came to Pakistan's rescue. In fact, Pakistan's so-called allies stopped all military and economic aid. In 1971, our so-called allies played the role of silent spectators when Pakistan was disintegrated. There was a perception that had Pakistan not become camp-follower of the West, it would not have been disintegrated as a result of international intrigue. Evidence suggests that Soviet Union had used its Veto in United Nations General Assembly only after American spy plane U-2 had taken off from Budh Ber near Peshawar in 1958. Soviet Russia had not vetoed the resolution bestowing the right on Kashmiris to decide through a plebiscite if they wish to join India or Pakistan.

In 1979, when Soviet forces occupied Afghanistan, the US and the West started propaganda blitz against Soviet Union and persuaded Pakistan to organize a proxy war to push Soviet forces out of Afghanistan. But for Pakistan this proved to a recipe for disaster. After 9/11 when the US coerced Pakistan into joining war on terror it was due to the fact that US was the only super power after disintegration of the Soviet Union and it was mainly due to Pakistan's cooperation that the US enjoyed the status of the only super power. Since the US and the West are reviewing their strategy and policy, Pakistan should also reviews its foreign policy, which in fact should have been done in 1971.

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







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## Holbrooke: Poppy eradication 'wasteful'

Published: March 31, 2009 at 1:41 PM

WASHINGTON, March 31 (UPI) -- Attempting to eradicate poppy fields in Afghanistan is counterproductive, the United States' top envoy to the country says.

Even though U.S. President Barack Obama's new strategy for Afghanistan calls for continued efforts to destroy the flowers used in the production of opium, Richard Holbrooke, the administration's coordinator of Afghanistan policy, called the practice "wasteful and ineffective" at a Brussels forum this month, USA Today reported Tuesday.

Moves to eradicate poppies have been "pushing farmers into the Taliban's hands" because it destroys their livelihoods, Holbrooke reportedly said.

He later told the newspaper via e-mail that although Obama's strategy calls for poppy eradication, emphasis will also be placed on creating new agricultural jobs.

"In the time available we could not design an all new program but there was unanimity that there was significant flaws in the current program," he said. "Now that the Strategic Review is done, we will turn our attention toward agriculture sector job creation and alternative livelihoods while at the same time the government has to go after the drug lords."

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AP Photo/Charles Dharapak

OPINION

## Cacophonous Disunity

Henry Kissinger's famous quip in the 1970s, "When I want to call Europe, I cannot find a phone number," has ironically been turned on its head. There are too many phone numbers. The London G-20 summit spotlights the great disunion of the European Union at a critical juncture

JEAN-PIERRE LEHMANN

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GENEVA

As London hosts the second summit of the G-20 on 2 April, an event that could impact the course of global affairs into the next decade and beyond, the European Union stands in a state of cacophonous disarray.

The disarray is audible at three interconnected levels: within the member states, among the member states and in the EU's position in global governance. Of course, cacophony and disarray are not strangers to the EU – but never to this degree. The EU has not faced such a daunting global situation since the creation of the union with the 1957 Treaty of Rome.

Disarray within the member states at the G-20 summit is most visibly illustrated by the weak positions of government leaders. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown is virtually certain to lose the next general election, but more poignantly many of his compatriots see him as responsible for the crisis. Hence, how can he be part of the solution? Angela Merkel, undoubtedly the most impressive of the lot, must contend with a fractious coalition. Nicolas Sarkozy is fortunate in that the opposition is in greater disarray, but his popularity rankings in the 30th percentile are a historic low for the Fifth Republic. In respect to Silvio Berlusconi, disarray in Italian politics has been a permanent feature.

And in ironically perfect timing, the government of the Czech Republic, which holds the current presidency of Europe, has been overthrown in a vote of no confidence. The colorful Czech ex-Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek – who described the American response to the crisis as the "road to hell" – will be in London as a lame duck. Commission President José Manuel Barroso will also attend the summit, but his mandate runs out in a few months and his reinstatement is uncertain. Weakness and disarray of EU member-state governments will, among other pernicious effects, direct their focus on domestic politics rather than global governance.

The cacophonous disarray among the member states, while reflecting a frequent EU condition, is nevertheless shriller and more ominous than it's ever been. This is in part exacerbated by the fact that membership is now composed of 27 highly diverse states, with more voices, accents and instruments to add to the cacophony. In the context of an enlarged EU, the Franco-German axis would not count as much as it did in the days of the Konrad Adenauer/Charles de Gaulle, Helmut Schmidt/Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Kohl/François



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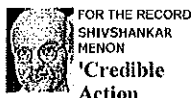


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Why would Obama want to quarrel with Israel, confront the mighty pro-Israel lobby and the US Congress, when he can settle for soothing words from Netanyahu? Not to mention Europe, divided and ridden by Holocaust guilt, and the pathetic Tony Blair moving around like a restless ghost...  
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**Bush Wine In Obama Bottle...**

Obama's new strategic broth, to which many cooks have contributed, has shown a clear understanding of the problems confronting him in Afghanistan-Pakistan. Bush and his advisers were not as articulate but they too had come to a similar conclusion though not in as smart a language...  
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**'Credible Action Against Terrorism'**  
The foreign secretary on President Zardari's desire to restart the Composite Dialogue and Obama's talk of constructive diplomacy: 'We want to see credible action against the infrastructure of terrorism in Pakistan. We want to see the perpetrators brought to justice'  
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**'Disrupt, Dismantle, And Defeat...'**  
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Mitterrand ententes. Still the rift and mutual suspicion between Merkel and Sarkozy only heighten the cacophony's pitch.

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### Cacophonous Disunity

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Not only are such acts in violation of EU rules, they are much more so in violation of the European spirit.

Since the beginning of this century the EU seemed bogged down in unfulfilled promises and incomplete initiatives. Take the Lisbon Agenda, also known as the Lisbon Process or the Lisbon Strategy, but not to be confused with the Lisbon Treaty: It was adopted in March 2000 with the aim of making the EU "the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment by 2010." With eight months to go, mentioning the Lisbon Agenda in Brussels today is met with embarrassed silence.

Then in 2004/2005, there was the fiasco of the European Constitution, rejected in referendums in two of the EU's founding member states, the Netherlands and France. The constitution has in the meantime been recalibrated and re-branded as the Lisbon Treaty, rejected by the Irish in their referendum in June 2008. So, constitutionally the EU remains at an impasse. Perhaps a turning point has been reached. The initial belief that ultimately the EU would overcome the obstacles and continue its ascension has eroded. Current trends would seem more indicative of a weakening or indeed unraveling of the EU - including membership, the Common Market and the single currency. While not a prediction, this emerges as a plausible scenario.

The disarray of the EU's position in global governance is reflected in the G-20 summit choreography. And the convening of the G-20 in turn provides the occasion to turn up the cacophony. Henry Kissinger's famous quip in the 1970s, "When I want to call Europe, I cannot find a phone number," has ironically been turned on its head. There are too many phone numbers.

While among the 20 there will be one China, one India, one Indonesia, one Brazil, one US, one Russia, etc, there will be six EU members at the table and a host of others, with past and present EU roles. Account must also include the head of the International Monetary Fund, who by convention must be a European. Director General of the WTO Pascal Lamy, also attending, is a European, but his predecessor was a Thai, so the WTO position is far less contentious than is the case with the IMF head. While there are many Europeans, there is no European position of substance, though efforts will be made to keep the flowery rhetoric going. To reduce the noise, the EU participants at the G-20 summit need to reach the lowest possible common denominator among themselves, wielding considerable influence on the summit's outcome.

In 1900, at the height of Europe's "global glory," in terms of power over the rest of the world, Europeans accounted for 25 percent of the world's population. Now, including EU and non-EU Europe, the population is less than half that figure and by 2050 will diminish by another half. A single European voice would make sense for the EU and for the world. Instead, at a time of crisis, when stability and clarity are sought, the EU in disarray is producing a high-pitched cacophony.

Jean-Pierre Lehmann is professor of International Political Economy and the founding director of The Evlan Group at IMD. Rights: © 2009 Yale Center for the Study of Globalization. YaleGlobal Online

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The Atlantic Business Channel

Apr 2 2009, 10:11 am by **Bruce Stokes**

**CongressDaily**

### **The Atlantic Dialogue**

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BRUSSELS, Belgium -- President Obama meets today in London with the leaders of the world's largest economies. They can be expected to call for solidarity in the face of the worsening global economy and to issue a lengthy list of commitments to revive economic growth and better regulate international financial transactions.

Out of diplomatic deference, what their meeting communiqué will not say is that most of what has to be done will fall on the shoulders of the world's two largest economies: the European Union and the United States. If the lofty goals of this G-20 summit are to have any chance of success, Europeans and Americans will need to work closely. Unfortunately, on the eve of the summit, recent experience was not promising.

"We need to cooperate to find solutions that are coherent and global," Joaquin Almunia, the European Union's Commissioner for Economic and Financial



Affairs, said in an interview with *CongressDaily*. "The agenda is now clear, even if on the details we will differ in approaches."

But it is precisely these differences that pose the problem. Recent Obama administration complaints that the Europeans are not doing enough stimulus spending have been met with sharp European rebuttals.

"It is unwise to speak about a new [spending] plan," said European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso at the German Marshall Fund's Brussels Forum in late March, "before we have implemented the old plan."

True, but Barroso's comment implies EU spending is adequate. Yet new European stimulus expenditures this year will equal only about half of such U.S. spending as a percentage of GDP.

European officials contend such calculations fail to account for expenditures on their social safety net: generous unemployment benefits and subsidies to keep people employed. This is disingenuous. Such state spending cuts the gap in transatlantic stimulus spending by about half, but it certainly doesn't result in equal burden sharing, according to estimates by Bruegel, a Brussels-based think tank.

The good news is most observers here believe European government stimulus spending is likely to increase before the year is out. The ruling coalition in Germany, for one, is expected to boost outlays by June in the run-up to that country's September elections.

Thus the more important challenge might be developing a transatlantic consensus on a coordinated stimulus exit strategy. Failure to agree on joint criteria for phasing out spending once it is no longer needed could lead to some nations turning off the spigot prematurely, risking a prolonged downturn.

To avoid that, Congress might press the administration to reopen the transatlantic dialogue over stimulus spending in 2009's Third quarter, once the depth and length of the recession is clearer. The goal could be to share evidence of what works and to develop criteria for deciding when enough is enough.

Developing rules of the road for financial institutions is the second challenge in the wake of the G-20 meeting.

"We will not move to global convergence of regulatory standards and principles unless we have a strong EU and U.S. regulatory and supervisory system," said a senior EU official, "because we constitute 70 percent of global capital markets."

But such ambition faces temporal and policy differences. In February, the European Union laid out its vision for supervision of European financial institutions and markets. It called for new rules for credit rating agencies, regulation of hedge funds and new standards for issuing securities in the European market.

U.S. officials privately worry the European Union is moving too fast and will force U.S. financial players to live by European rules. "We are going in different directions already," said economist Karel Lannoo of the Centre for European Policy Studies, a Brussels think tank.

"This is not compatible with globally convergent approaches," said one former Bush administration official.

But European officials complain they are being blamed for trying to close the barn door after the Americans left it open. Moreover, they contend that the SEC is already signaling a lack of interest in international cooperation.

Differences in the pace of reregulation, if not the substance, might sort themselves out. EU officials acknowledge concrete proposals for financial rules will not come before the end of the year and could not be enacted much before the end of 2010. Moreover, the European Union does not speak for its member states, so Brussels' ambitions might have to be tempered.

This certainly gives Washington time to get its act together. But Brussels' Byzantine rulemaking requires U.S. officials to coordinate with European counterparts now, before things set in stone. Since Congress will play such a pivotal role in U.S. financial reregulation, the Senate Banking and House Financial Services committees might consider appointing one or two members as liaisons with counterpart committees in the European Parliament, to avoid differences that emerged over 1990s accounting reforms.

No one ever said coping with the worst global recession in 80 years would be easy. And, above all, it will require a willingness to work across the Atlantic despite differences. "We need the political generosity to say others may have the right idea," suggested Nicolas Veron, a Bruegel resident scholar. That degree of national humility might be the toughest challenge emerging from the G-20 summit

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THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2009

The G-20 and the Future of Capitalism – Part II

## The G-20 and the Future of Capitalism – Part II

The London G-20 summit spotlights the great disunion of the European Union at a critical juncture

Jean-Pierre Lehmann  
*YaleGlobal,*

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United in disagreement: As the global crisis deepens, European Union leaders make solutions harder with their cacophonous disunity

global situation since the creation of the union with the 1957 Treaty of Rome.

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**POSTED BY RICARDO VALENZUELA AT 6:23 PM**

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How could a ruler be invited in Prague, in whose country a vice-speaker of the parliament, an Internal Affairs Minister, a businessman and a famous journalist had been assassinated?

The international conference dedicated to the memory of the first Estonian president Lennart Meri took place in Tallinn on March 29-31 under the auspices of Estonian president Toomas Hendrik Ilves. Foreign Ministers of the European Union countries, high-ranking European officials and leading experts were taking part in the conference. At this prestigious forum Belarus was traditionally presented by the leader of the civil campaign "European Belarus" Andrei Sannikov and the leader of the civil initiative "We Remember" Iryna

Iryna Krasouskaya told the Charter'97 press-centre about how the Belarusian question was approached at the conference in Tallinn.



- Iryna, what have you discussed with the politicians you met during the conference in Tallinn?

paid to Belarus. Iryna Krasouskaya told the Charter'97 press-centre about how the Belarusian question was approached at the conference in Tallinn. - Above all, I wanted to get across a message that only cosmetic changes are taking place in our country, and they do not influence the situation in general. While so much attention is paid to Belarus, the situation suggests itself about conditions which the regime is to fulfill in order to become a participant of the programs offered to it. These conditions are simple: to put an end to repressions against the opposition, to alter the electoral code, to guarantee freedom of expression, to investigate cases of disappearances and assassinations of oppositional leaders and a journalist. Without fulfillment of these conditions no advances should be made to the Belarusian authorities.

- Do European officials remember that opposition leaders including your husband had been forcibly abducted and assassinated?

- Europe shouldn't forget about that. And I am bringing up this point constantly no matter where I speak. How could a ruler be invited to Prague in whose country a former Internal Affairs Minister, a vice-speaker of the parliament, a businessman and a famous journalist had been forcibly abducted and assassinated? What could be discussed with a person when his entourage is suspected of implication in these crimes by the international community?

- To you mind, do the European politicians want to meet with the last dictator of the continent in Prague?

- Theoretically they could reason in a way that his invitation is possible, as the Eastern partnership is one of the many programs of the European Union, and everybody should be present at this summit. But when I asked participants of the conference about that directly, almost everybody said no. Nobody wants to be a whipping boy.

By the way, at the section dedicated to Eastern Partnership, Edward Lucas, a journalist who works for "The Economist" asked a simple question to its participants: "Who of you is ready to shake hands with Lukashenka?" Only 4 or 5 persons raised their hands out of 250 present! And when Lucas asked who won't greet the Belarusians dictator in case of his arrival to Prague, there was a sea of raised hands.

Andrei Sannikov, the leader of the civil campaign "European Belarus" has also answered the questions of the Charter'97 press-centre.



- Mr Sannikov, was the conference in Tallinn a continuation of the Brussels Forum in which you took part recently alongside with leaders of many European countries?

- As for the issue of Belarus, undoubtedly yes. Much attention had been paid to our country. The situation was discussed with hope and with great concern. The hurriedness with which European officials have made an attempt to recognize the Belarusian dictatorship is very doubtful now. More and more politicians and representatives of European countries are coming to understand that the authorities of Belarus are not ready for any serious changes.

An entire section had been dedicated to Belarus; much was said about our country in the framework of discussion of the European Neighborhood policy and the Eastern Partnership program. By the way, this program was subjected to well-grounded criticism. It was said in particular by Borys Tarasyuk, chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine's European Integration Committee and Andrei Illarionov, a well-known Russian economist, a former economic policy advisor to the President of Russia.

Besides, lots of skeptical words about Belarus' participation in the Eastern Partnership have been heard. I can be a witness that the understanding of those problems faced by the European Union after offering the new policy towards the Belarusian regime, is growing.

April 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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Валюта	07.04.09	08.04.09
EUR	3 775.47	3 750.15
USD	2 789.00	2 807.00
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In your view, Europe should invite Lukashenka:

to Prague

to the Hague

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[New prisoners of conscience in Belarusian jails](#)

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Belarusian Weather Forecast

	07.04	08.04
Brest	+16 +7	+18 +7
Vitebsk	+9 +2	+10 +2
Gomel	+13 +3	+12 +2
Grodno	+14 +5	+15 +6
Minsk	+12 +1	+14 +2
	+11	+11

**- That means that Europe comes to realize that it was too early to make Lukashenka's Belarus a part of the Eastern partnership program?**

- The original optimism of European officials which we observed, is disappearing, as they see neither serious changes in Belarus, nor a desire to carry out these changes on the part of the Belarusian authorities.

The visit of the Foreign Minister of Spain **Miguel Moratinos** to Belarus caused rather bewilderment than positive emotions among Europeans. Even European colleagues of Moratinos said that actions of the Spanish minister are in no way in congruence with the common agreements in the European Union. The Foreign Minister of Spain made some proposals to Belarusian authorities over the head of the Czechs, currently presiding in the EU, and the future presiding country, Sweden.

Europeans are more and more aware of the fact that Lukashenka is trying to use the new policy of the European Union towards the post-Soviet states for supporting its regime during the crisis.

**- It is known that at the conference in Tallinn you met with the Foreign Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt. What the policy of the European Union could look like during this country's presiding?**

- We discussed exactly the approaches Sweden is going to realize in Belarus. In our conversations with **Carl Bildt**, representatives of European structures and ministries **Iryna Krasouskaya** and me attracted attention to the necessity to further support of rights and freedoms of Belarusians, and release of political prisoners.

In mid April a number of missions of the European Union are to visit Belarus in order to study the situation after the beginning of the new stage of the European Union policy, and to present their conclusions in Brussels. The extent and format of Belarus' participation in the EU summit dedicated to the Eastern Partnership are to depend on these conclusions greatly.

**- Do European officials know that there are political prisoners in Belarus?**

- Europeans know about that undoubtedly. Some of them are trying to close their eyes to that and ignore this fact. Their argumentation rationale does not hold water. To say that one should wait for a court and only then jailed people could be or couldn't be called political prisoners is simply absurd. I would like to remind that in line with the UN report prepared 10 years ago, independent court system does not exist in Belarus. If something has changed since then, it has changed for the worse.

**- What worries the Europeans most of all today: a possible recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia by Lukashenka's regime, or human rights violations in our country?**

- It looks like they are more concerned by geopolitics, though it was a matter of much argument: how to maintain democratic and liberal values in Europe. It's high time for the Europeans to understand that the issue of recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia won't help to improve the situation with human rights in our country. On the contrary: the democratic processes in Belarus, respect to human rights would remove from the agenda the problem of the separatists' recognition by our country.

**- Now Europeans are deciding whether they should invite Lukashenka to Prague. To your mind, what opinion do most European politicians hold?**

- The last word has not yet been said on this matter. I think that the decision would be adopted at the supreme moment. I have notices that there are personal lobbyists of the dictator in Europe, but most Europeans do not have a desire to invite Lukashenka to Prague.

**A note by the Charter'97 press-centre:**

The International conference dedicated to the memory of the first Estonian president **Lennart Meri** takes place for the third year. This year its participants included: Vice Prime Minister of the Czech Republic **Alexander Vondra**, Swedish Foreign Minister **Carl Bildt**, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Latvia **Maris Riekstins**, Foreign Minister of Estonia **Urmas Paet**, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs at the U.S. Department of State **David Kramer**, Defense Minister of the Netherlands **Elmert van Middelkoop**, Defense Minister of Georgia **David Sikharulidze**, deputies of the European parliament, heads of departments of the European Commission, representatives of the Council of the European Union, leading analysts from the United States, Europe and Russia.



Foreign Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt, "The Economist" journalist Edward Lucas and Vice Prime Minister of the Czech Republic Alexander Vondra

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One of participants of the conference, President of Estonia Toomas Hendrik Ilves



Andrei Sannikov and Iryna Krasouskaya with Carl Bildt, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden

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Jan Wiersma: "I don't believe Lukashenka can become a democrat"

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## **Latest news from Belarus**

Apr 06 2009

### **Iryna Krasouskaya: "I don't cherish any illusions cases of political disappearances will be investigated"**

Relatives of the kidnapped people don't think resignation of the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs will lead to investigation of high-profile cases.

"Resignation of Uladzimir Navumau may mean that the Belarusian authorities are giving a signal to Europe. Perhaps, it is a sign that pressure by Europe has become effective. All known that the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly prepared a report on the situation with kidnappings of Anatol Krasouski, Viktor Hanchar, Yury Zakharanka, and Zmitser Zavadski, and concluded that high ranking Belarusian officials were involved in those crimes. Besides, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the UN Working Group on Disappearances keep an eye on the situation. We laid an action to the Un against the Belarusian authorities," Iryna Krasouskaya, leader of the initiative "We Remember", widow of the kidnapped Belarusian businessman and public figure, told the Charter'97 press center.

Nevertheless, Iryna Krasouskaya doesn't think the Belarusian authorities will carry out an objective investigation of cases of kidnappings and killings of the opposition leaders and the journalist.

"I don't cherish any illusions that cases of political disappearances will be investigated. Lukashenka probably wants to visit the eastern Partnership summit in Prague. It was said at the recent Brussels Forum and the Lennart Meri Conference in Tallinn, in which I took part, that one of the main obstacles for Lukashenka's visit to Prague was non-investigation of cases of disappeared oppositionists and possible involvement of Belarusian high ranking officials in those crimes. I am very sceptical about an objective investigation by the current Belarusian authorities. Secretary of the Security Council Viktor Sheiman, suspected of involvement in disappearance of oppositionists, was removed from his post, but nothing has changed so far," Iryna Krasouskaya concluded.

Filed in [Politics](#)

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## Britain's Foreign Office Minister Mark Malloch-Brown (L) gestures ...

March 22, 2009



(Reuters) - Britain's Foreign Office Minister Mark Malloch-Brown (L) gestures during a news conference after the 'Shared destiny : How relevant is Europe to the U.S. under Obama' session at the Brussels Forum conference staged by the German Marshall Fund think-tank in Brussels March 20, 2009. REUTERS/Sebastien Pirlet

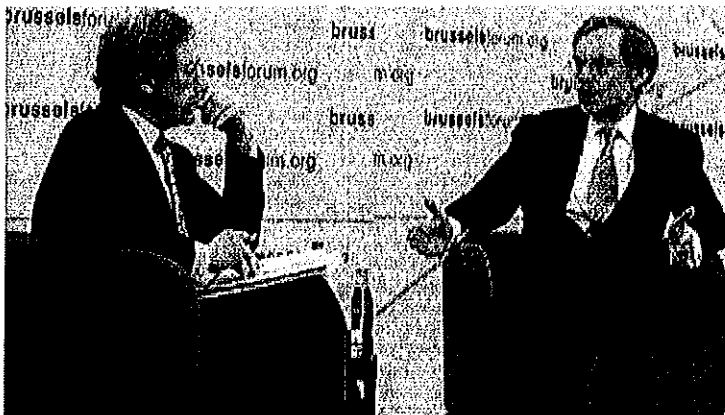
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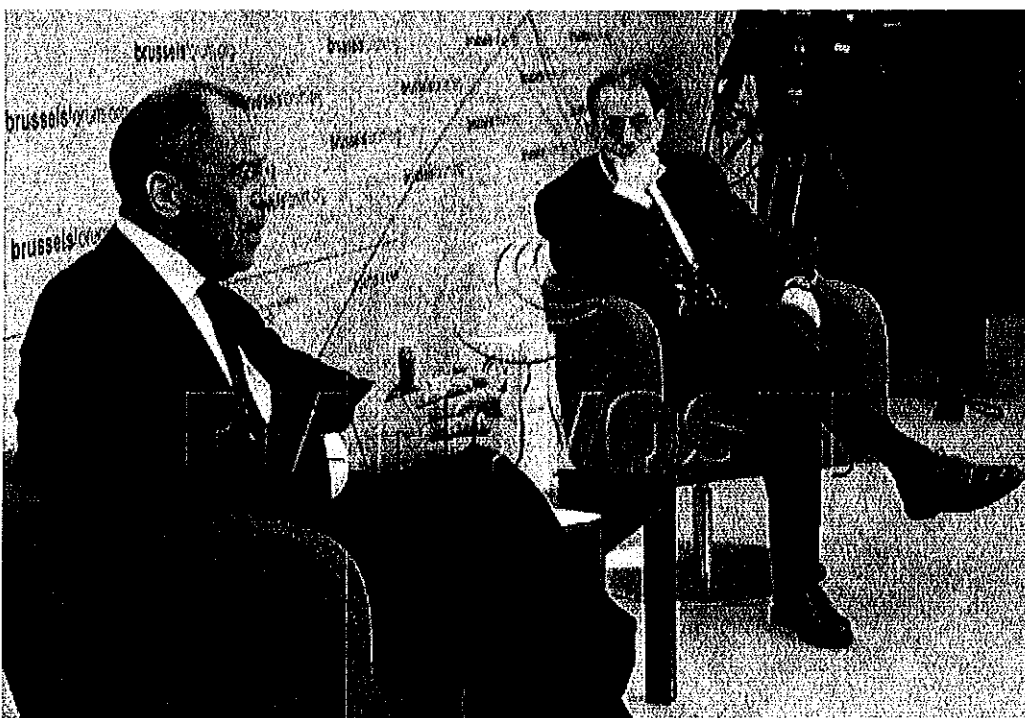
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**Photo #381656**  
 Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov attends Brussels Forum 2009

Categories:  
[Politics](#)

Description:  
 Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, foreground, speaking at the Brussels Forum 2009. In the background is EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana.

Location:  
[Belgium, Brussels](#)

Date of event:  
 21.03.2009

Author:  
 Eduard Pesov, [STR](#)

Keywords:  
[international relations](#)

Source:  
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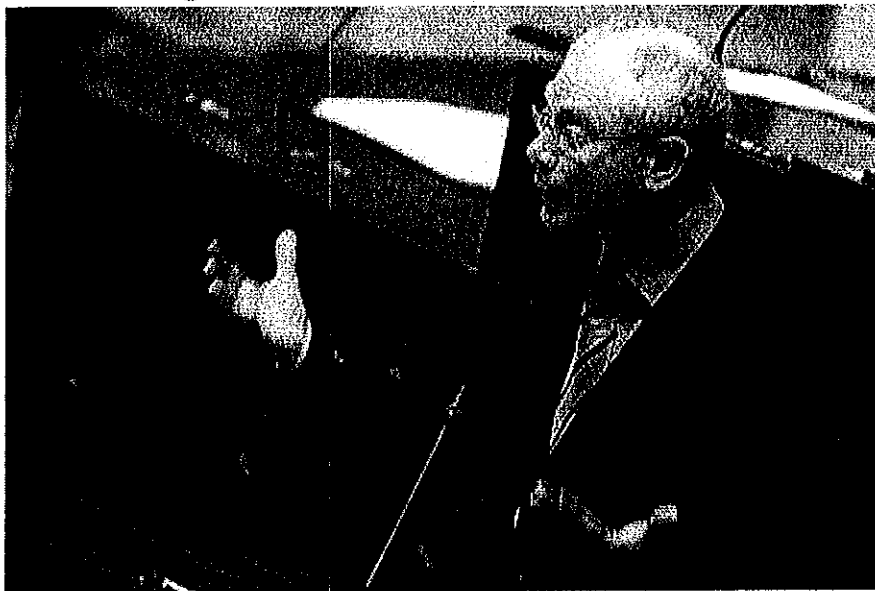


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## Van Rompuy belooft "extra bijdrage" voor Afghanistan



Premier Herman van Rompuy (CD&V) belooft dat België nog een extra bijdrage zal leveren voor de internationale operaties in Afghanistan. Dat meldt de VRT-nieuwsredactie.

### **Europees-Amerikaanse conferentie**

De premier deed die belofte op een conferentie in Brussel, waar toppolitici uit de Verenigde Staten en Europa aan deelnemen. Dat zogenaamde Brussels Forum is vanavond van start gegaan.

In zijn openingstoespraak zei Van Rompuy dat er voor Afghanistan nog meer moet worden gedaan. "Ik zal proberen om voor de top van de NAVO, begin april, een beslissing te nemen over een bijkomende bijdrage vanuit België", aldus de premier.

### **"Iets civiel-militair"**

Over wat die bijdrage inhoudt, bleef Van Rompuy op de vlakte. Meer details dan dat het over iets civiel-militair zou gaan, wou hij niet kwijt.

### **John McCain**

Op de conferentie bespreken Amerikaanse en Europese politici op een informele manier allerlei wereldproblemen. Onder meer senator John Mc Cain, de verliezer van de laatste Amerikaanse presidentsverkiezingen, en de baas van de Wereldbank, Robert Zoellick, zijn van de partij. (belga/lb)

20/03/09 23u32

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VIDEOZONE 



## "Extra Belgische bijdrage in Afghanistan"

(Belga)

**vr 20/03/09 21:16 - Premier Herman van Rompuy (CD&V) belooft dat België nog een extra bijdrage zal leveren voor de internationale operaties in Afghanistan.**


De premier deed die belofte op een conferentie in Brussel, waar top-politici uit de Verenigde Staten en Europa aan deelnemen. Dat zogenaamde Brussels Forum is vanavond van start gegaan.

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### POLITIEK

Woelige betoging tegen moskee in Kortrijk 

Vlaamse regering blij met eisen

Obama 

Jurgen Verstrepen trekt Antwerpse

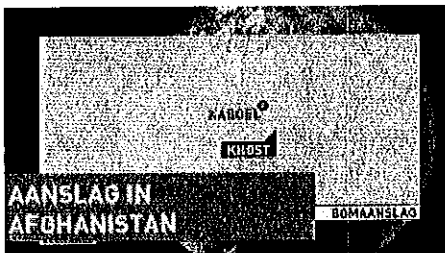


VIDEOZONE



za 21/03/09 19:35 (UPDATE video) - Minister van Defensie Pieter De Crem (CD&V) wacht op concrete vragen voor een verhoging van de Belgische aanwezigheid in Afghanistan. Dat heeft hij gezegd na de belofte van premier Herman Van Rompuy (CD&V) over een extra bijdrage aan Afghanistan.

Van Rompuy deed de belofte gisteravond op het Brussels Forum, een conferentie waar toppolitici uit de Verenigde Staten en Europa aan deelnemen. Maar de premier bleef wel heel vaag over de concrete invulling van de extra steun.




Ook minister van Defensie De Crem heeft er voorlopig nog het raden naar. Hij denkt dat het gaat om mensen die het Afghaanse leger en de politie moeten opleiden.

"We zouden een C130 ter beschikking kunnen stellen. Maar er zijn ook structurele vragen: gaat het over steun aan het Afghaanse leger? Gaat het om vorming van het leger of gaat het


om de oprichting van een nationale Afghaanse politiedienst?", oppert hij.

Op dit ogenblik zitten er bijna 500 Belgische militairen in Afghanistan. Ze staan vooral in voor de bewaking van de luchthaven van Kaboel. Daarnaast bestaat het Belgische contingent ook uit F16-piloten.


## VERWANTE BERICHTEN


"Extra Belgische bijdrage in Afghanistan" 


## POLITIEK


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Vlaamse regering blij met eisen Obama 


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
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## Van Rompuy belooft extra bijdrage voor Afghanistan

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### BRUSSEL -

Premier Herman Van Rompuy (CD&V) belooft dat België nog een extra bijdrage zal leveren voor de internationale operaties in Afghanistan. Hij zegt er niet bij om wat voor bijdrage het gaat.

*belga*

De premier deed die belofte op een conferentie in Brussel, waar toppolitici uit de Verenigde Staten en Europa aan deelnemen.

Dat zogenaamde Brussels Forum is vrijdagavond van start gegaan.

In zijn openingstoespraak zei Van Rompuy dat er voor Afghanistan nog meer moet worden gedaan. 'Ik zal proberen om voor de top van de NAVO, begin april, een beslissing te nemen over een bijkomende bijdrage vanuit België', aldus de premier.

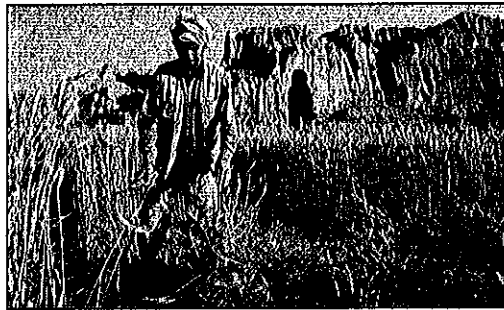
Over wat die bijdrage inhoudt, bleef Van Rompuy op de vlakte.

BELGA

maandag 23 maart 2009

## VS gaan strijd om harten en geesten aan

**BRUSSEL - Afghanistan is een strategische prioriteit voor president Barack Obama. En hij rekent op steun van de bondgenoten voor een 'surge', die een opvallende nadruk legt op civiele heropbouw. Dat bleek dit weekinde in Brussel.**



*Een Afghaanse boer aan het werk in Bamiyan, bij de nis waar het grote Boeddhabeeld stond dat in 2001 door de Taliban werd opgeblazen. reuters*

Van onze redactrices

Corry Hancké

Richard Holbrooke, de speciale gezant van president Obama voor

© Ahmad Masood / Reuters

Afghanistan en Pakistan, was een van de opgemerkte gasten op het 'Brussels Forum', dat jaarlijks politieke leiders en opiniemakers uit een groot aantal landen bijeenbrengt. Holbrooke trad de Europese kritiek bij dat Amerika een enorme fout had gemaakt door zijn prioriteit van Afghanistan naar de oorlog in Irak te verschuiven terwijl het werk in Afghanistan lang niet voltooid was. President Obama wil die 'historische fout' nu rechtzetten.

Amerika stuurt extra 17.000 manschappen naar Afghanistan, maar het rekent niet op militaire macht alleen om een terugkeer van de Taliban te verhinderen. Het doel is een *comprehensive surge* op alle fronten om ook de harten en geesten van de Afghanen te winnen, zei Holbrooke.

'Men kan het militaire en het civiele niet scheiden', zei hij. 'Vreemdelingen plegen weinig succes te hebben in Afghanistan en het er niet lang uit te houden. Dat is al zo sinds Alexander de Grote.' Daarom, zei hij, 'moeten we een manier vinden om de bevolking duidelijk te maken dat we ooit uit Afghanistan zullen vertrekken, en hen ook verzekeren dat het land niet zal hervallen in de chaos die er voordien heerste'.

Een van de grote doelstellingen van het nieuwe Amerikaanse beleid bestaat erin jongeren een toekomstperspectief te bieden. Vandaag kunnen de Taliban nog altijd meer bieden dan de Afghaanse overheid, namelijk goedbetaalde banen, mede door hun drugshandel. De VS willen banen creëren in de landbouwsector, waarin de meerderheid van de Afghanen werkt. Ze gaan zaaigoed verdelen, landbouwopleidingen geven en markten oprichten waar de landbouwproducten verhandeld kunnen worden.

Holbrooke zei ook dat de bondgenoten beter moeten communiceren over hun doelstellingen en strategie in Afghanistan. De Taliban schilderen ons bij de ten dele ongeletterde bevolking af als bezetters die het volk onderdrukken. We moeten een veel betere repliek ontwikkelen in die propagandaoorlog, zei hij.

Ook ten aanzien van de eigen bevolking moeten de westerse landen beter communiceren. De bekende Pakistaanse journalist Ahmed Rashid verweet



## VS staken vernietigen papaver

Van onze correspondent Bert Lanting

gepubliceerd op 23 maart 2009 09:25, bijgewerkt op 25 maart 2009 11:45

BRUSSEL - De regering-Obama zet een punt achter de pogingen de opiumteelt in Afghanistan te bestrijden door papavervelden te vernietigen. Dat kondigde de Amerikaanse gezant voor Afghanistan en Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, dit weekeinde aan op het Brussels Forum, een veiligheidsconferentie in Brussel.

Volgens Holbrooke, die door president Obama is belast met de opdracht het Afghanistanbeleid onder de loep te nemen, hebben de Amerikaanse pogingen de Taliban van hun inkomsten te beroven door papavervelden te vernietigen niets opgeleverd.

'Het heeft de Taliban niets, maar dan ook niets gekost. Wat ze ook aan de drugshandel verdienen, ze krijgen het toch, of wij nu het aantal papavervelden reduceren of niet.' Holbrooke noemde het Amerikaanse antidrugsprogramma, waaraan de overheid jaarlijks 800 miljoen dollar uitgeeft, het 'minst effectieve' programma dat hij in veertig jaar gezien heeft.

Volgens de Amerikaanse gezant drijven de VS de Afghaanse boeren in de armen van de Taliban door hun papavervelden te verwoesten. De enige oplossing is volgens hem veel meer geld te pompen in landbouwprogramma's, zodat Afghaanse boeren een alternatief krijgen voor de papaverteelt.

Met zijn kritiek zet Holbrooke zich af tegen de (Amerikaanse) opperbevelhebber van de NAVO, generaal Craddock. Die riep de NAVO-landen onlangs op meer te doen om de opiumteelt te bestrijden en drugshandelaars aan te pakken. Volgens Craddock was dat nodig, omdat de opiumteelt en de drugshandel de voornaamste inkomstbronnen voor de Taliban zijn.

Voor de Europese bondgenoten is het waarschijnlijk een opluchting dat Obama het roer wil omgooien. De meeste Europese NAVO-landen waren ertegen dat de NAVO zich ook met de strijd tegen de opiumteelt zou gaan bezighouden. Volgens hen zou dat de bevolking alleen maar tegen de internationale troepen in het harnas jagen.

url: [http://www.volkskrant.nl/buitenland/article1168237.ece/VS\\_staken\\_vernietigen\\_papaver](http://www.volkskrant.nl/buitenland/article1168237.ece/VS_staken_vernietigen_papaver)



maandag 23 maart 2009

## Globalistan

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**Barack Obama wenst Iran in een videoboodschap een gelukkig nieuwjaar, hij nodigt Rusland uit tot nauwere samenwerking, hij lultert naar zijn bondgenoten, kortom hij is een 'man van de dialoog'. Daarmee doet hij precies wat de Europeanen wensten en verwachtten.**

Maar Obama is geen man van de 'dialoog om de dialoog'. De gesprekspartners moeten tonen dat ze samen mee naar oplossingen willen zoeken, en niet louter kritiek leveren.

Rusland is ongelukkig over plannen voor een raketschild in Centraal-Europa en Japan? Wel, het kan helpen om proliferatie tegen te gaan, om klaarheid te helpen afdwingen over de Iraanse en Noord-Koreaanse wapenprogramma's. Dat zou die raketschilden overbodig helpen maken.

Europese en andere partners hebben Amerika bekritiseerd omdat het veel te snel Afghanistan op een laag pitje zette om oorlog in Irak te gaan voeren? Wel, Obama heeft een tijdschema vastgelegd voor terugtrekking uit Irak, en geeft prioriteit aan Afghanistan.

Hij stuurt 17.000 extra manschappen naar Afghanistan in het kader van een 'surge' die een opvallend sterk accent legt op civiele heropbouw. Het gaat in Afghanistan niet om de keuze tussen 'hard' en 'soft power', maar om de goede combinatie van de twee. Op het Brussels Forum van dit weekeinde zegden ook Duitse bewindslieden dat het weinig zin heeft scholen te bouwen als de Taliban die dan weer in brand steken. Heropbouw vereist veiligheid, dus militairen.

Daar verwacht Obama van Europa dat het daden bij zijn woorden voegt. Als sommige bondgenoten geen extra troepen willen sturen, dan vraagt Amerika dat ze dan wel op een andere manier meer middelen toewijzen aan die cruciale strijd in Afghanistan. Het gaat hier niet om een verafgelegen land waarmee wij niets te maken hebben. In 'Globalistan', zoals Mark Eyskens onze huidige wereld noemde, kent terrorisme net zo min grenzen als de financiële crisis nu doet.

In tegenstelling tot wat een gemakzuchtige illusie voorhoudt, is het Al-Qaeda dat de aanslagen van 9/11 en zovele andere plande, niet uiteengespat en niet verdwenen. Het vermoordde Benazir Bhutto en plande de aanslagen in Mumbai. Het leidt nog altijd lieden uit onze landen op die het dan terugstuurt.

Europa heeft een reëel belang bij de stabilisering van Afghanistan. Het gaat er om de eigen veiligheid. Het gaat ook om zijn geloofwaardigheid als partner voor een Amerikaanse president die samenwerking nastreeft. En tenslotte, als het een wereldspeler wil zijn, dan moet het ook in strategische delen van die wereld durven optreden. In Azië circuleren oneerbiedige grapjes over de Europese troepen in het rustige noorden van Afghanistan die 'nooit iets zwaarders optillen dan hun maandelijks looncheque'. Pleiten voor een verstandig gebruik van soft power is prima, overkomen als een 'softy' is niet zo goed voor Europa.

MIA DOORNAERT

de Europese regeringen dat ze hun bevolking niet voorlichten over de terreurdreiging. 'Er zijn terroristische cellen in alle Europese hoofdsteden', zei hij, en hij voorspelde dat 'de volgende grote aanslag in Europa zal plaatsvinden'. Al-Qaeda is niet uit elkaar gespat, zei hij. Het stuurt de Taliban in Afghanistan aan, het leidt nog altijd mensen uit Europese landen op die dan worden teruggestuurd. 'Het blijft een strategische bedreiging, men kan zelfs zeggen dat het een coherenter strategie dan het Westen heeft. Het is zich aan het organiseren om de nieuwe Amerikaanse troepen in Afghanistan te bevechten. Het akkoord in de Pakistaanse Swat-vallei dient om de handen vrij te hebben voor oorlog in Afghanistan.'

Holbrooke zei tegen *De Standaard* dat de Verenigde Staten 'voortgezet overleg' voeren met 'vele Europese bondgenoten' over het zenden van extra troepen. 'Heel wat landen hebben te kennen gegeven dat ze het sturen van bijkomende troepen overwegen tijdens en ook nog na de periode van de verkiezingen (*van augustus, red.*).'

Maar het lijkt erop dat de Verenigde Staten de bondgenoten daarover niet zwaar onder druk zetten. Ze vragen dan wel een grotere inzet in het civiele deel van de 'surge'. Holbrooke vermeldde bijvoorbeeld de 'enorme bijdrage' van Japan dat de wedden van heel de Afghaanse politie betaalt.

Ook voor de uitbouw van die politie zal evenwel veel meer nodig zijn. De voorziene uitbreiding van de politiemacht van 78.000 naar 82.000 man zal absoluut niet volstaan, zei de VS-gezant. En bovendien is die politie slecht opgeleid, 'en door en door corrupt'. Amerika hoopt dat ook Europese landen een bijdrage zullen leveren om van het zootje ongeregeld een reguliere politiemacht te maken. Premier Herman Van Rompuy zei vrijdag op het Brussels Forum dat de regering een bijkomende bijdrage van ons land bespreekt, die op de Navo-top van begin april aangekondigd zou kunnen worden.

Een grote vraag is natuurlijk of er een vredesregeling mogelijk is via onderhandelingen. De algemene mening op het Forum was dat er met de ideologische Taliban geen vergelijk mogelijk is over een aanvaardbare maatschappijvorm. De Afghaanse nationale veiligheidsadviseur, Zalmi Rasoul, maakte wel een onderscheid tussen de Taliban, die het land 'terug naar de veertiende eeuw willen katapulteren', en de meelopers, ongeschoold en straatarm, die zich om den brode lieten inlijven. Met die mensen kan en moet wel gepraat worden, en 'als ze de Afghaanse grondwet erkennen, hun wapens willen neerleggen, en niet ideologisch geïnspireerd zijn', dan vinden ze een uitgestoken hand.

Holbrooke maakte ook nog duidelijk waarom hij speciaal gezant is voor Afghanistan én Pakistan. Die twee landen vormen één strategische zone, omdat Al-Qaeda zich in Pakistan heeft genesteld. 'De mensen die de aanslagen van 11 september hebben gepland, die Benazir Bhutto vermoord hebben, die de bloedige aanslagen in Mumbai gepland hebben, die nu een schrikbewind gevestigd hebben in de Swat-vallei, zitten niet in Afghanistan, maar in Pakistan. Wij bevechten de Taliban, maar zij zijn de gewapende voorhoede van Al-Qaeda. Dat betekent niet dat we de Taliban niet meer moeten bestrijden, want als zij terugkeren, komt ook Al-Qaeda terug in Afghanistan, met een nog groter bereik dan vroeger.'

Blz. 2 commentaar

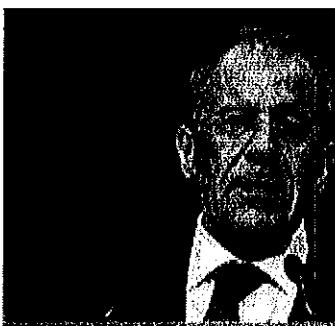
MIA DOORNAERT

# Handelsblatt<sup>.COM</sup>

21.03.2009

## Moskau irritiert über „östliche Partnerschaft“

**Russland hat von der Europäischen Union Aufklärung über die Ziele der neuen "Östlichen Partnerschaft" gefordert. "Wir haben da Fragen", sagte der russische Außenminister Sergej Lawrow am Samstag in Brüssel bei einer Diskussionsveranstaltung.**



Russlands Außenminister Lawrow sagte: „Ist das eine Einflussosphäre? Wir würden das gerne verstehen.“ Quelle: dpa

dpa BRÜSSEL. "Geht es darum, Länder von jenen Positionen wegzuziehen, über die sie doch frei entscheiden sollen?" fragte Lawrow, "ist das eine Einflussosphäre? Wir würden das gerne verstehen." Der russische Außenminister warnte die EU vor "Spielereien in der Nachbarschaft" und vor einem Versuch, im Osten eine Einflussosphäre zu suchen.

Die Staats- und Regierungschefs der EU hatten am Freitag in Brüssel beschlossen, Armenien, Aserbaidschan, Georgien, Moldawien, der Ukraine und Weißrussland eine "Östliche Partnerschaft" anzubieten. Sie soll am 7. Mai offiziell gegründet werden. Die Partner sollen in ihrer Reformpolitik unterstützt und bei hinreichenden Fortschritten mit größtmöglicher Annäherung an die EU belohnt werden. Weißrussland könne nur Teil der Partnerschaft werden, wenn es die georgischen Regionen Südossetien und Abchasien nicht als unabhängige Staaten anerkenne.

Lawrow sagte beim "Brussels Forum" in Brüssel zu Äußerungen des tschechischen Außenministers und derzeitigen EU-Ratsvorsitzenden Karel Schwarzenberg, Weißrussland könne für den Fall der Anerkennung der von russischen Truppen besetzten Gebiete die Partnerschaft "vergessen": "Ist das eine Drohung, Erpressung oder ist das angewandte Demokratie?" Moskau sei nicht gegen bessere Beziehungen der EU zu östlichen Staaten: "Wir alle würden davon profitieren, sofern wir das Prinzip beachten, dass wir keine Spielereien in der Nachbarschaft vorhaben und dass wir diese Länder nicht vor die Wahl stellen: Entweder seid ihr mit uns oder gegen uns."

Er verwahrte sich dagegen, dass Staaten in Zentralasien von EU-Politikern vor die Wahl gestellt würden, "entweder eine Kolonie Russlands oder Teil der freien Welt zu sein": "Das ist nicht zu akzeptieren. Das ist ein Spiel, das die Souveränität dieser Staaten ignoriert." Russland beharre allerdings darauf, besondere Beziehungen zu vielen östlichen Staaten zu unterhalten: "Wir können Länder, mit denen wir Hunderte und Aberhunderte von Jahren gemeinsamer Geschichte haben, nicht als unwichtig für uns betrachten. Die Verbindungen zwischen uns sind so zahlreich, dass man sie unmöglich ignorieren kann." Der Minister fügte hinzu: "Ich hoffe, das wird verstanden."

EU-Chefdiplomat Javier Solana sagte, die EU halte Verhandlungen über einen neuen Vertrag zur Gründung der von Russlands Präsident Dmitri Medwedew vorgeschlagenen neuen Sicherheitsarchitektur nicht für dringend. "Für mich gibt es keinen wichtigen Grund, die Sicherheitsstrukturen in Europa zu ändern", sagte er. "Wir fühlen uns durchaus wohl. Aber wenn Russland sich nicht wohl fühlt, dann sind wir und die USA bereit, mit Russland darüber zu sprechen." Allerdings müsse es dabei nicht nur um Sicherheit, sondern auch um Wirtschaft und Menschenrechte gehen. Zudem sollten mögliche Verhandlungen im Rahmen der Organisation für Sicherheit und

Zusammenarbeit in Europa (Osze) geführt werden.

Lawrow widersprach: In der Vergangenheit seien mündliche Zusagen, beispielsweise über die Nicht-Erweiterung der Nato, nicht eingehalten worden. "Der russischen Außenpolitik geht es nicht um Furcht, es geht um Fairness. Wenn Versprechen gebrochen, Verpflichtungen nicht erfüllt werden, dann haben wir Sorgen."

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**Link zum Artikel:** <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/moskau-irritiert-ueber-oestliche-partnerschaft;2210016>

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21. März 2009, 15:08

## SOLANA LEHNT RUSSISCHEN WUNSCH NACH NEUER SICHERHEITSARCHITEKTUR AB

**Russland hat von der Europäischen Union Aufklärung über die Ziele der neuen "Östlichen Partnerschaft" gefordert. "Wir haben da Fragen", sagte der russische Aussenminister Sergej Lawrow in Brüssel bei einer Diskussionsveranstaltung.**

"Ist das eine Einflussosphäre? Wir würden das gerne verstehen", sagte Lawrow. Der russische Aussenminister warnte die EU vor "Spielereien in der Nachbarschaft" und vor einem Versuch, im Osten eine Einflussosphäre zu suchen.

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Moskau sei nicht gegen bessere Beziehungen der EU zu östlichen Staaten, sagte Lawrow beim "Brussels Forum". Russland beharre darauf, besondere Beziehungen zu vielen östlichen Staaten zu unterhalten: "Wir können Länder, mit denen wir Hunderte und Aberhunderte von Jahren gemeinsamer Geschichte haben, nicht als unwichtig für uns betrachten."

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sda  
Publiziert am 21.03.2009

EU - Russland 21.03.09 15:08**Russland hat Fragen zu EU-Ostpartnerschaft**

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Reklame

(sda) "Ist das eine Einflussphäre? Wir würden das gerne verstehen", sagte Lawrow. Der russische Aussenminister warnte die EU vor "Spielereien in der Nachbarschaft" und vor einem Versuch, im Osten eine Einflussphäre zu suchen.

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## USA dringen auf Aufstockung der afghanischen Polizei

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Sonntag, 22. März 2009, 15:58 Uhr

Brüssel (Reuters) - Zwei Wochen vor dem Nato-Gipfel dringen die USA auf eine kräftige Aufstockung der afghanischen Polizei zur Stabilisierung der Lage am Hindukusch.

Diese sei das schwächste Glied in der Sicherheitskette, sagte der neue US-Sondergesandte für Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, am Wochenende bei einer Sicherheitskonferenz in Brüssel. "Wir müssen die Zahl der Polizeibeamten erhöhen und ihre Qualität und Ausbildung verbessern." Der Aufbau der afghanischen Polizei ist eine der Hauptaufgaben der Bundeswehr. Die Bundesregierung rechnet aber nicht mit neuen Anforderungen an Deutschland. Die USA hätten erst vor kurzem bei einem Treffen das deutsche Engagement positiv gewürdigt, sagte Verteidigungsminister Franz Josef Jung dem Tagesspiegel vom Sonntag.

Die Gewaltwelle in dem Land erreichte zuletzt einen neuen Höhepunkt. Bei zwei Bombenanschlägen starben am Wochenende sieben Zivilisten und ein Polizist. Durch zwei am Straßenrand gelegte Bomben kamen zudem vier kanadische Soldaten und ein einheimischer Übersetzer ums Leben. Im besonders unruhigen Süden des Landes wurde ferner ein weiterer Nato-Soldat getötet.

Holbrooke zufolge wird die ursprünglich von der Regierung von US-Präsident Barack Obama angepeilte Aufstockung um 4000 auf 82.000 Polizisten inzwischen als nicht mehr ausreichend erachtet. Darin sei man sich mit den Verbündeten und der afghanischen Regierung einig. Die von der "New York Times" ins Spiel gebrachte Verdoppelung aller Sicherheitskräfte des Landes auf rund 400.000 Mann wies Holbrooke aber als Spekulation zurück. Obama prüft derzeit mehrere Optionen für eine neue Afghanistan-Strategie. Diese dürften auch Thema beim Jubiläums-Gipfel der Nato am 3. und 4. April in Kehl und Baden-Baden sein.

Im Vorfeld des Treffens distanzierte sich der parlamentarische Staatssekretär im Bundesverteidigungsministerium, Christian Schmidt (CSU), von einer kräftigen Aufstockung der afghanischen Sicherheitskräfte. "Wir müssen Afghanistan zunehmend den Afghanen überlassen und kleinere Brötchen backen", sagte er der "Bild am Sonntag". "Manche" hätten den neuen Begriff der vernetzten Sicherheit von militärischem und zivilem Vorgehen "nicht weit genug verstanden". Zudem könne sich ein Land wie Afghanistan keinen riesigen Sicherheitsapparat leisten.

Die neue US-Regierung will in diesem Jahr 17.000 zusätzliche Soldaten an den Hindukusch schicken. Deutschland stellt mit rund 3800 Soldaten das drittgrößte Kontingent und hat bereits eine Aufstockung von 600 weiteren



Bundeswehr-Soldaten zugesagt. In dem vor knapp einem halben Jahr eröffnetem deutschen Polizei-Schulungszentrum in Masar-i-Scharif sollen jährlich bis zu 1000 Polizisten ausgebildet werden.

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22.03.2009 16:08

**EZB/Weber: Reaktion auf Krise kann Abschwung nicht stoppen**

Von Adam Cohen DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

Artikel-Service

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 Artikel drucken

BRÜSSEL (Dow Jones)--Die europäischen Reaktionen auf die aktuelle Wirtschaftskrise können diese nach Aussage von Bundesbankpräsident Axel Weber nur mildern, nicht aber stoppen. Zugleich nahm das Mitglied des Rats der Europäischen Zentralbank (EZB) die EZB gegen den Vorwurf in Schutz, sie habe langsamer als US-Notenbank und Bank of England (BoE) reagiert. Der EZB-Leitzins liege bei 1,50% und werde weiter sinken, die EZB habe angemessenen Maßnahmen zur Belebung der Euroraum-Wirtschaft ergriffen, sagte Weber am Sonntag bei einer Veranstaltung des German Marshall Fund in Brüssel.

Der Leitzins von Fed und BoE liegt bereits unter 1%. Weber lehnte direkte Aussagen zur nächsten EZB-Ratssitzung ab, sagte aber, es gebe noch "Spielraum". Der Bundesbankpräsident betonte zudem erneut, dass die EZB ihre Zinsen schneller wieder anheben werde, sollte die Inflation zurückkehren. Im Sommer 2008 hatte die Notenbank ihren Leitzins um 25 Basispunkte auf 4,25% angehoben, nachdem die Jahresrate der Verbraucherpreise die Marke von 4% überschritten hatte.

Die EZB ist auf die Gewährleistung von Preisstabilität verpflichtet, die sie bei einer knapp 2% gewährleistet sieht. Andere Notenbanken hatten ihre Zinsen zu diesem Zeitpunkt schon gesenkt.

Der Bundesbankpräsident wiederholte die Aussage von Präsident Jean-Claude Trichet, dass die EZB bereit sei, zusätzliche Maßnahmen zur Stützung der Euroraum-Wirtschaft zu ergreifen. Derzeit würden einige "unkonventionelle Idee" diskutiert, sagte Weber, ohne ins Detail zu gehen. Wirtschaftsverbände haben die EZB aufgefordert, nach dem Vorbild der Fed Commercial Paper zu kaufen.

-Von Adam Cohen, Dow Jones Newswires; +322 741 1486; konjunktur.de@dowjones.com

DJG/hab/bam

(MORE TO FOLLOW) Dow Jones Newswires

March 22, 2009 11:08 ET (15:08 GMT)

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Beitrag 3 von 5

## Russland bleibt gegenüber den USA hart

Noch haben die Flitterwochen zwischen den USA und Russland gar nicht richtig begonnen, da könnten sie schon wieder zu Ende sein. Diesen Eindruck zumindest vermittelte der russische Aussenminister Lawrow in Brüssel.

Russlands Aussenminister  
Sergej Lawrow.  
Bild: Reuters

Zwar setzt die neue US-Regierung von Barack Obama die Verbesserung der Beziehungen zu Moskau ganz zuoberst auf ihre Agenda und macht auch konkrete Zugeständnisse. Doch von russischer Seite ist praktisch kein Entgegenkommen zu erwarten. Aussenminister Sergej Lawrow machte an einer Veranstaltung des «German Marshall Fund» in Brüssel klar, dass seine Regierung in der Nato und besonders in den USA keinen Partner, sondern eine Bedrohung sieht.

Hören

Ein Beitrag der Sendung «Echo der Zeit»

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Sonntag, 22.3.2009, 18.00-18.30 Uhr, DRS 1 und DRS 4 News  
Sonntag, 22.3.2009, 19.00-19.30 Uhr, DRS 2, DRS 4 News und  
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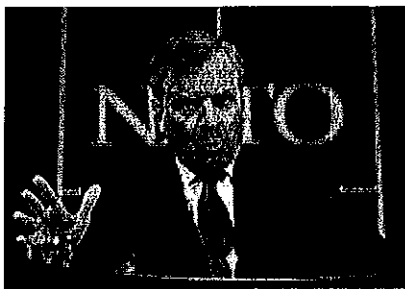
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## SCHEFFER: NATO-INTERVENTION IN 1999 NOTWENDIG



22.03.09 17:11



Der NATO-Generalsekretär Jaap de Hoop Scheffer erklärte, dass die Intervention der Allianz im Kosovo in 1999 einen kontroversen Konflikt darstelle, der notwendig gewesen sei. Kurz vorm 10. Jahrestag der NATO-Bombardierung Serbiens hat Scheffer gesagt, dass obwohl diese Intervention der Allianz von mehreren Seiten kritisiert worden sei, sie notwendig gewesen wäre, übertrug die Agentur ANSA. Scheffer erklärte dies in Brüssel, beim Transatlantischen Forum, der vom

deutschen Marshall Funds organisiert wurde.

Fenster schließen

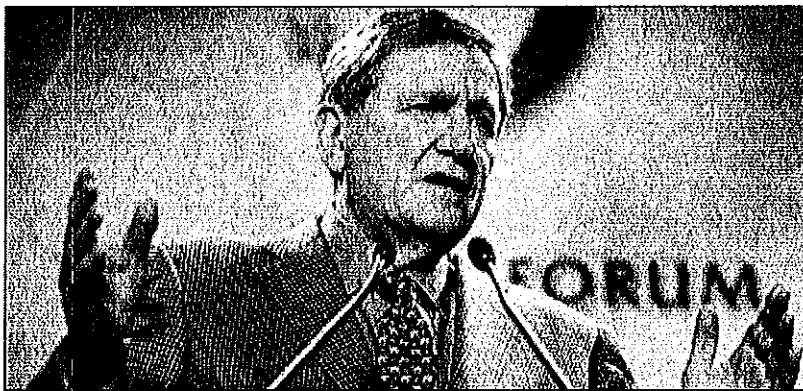
**SPIEGEL ONLINE**23. März 2009, 11:35 Uhr  
**NEUE MILITÄRSTRATEGIE**

## USA schwören Verbündete auf blutige Afghanistan-Offensive ein

*Aus Brüssel berichtet Gregor Peter Schmitz*

**Die US-Regierung überarbeitet ihre Strategie für Afghanistan und Pakistan - Obamas Sonderbeauftragter Holbrooke wird den Vertretern von Nato und EU das neue Konzept erläutern. Bei einer Konferenz in Brüssel gab er erste Einblicke: Der Einsatz wird gefährlicher.**

Brüssel - Es ist ein Halbsatz nur, doch er ist vielsagend. Richard Holbrooke sitzt auf der Bühne des "Brussels Forum", hochrangige Europäer und Amerikaner sind auf Einladung des German Marshall Fund versammelt. Mucksmäuschenstill ist es im Ballsaal, als der US-Regierungsbeauftragte für Pakistan und Afghanistan Auskunft gibt über die neue US-Strategie dort. Holbrooke seufzt, dies sei einer der Konflikte, in denen man am weitesten entfernt von den Nachschubbasen kämpfen müsse. "Wir Amerikaner", sagt er über diesen Kampf fern der Heimat, dann ertappt er sich, und fügt rasch halblaut hinzu: "Und die Nato".



DPA

US-Sondergesandter Holbrooke: "Wir Amerikaner - und die Nato"

Doch das Verteidigungsbündnis ist in diesen Momenten eher eine Randnotiz. Klar, Holbrooke spricht in seinen offiziellen Sätzen über eine umfassende Strategie des Westens, die Verzahnung von Zivilgesellschaft und Militär, den intelligenteren Umgang mit Aufständischen. Doch unterschwellig sendet er vor allem ein Signal amerikanischer Entschlossenheit. 17.000 neue US-Soldaten werden die USA nach Afghanistan schicken, damit dürfte sich Amerika um die Nato-Struktur nur noch wenig kümmern.

Holbrooke soll an diesem Montag Umriss der neuen US-Strategie in der Region Vertretern von Nato und EU vorstellen. Verschiedene geheime Strategie-Szenarien hat das Weiße Haus dazu in Auftrag gegeben, das Ergebnis scheint zu sein: Die Afghanistan-Mission entwickelt sich noch stärker zu einer US-Mission. Und es wird wohl - zumindest vorläufig - ein blutigerer Einsatz.

### **Mehr Soldaten, mehr Gewalt?**

"Die Lage ist so schlecht", sagt Holbrooke, "weil die internationale Gemeinschaft - vor allem die USA - verfrüht entschieden hat, dass die Mission in Afghanistan ganz gut funktioniert, und sich auf andere Dinge konzentriert hat." Für die Debatte um vermeintlich tiefer gesetzte Ziele des Westens dort hat er nur Spott übrig: "Es ist wohl kaum ein Minimalziel", schnaubt Holbrooke, "ein Land davor zu beschützen, wieder Zufluchtsort einer Terrorbewegung zu werden. Wir sollten die Schwierigkeiten nicht unterschätzen. Europäer und Amerikaner müssen sich entscheiden, ob ihnen dieser Kampf wichtig genug ist."

John McCain, Ex-Präsidentschaftsbewerber, ergänzt beim Abendessen nach Holbrookes Auftritt, das Gerede von bescheideneren Zielen in Afghanistan sei eine "sehr gefährliche Idee". Die politische Führungsspitze müsste vielmehr ihre Bürger überzeugen, dass der Einsatz Jahre, nicht Monate dauern werde - und dabei auch kommunizieren, dass mehr Soldaten zunächst wohl mehr Gewalt bedeuten.

Also jongliert Holbrooke nun mit gewaltigen Zahlen. Bis zu 400.000 afghanische Soldaten und Polizisten sind im Gespräch. "Ich glaube, diese Zahlen sind spekulativ, aber es wird eine deutliche Erhöhung geben", sagt der Sondergesandte. Zu Obamas Amtsantritt habe man über eine moderate Erhöhung von 78.000 auf 82.000 Sicherheitskräfte nachgedacht, "doch jeder sagte uns: Das reicht nicht." In den vergangenen Wochen und Monaten ist die US-Kritik am Stand der Polizeiausbildung in Afghanistan, an der die Deutschen mitwirkten, lauter geworden.

Einher damit geht in Holbrookes Ausführungen ein neuer Fokus auf Pakistan, wo viele der militantesten Kämpfer in der Region Unterschlupf suchen für Aktionen in Afghanistan. "Die Bedrohung kommt vor allem von Extremisten im Westen Pakistans", erinnert Holbrooke. "Man kann die militärischen und zivilen Aspekte nicht trennen - man wird das Problem nicht lösen, wenn man nicht in West-Pakistan siegt. Wir werden mehr tun, und wir hoffen, die Europäer werden mehr tun."

Aber wie? Interventionen auf pakistanischem Boden sind keine Option, also bleibt mehr zivile Hilfe, um das instabile Land zu stützen. Ruprecht Polenz, Vorsitzender des Auswärtigen Ausschusses im Bundestag, verweist auf deutsche Hilfe für eine solche Pakistan-Initiative, die Holbrooke lobend aufgreift. Pakistan stecke in einer gewaltigen Finanzklemme, es brauche viel Geld. "Wir müssen diese Fragen zu einer Priorität in unseren Haushalts-Budgets machen", fordert der polnische Außenminister Radoslaw Sikorski.

### **"Nur einige besorgen das Kämpfen und Sterben"**

Wird auch mehr militärische Hilfe der Europäer in Afghanistan wieder eine Priorität werden? EU-Diplomaten scheinen davon auszugehen, dass die Amerikaner beim Nato-Gipfel Anfang April nicht um neue Truppenbeiträge buhlen werden. Anne-Marie Slaughter, frisch bestellte Planungschefin des US-Außenministeriums, sagt SPIEGEL ONLINE: "Die Überprüfung unserer Strategie in Afghanistan und Pakistan würdigt die Bedeutung der Polizeiarbeit und der vielfältigen Aktivitäten, die nötig sind, um die Institutionen für effektives Regieren in Afghanistan zu stärken - das ist ein Teil des deutschen Beitrages."

Doch wie lange hält so ein Burgfrieden? Die Amerikaner kämpfen im konfliktreichen Süden des Landes, deutsche und europäische Soldaten trainieren vor allem die Polizei im sicheren Norden. Robert Kagan, konservativer Publizist und Außenpolitikberater von John McCain im Wahlkampf, warnt: "Während die Amerikaner ihre Truppen weiter ausbauen, reduzieren andere ihre Beiträge. Es ist einfach nicht fair, wenn nur einige das Kämpfen und Sterben besorgen."

Die Deutschen wissen aber, dass diese Debatte nicht vorbei ist - auch nicht um die Frage, ob die Deutschen Soldaten in den Süden Afghanistans senden sollten. Bezeichnend eine Szene auf der Konferenz in Brüssel: Volker Stanzel, Politischer Direktor des Auswärtigen Amtes, erinnert an den Umfang des deutschen Truppenbeitrags. "Diese Truppen sind im Norden Afghanistans", sagt Stanzel. "Gibt es einen breiten Aufstand im Norden? Nein."

Für viele scheint der Diplomat zu suggerieren, dass dies an der erfolgreichen deutschen Tätigkeit dort liege, ungläubiges Gemurmel brandet auf. Stanzel sagt, er habe das eigentlich nicht als Scherz gemeint. "Es ist aber schon interessant, zu was für Reaktionen das hier führt", sagt der Moderator zu dem Deutschen. Ein indischer Diskutant spottet: "Wenn die Deutschen im Norden so erfolgreich waren, vielleicht sollte man sie dann in den Süden schicken."

Holbrooke mahnt, man müsse den Bürgern klarmachen, dass die USA und andere Länder in diesem fernen Land kämpften, weil ihre nationalen Sicherheitsinteressen direkt berührt seien. Ähnlich klang einmal ein Bundesverteidigungsminister namens Peter Struck, der die deutsche Sicherheit auch am Hindukusch verteidigen wollte. Das ist lange her, wenig politisches Werben für den Einsatz und seine Gründe folgten. Ruprecht Polenz sagt: "Wenn man heute in Deutschland diesen Satz benutzt, lächeln die Leute - und verstehen

ihn nicht mehr."

**URL:**

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,614886,00.html>

**FORUM:**

Wie gut ist Obamas Afghanistan-Strategie?

<http://forum.spiegel.de/showthread.php?t=6377&goto=newpost>

**ZUM THEMA AUF SPIEGEL ONLINE:**

Neue Afghanistan-Strategie: USA prüfen politische Rolle für gemäßigte Taliban  
(22.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,614796,00.html>

Strategiewechsel: Obama plant Verdopplung afghanischer Sicherheitskräfte  
(19.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,614229,00.html>

Afghanistan: Nato-Soldat und Aufständische getötet (17.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,613917,00.html>

Afghanistan: Talbansprecher schlägt Obamas Gesprächsangebot schroff aus  
(09.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,612190,00.html>

US-Außenpolitik: Obama erwägt Gespräche mit gemäßigten Taliban (07.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,612003,00.html>

Neuer Nato-Oberbefehlshaber: Obama überrascht die Europäer (19.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,614174,00.html>

Manipulationen in Afghanistan: Wahlen ohne Demokraten (16.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,613204,00.html>

Afghanistan-Einsatz: "Den Amerikanern ist egal, ob die Europäer mehr Truppen  
senden" (26.02.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,609967,00.html>

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## BRUSSELS FORUM 2009 setzt Akzente

von Dirk ~ 23. März 2009. Zu lesen unter: [Sicherheitspolitik](#).

*Germany security is also defended at the Hindukush*

*Brussels Forum is an annual high-level meeting of the most influential North American and European political, corporate, and intellectual leaders to address pressing challenges currently facing both sides of the Atlantic. Participants include heads of state, senior officials from the European Union institutions and the member states, U.S. Cabinet officials, Congressional representatives, Parliamentarians, academics, and media.*

Hier wurde, was die außen- und sicherheitspolitische Zukunft Europas und Amerikas und auch Deutschlands in der Welt betrifft, viel Tacheles gesprochen. Der Satz: *"Germany security is also defended at the Hindukush"* fiel auch und wurde hinterfragt und zugleich belegt. Stellungnahmen, Videos und politische Akteure (Richard Holbrooke, Japp Hoop des Scheffer, Segey Lavrov, Jose Manuel Barroso und andere) sind zu finden bei: <http://www.brusselsforum.org> :



### **Beispiel und drängendes Problem Afghanistan:**

**Holbrooke calls for increase in Afghan police force ~ Sikorski: Europe must contribute to stability, leave region with honor ~**

BRUSSELS (March 21, 2009) - Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, advocated today for an increase in the Afghan police force while speaking at Brussels Forum. "The police aren't very good right now," he said. "We know they're the weak link in the security chain." The Obama administration has a plan for an increase in Afghan police numbers from 78,000 to 82,000 over the next three to four years, but Holbrooke said everyone he has talked to has said that is not enough. "So we're looking in conjunction with our allies and friends in the Afghan government at a very significant increase," Holbrooke said. Holbrooke spoke alongside Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Radek Sikorski, Afghanistan National Security Advisor Zalmay Rasoul, Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid, and Ruprect Polenz, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the German Bundestag, at the fourth-annual Brussels Forum, a high-level meeting of influential worldwide leaders to discuss pressing transatlantic issues. Brussels Forum is organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) with the Federal Authorities of Belgium & the Egmont Institute, Daimler, and the government of the Czech Republic. The European leaders on the panel said that one of the difficulties they face going into the NATO summit is that public support for intervention in Afghanistan is relatively low. They acknowledged they need to stress to their constituents that terrorist forces such as the Taliban and Al-Qaeda remain a threat to global security. Sikorski, who has been mentioned as a candidate for NATO secretary general, said that while Europe might not have a lot of leverage with Afghanistan, it must help to combat terrorist factions there. He said that, in the end, international forces must be able to hand off local government, including police and military functions, to Afghan leaders.

"Our objective [is] to be able to withdraw with honor, leaving a stable situation behind us," he said. In dealing with the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, "I believe that introducing regular administrations, an honest and capable administration by Pakistan and Afghanistan, is the solution." Polenz said the problem is linking security in Western leaders' countries to the security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. "We have to take all the efforts to convince our people that still, until today, our security is depending on security in Afghanistan and Pakistan," Polenz said. "It is a political problem but it takes political



leadership." Rasoul said that he is confident that the international community has the right "diagnosis" of the situation in his country. "So having the right diagnosis, the treatment will be much easier than before," he said. "I am very happy that this regional context of what is going on in Afghanistan is fully understood. I am confident that knowing now the problem, we can solve it."

Brussels Forum is organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), the Federal Authorities of Belgium and the Egmont Institute, the Government of the Czech Republic, and Daimler. Additional sponsors include the Ministry of Defence Republic of Latvia, the Bertelsmann Stiftung, The Tipping Point Foundation, and Fortis Bank.

(Bildquelle: Brussels Forum 2009 des German Marshall Fund of the United States [GMFUS.org](http://GMFUS.org))

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## 3 Kommentare zu *BRUSSELS FORUM 2009 setzt Akzente*

1. *Drachenstein*  
 23. März 2009 um 16:39 Uhr

"Germany security is also defended at the Hindukush"

Ich glaube das ist grammatikalisch so nicht korrekt.

Ich bin mir allerdings auch nicht sicher, ob es "Germany's" oder "German" heißen sollte. Ich glaube es geht beides.

Grüße,

Drachenstein

2. *Dirk*  
 23. März 2009 um 16:44 Uhr

@Drachenstein - hier müssen Anglisten und Amerikanisten ran, die sich dann möglicherweise zwischen UK und US auch nicht sicher und einig sind ...

## EU-Kommissar Almunia sieht keinen weiteren Handlungsbedarf

2009-03-23 15:29:18 cri Seite Drucken Schriftgröße: klein mittel groß

Brüssel

Der für die Wirtschaft und Währung zuständige EU-Kommissar Joaquin Almunia sagte am Sonntag, es gebe im Moment keinen Grund für die EU, zusätzliche Maßnahmen gegen die Rezession zu ergreifen.

An einer vom German Marshall Fund organisierten Konferenz in Brüssel am Sonntag erklärte Almunia, die EU habe bereits große Anstrengungen unternommen, um die gegenwärtige Wirtschaftskrise zu überwinden. Das Wichtigste sei nun, die verabschiedeten Maßnahmen in die Tat umzusetzen. Das Hauptaugenmerk der EU am G20-Gipfel in London am 2. April gelte der Reform des internationalen Finanzsystems, so Almunia weiter.

1/1 << 11 >>  
Kommentare: 0

Name:

E-Mail:

Kommentar:

### Forum Meinungen

• **Xiao Lan schrieb: John Rabe - der "Schindler Chinas" - bald im Kino**  
Der Spielfilm "John Rabe" ist ein Werk des deutschen Regisseurs Florian Gallenberger. Er wurde in Zusammenarbeit mit der chinesischen Mediengruppe Huayi Brothers in Nanjing und Shanghai gedreht. Das Drama basiert auf der wahren Geschichte von John Rabe, dem "Schindler von China", der im Jahr 1937 in der chinesischen Stadt Nanjing über 250.000 Menschen vor dem Tod gerettet hat... >> mehr

• **wikinger schrieb: Da haben wir den Salat . . .**  
als wenn die augenblickliche Finanzkrise nicht schon genug angerichtet hätte. Ich lese gerade: Finanzkrise beeinträchtigt Zuversicht chinesischer Frauen in internationale Eheschließungen Wegen der Finanzkrise wollen weniger chinesische Frauen einen ausländischen Mann heiraten. Die Finanzlage und die Sicherheit werden immer wichtigere Faktoren für die Gründung einer internationalen Familie... >> mehr

### Gerne gelesen

- USA und Iran führen geheime Gespräche im Libanon
- Dalai Lama eng mit Leibeigenschaft verbunden
- China gegen Spaltungsaktivitäten des Dalai Lama
- Britischer Premier nennt Ziele für G-20-Gipfel
- Aufruf des Dalai Lama zur Einstellung des Ackerbaus findet keine Zustimmung

### Fotos



Winter kehrt zurück



Fußballunterricht an Grundschule



Der Befreiung aus der Leibeigenschaft mit Gesang und Tanz gedacht



Erste ausländische Gaststätte in Kangding

# Handelsblatt<sup>.COM</sup>

23.03.2009

## Afghanistan-Einsatz

### USA und Kanada fordern mehr deutschen Einsatz in Afghanistan

von Eric Bonse

**Zwei Wochen vor dem Nato-Gipfel in Straßburg und Kehl wächst der Druck auf Deutschland, sich stärker in Afghanistan zu engagieren und die strikten Einsatzregeln der Bundeswehr zu lockern. Der US-Sondergesandte für Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, mahnte eine bessere Polizeiausbildung an - Verteidigungsminister Jung wies die Kritik zurück.**



Der Aufbau der afghanischen Polizei ist eine zentrale Aufgabe im Rahmen des deutschen Engagements in Afghanistan. Quelle: dpa

BRÜSSEL. Nach Frankreich forderte am Wochenende auch Polen, alle Alliierten müssten sich an Kampfeinsätzen beteiligen. Die USA und Kanada setzten sich zudem für eine neue Lastenteilung im Bündnis ein. Es könne nicht länger angehen, dass jene Länder die größten Lasten tragen, die die meisten Truppen schicken und die größten Risiken eingehen, hieß es bei einer Sicherheitskonferenz in Brüssel.

"Jedes Land muss beim Blick in den Spiegel sagen können, dass es für Afghanistan alles tut, was es tun kann", sagte der kanadische Verteidigungsminister Peter MacKay dem Handelsblatt. Ohne Kampfeinsätze lasse sich der Vormarsch der radikal-islamischen Taliban nicht stoppen. Zwar müsse die Bundesregierung nicht unbedingt Soldaten in den umkämpften Süden Afghanistans schicken: "Wenn Sie keine Truppen schicken können, um das Feuer zu löschen, dann schicken Sie eben mehr Ausrüstung." Entscheidend sei aber, dass ein gerechter Lastenausgleich zwischen allen 26 Alliierten stattfinde. Möglicherweise müsse die Nato dafür auch neue, verbindliche Regeln festlegen, sagte MacKay.

Bisher gilt im Atlantischen Bündnis das Prinzip, dass jedes Land die Kosten für seinen Militäreinsatz selbst zahlt. Zudem können die Alliierten die Einsatzbedingungen für ihre Soldaten festlegen und Beschränkungen erlassen. Kanada ist in der unruhigen Provinz Kandahar engagiert und hat dafür einen hohen Preis bezahlt. Erst am Freitag sind bei Kämpfen vier kanadische Soldaten und ein Übersetzer getötet worden. Deutschland konzentriert sich dagegen auf den Wiederaufbau im relativ sicheren Norden Afghanistans. Offensive Kampfeinsätze hat die Bundeswehr bisher vermieden.

Für eine neue Lastenteilung im Bündnis sprach sich auch der neue US-Sondergesandte für Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, aus. Die Alliierten sollten nicht nur mehr Einsatz am Hindukusch zeigen, sondern auch die Hilfe für die afghanischen Sicherheitskräfte aufstocken. Besonders die Polizeiausbildung lasse zu wünschen übrig, so Holbrooke: "Wir müssen die Zahl der Polizeibeamten erhöhen und ihre Qualität und Ausbildung verbessern." Ausdrücklich lobte Holbrooke die japanische Regierung, die sich bereit erklärt habe, für sechs Monate das Gehalt der afghanischen Polizisten zu bezahlen. "Das ist ein gutes Beispiel für Führungskraft", so Holbrooke.

Der Aufbau der afghanischen Polizei ist auch eine zentrale Aufgabe im Rahmen des deutschen Engagements in Afghanistan. Die Bundeswehr unterstützt die Ausbildung mit Feldjägern. Die

Bundesregierung rechnet jedoch nicht mit neuen Forderungen. Die USA hätten erst vor kurzem das deutsche Engagement gewürdigt, sagte Verteidigungsminister Franz Josef Jung dem "Tagesspiegel". Der Vorsitzende des Auswärtigen Ausschusses im Bundestag, Ruprecht Polenz (CDU), warnte in Brüssel vor überzogenen Erwartungen. Die Nato solle die deutschen Möglichkeiten nicht überschätzen. Man wolle sich auch künftig auf den Wiederaufbau konzentrieren.

Massive Kritik an der deutschen Haltung übte Polens Außenminister Radoslaw Sikorski. Ohne Deutschland direkt zu erwähnen, forderte er eine Aufhebung aller Beschränkungen beim Afghanistan-Einsatz. "Die Soldaten sollten dort eingesetzt werden, wo sie gebraucht werden - und nicht dort, wo sie das Parlament hingeschickt hat", sagte Sikorski unter Anspielung auf den deutschen Parlamentsvorbehalt. Künftig müsse die Afghanistan-Schutztruppe Isaf einer militärischen und nicht einer politischen Logik gehorchen.

Ähnlich hatte sich zuvor Frankreichs Verteidigungsminister Hervé Morin geäußert. Die Einsatzbeschränkungen müssten aufgehoben werden, forderte er. Nato-Generalsekretär Jaap de Hoop Scheffer blies ins gleiche Horn. Wiederaufbau und Kampfeinsätze ließen sich nicht sauber voneinander trennen, sagte er beim "Brussels Forum". Die Alliierten dürften Afghanistan nicht in verschiedene, voneinander abgeschottete Regionen teilen, warnte er: "Wir werden das Land nur als Ganzes gewinnen oder verlieren."

Die Kritik kommt für Berlin zur Unzeit. Am 3. und 4. April richtet Deutschland gemeinsam mit Frankreich das Gipfeltreffen zum 60. Nato-Jubiläum aus. Die Feiern sollen nicht durch Streit über Afghanistan belastet werden. Jung hatte erst vor wenigen Wochen die Entsendung von 600 zusätzlichen Bundeswehrsoldaten angekündigt. Sie sollen die Präsidentschaftswahlen im August absichern.

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**Link zum Artikel:** <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/usa-und-kanada-fordern-mehr-deutschen-einsatz-in-afghanistan;2211789>

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# Nato-Druck auf Berlin

zuletzt aktualisiert: 23.03.2009 - 02:30

VON ANJA INGENRIETH

**Vor dem Gipfel des Verteidigungsbündnisses steigen die Erwartungen an Deutschland, sich stärker in Afghanistan zu engagieren. Das könnte die Beziehungen zu den USA belasten.**

Brüssel Auf die Bundesregierung ist man im Brüsseler Nato-Hauptquartier derzeit gar nicht gut zu sprechen. "Die Deutschen nerven", heißt es dort freimütig. Berlin interessiere am großen Jubiläums-Gipfel in Baden-Baden und Straßburg nur eins: schöne Bilder. Selbst die übliche Sitzordnung im Nato-Kreis musste geändert werden. Normalerweise nehmen die Staats- und Regierungschefs in alphabetischer Reihenfolge um den Tisch Platz. Nun rahmen Merkel und Frankreichs Präsident Nicolas Sarkozy als Gastgeber den Nato-Generalsekretär ein – zumindest solange TV-Kameras im Saal sind. Dann beginnt das große Stühlerücken.

Ob Berlins Choreographie der totalen Harmonie aufgeht, ist fraglich. Denn vor dem Gipfel rumort es in der Nato. Der Druck auf Deutschland und andere europäische Partner wächst, sich in Afghanistan verstärkt zu engagieren. "Die Lage ist schlecht. Wir brauchen mehr Truppen, und zwar nicht nur unsere", forderte Richard Holbrooke, US-Sondergesandter für Pakistan und Afghanistan, am Wochenende in Brüssel. Nato-Generalsekretär Jaap de Hoop Scheffer griff Deutschlands "Nein" zu Kampfeinsätzen im Süden bei seiner letzten Rede vor dem Gipfel indirekt an: "Es ist eine Illusion zu glauben, dass Friedenserhaltung und Kampf getrennt werden können und in verschiedene moralische Kategorien gehören", sagte er gestern. "Afghanistan kann nicht in regionale Zuständigkeitsbereiche aufgeteilt werden. Entweder gewinnen oder verlieren wir Afghanistan als Ganzes."

Deutschland stellt für die 56 000 Mann starke Isaf-Schutztruppe rund 3500 Soldaten, engagiert sich bisher aber vornehmlich im vergleichsweise ruhigen Norden des Landes. US-Verteidigungsminister Robert Gates hatte deshalb noch vor einem Jahr vor einer Spaltung der Nato in Kämpfer und Brückenbauer gewarnt.

Diese Debatte flammt nun wieder auf. Polens Außenminister Radoslaw Sikorski kritisierte am Wochenende die deutschen Einsatzbeschränkungen: "Truppen müssen da eingesetzt werden, wo sie militärisch nötig sind und nicht da, wo Parlamente sie hinschicken. Sonst ist Afghanistan verloren."

Richard Holbrooke warf den Europäern vor, die Bedeutung des Afghanistan-Einsatzes für ihre Sicherheit zu unterschätzen. Osama bin Laden sei immer noch da und inspiriere Terroristen in aller Welt. "Der nächste Anschlag wird in Europa stattfinden", warnte der US-Sondergesandte. Die neue US-Regierung schickt in diesem Jahr 17 000 zusätzliche Soldaten an den Hindukusch und will verstärkt Pakistan im Kampf gegen die Aufständischen einbeziehen. Präsident Obama überholt derzeit die US-Afghanistan-Strategie und will darüber beim Nato-Gipfel sprechen.

Holbrooke hält auch die bisherige Polizei-Ausbildung für unzureichend – eine zentrale Aufgabe im Rahmen des bisherigen deutschen Engagements. Die "New York Times" hatte die Verdoppelung aller Sicherheitskräfte im Land auf rund 400 000 Mann ins Spiel gebracht. In Baden-Baden will Obama konkrete Angebote der Partner hören. Das könnte die deutsch-amerikanische Harmonie empfindlich stören. "Berlin wird bald merken, dass der Ton der Amerikaner unter Obama zwar versöhnlicher ist, die Forderungen sich aber nicht groß von denen der Bush-Administration unterscheiden", heißt es im Brüsseler Nato-Hauptquartier.

Quelle: Rheinische Post

## Ausland

Mehr US-Truppen nach Afghanistan

### NATO-General erwartet langfristig die Wende

Die Stationierung von zusätzlich rund 17.000 US-Soldaten im umkämpften Süden Afghanistans wird nach Einschätzung von NATO-General Mart de Kruif zunächst zu einem deutlichen Anstieg der Gewalt führen. Das sagte der Kommandeur der niederländischen NATO-Truppen in Afghanistan in einer Videokonferenz mit Journalisten in der US-Hauptstadt Washington.

Langfristig werde sich die Sicherheitslage durch die Truppenaufstockung jedoch verbessern, sagte Generalmajor de Kruif. Langfristig werde die Stationierung zusätzlicher Truppen die Wende bringen. Er gehe davon aus, dass sich zunächst im Laufe des kommenden Jahres die Situation verbessern werde.



Durch die Stationierung von weiteren US-Soldaten erwartet Generalmajor de Kruif für Afghanistan langfristig ein Ende der Gewalt.

### Anschläge mit mindestens acht Toten

Am Neujahrsfest kamen in Afghanistan mindestens acht Menschen bei Anschlägen ums Leben. In der Provinz Nangarhar im Osten des Landes sprengte ein Selbstmordattentäter ein mit Sprengstoff gefülltes Fahrzeug vor einem Polizeiposten in die Luft. Dabei wurden nach laut Behördenangaben fünf Zivilisten und ein Polizist getötet. Präsident Hamid Karsai machte die radikalislamische Taliban für das Attentat verantwortlich.

In der östlichen Provinz Chost kamen bei der Explosion einer Autobombe mindestens zwei Menschen ums Leben. Wie die Polizei mitteilte, detonierte der Sprengsatz inmitten einer Menschenmenge, die sich zu Neujahrsfeierlichkeiten versammelt hatte. Wie die internationale Schutztruppe ISAF mitteilte, kam am Freitag zudem ein NATO-Soldat bei einem feindlichen Angriff im Süden des Landes ums Leben. Die Nationalität des Getöteten wurde bislang nicht bekannt.



Bei der Explosion einer Autobombe an einem Schrein starben mindestens zwei Menschen.



#### ARD-Umfrage 2009

##### Afghanistan

► Der Hass auf den Westen wächst [mehr]

### USA erwarten mehr europäisches Engagement

US-Präsident Barack Obama will in den kommenden Monaten den Kampf gegen Aufständische in Afghanistan mit weiteren 17.000 Soldaten unterstützen. Auch von den Verbündeten in Europa erwarten die USA ein stärkeres Engagement. Verteidigungsminister Franz Josef Jung sagte dem "Tagesspiegel", er rechne aber nicht mit einer Forderung nach weiteren Truppen aus Deutschland.

Neben einer starken Militärpräsenz setzen die USA künftig auch auf eine durchsetzungsstarke Polizei im Land. Der amerikanische Sondergesandte für Pakistan und Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, forderte in Brüssel eine massive Aufstockung der Polizeitruppe. Verstärkte Einstellungen und Ausbildung von Polizisten sei eine Priorität der neuen US-Afghanistan-Strategie. Eine stärkere Polizei ermögliche es den NATO- und US-Soldaten, sich auf militärische Aufgaben zu konzentrieren, sagte Holbrooke auf dem Brussels Forum, einem Treffen europäischer und amerikanischer Politiker und Entscheidungsträger.



Diesen Artikel drucken | Dieses Fenster schließen

## Weber signalisiert Spielraum für weitere EZB-Leitzinssenkung

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Montag, 23. März 2009, 07:04 Uhr

Brüssel (Reuters) - Bundesbank-Chef Axel Weber hat weitere Maßnahmen der Europäischen Zentralbank (EZB) zur Lockerung der Geldpolitik in Aussicht gestellt.

Trotz "nach unten gehenden" Zinssätzen sehe er kein Inflationsrisiko, sagte Weber am Sonntag auf einer Konferenz in Brüssel. Auch unorthodoxe Methoden der EZB zur Konjunkturbelebung sind laut Weber denkbar. "Wir haben nicht ausgeschlossen, dass wir in Zukunft zusätzliche Maßnahmen ergreifen, wenn das notwendig ist", sagte Weber. Derzeit berate man jedoch lediglich über verschiedene Instrumente und stehe nicht vor einer Entscheidung.

Weber sprach sich darüber hinaus gegen schnelle Verabschiedung neuer Konjunkturpakete aus. "Lasst uns erst alles umsetzen, was beschlossen wurde", sagte er. Auch EU-Wirtschafts- und Währungskommissar Joaquin Almunia bekräftigte auf der Konferenz, der Schwerpunkt müsse nun auf der Umsetzung der beschlossenen Maßnahmen liegen. Weitere Pakete seien jedoch möglich. "Angesichts der derzeitigen Unsicherheit wird niemand ausschließen, dass weitere Maßnahmen nötig werden können."

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**SPIEGEL ONLINE**

27. März 2009, 21:35 Uhr

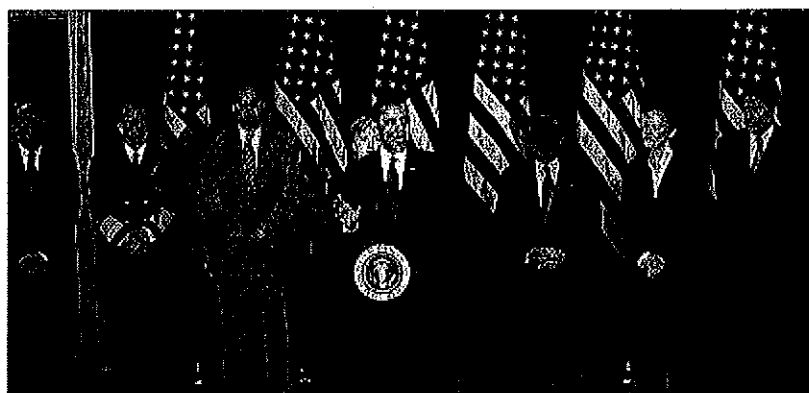
**OBAMAS NEUE STRATEGIE**

## Angriff auf Afpakistan

*Von Gregor Peter Schmitz, Washington*

**Barack Obama macht zwischen Afghanistan und Pakistan keinen Unterschied mehr, wenn es um den Anti-Terror-Kampf geht. In einer Grundsatzrede verkündete er eine völlig neue Strategie für den Krieg gegen al-Qaida und Taliban - doch manche Experten zweifeln, ob sie zum Sieg führen kann.**

Wenn Amerikaner derzeit vom Konflikt am Hindukusch sprechen, reden sie meist von "Afpakistan". Ob Afghanistan oder Pakistan - das Problem ist das gleiche. In der gebirgigen Grenzregion zwischen den Staaten finden genug militante Kämpfer von Taliban und al-Qaida Unterschlupf, um beide Länder zu destabilisieren.



REUTERS

US-Präsident Obama: "Die Zukunft Afghanistans ist unausweichlich verknüpft mit der Zukunft seines Nachbarn Pakistan"

Barack Obama kann den Begriff nicht verwenden bei seiner Ansprache zur künftigen Strategie für die Region - das wäre kaum präsidential. Ernst steht er deshalb vor US-Flaggen, sein Sicherheitsteam mit Außenministerin Hillary Clinton, Verteidigungsminister Robert Gates und dem Sonderbeauftragten Richard Holbrooke ist versammelt. Doch Obamas knapp halbstündige Ansprache ist im Prinzip eine einzige lange Ausführung zu Afpakistan. Eine Zusammenführung der Probleme in den beiden Ländern.

"Klar und deutlich" wolle er sprechen, beginnt Obama. Man sei derzeit nicht dabei, den Krieg in Afghanistan zu gewinnen. Im Gegenteil. "Die Lage wird immer gefährlicher. Die Taliban sind vor mehr als sieben Jahren gestürzt worden, doch der Krieg dauert an, und Aufständische kontrollieren Teile von Afghanistan und Pakistan. Die Attacken gegen unsere Truppen, unsere Nato-Verbündeten und die afghanische Regierung sind stetig mehr geworden."

Von Afghanistan nach Pakistan in einem Satz - vielleicht ist es diese Verbindung, die in Erinnerung bleiben wird von Obamas Ansprache. Denn die Grundzüge seiner neuen Strategie, die sich auf umfangreiche Szenario-Studien des Weißen Hauses stützt, waren in den vergangenen Tagen ja schon bekannt geworden. Den 17.000 US-Soldaten, die Obama schon zusätzlich nach Afghanistan entsandt hat, werden rund 4000 weitere folgen, die einheimische Sicherheitskräfte trainieren sollen. Darunter auch Eliteeinheiten wie die 82. Airborne Division. Holbrooke hatte in der vergangenen Woche schon bei der Transatlantikkonferenz "Brussels Forum" verkündet, es werde eine "deutliche Erhöhung" der Zahl einheimischer Polizisten und Soldaten geben. Manche reden von einer Verdopplung auf 400.000.

Auch die Art, in der Obama seine Strategie begründet, überrascht kaum. Eigentlich konkretisiert der Präsident nur, was sich in den US-Debatten seit Monaten abzeichnet. Nicht mehr Menschen- oder Frauenrechte stehen beim Afghanistan-Einsatz im Vordergrund, sondern der Kampf gegen al-Qaida.

Zwar erwähnt Obama Menschenrechte in seiner Rede - allerdings keineswegs prominent. Auf die selbst gestellte Frage: Warum kämpfen wir in Afghanistan?, lautet dagegen die Antwort klar: weil al-Qaida dort ist.

Und eben auch in Pakistan.

"Die Zukunft Afghanistans ist unausweichlich verknüpft mit der Zukunft seines Nachbarn", sagt Obama. In den fast acht Jahren seit den Anschlägen vom 11. September seien al-Qaida und extremistische Verbündete in die pakistanische Grenzregion weitergezogen. Diese sei für die USA nun der gefährlichste Ort der Welt.

### **"Wir wollen al-Qaida zerstören"**

"Neue Benchmarks" will Obama deshalb für den Anti-Terror-Kampf der pakistanischen Regierung aufstellen - also Ziele definieren, die diese erreichen soll. Die Zeit der Blankoschecks aus Washington sei vorbei. Die USA haben schon viele Milliarden Dollar in das Land gepumpt, doch sie gingen vor allem unter Militärmachthaber Pervez Musharraf direkt an die Armee. Es wurde kaum kontrolliert, ob sie wirklich für Anti-Terror-Aktivitäten ausgegeben wurden. Das soll sich nun ändern. Obama fordert vom US-Kongress 1,5 Milliarden Dollar jährlich für zivile Hilfe. Die Unterstützung soll der pakistanischen Bevölkerung die positive Rolle der USA klarmachen.

"Wir haben ein einfaches, klares, präzises Ziel", sagt Obama. "Wir wollen al-Qaida in Pakistan stören, auflösen und schließlich zerstören."

US-Truppen auf pakistanischem Boden sind allerdings keine Option. Und das viele Geld muss sinnvoll verteilt werden - kann das alles durch neue Benchmarks gelingen?

Fest steht, dass den USA in der Kriegsführung in der Region künftig eine noch wichtigere Rolle zukommen dürfte. In Afghanistan sind die Soldaten zwar offiziell Nato-Kommandierenden unterstellt, doch in Wahrheit hören sie auf die US-Führung. Und in Pakistan ist die Weltmacht ohnehin der wichtigste Ansprechpartner.

Der Bedeutungsschwund der US-Verbündeten in dem Konflikt ist offensichtlich. Ruprecht Polenz, CDU-Politiker und Chef des Auswärtigen Ausschusses im Bundestag, sagt offen: "Man sollte nicht die Möglichkeit der Deutschen oder gar der Europäer überschätzen, Einfluss auf ein Land wie Pakistan auszuüben."

### **Annäherung an Iran als Partner für Afghanistan**

Obama nutzt seine Rede gar nicht erst für einen Hilfsappell an die Partner. Er sagt kurz, welche Gefahr der Terror auch für andere Nationen darstelle - macht dann aber klar, dass er nicht zwingend zusätzliche Truppen der Verbündeten erwartet. Stattdessen geht es ihm um konkrete Hilfe in konkreten Bereichen.

Das ist ein wichtiger Satz zum Beispiel für die Deutschen, die keine Truppen in den Süden Afghanistans schicken wollen - aber beim Polizeitraining im Norden weiter helfen möchten.

Die USA suchen auch neue Partner. Sie wollen auf einer Afghanistan-Konferenz am 31. März in Den Haag offen um Unterstützung bei Russland oder Iran werben. Im Gespräch ist sogar ein Treffen von Außenministerin Hillary Clinton mit iranischen Vertretern. Man wolle Anzeichen erhalten, dass Iran ein "produktiver Spieler" in der Region sein wolle, sagten Regierungsvertreter der "Washington Post".

Die Suche nach neuen Partnern soll sogar innerhalb Afghanistans stattfinden. Als Obama am Donnerstag seine Strategie im Kongress vorstellte, erklärte er seine Absicht, jene Taliban-Kämpfer vom Kämpfen abzubringen, die nicht wegen der Ideologie im Feld seien, sondern wegen des Geldes. Sein Geheimdienstberater Dennis Blair spricht gar davon, bis zu drei Viertel der Taliban könnten offen für US-Angebote sein.

Allerdings ist dieser Teil der Strategie keineswegs unumstritten. Die "New York Times" berichtet, dass Taliban in Pakistan und Afghanistan schon neue Allianzen gegen die US-Kämpfer schmieden. Al-Qaida rief passend zu Obamas Grundsatzrede zum Dschihad gegen Islamabad auf.

Gilles Dorronsoro, Afghanistan-Experte am "Carnegie Endowment for International Peace" in Washington, ist misstrauisch: "Wenn man Leute fragt, wer ein 'moderater' Taliban ist, können sie keine Namen nennen. Man weiß einfach nicht, mit wem man verhandeln sollte." Er ist wie andere Experten auch skeptisch, ob bis zu 20.000 zusätzliche US-Soldaten viel ausrichten können. "Wir werden die Spielregeln nicht ändern. Es wird einfach mehr Tote geben, mehr Zivilisten werden umkommen", sagt Dorronsoro. "Am Ende werden die Taliban noch stärker sein."

Dazu kommt noch eine ganz andere Frage - die innenpolitische. Wird ein Krieg, der zumindest vorläufig mehr Tote und mehr Geld kosten dürfte, die Unterstützung der US-Bürger haben? In einer Zeit, in der das Land wegen der Finanzkrise immer mehr nach innen schaut?

In einem Interview am Sonntag hat der Präsident von einer "Exit-Strategie" gesprochen. Diesen Begriff wiederholt er in seiner Ansprache nicht.

#### URL:

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,615971,00.html>

#### FORUM:

Wie gut ist Obamas Afghanistan-Strategie?

<http://forum.spiegel.de/showthread.php?t=6377&goto=newpost>

#### ZUM THEMA AUF SPIEGEL ONLINE:

Doppelstrategie am Hindukusch: Berlin lobt Obamas Afghanistan-Plan (27.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,615880,00.html>

Terrorismus: Al-Qaida ruft zum Dschihad gegen Islamabad auf (27.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,615893,00.html>

Afghanistan und Pakistan: Vereinte Taliban planen Offensive (27.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,615811,00.html>

Kampf gegen Taliban: USA hoffen auf Hilfe Irans in Afghanistan (27.03.2009)

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Zwischenfall in Kabul: Afghanischer Soldat erschießt US-Militärs (27.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,615985,00.html>

Anti-Terror-Strategie: Obama will al-Qaida in Afghanistan ausschalten (27.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,615890,00.html>

Truppenaufstockung: Obama schickt weitere 4000 Militärausbilder (26.03.2009)

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,615763,00.html>

Obama: Kampfansage an die Taliban

<http://www.spiegel.de/video/video-58159.html>

ZEIT ONLINE 3.4.2009 - 15:59 Uhr [<http://www.zeit.de/online/2009/14/nato-krieg>]

Nato

## Ein Gipfel zum Kuschneln

*Von Jochen Bittner*

### **Die Nato wird 60 Jahre alt. Das muss gefeiert werden. Auch wenn das Bündnis gerade seinen ersten Krieg verliert - in Afghanistan**

Die Nato wird die Vergangenheit feiern, als gäbe es kein Morgen. Am Rhein, der Frontlinie zweier Weltkriege, kommt das Verteidigungsbündnis ab Freitag zu seinem 60. Gründungstag zusammen. Das Protokoll für den großen Jubiläumsgipfel, den Frankreich und Deutschland gemeinsam ausrichten, möchte rührige Bilder, die an den Gründungszweck der Allianz gemahnen. In Straßburg, auf der französischen Uferseite, wird Nicolas Sarkozy die Bundeskanzlerin erwarten. Angela Merkel soll, gefolgt von den 24 übrigen Staatschefs der Allianz, vom deutschen Kehl aus auf einer Fußgängerbrücke über den Fluß schreiten. In der Mitte wird man dann so tun, als sei gerade erst Frieden eingekehrt in Europa. Bündnisküsse mit Obama, kämpferisches Strahlen in die Kameras der Welt.

Etwas weiter entfernt, in den Bergschluchten des Hindukusch, droht die schier übermächtige Nato derweil den ersten Krieg zu verlieren, in den sie sich begeben hat. Ein paar Tausend Taliban, so zeigt sich, sind in der Lage, geschickter und schlagkräftiger zu agieren als 26 High-Tech-Armeen der reichsten Länder der Welt. Wenn sich daran nichts ändert, könnte die Nato in Afghanistan bald enden wie vor ihr schon Briten und Russen: aufgerieben von Aufständischen, die zwar weniger sind als sie, aber einiger und entschlossener.

Im Anschluss an das feierlich begangene Jubiläum haben die Regierungen in Straßburg einen halben Tag lang Zeit, darüber zu beraten, wie sie dieses Debakel verhindern wollen. Daneben stehen noch ein paar untergeordnete Themen auf der Tagesordnung. Die Frage nach dem künftigen Verhältnis zu Russland zum Beispiel, oder die Debatte um die Aufnahme von Albanien und Kroatien als Neumitglieder. Die Diskussion um Leitlinien für ein neues strategisches Konzept. Nicht zu vergessen die ausstehende Einigung auf einen neuen Generalsekretär nach dem türkischen Widerstand gegen den dänischen Ministerpräsidenten Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

"Es wird ein atemloser Gipfel", heißt es im Nato-Hauptquartier in Brüssel. Selbst die Beteiligten bemühen sich, die Erwartungen zu dämpfen. Dabei böte Straßburg nicht weniger als die Gelegenheit, gemeinsam mit Obama den Neustart-Knopf für das Bündnis zu drücken. Stattdessen sieht es wie üblich so aus, als werde Amerika voranpreschen und Europa hinterhertrotten.

Barack Obama will das Blatt in Afghanistan dadurch wenden, dass er 17.000 Soldaten aus dem falschen (Irak) in den richtigen Krieg (Hindukusch) umsiedelt. Die West-Europäer sind mit ihm immerhin soweit einig, als sie seine Irakkriegs-Bewertung teilen. Eine

Herzensangelegenheit wird ihnen die Afghanistan-Mission deswegen aber noch lange nicht. "Wenn man heute noch sagt, auch unsere Sicherheit werde am Hindukusch verteidigte, erntet man nur Lächeln", gestand Ruprecht Polenz, Vorsitzender des Auswärtigen Ausschusses des Bundestags, gegenüber dem Publikum des *Brussels Forum*, zu dem der German Marshall Fund kurz vor dem Gipfel hochrangige Politiker aus aller Welt zusammen gebracht hatte. "60 Prozent unserer Bevölkerung sind gegen die Mission", erinnerte der CDU-Abgeordnete.

Zwar stellen die Deutschen mit über 3.500 Soldaten das drittgrößte Kontingent der internationalen Aufbautruppe (Isaf), aber sie scheuen jede Aktion, die als Kampfeinsatz gewertet werden könnte. In Frankreich, dem anderen Gastgeberland des Nato-Jubiläumsgipfels, fordert die Opposition, die Regierung möge endlich einen Zeitplan erstellen, wann die Nation mit der leidigen Mission durch sei.

Ist Afghanistan also das verklingende Echo eines Bündnisversprechens, an das die Europäer 20 Jahre nach dem Mauerfall in Wahrheit schon lange nicht mehr glauben? Trotz des Sympathie-Bonus für Obama zweifeln Amerikas Außenpolitiker daran, ob Europa in Afghanistan wirklich Frieden will, oder ob es nicht eigentlich mit Afghanistan in Frieden gelassen werden möchte. "Fühlt sich Europa der Aufgabe wirklich so verpflichtet wie die Vereinigten Staaten es tun?", fragt US-Nato-Botschafter Kurt Volker. Vielleicht, schlägt er vor, wäre es ganz gut, die öffentliche Meinung für das Projekt zurück zu gewinnen.

Die jämmerliche Zahl von 177 Polizeiausbildern hat die "soft power" Europäische Union bis heute für den Wiederaufbau aufgetrieben – und ist damit mitverantwortlich dafür, dass Afghanistan noch weit entfernt ist von jener "selbsttragenden Sicherheit", die sich die internationale Gemeinschaft so dringend wünscht. "Die Polizei ist in keinem guten Zustand", mahnte in Brüssel der neue US-Beauftragte für Afghanistan und Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke. Er forderte "einen sehr beträchtlichen Zuwachs" an Sicherheitskräften.

Auf bis zu 400.000 Soldaten wolle die Obama-Regierung die Afghanische Nationalarmee aufstocken, meldet die New York Times. "Völlig unrealistisch" nennt ein europäischer Nato-Diplomat dieses Ziel. Aber auch an einen weiterreichenden strategischen Wandel kündigt der Sonderbeauftragte Holbrooke an. Es gebe kein Afghanistan und kein Pakistan mehr, sagt er, es gebe nur noch "Afpak", sprich: ein zusammenhängendes Problem. Solange die Taliban ihren Nachwuchs im pakistanischen Grenzgebiet trainieren, solange wird die Isaf-Mission in Afghanistan nicht beruhigen können.

Der europäische Beitrag zu diesem neuen "Regional Approach", so ist zu hören, könnte in der Schulung pakistanischer Offiziere bestehen oder im Bau von Schulen, wo es heute nur Koran-Madrassas gibt.

Von Russland erhofft die Nato derzeit, dass Moskau den Isaf-Truppen neue Nachschubwege an den Hindukusch eröffnet. Als Zuckerbrot bietet die Allianz Moskau trotz des Georgienkrieges eine "phasenweise Wiederannäherung" an. Mit anderen Worten: Der Gipfel könnte die Rückkehr zu den gewohnten Beziehungen mit Russland markieren. Russlands Nato-Botschafter Dimitri Rogosin kommentiert das Angebot gewohnt ruppig. "Hübsche Foto-Gelegenheiten und Medienrauschen" interessierten ihn nicht, sagt er. Wohl aber "echte Partnerschaft", verbunden bitteschön mit der "Rückkehr Russlands auf die rechtmäßige Position der Weltbühne." Bloß: Wo genau ist der?

Klar ist, die Bühne Europas gehört am kommenden Wochenende ganz dem neuen US-Präsidenten Barack Obama. Da mögen seine mitreisenden Diplomaten hinter den Kulissen fordern, was sie wollen. Die erste Europareise des sympathiemächtigsten Mannes der Welt wird kein Missklang stören. Obama, heißt es von amerikanischen Offiziellen, kenne den "Hunger" der Europäer nach frischen Botschaften aus dem Weißen Haus. "Er wird sich alle Mühe geben, den zu stillen", sagt eine seiner Diplomattinnen.

## Zum Thema

### **ZEIT ONLINE 15/2009: Brauchen wir die Nato?**

Die NATO feiert Jubiläum – doch die Proteste zeigen, dass das Bündnis nicht unumstritten ist. Brauchen wir die Nato? Wie sieht ihre Rolle im 21. Jahrhundert aus?

[<http://www.zeit.de/online/2009/15/umfrage-nato-zukunft>]

### **ZEIT ONLINE 15/2009: 300 Festnahmen bei Anti-Nato-Protest in Straßburg**

Schon vor Beginn des Gipfeltreffens haben sich Demonstranten und Polizei Auseinandersetzungen geliefert. In den nächsten Tagen wird noch mehr Gewalt erwartet

[<http://www.zeit.de/online/2009/15/nato-gipfel-strassburg-proteste-festnahmen>]

### **ZEIT ONLINE /2009: Nato**

Afghanistan-Einsatz, Osterweiterung, Raketenabwehr, das Verhältnis zu Russland: Wohin steuert die Nato?

[<http://www.zeit.de/themen/international/nato/index>]

**ZEIT ONLINE**

## AFGHANISTAN: HOLBROOKE, USA PROGETTANO INCREMENTO FORZE POLIZIA



(AGI) - Bruxelles, 21 mar. - Barack Obama sta pensando a un incremento "molto significativo" delle forze di polizia in Afghanistan. Lo ha annunciato l'inviato speciale degli Stati Uniti per Afghanistan e Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, sottolineando che il progetto iniziale dell'amministrazione Usa di aumentare le unita' di polizia da 78mila a 82mila nei prossimi 3-4 anni e' ritenuto inadeguato. "Tutti quelli con cui abbiamo parlato, senza eccezioni - il governo e la popolazione afghana, gli esperti, l'esercito americano - hanno convenuto che non e' sufficiente", ha sottolineato Holbrooke, "cosi' stiamo pensando insieme agli alleati e agli amici del governo afghano a un incremento molto significativo" delle forze di polizia. Intervenendo nel corso di una conferenza sulla sicurezza a Bruxelles, Holbrooke ha osservato che la polizia non si trova attualmente in una posizione favorevole: "sappiamo che e' il punto debole nella catena della sicurezza" in Afghanistan. "Abbiamo bisogno di aumentare il numero, la qualita' e l'addestramento", ha aggiunto Holbrooke. L'inviato americano ha giudicato "speculativi" i dati forniti dal 'New York Times', che aveva parlato dell'obiettivo di arrivare a circa 400mila unita' tra esercito e polizia afghana, sottolineando che Obama deve ancora ultimare i numeri. E' certo, tuttavia, che gli sforzi internazionali nell'addestramento delle forze di sicurezza afghane sono considerati di gran lunga insufficienti.

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## ECONOMIA

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L'intervento del commissario agli Affari Economici Ue al German Marshall Fund  
Weber (Bce): "I tassi d'interesse scenderanno sotto l'attuale 1,5%"

# Almunia: "Ci saranno altre crisi anche l'Italia tra i paesi a rischio"

"Ma l'Europa è attrezzata per contrastarle"

**BRUXELLES** - "Sì, possiamo aspettarci altre crisi in Europa, anche nella zona euro, ma siamo attrezzati per contrastarle". A lanciare l'allarme è il commissario agli Affari economici e monetari, Joaquin Almunia, nel suo intervento al forum organizzato a Bruxelles dal German Marshall Fund si è mostrato fiducioso sulla capacità dell'Unione Europea di far fronte alla crisi. Tra le preoccupazioni di Almunia, "Paesi come Italia e Grecia" che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi. E intanto la Bce si prepara ad abbassare ancora i tassi per contrastare la recessione.

"Non escludo che vi possano essere problemi anche nella zona euro, li abbiamo già", ha detto Almunia nel suo intervento al forum trasatlantico organizzato dal German Marshall Fund a Bruxelles. "Ma - ha spiegato - abbiamo anche gli strumenti tecnici e politici per risolverli, e per non lasciare che la crisi diventi una questione a cui non ci si può opporre".

Tra le preoccupazioni del momento, spiega Almunia, vi sono "quei Paesi Ue che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi, come Italia e Grecia, i due esempi più conosciuti", dove il debito pubblico è tra i più alti d'Europa. E ancora più preoccupanti quegli Stati membri "dove il debito pubblico cresce molto rapidamente a causa degli sforzi per il sostegno alle banche e allo stimolo fiscale".

Bruxelles non esclude, al momento, un possibile aumento dei pacchetti di stimolo per gli Stati membri: "Considerata l'incertezza di questi tempi l'aumento non si può escludere", ha aggiunto il commissario. E una tale decisione, ha spiegato, si potrà prendere al prossimo G20 di Londra dove tutti sono già in allerta: "Siamo pronti ad adottare qualunque misura per reagire alla recessione ed evitare che la situazione si aggravi". Anche se ora, ha precisato, occorre prima di tutto valutare le misure fin qui prese.

Il commissario ha poi ricordato che la Ue ha già "messo a punto piani di salvataggio per l'Ungheria, la Lettonia e con la Romania sono stati avviati i negoziati", e anche se "possiamo aspettarci crisi in altri Paesi fuori dall'euro, siamo attrezzati per affrontarle".

Dal canto suo Axel Weber, governatore della Bundesbank e membro del Consiglio direttivo della Banca Centrale Europea, ha ribadito che la Bce è orientata verso un ulteriore taglio dei tassi, ipotesi alla quale ha già accennato più volte anche il presidente Jean-Claude Trichet.  
(22 marzo 2009)

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Ultima Ora

## Crisi,Almunia: Non escludiamo ulteriori sostegni a altri paesi Ue

Crisi,Almunia: Non escludiamo ulteriori sostegni a altri paesi Ue Data la grave situazione di incertezza

22/03/2009

- A +

Bruxelles, 22 mar. (Ap-Apcom) - Il commissario Ue agli Affari economici e monetari Joaquim Almunia non esclude che possano essere decisi ulteriori interventi di sostegno in ambito Ue per quei paesi che dovessero trovarsi in situazioni di grave crisi. "Data la situazione di incertezza, nessuno può escludere che sarà necessario adottare altre decisioni", ha dichiarato Almunia nel corso di una conferenza a Bruxelles. "Ma prima, lasciateci mettere in pratica quanto è stato finora deciso". Almunia ha precisato che il prestito congiunto Ue e Fmi per la Lettonia sarà negoziato nei prossimi giorni e che quello per la Romania potrebbe essere annunciato in settimana prossima. ma, secondo il commissario, anche altri paesi Ue non della zona euro potrebbero richiedere un sostegno. Il capo della Bundesbank e membro della Bce, Axel Weber, ha fatto eco alle parole di Almunia e, nel corso della conferenza, ha affermato che "in futuro, non è escluso che debbano essere adottate misure ulteriori, se dovesse rendersi necessario. Intanto però, è necessario dare seguito a quanto è stato fin qui stabilito".



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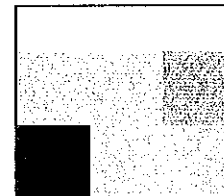
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## Almunia: "Italia e Grecia rischiano"

**BRUXELLES** - La crisi è solo all'inizio, l'Europa si aspetta che da un momento all'altro anche nei Paesi della zona euro possa scoppiare l'emergenza: a lanciare l'allarme è il commissario agli Affari economici e monetari, Joaquin Almunia, che ammette: "Sì, possiamo aspettarci altre crisi in Europa, anche nella zona euro, ma siamo attrezzati per contrastarle".

E intanto la Bce si prepara ad abbassare ancora i tassi per contrastare la recessione. "Non escludo che vi possano essere problemi anche nella zona euro, li abbiamo già", ha detto Almunia nel suo intervento al forum transatlantico organizzato dal German Marshall Fund a Bruxelles. "Ma - ha spiegato - abbiamo anche gli strumenti tecnici e politici per risolverli, e per non lasciare che la crisi diventi una questione a cui non ci si può opporre".


Tra le preoccupazioni del momento, spiega Almunia, vi sono "quei Paesi Ue che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi, come Italia e Grecia, i due esempi più conosciuti", dove il debito pubblico è tra i più alti d'Europa. E ancora più preoccupanti quegli Stati membri "dove il debito pubblico cresce molto rapidamente a causa degli sforzi per il sostegno alle banche e allo stimolo fiscale".

"Non mi pare che possiamo essere paragonati a Grecia, Lettonia o Ungheria". Lo afferma il presidente di Confindustria, Emma Marcegaglia, rispondendo all'allarme lanciato dal commissario europeo, Joaquin Almunia, a proposito del debito pubblico italiano.

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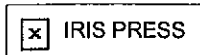
## Crisi: Almunia, possibili nuove emergenze anche in zona euro

(ANSA) - BRUXELLES, 22 MAR - 'Possiamo aspettarci altre crisi in Europa, anche nella zona euro, ma siamo attrezzati per contrastarle'. Così il commissario Almunia. Il commissario per gli affari economici e monetari ha poi ricordato che la Ue ha già 'messo a punto piani di salvataggio per l'Ungheria, la Lettonia e con la Romania sono stati avviati i negoziati', e anche se "possiamo aspettarci crisi in altri Paesi fuori dall'euro, siamo attrezzati per affrontarle".

22 marzo 2009

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## ECONOMIA

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22/03/2009 - 15.55

# CRISI ECONOMICA: ALMUNIA, UE ATTREZZATA PER CONTRASTARLA

(IRIS) - ROMA, 22 MAR - "Sì, possiamo aspettarci altre crisi in Europa, anche nella zona euro, ma siamo attrezzati per contrastarle" Il commissario agli Affari economici e monetari, Joaquin Almunia, nel forum promosso a Bruxelles dal German Marshall Fund manifesta un atteggiamento ottimista rispetto all'azione dell'Ue. "Non escludo che vi possano essere problemi anche nella zona euro, ma abbiamo gli strumenti tecnici e politici per risolverli" ribadisce Almunia. Sui Paesi in difficoltà, il commissari annuncia che l'Ue ha "messo a punto piani di salvataggio per l'Ungheria, la Lettonia e con la Romania sono stati avviati i negoziati".

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22-03-2009 sezione: HOME\_ECONOMIA

## Crisi, Almunia: nuovi rischi per la Ue La Bce pronta a tagliare i tassi

BRUXELLES (22 marzo) - La crisi è solo all'inizio, e l'Europa si aspetta che da un momento all'altro anche nei Paesi della zona euro possa scoppiare l'emergenza: a lanciare l'allarme è il commissario agli Affari economici e monetari, Joaquin Almunia, che ammette: «Sì, possiamo aspettarci altre crisi in Europa, anche nella zona euro, ma siamo attrezzati per contrastarle». Tra le preoccupazioni di Almunia: Paesi come Italia e Grecia che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi. E intanto la Bce si prepara ad abbassare ancora i tassi per contrastare la recessione.

**Preoccupazioni per l'Italia.** «Non escludo che vi possano essere problemi anche nella zona euro, li abbiamo già», ha detto Almunia nel suo intervento al forum trasatlantico organizzato dal German Marshall Fund a Bruxelles. «Ma - ha detto - abbiamo anche gli strumenti tecnici e politici per risolverli, e per non lasciare che la crisi diventi una questione a cui non ci si può opporre». Tra le preoccupazioni del momento, dice Almunia, vi sono «quei Paesi Ue che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi, come Italia e Grecia, i due esempi più conosciuti», dove il debito pubblico è tra i più alti d'Europa. E ancora più preoccupanti quegli Stati membri «dove il debito pubblico cresce molto rapidamente a causa degli sforzi per il sostegno alle banche e allo stimolo fiscale».

**Pacchetti di stimolo.** Bruxelles non esclude, al momento, un possibile aumento dei pacchetti di stimolo per gli Stati membri: «Considerata l'incertezza di questi tempi, l'aumento non si può escludere» ha aggiunto il commissario. E una tale decisione, ha spiegato, si potrà prendere al prossimo G20 di Londra, dove tutti sono già in allerta: «Siamo pronti ad adottare qualunque misura per reagire alla recessione ed evitare che la situazione si aggravi». Anche se ora, ha precisato, occorre prima di tutto valutare le misure fin qui prese. Il commissario ha poi ricordato che la Ue ha già «messo a punto piani di salvataggio per l'Ungheria, la Lettonia e con la Romania sono stati avviati i negoziati», e anche se «possiamo aspettarci crisi in altri Paesi fuori dall'euro, siamo attrezzati per affrontarle».

**Bce pronta a tagliare i tassi.** Intanto la Bce fa sapere che si tiene pronta ad abbassare ancora i tassi per contrastare la recessione. «I tassi - ha detto oggi a Bruxelles Axel Weber, membro del board - sono all'1,5% nell'area euro e stanno scendendo».

## ECONOMIA

Commissario europeo agli Affari economici e monetari al forum del German Marshall Fund

# Almunia, possibili crisi in vista. A rischio Italia e Grecia

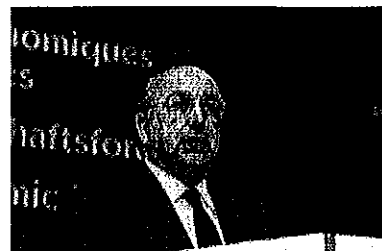
**Non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi**

Bruxelles – Joaquin Almunia, commissario europeo agli Affari economici e monetari, mette in guardia l'Europa, contemplando la possibilità di altre crisi, in particolare in Italia e in Grecia, che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi. Il commissario europeo tuttavia rassicura: "Siamo attrezzati per contrastarla", non escludendo la possibilità di un aumento dei pacchetti di stimolo per gli Stati dell'Ue.

**"Possiamo aspettarci altre crisi in Europa, anche nella zona euro, ma siamo attrezzati per contrastarle"**, avverte Joaquin Almunia, commissario europeo agli Affari economici e monetari, durante il suo intervento al forum organizzato dal German Marshall Fund. **Almunia cita Grecia e Italia**, verso le quali nutre una particolare preoccupazione. Si tratta infatti di Stati che non hanno saputo consolidare le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi. Intanto la Bce si prepara ad abbassare ancora i tassi per contrastare la recessione.

Il commissario europeo tuttavia non tarda a rassicurare i diretti interessati, membri dell'Ue e non, che Bruxelles ha già disposto tutti gli strumenti necessari per contrastare le crisi. Ha già "messo a punto piani di salvataggio per Ungheria e Lettonia e con la Romania sono stati avviati negoziati". Per quanto riguarda invece Eurolandia, il commissario non esclude un possibile aumento dei pacchetti di stimolo per gli Stati membri: "Una tale decisione -precisa Almunia- si potrà prendere al prossimo **G20 di Londra**, dove tutti sono già in allerta".

*Annalisa Tregattini*



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**ECONOMIA**

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Le dichiarazioni di Almunia riportate dalla stampa  
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Ma il commissario aveva citato il nostro paese e la Grecia  
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**ROMA** - La Commissione europea ritiene che le dichiarazioni del Commissario Ue agli Affari Economici, Joaquin Almunia, riportate dalla stampa italiana siano state presentate in modo "tendenzioso e non responsabile". "I mercati sono sufficientemente nervosi per non aggiungere altro nervosismo" ha detto la portavoce Amelia Torres.

"Il commissario Almunia non ha detto quel che leggo, in particolare su *Repubblica*" dice la portavoce della Commissione europea, Amelia Torres, responsabile dell'Economia, che parla di "articoli tendenziosi, non molto seri e non molto responsabili... La situazione è abbastanza seria ed i mercati sono così nervosi che non è proprio necessario rincarare la dose".

La portavoce ha ricordato le parole del commissario europeo all'Economia, Joaquin Almunia, il quale ieri in una conferenza si è limitato a dire che "ci sono alcuni Paesi che in passato non hanno fatto gli sforzi necessari... che hanno un grosso debito, e non sono ora nella migliore delle situazioni per avere dei margini di manovra".

Torres ha quindi invitato "a non fare estrapolazioni da discorsi che in questo momento non sono responsabili". E ha ricordato del resto che si tratta dello stesso giudizio contenuto "nel parere della Commissione europea sul piano di stabilità italiano aggiornato, parere che è stato fatto proprio dal Consiglio Ecofin".

Secondo la trascrizione degli organizzatori della conferenza cui ha partecipato Almunia (Brussels forum 2009, German Marshall Fund) il commissario agli Affari Economici aveva affermato: "Abbiamo problemi in alcuni paesi che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi. Posso darvi due esempi conosciuti molto bene, Grecia e Italia per quanto concerne il debito in rapporto al prodotto lordo prima della crisi. Siamo preoccupati per la situazione di alcuni paesi il cui debito pubblico sta aumentando molto velocemente a causa degli sforzi necessari non solo per lo stimolo di bilancio ma anche per sostenere il settore bancario".

Sulla vicenda in serata è intervenuto anche il ministro dell'Economia Giulio Tremonti: "Siamo un Paese solido e considerato solido. Lo ha scritto l'Europa e oggi lo ha confermato il commissario Almunia". "L'Italia - ha aggiunto il ministro, intervistato dal Tg4 - ha un grande debito pubblico ereditato dal passato ma ha un debito privato minimo. Fatta la somma siamo messi bene".

(23 marzo 2009)

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MARCEGAGLIA: «NON POSSIAMO ESSERE PARAGONATI A GRECIA, LETTONIA E UNGERIA»

## Almunia e le frasi sul «rischio Italia» Gasparri: «Zapatero lo richiami»

Il commissario Ue: «Le mie parole sono state riportate in modo tendenzioso». Ma è polemica



Joaquin Almunia (Afp)

**BRUXELLES** - «Almunia? Credo che Zapatero dovrebbe richiamarlo in patria». Maurizio Gasparri liquida con una battuta le polemiche sulle frasi sul nostro Paese, poi puntualizzate, del commissario europeo agli Affari economici. Nel suo intervento al forum organizzato dal German Marshall Fund, Almunia aveva avvertito: «Possiamo aspettarci altre crisi in Europa, anche nella zona euro, ma siamo attrezzati per contrastarle». Il commissario aveva poi citato, come fonte di preoccupazione, «quei Paesi Ue che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi, come Italia e Grecia, i due esempi più conosciuti» (guarda il video originale). Frasi che hanno suscitato una certa preoccupazione, ma che la mattina successiva sono state «corrette» dal portavoce di Almunia:

«La Commissione europea ritiene che le dichiarazioni del commissario Ue agli Affari economici, Joaquin Almunia, riportate dalla stampa italiana siano state presentate in modo tendenzioso e non responsabile. I mercati sono sufficientemente nervosi per non aggiungere altro nervosismo», recita la nota ufficiale.

**GASPARRI** - Le reazioni non si sono però fatte attendere. Tra queste, quella di Maurizio Gasparri: «Non è la prima volta che il commissario Ue Almunia emette giudizi poco lusinghieri nei confronti del nostro Paese - ha dichiarato l'esponente del Pdl - Questa volta si è spinto fino a considerare il debito pubblico italiano tra i più alti d'Europa, accostandoci quasi a paesi come la Lettonia o l'Ungheria, salvo poi debite smentite». «Non possiamo augurarci altro - ha proseguito Gasparri - se non che Zapatero sappia valorizzarlo di più in patria, attribuendogli un incarico interno e magari lasciando che in Europa lavorino persone in grado di dare un contributo più incisivo, positivo e concreto per superare la crisi internazionale».

**MARCEGAGLIA** - Anche il presidente di Confindustria, Emma Marcegaglia, non condivide la preoccupazione del commissario europeo: «È vero che l'Italia ha un debito pubblico alto - dice a margine degli stati generali di Confindustria lombarda - però d'altra parte ha un tasso di risparmio delle famiglie che non ha uguali in Europa, ha un sistema industriale che per il momento, nonostante la crisi, sta tenendo abbastanza». Secondo la leader degli industriali, quindi, «non mi pare che possiamo essere paragonati a Grecia, Lettonia, Ungheria. Non mi sembra che questo sia il problema».

22 marzo 2009 (ultima modifica: 23 marzo 2009)




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**La Bce valuta un nuovo tagli dei tassi**

## **Crisi, Almunia: «Possibili altre crisi, a rischio l'Italia»**

### **Il commissario Ue sicuro: «Sappiamo come contrastarle»**

**Il commissario Ue agli Affari economici e monetari a Bruxelles non esclude la possibilità di ulteriori difficoltà in Europa, anche nella zona euro: «A rischio paesi che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi, come Italia e Grecia». La Bce potrebbe operare un nuovo taglio dei tassi di sconto.**

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Non è escluso che possano verificarsi altre crisi in Europa, anche nei paesi dell'eurozona, ma la Ue è pronta a fronteggiarle. Lo sostiene il commissario agli Affari economici e monetari, Joaquin Almunia, intervenuto a Bruxelles al forum organizzato dal German Marshall Fund. «Sì, possiamo aspettarci altre crisi in Europa, anche nella zona euro - ha detto Almunia -, ma siamo attrezzati per contrastarle con mezzi tecnici e politici». Il commissario Ue ha quindi specificato che tra i paesi a rischio c'è soprattutto l'Italia: a preoccupare maggiormente sono infatti «quei paesi Ue che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi, come Italia e Grecia, i due esempi più conosciuti», così come anche queglii stati membri che vedono il proprio debito pubblico crescere con rapidità «a causa degli sforzi per il sostegno alle banche e allo stimolo fiscale». La Ue continua nel suo lavoro di sostegno ai paesi membri e Almunia ha ricordato come siano stati «messi a punto piani di salvataggio per l'Ungheria, la Lettonia e con la Romania sono stati avviati i negoziati», e anche se «possiamo aspettarci crisi in altri Paesi fuori dall'euro, siamo attrezzati per affrontarle». E' possibile inoltre che l'Unione europea aumenti i pacchetti di stimolo per gli stati membri: «L'aumento non si può escludere al momento, abbiamo già detto che siamo pronti ad adottare qualunque misura per evitare che la situazione si aggravi».

Intanto, in materia di interventi e misure, sembra ormai sicuro un nuovo taglio dei tassi da parte della Bce, come ribadito da Axel Weber, governatore della Bundesbank e membro del Consiglio direttivo della Banca Centrale Europea e più volte accennato dal presidente Jean-Claude Trichet.

**REUTERS**

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## Crisi, Almunia preoccupato per Italia e Grecia

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lunedì 23 marzo 2009 10:49

MILANO (Reuters) - Il commissario Ue agli Affari economici e monetari Joaquin Almunia - secondo quanto riportato da alcuni quotidiani italiani - si è detto ieri preoccupato per i paesi come l'Italia e la Grecia che non hanno messo a punto, prima della crisi, misure per il consolidamento delle finanze pubbliche.

"Sì, possiamo aspettarci altre crisi in Europa, anche nella zona euro, ma siamo attrezzati per contrastarle" ha detto Almunia aggiungendo di essere preoccupato per "quei paesi Ue che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi, come Italia e Grecia, i due esempi più conosciuti" ha detto nel suo intervento al forum organizzato dal German Marshall Fund a Bruxelles.

E ancora più preoccupanti sono quegli Stati membri "dove il debito pubblico cresce molto rapidamente a causa degli sforzi per il sostegno alle banche e allo stimolo fiscale" ha detto.

"Non escludo che vi possano essere problemi anche nella zona euro, li abbiamo già", ha detto Almunia. "Ma - ha spiegato - abbiamo anche gli strumenti tecnici e politici per risolverli, e per non lasciare che la crisi diventi una questione a cui non ci si può opporre".

Bruxelles non esclude, al momento, un possibile aumento dei pacchetti di stimolo per gli Stati membri: "Considerata l'incertezza di questi tempi l'aumento non si può escludere", ha aggiunto il commissario. E una tale decisione, ha spiegato, si potrà prendere al prossimo G20 di Londra dove tutti sono già in allerta: "Siamo pronti ad adottare qualunque misura per reagire alla recessione ed evitare che la situazione si aggravi". Anche se ora, ha precisato, occorre prima di tutto valutare le misure fin qui prese.

Il commissario ha poi ricordato che la Ue ha già "messo a punto piani di salvataggio per l'Ungheria, la Lettonia e con la Romania sono stati avviati i negoziati", e anche se "possiamo aspettarci crisi in altri Paesi fuori dall'euro, siamo attrezzati per affrontarle".

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23-03-2009 sezione: HOME\_ECONOMIA

## Almunia: forse altre crisi nella Ue, ma non ho detto che l'Italia è a rischio

BRUXELLES (23 marzo) - «Sulle parole pronunciate ieri dal commissario Ue per gli Affari economici, Joaquin Almunia, sono stati scritti oggi su alcuni quotidiani articoli tendenziosi»: è quanto ha precisato oggi il portavoce

dello stesso commissario in relazione, in particolare, al titolo di un quotidiano in cui si mette in evidenza come l'Italia, secondo Almunia, sarebbe «un Paese a rischio». «Almunia non ha detto quello che scrive oggi questo giornale» ha precisato il suo portavoce, notando che tra l'altro quanto affermato nel titolo non trova riscontro nel testo.

Il commissario, ha aggiunto il suo portavoce, «ha detto che ci sono alcuni Paesi che nel passato non hanno fatto gli sforzi necessari per mettere le loro finanze pubbliche in una situazione più sostenibile e oggi hanno quindi un debito molto elevato, che riduce gli spazi di manovra disponibili per interventi anticrisi. Non c'è nulla di nuovo, in quanto già più volte detto in passato dal commissario. La situazione è già abbastanza grave e i mercati sono abbastanza nervosi, e non c'è quindi proprio necessità di alimentare tensioni».

La portavoce ha indicato anche che «non c'è bisogno di ripetere le nostre valutazioni sull'Italia e che sono relative al programma di stabilità aggiornato» al quale recentemente Commissione europea ed Ecofin hanno dato il via libera. Nella trascrizione degli organizzatori della conferenza cui ha partecipato Almunia (Brussels Forum 2009, German Marshall Fund) il commissario agli Affari economici aveva affermato: «Abbiamo problemi in alcuni Paesi che non hanno consolidato le finanze pubbliche prima della crisi. Posso darvi due esempi conosciuti molto bene, Grecia e Italia per quanto concerne il debito in rapporto al prodotto lordo prima della crisi. Siamo preoccupati per la situazione di alcuni Paesi il cui debito pubblico sta aumentando molto velocemente a causa degli sforzi necessari non solo per lo stimolo di bilancio ma anche per sostenere il settore bancario».

A proposito di possibili nuove crisi in ambito europeo, Almunia aveva detto: «Sì, possiamo aspettarci altre crisi in Europa, anche nella zona euro, ma siamo attrezzati per contrastarle».



1 Aprile  
ore 11:58



ITALYGLOBALNATION

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**Economia**

**CONTI PUBBLICI: ALMUNIA, STAMPA HA CAMBIATO MIE PAROLE SU ITALIA**

COMMISSARIO NON SI PRONUNCIA SU ROMA, NON CREO ALTRE OCCASIONI

leggi i commenti commenta 1 vota 0 tutte le notizie di economia

ultimo aggiornamento: 24 marzo, ore 18:43

Bruxelles, 24 mar. (Adnkronos/Aki) - "Oggi non creo un'altra occasione perché la stampa cambi le mie parole". Ha risposto così il commissario Ue agli Affari economici Joaquín Almunia, a chi chiedeva chiarimenti sulla 'querelle' tra Bruxelles e i media per le dichiarazioni rese dal commissario domenica scorsa durante un incontro a Bruxelles del German Marshall Fund.

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guldopar43 ha scritto (24/03/2009 - ore 18:26)

segnala un abuso

L'episodio secondo me è di una gravità inaudita, tuttavia, vedo che la stampa italiana non ne parla come se non fosse successo niente!! Perché o il Sig. Almunia ha detto quanto riportato dai giornalisti italiani circa la situazione del ns. Paese e oggi, spaventato per i possibili rimproveri del ns. Governo, si rimangia tutto e dice di essere stato frainteso << gli italiani sono ormai avezzati ai politici che oggi affermano una cosa e domani il contrario di essa!!>> tuttavia il problema resta non è pensabile che chi ricopre cariche così importanti nelle Istituzioni Comunitarie non abbia il coraggio delle proprie azioni o non sappia contenersi. Oppure il Sig. Almunia non ha detto quanto riportato dalla stampa italiana e allora il problema è perché? Perché ogni giorno i media italiani aprono con notizie sconcertanti sulla situazione della crisi << che in Italia deve essere più negativa che in altri paesi!!>> e se non ci sono notizie? inventano?? A chi giova? O semplicemente data la scarsa conoscenza delle lingue straniere da parte di noi italiani la traduzione di quanto espresso dal Sig. Almunia è risultata un po' diciamo così arruffata??!!

ultim'ora forum speciali regioni

- 17:54 G20: OBAMA E HU JINTAO, ASSIEME CONTRO LA RECESSIONE GLOBALE
- 17:29 SALUTE: DIETA DEI CENTENARI, SEGRETI PER ARRIVARE A 100 CANDELINE
- 17:22 RAI: DI PIETRO, DA FRANCESCHINI LAMENDELE AL VENTO A FRITTATA FATTA
- 17:12 GOVERNO: BERLUSCONI A PREMIER GIAPPONESE, MIO GRADIMENTO AL 66,4%
- 17:10 GB: ELICOTTERO PRECIPITA AL LARGO DELLA SCOZIA, SI TEMONO OTTO MORTI
- 17:10 TIBET: TORNA LA PACE FRA CINA E FRANCIA DOPO TENSIONE SU DALAI LAMA
- 16:54 G20: BERLUSCONI GIUNTO A LONDRA, BILATERALE CON TARO ASO
- 16:49 QUOTE LATTE: GOVERNO PONE FIDUCIA SU MAXIEMENDAMENTO

Tutte le Notizie >>

Disoccupazione, per l'OCSE nel 2010 potrebbe salire al 10%

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Il Federalismo visto dal Sud

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# il Giornale it

n. 78 del 2009-04-01 pagina 1

## LA FABBRICA DELLA PAURA

di Vittorio Macioce

La fabbrica della paura funziona così. Joaquín Almunia, commissario europeo all'Economia, parla al German Marshall Fund e cerca di non drammatizzare. Sorride, non nasconde i rischi, ma dice che l'Europa ce la farà. «Possiamo aspettarci altre crisi, anche nella zona euro, ma siamo attrezzati per contrastarle». I piani di salvataggio sono pronti, anche per chi sta peggio, come Ungheria, Lettonia e Romania. Il tono di Almunia è niente panico. È chiaro, aggiunge, che ci sono Paesi che in passato non hanno fatto gli sforzi necessari, quelli con un grosso debito e pochi margini di manovra. È un discorso vecchio. Anche Tremonti vorrebbe abbassare le tasse, ma non può. L'Italia ha un passato di welfare sprecone e «capitalismo di Stato». Questa è la colpa dei padri che cade sulla testa dei figli. E la stanno pagando, da tempo. Cosa c'è di nuovo? Nulla. Le parole di Almunia finiscono nel tritacarne di quelli che sognano l'apocalisse economica. E vai con la paura: «L'Italia tra i Paesi a rischio». L'Italia come la Grecia. L'Italia in bilico. L'Italia che non ce la fa. L'Italia appestata, prossimo focolaio della crisi. L'Italia ventre molle, come quelli che stanno peggio.

Il giorno dopo tocca ad Amalia Torres, portavoce di Almunia, smentire, chiarire, svelare la fabbrica della paura. «Almunia non ha detto quello che leggo su Repubblica. Articoli tendenziosi e non molto responsabili. La situazione è abbastanza seria e i mercati sono così nervosi che non è proprio necessario rincarare la dose». Qualcosa, a quanto pare, si è perso nella traduzione. Il sospetto è che gran parte della stampa italiana abbia preso la crisi dal lato oscuro, nero. E gli stessi italiani si chiedono se questa lunga litania che dura da mesi, di titoli sempre più cupi, tragici, senza rimedio, sia la realtà o uno specchio deformato, che vede il futuro più nero della mezzanotte. Titoli così. «Allarme cassa integrati: più 553%. Bankitalia vede nero» (Repubblica, 2 marzo). «Gli scenari neri dell'Fmi: declino giapponese» (Corriere della Sera, 16 marzo). «Fmi, il peggio deve ancora arrivare» (Repubblica, 20 marzo). «Si salvi chi può» con la foto di un salvagente (L'Unità, 30 novembre). È una colonna sonora da tutti a casa, da 8 settembre, da fallimento, da Titanic che affonda. E poi, all'interno, pezzi di costume sull'amore al tempo della crisi, sulla riscoperta del vintage, vestiti usati e mercatini, diete da grande depressione e parcheggi vuoti, perché con la crisi nessuno più va al lavoro con la macchina. Non ci sono più soldi per pagare le multe?

Questo è l'orizzonte. Chi ci salverà dalla peste economica? Nessuna via d'uscita. Il mondo può anche resistere, ma l'Italia è condannata perché segnata da un peccato originale, metafisico. L'Italia di Berlusconi non merita alcuna speranza. È come se questa crisi fosse una maledizione (o benedizione) del cielo che viene a colpire un governo sconosciuto. Muoia Berlusconi con tutti i filistei. Non importa se questi, i filistei, hanno famiglia, figli, una vita da mandare avanti. E intanto la paura corrode la fiducia, chiude i mercati, i negozi, le aziende e i posti di lavoro. Tutta la fiducia, la speranza, è altrove, viaggia oltre l'Atlantico e illumina un solo uomo: Barack Obama. Un sospetto. Non è che i fabbricanti della paura vogliono farci emigrare?.

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第15回 亀井幸一郎 コラム更新!

**「スピードに対応する  
自己ルールを徹底したい」**

**FX特集**

外国為替市場資金取引

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トップ | 主要 | 経済 | 企業 | 株・為替 | 国際 | 政治 | 社会 | スポーツ | 新製品 | リリース | 社説・春秋 | おくやみ | ネットPLUS | ネットナビ | ニュースランキング

### ロシア外相、新欧州安保条約を提唱 “政治版”ダボス会議で

欧米の首脳、閣僚らが国際政治の課題を話し合う「ブリュッセル・フォーラム」が20日から22日までブリュッセル市内で開かれた。ロシアのラブロフ外相は北大西洋条約機構(NATO)拡大やEUによる旧ソ連圏との連携強化に不快感を表明。「NATOが責任を負うのは好ましくない」と述べ、ロシアを含む新たな欧州安全保障条約締結を改めて提唱した。

欧州連合(EU)のソラナ共通外交・安全保障上級代表は「(NATOなど既存組織の)見直しの必要はない」と拒否した。ただ、NATOとロシアの関係級協議を通じ「協力できる余地は大きい」と語り、ロシアと関係改善を進める欧州側の方針を示した。

アフガン問題をめぐっては米関係者による欧州側への注文が目立った。米共和党の大統領候補だったマケイン上院議員が「(提供する人員や資金を)最小限に抑えるやり方は誤りだ」と述べ、兵員の大幅増派に欧州も協力すべきだと主張。ホルブルック米特別代表(アフガニスタン・パキスタン担当)は治安安定へ警察官の増員の必要性を訴えた。(ブリュッセル=瀬能繁)(22日 21:42)

#### 関連記事

- ウクライナなど旧ソ連6カ国 EU、連携強化「宣言」へ(3/19)
- ロシア外相、米のMD計画けん制 「世界の安定損なう危険」

#### 最新主要ニュース

- GM、ヘンダーソン新CEOが会見 「再建へ手段選ばず」(00:00)
- メルケル首相「独政府もオベル救済策を検討」 「GM猶予期間」で(31日 23:18)
- 09年の世界経済、マイナス成長に 世界銀行とOECDが予測(00:21)
- イスラエル新政権発足へ 外相に極右党首、和平停滞の懸念(00:48)
- 衆院選情勢で進退判断 民主・小沢代表、改めて強調(31日 22:15)
- 三笠フーズ、美少年酒造へ裏金 コメ差し替え、差額プール(31日 23:54)

【SSD】搭載のレッツノートW8最上位モデルを、モニター販売価格でおトクに!  
 <新着>大手外資系のマネージャー&リーダー転職求人特集【外資系転職のISS】  
 経営者や財務・管財担当者の方へ 企業向け不動産=CREポータル誕生 日経  
 Wi-Fiフィットを使った【パワフルに働く】ためのトレーニングを紹介 NEW!  
 運転資金を増やすための近道とは? - 中堅・中小企業の経営効率改善 - SAP

- 米国株、反発で始まる 金融株が堅調、GMは続落(31日 22:53)
- 米住宅価格、主要10都市で19.4%下落 1月、最大下落率(31日 22:38)
- 「第2ロットワールド」、韓国政府が建設許可へ(31日 21:51)
- 日産が「エコカー」7車種 低公害車減税にらみ4月発売(31日 21:39)
- 補正予算案を国会提出、首相が表明 解散、野党の反応見極め(31日 20:27)
- 楽天、TBS全株売却 買収断念、3年半の攻防決着へ(31日 20:12)
- 日経平均、08年度下落率35% リーマン・ショックきっかけに一変(31日 19:53)
- 大手企業の買上げ額5815円、4年ぶり低下 経団連第1回集計(31日 19:42)
- マクドナルドにWBC効果? 1日の売上高が過去最高(31日 17:57)
- 首相、解散「私が判断」 北朝鮮ミサイル「安保理で何らかの決議も」(31日 17:48)
- 麻生首相、補正予算案編成を明言 追加経済対策「4月中旬までに」(31日 17:18)
- 日経平均、08年度下落率は35% 8年ぶりの大きさ(31日 16:42)
- 主婦の就活道険し 夫のリストラ 収入減で急増(31日 16:00)
- トヨタ、初の減配へ 09年3月期(31日 16:00)
- 製造業の残業半減、2月は1人8.9時間 早急な雇用対策課題(31日 15:34)
- 楽天、TBS株売却へ 買い取りを請求、M&A攻防決着へ(31日 15:17)
- 日経平均、続落 終値126円安の8109円(31日 15:10)

### 情報セキュリティガバナンス シンポジウム 2009

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詳細はこちら

主催: 経済産業省、日本経済新聞社

- 主要ニュースランキング (3/31 23時更新)
- GM、労組に強硬姿勢も ワゴナー氏に高額退職手当
  - トヨタ、初の減配へ 09年3月期
  - 楽天、TBS株売却へ 買い取りを請求、M&A攻防決着へ
  - 日清紡、燃料電池を低コストで 価格6分の1の触媒
  - 主婦の就活道険し 夫のリストラ 収入減で急増
- 主要ニュースランキング一覧を見る

#### おすすめコンテンツ

- ゲームで得られる運動効果
- パワフルに働くために
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- ポルシェ初4ドアスポーツ 最上級モデルは2061万円
- (映像)横浜街路レジデンス 四季と身近に暮らす豊かさ
- 一緒に来しもう 家族のみんながヒーローに

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#### PR情報

- 新築一戸建てランキング NIKKEI NETユーザーが注目する新築分譲・一戸建ては?【住宅サーチ】
- 金属の質感でさらに美しく 高強度アルミ、ルミナリーシールドのレッツノート新登場[Panasonic]
- 時代のニーズと「進化」 実績ある二社が合併して生まれるマンションとは【住宅サーチ】

アジア、09年は3.4%成長 アジア開銀予測、中印の勢い鈍る (31日 14:03)  
 郵政の事業計画、条件付きで認可 総務相、宅配便統合延期も (31日 13:45)  
 北朝鮮ミサイル、衆参両院が発射自制求める決議 都は伝達訓練 (31日 13:30)  
 首相、追加経済対策「4月中旬までに」 赤字国債発行も容認 (31日 13:18)  
 GM、労組に強硬姿勢も ワゴナー氏に高額退職手当 (31日 12:26)  
 国交省、大戸川ダムの建設凍結 直轄国道18件も凍結 (31日 12:22)  
 ソニー、10年春新卒採用48%減 中途採用は当面凍結 (31日 12:13)  
 北朝鮮ミサイル、参院が発射自制求める決議 東京都は伝達訓練 (31日 11:44)  
 公的資金で株買い取り 自民が追加対策、議員立法で提出へ (31日 11:26)  
 日経平均反発、午前終値72円高の8308円 上げ幅一時140円超す (31日 11:16)  
 年金記録統合、2割どまり 社保庁、処理担当者1万人超に (31日 11:03)  
 経営陣の報酬を政令で制限 仏政府、ルノーなど対象 (31日 10:26)  
 柏崎刈羽原発「地震想定できず反省」 07-08年版原子力安全白書 (31日 10:13)  
 無料で音楽検索・取り込み 米グーグルが中国専用サービス (31日 10:05)  
 日経平均 売り先行後、小幅反発 (31日 09:15)  
 非正規労働の失業、9カ月間で19.2万人 内定取り消し1845人 (31日 08:47)  
 2月の有効求人倍率0.59倍、6年ぶり低水準 失業率4.4%に悪化 (31日 08:37)  
 IMF、新興国支援の資金枠3倍に 首相「無条件融資を」 (31日 08:02)  
 日航、成田の貨物スペース2割縮小 輸出入急減、「空き」返却 (31日 07:00)  
 日清紡、燃料電池を低コストで 価格6分の1の触媒 (31日 07:00)  
 米欧大手銀、金融取引所を設立 国債増発で需要拡大見込む (31日 07:00)  
 GM再建、猶予60日 米大統領「計画は不十分」 (31日 07:00)  
 NY原油、大幅続落 5月物は48.41ドルで終了 (31日 05:53)  
 NY株続落、終値254ドル安の7522ドル 自動車再建への懸念で (31日 05:38)

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# Sikorski za większym zaangażowaniem UE w Afganistanie

**Gazeta.pl**

■ PAP 2009-03-21, ostatnia aktualizacja 2009-03-21 16:23:32.0

**Unia Europejska nie angażuje się wystarczająco w Afganistanie, tymczasem powinna uznać wsparcie stabilizacji w tym kraju za swój priorytet, nawet kosztem innych - powiedział w sobotę w Brukseli minister spraw zagranicznych Radosław Sikorski.**

Podczas panelu na "Brussels Forum", międzynarodowym spotkaniu osobistości ze świata polityki, dyplomacji, biznesu i finansów, wskazał, że rocznie UE wydaje na Afganistan 160 mln euro, choć jest "superpotęgą, jeśli chodzi o pomoc humanitarną i rozwojową".

"Komisja Europejska przedstawiła plany dorzucenia do tego kolejnych sum, ale to nadal będą sumy rzędu dwustu - dwustu kilkudziesięciu milionów. Tymczasem na działania wojenne wydajemy dziesiątki miliardów. Te proporcje nie są właściwe, skoro wiemy, że nie da się ustabilizować Afganistanu czysto wojskowymi metodami" - powiedział potem dziennikarzom.

Dlatego, zdaniem Sikorskiego, europejskie kraje powinny dodatkowo wesprzeć Afganistan, angażując się tam militarnie, albo w działania cywilne. "Tam, gdzie z takich czy innych powodów nie jest możliwe wysłanie żołnierzy, to przynajmniej kraje powinny sprawiedliwie ponosić odpowiedzialność i ryzyko, przynajmniej (powinny) pomóc innym ich zastąpić" - powiedział. Polska - dodał minister - jest wśród krajów, które rozważają zwiększenie swojego 1600-osobowego kontyngentu.

Sikorski przekonywał też, że pieniądze na większe zaangażowanie cywilne w Afganistanie "są w budżecie UE". "Jeśli uznajemy, że Afganistan jest priorytetem - a moim zdaniem powinien być - to trzeba nań przeznaczyć środki kosztem innych" - apelował.

Od zeszłego roku trwa zwiększanie unijnej misji policyjnej w Afganistanie do ok. 400 osób. Misja szkolenia policjantów afgańskich Eupol, licząca początkowo 160 osób, została ustanowiona latem 2007 roku. W lutym br. UE zgłosiła gotowość dalszego wzrostu zaangażowania w operacje cywilne deklarując chęć "wspólnego podejścia" z administracją Baracka Obamy. O ile spełnione zostaną warunki bezpieczeństwa, prawdopodobne jest wysłanie misji obserwacyjnej na wybory prezydenckie 20 sierpnia, których organizację UE obiecała wesprzeć finansowo.

Sikorski przekonywał w dyskusji, że celem zaangażowania wspólnoty międzynarodowej (NATO, USA, UE) w Afganistanie jest "oddanie kraju Afgańczykom". "Musimy zostawić po sobie stabilną sytuację" - powiedział. Całkowicie zgodził się z nim specjalny wysłannik USA ds. Afganistanu i Pakistanu Richard Holbrooke. Dlatego podkreślił on konieczność wzmocnienia afgańskiej armii i policji.

Wypowiadając się w imieniu nowej administracji USA, zapowiedział dalsze zwiększenie sił afgańskiej policji, ponad zaplanowane 82 tys. funkcjonariuszy (z obecnych ok. 78 tys.).

"Wszyscy bez wyjątku: Afgańczycy, eksperci, rząd, amerykańscy wojskowi, mówili że to za mało - powiedział Holbrooke. - Więc razem z naszymi sojusznikami i przyjaciółmi w afgańskim rządzie spodziewamy się bardzo znaczącego wzrostu".

Pośrednio zdementował jednak informację dziennika "New York Times", że celem jest zwiększenie liczebności afgańskiej armii i policji łącznie do ok. 400 tys. osób. Na razie rząd w Kabulu wdraża plan zwiększenia armii z 70 do 134 tys. Holbrooke powiedział, że Biały Dom nie podjął jeszcze takich decyzji.

Sytuacja w Afganistanie, wraz z nasilającym się atakami talibskich bojówek, jest teraz najgorsza od czasu obalenia reżimu talibów w 2001 roku po zamachach z 11 września. Holbrooke podkreślił jednak, że problemu terroryzmu nie da się rozwiązać, pomijając sąsiedni Pakistan. Tłumaczył, że terroryści powiązani z zamachami z 11 września w USA, a także w Londynie, Madrycie czy Bombaju "są nie w Afganistanie, ale w Pakistanie". "Nie możemy ignorować Pakistanu. Jeśli Taliban (tam) wygra, talibowie wrócą do Afganistanu" - powiedział Holbrooke.

PAP

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**Sábado, 21**  
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## **Finanzas-economía-Brasil-UE-G20**

### **Brasil insta a EEUU y UE a ser motores de reactivación contra crisis**

El canciller brasileño, Celso Amorim, afirmó el sábado en Bruselas que Estados Unidos y la Unión Europea (UE) son quienes deben hacer más esfuerzos de reactivación para enfrentar la recesión mundial, debido a su "responsabilidad" en la actual crisis económica.

"El estímulo debe ser proporcional a la responsabilidad que cada país tiene en esta crisis. No se puede pedir a Turquía, Brasil o India tener la misma responsabilidad que Estados Unidos y Europa", señaló Amorim en un debate sobre "multilateralismo económico", en el marco de la conferencia Brussels Forum.

"Sabemos que Europa tiene otros problemas vinculados con el Este de Europa y quizás otras cuestiones, pero creo que Europa también debe hacer un esfuerzo en términos de reactivación", continuó, destacando la necesidad de evitar medidas proteccionistas que convierten en "negativo" ese impulso económico.

La UE rechazó en su cumbre de Bruselas de jueves y viernes la presión norteamericana de inyectar más fondos públicos ante la recesión, con la mente puesta en mostrarse unida para reformar el sistema financiero mundial en la cita del G20 del 2 de abril en Londres.

La UE ha adoptado hasta el momento medidas presupuestarias para afrontar la crisis por un monto de 400.000 millones de euros (unos 520.000 millones de dólares), es decir el 3,3% del Producto Interior Bruto (PIB) de los 27.

De su lado, Estados Unidos lanzó en febrero un plan de impulso económico de 787.000 millones de dólares, lo que representa un esfuerzo del 5,5% de su PIB, y milita por la necesidad de más medidas presupuestarias a nivel mundial para luchar contra la recesión.

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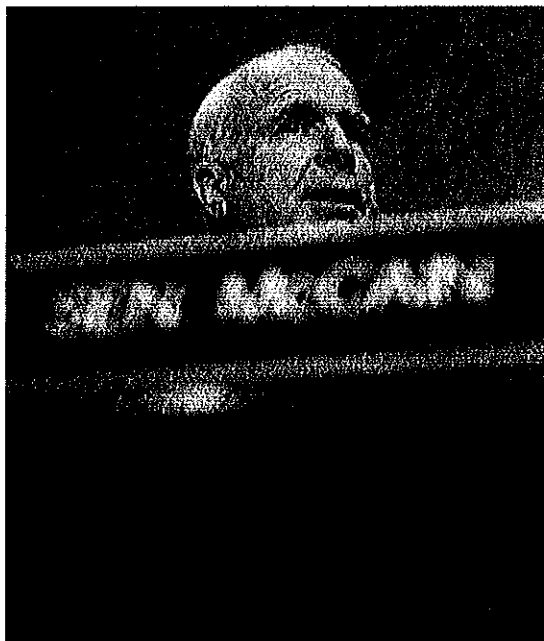
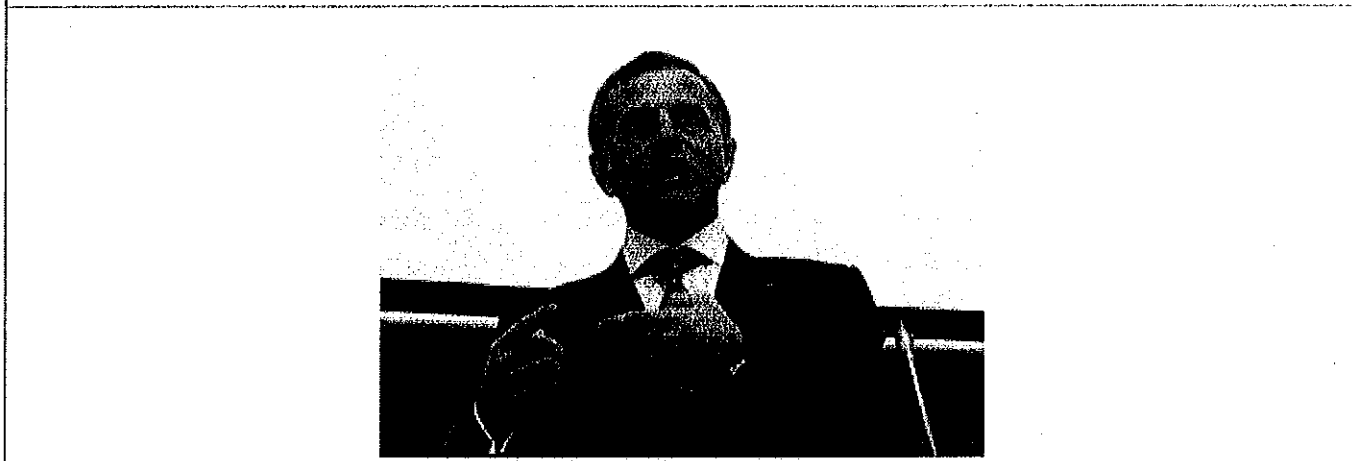
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## Situația din România, discutată de Geoană cu John McCain și Richard Holbrooke

Președintele Senatului Mircea Geoană a discutat, la Bruxelles, cu senatorul american John McCain și cu ambasadorul special al Administrației Obama pentru Afganistan și Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, situația din România, evoluțiile geo-politice din regiune și problemele generate de criza economică.

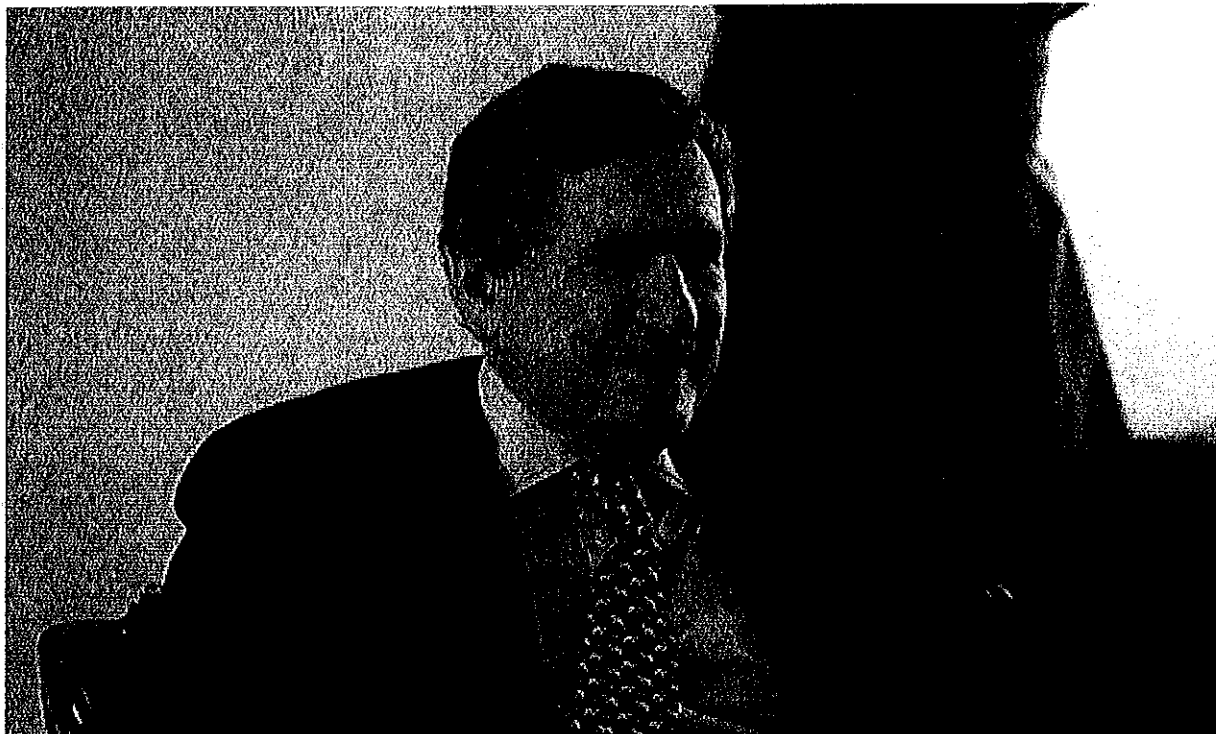


Geoană a precizat, pentru MEDIAFAX, că, în calitate de **președinte al Senatului României**, a adresat invitația ca o delegație a Senatului SUA să viziteze România pentru a da un element de dinamism suplimentar relației strategice româno-americane, după modificările din cadrul administrației SUA.


Președintele Senatului a declarat că a avut, sâmbătă, la Bruxelles, o conversație cu senatorul american **John McCain** și cu un număr de senatori americani, pe teme legate de evoluțiile relațiilor SUA și NATO cu Federația Rusă, Ucraina și Georgia, existând de asemenea și un schimb de opinii cu privire la prioritățile noii administrații americane și ale Senatului american


față de **problemele crizei economice** mondiale și ale evoluțiilor geo-politice din regiunea României.

Mircea Geoană s-a întâlnit, totodată, cu ambasadorul **Richard Holbrooke**, cu care a discutat despre evoluțiile din România, dar și pe o temă aplicată, legată de situația din zona Iran-Pakistan-Afganistan.



**Geoană** a participat împreună cu președintele Georgiei, cu Richard Holbrooke și cu lideri europeni la un panel cu privire la Georgia și la zona Mării Negre, în contextul Conferinței anuale a German Marshall Fund.

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## **Amorim se reunirá con autoridades de la UE, Bélgica, Holanda y de la CPLP**

20 de Marzo de 2009, 07:25PM ET

Brasilia, 20 mar (EFE).- El canciller brasileño, Celso Amorim, comenzará mañana una gira, que incluirá encuentros con autoridades de la Unión Europea, Bélgica y Holanda, además de la reunión ministerial extraordinaria de la Comunidad de los Países de Lengua Portuguesa (CPLP) en Cabo Verde, informó hoy la Cancillería.

El canciller brasileño llegará mañana a Bruselas para conversar con el alto representante para Política Exterior y de Seguridad Común, Javier Solana, con quien repasará temas de la agenda internacional.

El mismo día participará en el "Brussels Forum 2009" sobre buenas prácticas de gobierno económico, en el que también asistirá el presidente del Banco Mundial, Robert Zoellick.

El lunes, Amorim va a ser recibido por el presidente de la Comisión Europea, José Manuel Durao Barroso, y por la comisaria para Relaciones Exteriores y Política Europea de Vecindad, Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

Con esta representante europea, discutirá sobre la relación entre el bloque comercial y Brasil y "hará énfasis" en la implementación del plan de acción relativo a la asociación estratégica entre Brasil y la UE, que fue adoptado en diciembre del año pasado.

El Plan de Acción prevé encuentros periódicos entre representantes brasileños y del bloque comercial en varias áreas y a diferentes niveles, para poder convertir la alianza estratégica en acuerdos de cooperación económica, política, social, ambiental, científica y tecnológica.

Ese mismo día, Amorim se encontrará con su homólogo belga, Karel De Gucht, para analizar temas de su agenda bilateral.

El martes, el canciller brasileño realizará una visita oficial a Holanda, donde se encontrará con el ministro de Exteriores, Maxime Verhagen.

Durante su permanencia en La Haya, también mantendrá encuentros con representantes de la Corte Internacional de Justicia y del Tribunal Penal Internacional.

El miércoles, Amorim se desplazará a Cabo Verde para participar en la reunión ministerial extraordinaria de la CPLP, sobre la situación en Guinea Bissau después del asesinato de su presidente, Joao Bernardo Vieira, a comienzos de este mes.

En esa reunión, la CPLP buscará "apoyar de manera concreta" la realización de elecciones presidenciales, además de "apoyar la manutención de la normalidad político-institucional" y el

desarrollo de ese país, según el comunicado de la cancillería. EFE

mp/jrh

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La polémica salida de Kosovo

## Ira y frustración entre los aliados de la OTAN

La mayor parte de los socios de la Alianza desconfían ahora de España

RICARDO MARTÍNEZ DE RITUERTO · Bruselas - 23/03/2009

Vota

Resultado ★★★★★ / 10 votos



Ira y frustración expresó el secretario general de la OTAN, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, el pasado viernes en una reunión con todos los embajadores aliados cuando llegó el momento de discutir la manera en que España había anunciado su retirada unilateral de Kosovo. Buena parte de los 26 jefes de delegación secundaron las palabras de Scheffer, a las que tuvo que contestar el embajador español con razones que nadie discute pero que no sirven para paliar el gravísimo daño causado a la credibilidad de España en la escena internacional. "Lo hecho no tiene vuelta atrás", apunta una fuente diplomática. "El daño ya está hecho".

Chacón: "Me pareció correcto transmitir la decisión directamente a los soldados españoles"

Chacón, "satisfecha" de su reunión "muy cordial" con Jaap de Hoop

"Cuando los países toman decisiones, han de consultar con sus aliados y todos deben estar al tanto de las consecuencias", explicaba ayer Peter MacKay, ministro canadiense de Defensa y uno de los dirigentes políticos aliados que han sonado como posible sucesor de Scheffer, quien el próximo 31 de julio entrega el relevo como jefe de la OTAN. "El respeto mutuo en la Alianza exige ese nivel de comunicación", recordó cuando le preguntaron sobre la evacuación española de Kosovo.

MacKay estaba en Bruselas para asistir al foro de debate de cuestiones internacionales que cada mes de marzo organiza el German Marshall Fund. En su panel, dedicado al 60º aniversario de la Alianza, intervino también Scheffer haciendo un canto a la necesaria solidaridad entre los aliados, cuestión de plena vigencia política, militar y financiera en la organización.

Scheffer no compareció luego ante la prensa para dejar ver cómo evoluciona la crisis diplomática creada por el Gobierno español con sus socios.

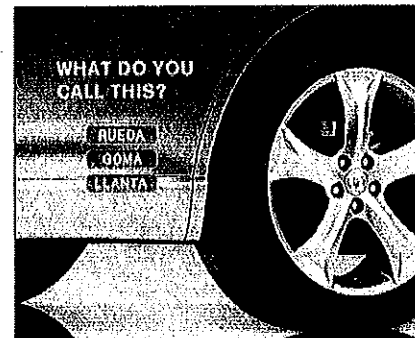
Pero el viernes, en una reunión preparatoria de la cumbre de los días 3 y 4 de abril en Estrasburgo y Kehl, el secretario general de la OTAN dejó claro ante los presentes su "ira y frustración" por la peripecia protagonizada por la ministra de Defensa de España, Carme Chacón, en Istok. Y le secundaron buena parte de los aliados.

En términos muy duros intervino el representante italiano, país que ahora tiene el mando global de la misión de la OTAN en Kosovo (Kfor) y, en concreto, sobre la región occidental en que opera el contingente español. También ventilaron su frustración los embajadores de Grecia y de Rumanía, países que, al igual que España y Eslovaquia, no reconocen la independencia de Kosovo y que ahora se quedan colgados de la brocha con los argumentos españoles de que tal independencia hace inviable la presencia de las

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El secretario general de la OTAN, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. EFE



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tropas.

Reino Unido, Francia, Turquía y Holanda, que han defendido la tesis de que ya es factible rebajar la presencia aliada en Kosovo, vieron en silencio cómo ardía en la pira la credibilidad de España. Alemania hizo saber que no quería que un incidente de falta de comunicación, calificado de burdo por alguna fuente aliada, fuera a empañar la cumbre de abril, de la que es coorganizadora.

El embajador español en el Consejo Atlántico, Carlos Miranda, dio respuesta a todos, reiterando los motivos ya expuestos por carta el jueves a los aliados: que será una retirada gradual y coordinada; que España ha sido un socio constructivo; que pese a no reconocer la independencia de Kosovo, Madrid nunca ha bloqueado decisiones de la OTAN sobre el territorio; que la evolución de la independencia crea situaciones de incomodidad política a España...

Son razones comprendidas por los presentes que, sin embargo, consideran irresponsable e insolidaria la puesta en escena, contraria a la civilidad, usos y procedimientos propios de una organización internacional y más cuando todos habían acordado actuar de consuno llegado el momento. Ése es el jarrón que España ha roto en Kosovo y que no puede compensar colocando otro igual o más grande en Afganistán.

"No tiene vuelta atrás; el daño ya está hecho", insiste una fuente diplomática. "¿Con qué teorías de seguridad internacional va a acudir Zapatero a Estrasburgo?", se pregunta otra fuente, haciendo énfasis en la credibilidad volatilizada del presidente del Gobierno español. "Parece ignorar que lo que se hace en un escenario tiene efectos sobre otros. Quiere sentarse en el G-20, dice que quiere jugar un papel en Oriente Próximo y el hecho es que España es ahora un país poco creíble, que pone y quita soldados al albur".

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## **Eurozona registra enorme déficit comercial**

Bruselas, 23 mar (PL) La Eurozona sufrió en enero un déficit comercial de 10 mil 500 millones de euros por la debilidad de la demanda global que golpea las exportaciones comunitarias, indicó hoy la oficina de estadísticas europeas Eurostat.

En diciembre había sido de sólo mil 700 millones de euros, según datos revisados de la entidad, pero el primer mes de 2009 las exportaciones disminuyeron 10,7 por ciento con respecto a diciembre y las importaciones cayeron 7,3 por ciento.

La profundización de la crisis financiera del orbe agudizó el parámetro, pese a las continuas estrategias de estímulo, advirtieron los expertos.

En ese sentido el comisionado de Asuntos Económicos y Monetarios de la Unión Europea (UE), Joaquín Almunia, sin descartar más medidas, señaló que tanto el bloque en su conjunto como la región del euro han hecho suficiente para estimular la economía.

No podemos costear el pasar las próximas dos décadas absorbiendo la deuda de los gastos de los paquetes fiscales, puntualizó ayer durante una rueda de prensa en Bruselas, organizada por el Fondo alemán Marshall.

Pese a que Estados Unidos promueve el incremento de esfuerzos en este sentido, como alternativa anticrisis, los líderes de la UE rechazaron cualquier estímulo adicional tras concluir el viernes una cumbre de dos días en la capital belga.

La preocupación de que más gastos gubernamentales impulsen el déficit a niveles más altos del límite, marcó la posición del llamado viejo continente.

Según los reglamentos, los 27 estados miembros de la UE deben mantener este indicador por debajo de tres por ciento de su Producto Interno bruto (PIB).

rmh/ggr

PL-50,

## Gündem

21.03.2009

### Obama Türkiye'ye niçin geliyor

Zeynep GÜRCANLI- BRÜKSEL

Avrupa'nın adı konulmamış başkenti Brüksel, bugünlerde çok hareketli. Şehrin her köşesinden polis siren sesleri geliyor.

Bunun nedeni Brüksel'in iki farklı yerinde gerçekleşen iki önemli toplantı...

Shuman meydanındaki AB Konsey binasında Avrupa Birliği'nin 27 ülkesinin liderleri toplanıyor.

Diğer köşe Louise caddesi üzerindeki Conrad otelinde ise ABD'nin imzasını taşıyan bir başka önemli toplantı yapılıyor: German Marshall Fund'un organize ettiği '4. Brüksel Forumu.'

Shuman meydanındaki AB zirvesinde olmayan ABD, Conrad otelinde "tam kadro" mevcut.

En ilginç isim, 4 Kasım seçimlerinde Obama'ya yenilen Cumhuriyetçilerin Başkan Adayı John McCain.

Halen ABD Senatörü olan McCain'in yanı sıra, en az bir düzine daha ABD Kongre üyesi sırf toplantıya katılmak için Brüksel'de.

ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı'ndan çok sayıda Büyükelçi de Amerikalı senatörlere eşlik ediyor.

Aralarında Türkiye'nin çok yakından tanıdığı isimler de var...

ABD'nin Ankara'daki eski Büyükelçilerinden Marc Grossman ile Obama'nın Afganistan özel temsilcisi olarak atadığı Richard Holbrooke da toplantıda.

Gürcistan Devlet Başkanı Mihail Saakaşvili, AB Komisyonu Başkanı Jose Manuel Barroso, AB Dış Politika özel temsilcisi Javier Solana, İsveç Dışişleri Bakanı Carl Bildt, Dünya Bankası Başkanı Zoellick, Çek Cumhuriyeti ve Belçika Başkanları hemen göze çarpan diğer isimler.

#### OBAMA NEDEN GELİYOR?

Bu kadar Amerikalı yetkiliyi bir arada bulunca, sormadan olmaz...

ABD Başkanı Barack Obama, göreve başladıktan hemen sonra Kanada'yı ziyaret etti. Nisan başında Avrupa'ya gelip, G-20, NATO ve AB-ABD zirvelerine katılacak.

Ve ardından da Türkiye'ye "ikili düzeyde" bir ziyarette bulunacak. Peki ABD Başkanı, komşu Kanada'dan sonra, ikinci ziyareti için neden Türkiye'yi seçti.



**Zeynep  
Gürcanlı  
YAZIYOR**

Bunun yanıtını, ABD Dış politikasının en önemli planlayıcılarından birinden, ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı'nın "Siyaset Planlama" Direktörü Anne-Marie Slaughter verdi.

Yanıt kısa ve açık oldu;

"Başkan, Türkiye'ye, Türkiye'nin öneminin altını çizmek için geliyor..."

Slaughter'a göre, Türkiye ile ABD'nin "ortaklığı" çok önemli; "Türkiye ile Avrupa'da, Ortadoğu'da ve Orta Asya'da ortaklığımız var. Bu ortaklığa çok büyük önem veriyoruz. Ve Başkan ziyareti ile bu ortaklığının öneminin altını çizecek..."

ABD'de yeni Obama yönetimi özellikle Orta Doğu ve Orta Asya'ya büyük önem veriyor. "Orta Doğu ve Orta Asya'daki güvenlik, hem ABD'yi, hem de Türkiye'yi etkiler" diyor, Slaughter ve ekliyor:



"Türkiye ile ABD, on yıllardır hem NATO içinde, hem de ikili düzeyde müttefik. Hem Orta Doğu, hem de Orta Asya, her iki müttefik ülke için de, Türkiye ve ABD için, kritik önemde. Başkan da, Türkiye'de bunları konuşacak..."

Türkiye seçim telaşına düşmüş;

Brüksel'deki bu önemli forumda Ankara'dan üst düzeyde kimse yok.

Ama Türk yetkililer pek ortalıkta görünmeseler de, Türkiye'ye hemen her konuda bir atıfta bulunuluyor.

İzlenimler sürececek...

<b>ADnet Reklamları</b>	<b>Bu bir reklamdır.</b>
	
<b>\$25.000 PARA ÖDÜLLÜ YARIŞMA</b> ForexFormula 2009 Hemen ÜCRETSİZ Katılın. forexformula2009.com Reklam vermek için tıklayınız.	<b>FOREXFORMULA 2009</b> \$25.000 Ödüllü Döviz İşlemleri Yarışması Hemen ÜCRETSİZ Katılın. forexformula2009.com

## Dünya

21.03.2009

### Holbrooke Obama'nın Afganistan stratejisini açıkladı

Zeynep GÜRCANLI- BRÜKSEL

Türkiye, Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sayesinde Davos toplantılarını tanıdı. Ancak en az Davos kadar önemli bir uluslararası toplantı da şu anda Brüksel'de devam ediyor.



German Marshall Fund'un organize ettiği toplantının amacı, tüm dünyanın etkin isimlerini ancak özellikle Amerika ve Avrupa'nın "karar vericilerini" bir araya getirmek.

### **Brüksel Forum'undan kareler**

Nitekim, toplantı Fon'un ABD ayağı tarafından düzenlendiğinden en geniş katılım da ABD Kongresi'nden.

Onlarca Amerikalı Kongre üyesi arasında göze çarpan en ilginç isim, 4 Kasım seçimlerinde Obama'nın karşısına aday olarak çıkan, ancak kazanamayınca Senatörlük görevine dönen John McCain.

ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı'ndan çok sayıda Büyükelçi de Amerikalı senatörlere eşlik ediyor.

Aralarında Türkiye'nin çok yakından tanıdığı isimler de var...

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**Zeynep Gürcanlı  
Brüksel'den  
YAZIYOR**

Türkiye ise toplantıda hemen hemen yok gibi... Resmî tek katılımcı AKP milletvekili Suat Kınıkloğlu. Ancak Kınıkloğlu'nun milletvekili seçilmeden önce German Marshall Fund'un Türkiye temsilcisi olduğunun da altını çizmek gerekir.

## **İŞTE ABD'NİN AFGANİSTAN POLİTİKASI**

Brüksel Forum'da en çok konuşulan iki konu; Afganistan'ın geleceği ve dünyadaki küresel kriz.

Konu Afganistan olunca da gözler doğal olarak ABD Başkanı Obama'nın göreve gelir gelmez "Afganistan ve Pakistan özel temsilcisi" olarak atadığı Büyükelçi Richard Holbrooke'a dönüyor.

Holbrooke, Brüksel Forumu'nda katıldığı panellerde Obama'nın en çok merak edilen politikasını, Afganistan'da izleyeceği politikayı ilk kez açıkladı.

## **"ASIL SORUN PAKİSTAN"**

Holbrooke'un bu konudaki en ilginç çıkışı ise Afganistan sorununun çözümü için asıl olarak "Pakistan sorununun çözülmesi gerektiğini" söylemesi oldu. İşte en can alıcı sözleri:  
"11 Eylül saldırılarını planlayanlar da, Pakistan Başbakanı Benazir Butto'yu öldürenler de, Hindistan'ın Bombay kentindeki terör saldırısını düzenleyenlerde aslında Afganistan'da değil, Pakistan'da. Pakistan'ın, Afganistan sınırındaki aşiretler bölgesinde yaşıyorlar. Dolayısıyla eğer Taliban ya da El Kaide karşısında başarılı olmak istiyorsak öncelikle Pakistan sorununu çözmemiz

## **BABACAN'DAN CLINTON'A AFGANİSTAN MEKTUBU**

Konferansta soru sorma imkanı bulduğumuz Richard Holbrooke, ABD'de yeni yönetimin Türkiye'den beklentileri hakkında da ipuçları verdi. Türkiye'nin "Afganistan'da merkezi bir rol oynadığına" dikkat çeken Holbrooke bunu üç unsura bağladı:

- Afganistan'daki Türkmen azınlık
- Afganistan'da Türkiye'ye yönelik genel sempati
- Türkiye'nin bugüne kadar hem NATO'da, hem de Afganistan'da oynadığı rol.

Bu konunun ABD Dışişleri Bakanı Hillary Clinton'un Ankara ziyaretinde de gündeme geldiğini kaydeden Holbrooke, Dışişleri Bakanı Ali Babacan'ın hem Clinton'a hem de kendisine ayrı ayrı mektup yazarak, "Türkiye'nin desteği sürecektir" mesajı verdiğini de açıkladı.

Holbooke, mektupta Babacan'ın özellikle "sivil alanda destek sözü verdiğini" de vurguladı. Ancak ayrıntı istediğimizde, "Ankara'nın vereceği desteğin ayrıntılarını açıklamayı Sayın Babacan'a bırakıyorum" dedi.

Diplomatik kaynaklara göre, Türkiye'nin gerek mektup aracılığıyla gerekse Amerikalı yetkililerle yüzyüze yaptığı görüşmelerde verdiği destek vaadi "Afganistan'a muharip asker göndermeyi" içermiyor.

Ancak Türkiye, "sivil amaçlarla" Afganistan'daki asker sayısını önümüzdeki dönemde arttıracak. Türk askerleri hem

gerekiyor. Hepimizin, ABD'nin, Avrupa'nın, Avustralya'nın ya da dünyanın bir başka bölgesine yönelik terör tehdidinin kalbinde Pakistan'ın yer aldığını anlamamız gerekir...."

### **İRAN'LA AFGANİSTAN DİYALOĞU**

Holbrooke, Obama

yönetiminin izleyeceği Afganistan-Pakistan stratejisinin ana hatlarını da şöyle özetledi:

- Sorunun asıl kaynağı olarak Pakistan'a eğilmek
- Afganistan'ın tüm komşuları, kesinlikle tümü ile bu sorunun çözümü için diyaloga geçmek. (Holbrooke bu maddeden bahsederken özellikle Çin'in adını andı. Adını anmadığı İran oldu. Ancak onu da 'Afganistan'ın kesinlikle tüm komşuları' diyerek, isim belirtmeden kayıtlara geçirdi.)
- Soruna sadece askeri açıdan değil, sivil açıdan yaklaşmak. Afgan halkını kazanmak. Ülkedeki uluslararası gücün sonsuza kadar kalmayacağını, bir işgal gücü olmadığını anlatmak.
- Afganistan ordusunu ancak özellikle polis gücünü eğitmek
- Afganistan'daki uyuşturucu üretiminin yerine tahıl ve diğer tarım ürünleri üretimine geçmek. (Holbrooke bu konuyu ABD Tarım Bakanı ile özel olarak konuşacağını, ABD'nin bu konuya eğileceğini, diğer koalisyon üyesi ülkelere de katkı beklediklerini söyledi. Bu konuda en vurucu cümlesi ise "Her yıl Afganistan'daki uyuşturucu üretimine karşı mücadele için milyonlarca dolar ayırdık. Ancak karşılığında bugüne kadar aldığımız koca bir hiç. Bu değişimell...")

### **"AFGANİSTAN'DA İNSANİ AMAÇLARLA DEĞİL, ÇIKARIMIZ İÇİN BULUNUYORUZ"**

Holbrooke'un bu konuda tüm dünyaya Brüksel'den verdiği bir başka ilginç mesaj ise şu oldu:

"Herkesin anlaması gerekiyor. ABD ya da uluslararası güce katkıda bulunan ülkeler buraya insani yardım için gelmediler. Kendi ulusal çıkarları bunu gerektirdiği için buradalar. Afganistan'da yuvalanan teröristlerin ABD'ye de tüm dünyaya da tehdit oluşturdukları için burada görev yapıyorlar"

### **"MOLLA ÖMER'İN PRENSİPLERİNİ TAKİP EDENLERLE İŞBİRLİĞİ OLMAZ"**

Holbrooke'a, Başkan Obama'nın tartışılan çıkışı "light Taliban ile görüşülebilir" sözü de soruldu. Ancak Obama'nın temsilcisi, Başkan'ın kendisi kadar açık konuşmamayı tercih etti bu konuda;

"Molla Ömer'in prensiplerini, öğretilerini takip eden hiç kimse, ılımlı diye nitelenemez. Ancak bir de Taliban hareketi içinde bu yola dini öğretiler, değerler ya da sadece hırs için girenler yok. Bir de bu işi bir meslek, bir iş olarak görenler var. İşte kazanılabilecek kişiler de onlar..."

### **TÜRKİYE'DEN KİMSE YOK, "MODERATÖR" DE YOK...**

Seçim telaşı içindeki Türkiye, Brüksel'de uluslararası toplantıda resmi düzeyde temsil edilmedi.

Kabil'de Türkiye'nin devralacağı komutanlık görevinde, hem de kırsal kesimdeki "sivil-asker işbirliği" görevlerinde kullanılacak.

Türkiye ayrıca Afgan ordusunun eğitimindeki rolünü de arttıracak. Afganistan'a verilecek bu ek desteğin ayrıntılarının ise Başkan Obama'nın Türkiye ziyaretinde kesinleşmesi ve açıklanması bekleniyor.


Ancak ilginçtir, Türkiye'den "resmi" hemen hemen hiç kimsenin gelmediği forum toplantısına, Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ı kızdıran ve "ünlü" olan moderatör David Ignatius da katılmadı.

Toplantıyı organize edenler başlangıçta Ignatius'un yine "moderatör" olarak bulunacağı Ortadoğu konulu bir panel planlamışlardı. Üstelik bu panele de Başbakan Erdoğan'ın dış politika danışmanı Ahmet Davutoğlu'nu davet etmişlerdi.

Ancak Davutoğlu toplantıya gelemeyeceğini bildirdi.

Bu durumda, Washington Post gazetesi editörlerinden olan Ignatius başka bir toplantıya yine moderatör olarak kaydırıldı.

Ancak Brüksel Forumu başladığında Ignatius ortalarda yoktu. Son gün organizatörlere "katılamayacağını" bildirdiği ortaya çıktı. Ignatius'un yerine moderatörlük görevini de yine Washington Post gazetesinden meslektaşısı bir bayan gazeteci Anne Applebaum üstlendi.

<b>ADnet Reklamları</b>	<b>Bu bir reklamdır.</b>
	
<b>Afyon'dan Gelen Lezzetler</b> İkbal Cumhuriyet ve Ahmet İpek sucuklarının satış merkezi www.sucugumafyondan.com Reklam vermek için tıklayınız.	<b>Forex İşlemlerini Deneyin</b> EUR/USD 1 pip, USD/TL 10 pip. Altın 3 cent. Faizsiz Hesap. www.hedefonline.com

# HABER TÜRK

## Soli Özel

Brüksel Forumu'ndan Türkiye'ye bakmak

**22.03.2009 07:20:08**

ULUSLARARASI konferanslarda Türkiye'nin ne kadar merkezi bir ülke olduğunu/olabileceğini daha iyi görüyorsunuz, hem de dünyanın merkezinin Türkiye olmadığını.

Kuruluş parasını 1970'li yılların başında Alman devletinin verdiği **Amerika merkezli German Marshall Fund** adlı kuruluş bu yıl **Brüksel Forumu** toplantısının dördüncüsünü yapıyor. Konferansta dünya sistemindeki gelişmeler hakkında alanlarında dünyanın en iyileri arasında sayılan **Atlas Okyanusu'nun iki yakasından, Asya'dan ve uluslararası kuruluşlardan** şahsiyetler var.

Türkiye ile ilgili mesajı da hem konferanstaki tartışmalardan çıkarıyorsunuz, hem de yemeklerdeki ve kahve molalarındaki konuşmalardan. Türkiye'nin iç oolitikasındaki gelişmeler ve dış Dolitikasındaki tavrıyla ilgili merak düzeyi yüksek.

**Başkan Obama'nın** ziyaretinin nahiyeti ve olası sonuçları hakkında ia ciddi bir beklenti var. Yorumlar arklı. Genel beklenti bu ziyaretin iki ilke ilişkilerini **daha ileri noktalara taşıyacağı**, ancak Türkiye'nin de Amerikan başkanından gelecek bazı taleplere hazır olması gerektiği yönünde.

Yerel seçimlerin sonuçları kadar bu seçimlerden sonra Türk demokrasisinin ne yönde ilerleyeceği sorusu da Türkiye ile ilgilenenlerin aklında. Bir Amerikalı katılımcının söylediği gibi **Türkiye ABD açısından dünya devlerinin bulunduğu ilk sıralamanın ardından gelen grubun en başlarında**. Bu nedenle dış politikadaki tercihleri kadar iç politikasında da bir **NATO** üyesi olarak demokratik istikrarını koruması önem taşıyor.

ABD'deki yeni yönetimin dünya meselelerine ve müttefikleriyle olsun, diğer ülkelerle olsun ilişkilerine yeni bir nefes getirdiği hemen belli oluyor.

**Dışişleri Bakanı Hillary Clinton'un**

buraya yaptığı ziyaretteki temaslarının çok yapıcı olduğuna dair mutabakat var. **Başkan yardımcısı Joe Biden'in "herkesi dinleyeceğiz"** sözü herkesin hoşuna gitmiş. Ancak cümlenin gerisi de önemli: **"sonra da sizden istediklerimizi söyleyeceğiz."**

Ortaya çıkan tabloda ABD'nin birinci derecede önem verdiği konularda ilgili tüm taraflarla istişarede bulunacağı açık. Birlikte hareket etmekte yarar gördüğü ülkelerle işbirliği koşullarını hazırlamaya ciddiyetle çalışacağı anlaşılıyor. Ancak ortada ciddi sorunlar da var.



## AVRUPA NE DİYECEK

**Obama yönetiminin yarattığı sıcaklığa rağmen özellikle Avrupalılar'ın ABD'nin tüm taleplerine cevap verip vermeyecekleri belli değil.** Taraflar dünyadaki ekonomik krize olan yaklaşımlarında birbirlerine hâlâ yaklaşmış değiller. **Bush yönetiminin nobranlığı** iki taraf arasındaki bakış farkını ve çıkar ayrılıklarını gizlemişti. Bu kez durum çok farklı.

ABD gündeminin en önemli konusu Afganistan ve Pakistan (artık bu iki ülke birlikte Afpak diye anılıyor). **Obama yönetimi bu konuda tüm NATO müttefiklerinden, Rusya'dan ve Çin'den de yardım isteyecek.** Bu iki ülkede kaosa kayılmasının önüne geçilemezse küresel bir belanın yaşanacağında herkes hemfikir.

**Rusya Dışişleri Bakanı Lavrov** da ülkesinin yeni güvenlik yapılanmasına katkıda bulunmaya hazır olduğunu söyledi. Rusların asıl isteği eskiden olduğu gibi büyük ülke muamelesi görmek. Bunu elde ettikleri takdirde **Obama yönetimiyle işbirliği yapma ihtimalleri yüksek.**

**Son tahlilde Obama yönetimi Başkan'ın İran halkına hitabında olduğu gibi bu ilk aylarda tüm önemli ülkelere yönelik açılımlar yapacak, yaklaşımlarını dinleyecek.** Ardından da taleplerde bulunacak. Bu taleplere müttefikler cevap vermezse, ya da İran kendisine yönelik açılımları değerlendirmezse yılın ikinci yarısından itibaren ABD'nin yeniden dizginleri tek başına ele almak isteyeceği bir dönem gelecektir.

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## Moderatörlüğü sallantıya girdi!

Davos zirvesinin ünlü ismi moderatör David Ignatius'un Türkiye'nin katılmaktan vazgeçtiği Brüksel Forum'da, yıllardır yürüttüğü moderatörlük görevine son verildiği iddia edildi.

Başbakan Erdoğan'ın Davos Zirvesi'nde tarihi çıkışını yapmasında etkili olan Washington Post yazarı, moderatör David Ignatius'un bu görevine son verildiği iddia edildi. Brüksel'de dün sona eren ve 4 gün süren Brüksel Forum'da Türkiye'nin katılacağını bildirdiği ancak daha sonra iptal edilen Ortadoğu konulu panel iptal edilince İgnatius başka bir panele yönlendirildi. Söz konusu panele Başbakan'ın dış politika danışmanı Ahmet Davutoğlu katılacaktı fakat daha sonra toplantıya katılamayacağını bildirdi. Ignatius'u ise forumda bir daha gören olmadı. Bu durum İgnatius'un önceki yıllarda da yürüttüğü moderatörlük görevine son verildiği söylentisine yol açtı. Öte yandan Forum'u organize eden kurumlardan biri olan German Marshall Fund'un İletişim Direktörü Elizabeth Rega, Ignatius'un, ailesinden birinin sağlık problemi nedeniyle foruma katılmayacağını bildirdiğini söyledi. DIŞ HABERLER



Washington Post yazarı David Ignatius, Davos Zirvesi'nde Başbakan Erdoğan'a tanınan süreyle kısa tutarak en çok eleştirilen isim haline geldi

**Kaynak:** <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Dunya/?l=176583>