

TRANSCRIPT

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Q: Welcome this morning to Ambassador Daniel Fried. He's the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, a career diplomat, and served in at least two Administrations in high positions, and a lot of time in Eastern Europe on the ground. I wanted to combine a couple of things to get you to talk about NATO. You pointed out in your presentation at the Foreign Journalists about a month ago that NATO has become kind of like an alliance with no geographic boundaries at this point. It's changing quite a bit; it's going to change more as a result of what happens at Riga next week. I wonder if you would take a few minutes here at the top and talk about what you do see coming out of Riga with respect to the alliance, and what are the big changes that you said you expect to occur there?

A: Riga is going to be another step in the process of NATO changing, transforming, to use the phrase, from its Cold War identity to a 21st century identity. You said NATO has a kind of global scope, or there aren't geographic limits--NATO is and will remain transatlantic alliance. And its core mission remains the Article 5 mission of defending the security of its members, but in a 21st century world, this takes place in new ways. The Soviet Union is gone; NATO in the Cold War was prepared to fight one titanic battle in central Germany. Now, NATO is adjusting to new threats, and of course, after all the decades of NATO's preparation to defend Germany, is a great historic irony that the one and only time NATO has invoked Article 5 was in response to an attack on the United States that originated in Afghanistan. And on September 12th, NATO was thrust into a new world for which it was not any more prepared than we were, the United States. NATO has spent the intervening years beginning to expand its mental horizons and develop its expeditionary capabilities. Now, this does not mean that it becomes a global

NATO. It's a transatlantic NATO, but it has missions around the globe and global capabilities, and this is not so much an assertion by me that NATO has made some huge theoretical shift. This is a statement of fact of how NATO has adjusted to new challenges since 9/11, and NATO is in this process of doing so. Riga will mark another step on that process, neither the first nor the last, but it is a case of a transforming alliance which is happening, whose transformation is so profound it is one of the unsung stories, less written stories of the past five years, and it is a success for the transatlantic community that despite the disagreements about Iraq, despite politics and partisanship that NATO has undertaken a set of new missions with Afghanistan front and center that change the nature of the organization. And again, this is a process not an act--it's not as if at Riga there will be some new NATO born from the sea. NATO is in the process of putting together the capabilities and the mental horizons to do this.

Q: Well, back to what Blair had to say yesterday about Afghanistan. It's the position of the United States government, I believe, that the NATO allies need to do more in Afghanistan, do more in terms of operations, more in terms of reconstruction development--that's correct, isn't it?

A: Well, it depends on which hat I want to wear.

Q: Well, I was going to ask the question--what does the United States want them to do at this point?

A: Based on what I said, the next step is for NATO to keep NATO nations to develop military capacities of an expeditionary nature, to have forces that they can send to the field at far distance. And the second thing NATO countries have to do is be prepared politically to commit those forces. Now, you can look at glass half full, glass half empty, and both are valid ("Around here, it's always half empty") Whether I'm half empty or half full depends on who I'm talking to and what my point is. I tend to be half full when I step back and look at progress because I believe progress is incremental, and I'm a big believer in half steps, which take you a far distance if you take enough of them. Day to day when I'm talking to allies, I'm glass half empty because I always want countries to do more, but both are valid points of view. There are now in the south in Afghanistan where this debate is come up, countries like Canada, the Netherlands, UK as well as the United States that went in, have done a lot of fighting and have suffered casualties. They have done extremely well on the battlefield, and I should say and put this in context, it was not a surprise that the Taliban went after the Dutch, the Canadians in the south when they came in. We knew they were going to do so that when NATO expand into the south where there had been no international presence and not much Afghan government presence that the Taliban would go after them. We also knew that the Taliban, or strongly suspected, that the Taliban would go after non-US NATO countries because they believed that these would be softer targets, so we knew this would be the

case beforehand. The Taliban's calculations were wrong; the countries, the Dutch, the Canadians, were extremely tough, and they had battlefield success. They paid a price; there were casualties, but they succeeded in the battlefield. Now, battlefield success in Afghanistan gives you only the time and space you need to create the conditions for strategic success, which is non-military. There's a lot of stuff that has to happen, but you have to start with basic security. Now, that is a story of NATO success in the field, but it's also true that there are four allies that were doing a disproportionate share of the fighting. Now this is not to criticize allies like Germany that have large effective PRTs in the north; that is also important. They're doing a job. The point we have made to allies is that caveats, that is national restrictions on the use of troops, are not what we like to see in NATO operations. It doesn't mean that everyone has to do every job, or that the German job in the north, and the Italian job in the west is intrinsically somehow irrelevant or less important--that's not true, I'm not saying that. But I am saying that caveats aren't a good idea. The NATO commanders need the operational flexibility to move troops in case of emergencies, and that's what this debate is about, and I don't know if there's anybody from Canada here, but this is a big deal for Canada, I think they've lost over 40 people. By the standards of 20th century war, that's not much, but by Canadian standards and by anybody's standards these days, that's a hard price. And the Canadians feel that they ought to feel that they ought to know that the rest of NATO is at their back, and we understand this and respect it.

Q: So I take it that the issue of the caveats is going to be raised at Riga.

A: Afghanistan needs to come up. I don't think it's right to say that we're going to go in there with a big caveat mission--Afghanistan will come up in a broader context. And I think a lot of countries want to hear from us, our assessment of how things are going, what's working, what's not working, what we can do better. Because as I said, success in Afghanistan is not simply military, it's more than military. So we need to be thinking more broadly, and in fact we are, so it's a lot easier and more constructive to discuss caveats within the context of the whole picture, so countries, so their publics see that this is not simply the Americans trying to solve the problems of Afghanistan through purely military means; it's not the case. But if the publics believe that is the case it becomes harder for them to accept a fighting role for their troops. So, yes, Afghanistan will come up but I think it will come up in a way--I hope it comes up in the way I described. These NATO meetings are sometimes predictable, sometimes not, and especially in the unscripted portions that leaders have a way of not really caring what their advisers say. They will often take the discussion the way they want to take it--that's why they're leaders.

Q: This summit is not scheduled to be one about expansion but I'm wondering if communication should be expected, (inaudible) the right kinds of words, (inaudible), Croatia, Macedonia, and then looking one step further; what kind of monies will be

there for global partners far beyond the NATO area?

A: Both good questions. It is not an expansion summit, that is, NATO is not going to be making invitations to new members this time around. The issue of NATO expansion is of course on the agenda in a general way, and there are three countries who have been in the so-called Membership Action Plan. Let me step back, some of you remember the debate about NATO enlargement in the 1990s, and at that time, NATO set up a series of steps, starting with Partnership for Peace, and going through intensified dialogue on membership questions. Then, going to a MAP, the Membership Action Plan, and then an invitation to NATO membership. It's hard to believe NATO membership was as hotly debated as it was 10 years ago, because it turned out to be such a fabulous success--look at the Poles, look at the Romanians, these are fighting allies; they have capable militaries. Some of the Polish units are world-class; the Romanians fly themselves to Afghanistan and got C-130s. Fabulous success, and the process will continue. Three countries--Macedonia, Croatia, Albania--are in the so-called Membership Action Plan. President Bush told the Croatian leader, Prime Minister Sanader, that he believes Croatia will be ready in 2008 to receive an invitation, and that there maybe more countries like Macedonia and Albania. We'll see how they do--they've all made progress, they have all have a way to go, and I expect the communicate will say something about this. It won't offer an invitation, it's still under discussion, but it will come up. Then there are two other countries which are not in the M-A-P, the MAP program, are in the intensified dialogue program, and that's Ukraine and Georgia. Both countries are very different. Ukraine has a large, capable military, but at the moment, there's no national consensus quite in Ukraine about whether they want to join NATO. The government says it wants to work with NATO, it wants to draw closer to NATO, and help its public opinion advance. Georgia, on the other hand, very much wants to join NATO, but they have a further way to go in terms of consolidating their institutions. So they are further for different reasons, both Georgia and Ukraine are further removed. We want to work with them, and help these countries consolidate. There's a debate in the alliance, as always, about how far NATO enlargement should go, and my answer to my European colleagues has been what it's been for the past 15 years on this subject, which is--let these countries get themselves ready to join NATO. Let them work on their democratic institutions, reform of the military, relations with their neighbors; let them do their homework and when they are ready, then our decision in NATO as to whether to take them in becomes a lot easier. Don't debate it in the abstract, debate it when these countries clean up their acts, so to speak, pull themselves together, and then the question will take care of itself just as it did with Poland, just as it did with the Baltics, just as it did with Romania.

Q: Can you tell us which countries will not submit to fighting, to sending fighting forces, and will anything be done beyond rhetoric possibly at the summit to try to get them to change? And just for the sake of argument, considering the history of some of these

countries, what's so awful about the fact that they're not going to get into fine fighting shape (inaudible) everything that happened before (inaudible)?

A: Not to be argumentative at all (Inaudible--to me that some of these countries are not up to fighting (inaudible) then there would be more people (inaudible) let's just stick to the facts, who's outside the charmed circle and are you going to do anything to try to get them to--

Barry, the way you put that I mean there are so many opportunities for me to generate a story that I'd rather not (inaudible). That's fair enough for you to ask, I just have to be careful the way I answer. I wouldn't put it in terms of charmed circle or refusing. There's been some speculation in the German press, and some debate in Germany which is obviously one of the countries you're referring to about what their role is and should be. First of all, the Germans have a couple of thousand troops in the north in (inaudible). I've been to their PRT--they are out there, they are patrolling, they are working, they are providing security, so let's be clear. The Germans are doing a good job in the North (Then you can do a good job without fighting?) Yes, and I want to be clear; that has to be the start, ok? Secondly, you've raised a question about history; well, look, Germany itself is still working through the issues of what it means to be a leader in Europe and what it means to be a leader in the world. What does this mean? It was a big deal for Germany to send combat troops to the Hindu Kush, and I don't minimize that. And the Germans also have troops in K4 in Kosovo--the commander of K4 is a German. So this is not a case of knocking the Germans or saying they're not doing a lot, because they are doing a lot. The question, and I want to slice this accurately, the question is: Should the NATO commander in the field have the ability to move his, that is NATO resources, in a contingency where they need to be moved? And is the issue of caveats a problem? National caveats are a problem. This doesn't mean that what the Germans are doing or what the Italians are doing is not intrinsically worth doing--it is. These are worthy efforts. The question is: Do the NATO commanders have the operational flexibility? And we think they need that kind of flexibility, which is different, I'm putting it in a way differently than your question suggests, but that's okay. So our view is, national caveats are not a good thing in general. NATO commanders should have the flexibility to deploy troops and a country like Canada and the Netherlands have every right to expect that their allies are at their back, which means if they get into trouble, they can count on support from all of NATO. So that is our approach. On the one hand, you can write a lot of stories about all of these debates, about whether or not there are enough countries doing the fighting, whether it's working, whether NATO has enough lift capability. On the other hand, the fact that we're having this discussion at all, the fact that NATO is involved at all in Afghanistan is rather astonishing, and this is a very big deal. So I want to be careful the way you redefine this debate, and respectful of both the Canadians and the Dutch, and understanding of the German position. And we hope that the Germans as they work through this, will understand that removing caveats is not, that's a good

thing, that's a question of allied solidarity, so another interesting piece of this--four or five years ago, if we were sitting around talking about NATO, you would have probably asked me whether or not we believed in NATO as an institution, or whether we had abandoned it in favor of a coalition in the war. Remember that debate? And it's interesting that nobody would think to ask this because the debate changes, our thinking has changed. Just thought I'd point that out.

Q: No, but is this coming up at the summit and is Germany the only caveated country?

A: No, no, a lot of the countries have caveats. I don't mean to single out Germany. I mentioned them because your question mentioned them, and because they have a large military, they have a large presence in Afghanistan. The way you framed the question, it was obviously about Germany, and we're debating it.

Q: I'd like to ask you energy security. How important will that be in the summit and how does NATO approach issues about energy security in a time like, you know Russia has (inaudible) a willingness to use it as an instrument of pressure.

A: Well there are two aspects to the question. One is about the transatlantic community's and then Europe's energy policies in general with respect to Russia. A second question is what is NATO's role within that larger question? The Europeans are debating themselves questions of their energy dependence and energy diversification. It's our view that monopolies are not a good thing in economics generally and they're less good in energy. We believe in diversification of sources of energy. We believe in open energy markets, meaning that they should be open for investment. Pipelines should be not the property of one country, and an open market is going to be good for everybody; both consumers and suppliers, and it's good for suppliers because an open system attracts the highest quality investment, which is what you need to develop resources. For Europe, the debate on energy policy is generally between member nations, that is, each country has its own national energy policy--the Germans anti-nuclear, the French pro-nuclear. And there's a debate between how much of Europe's energy policy should be EU-wide, and how much should be national, so that's one debate. Another debate is what their position should be about Russia and Gazprom. A third debate is what, if anything, NATO should do. So I want to slice that, unpack that question a little bit. Jim Jones and people in the United States, I'm thinking of Senator Luker, and others, have started addressing this question. There may be certain niche capabilities for NATO, whether it means, and these are not decisions, we're thinking about these issues. Does NATO have a role in possibly protecting pipelines from terrorism? Does it have a role in helping countries provide for security of LNG and other energy hard points on their territory? (You mean terminals?) Terminals, yeah. NATO 20 years ago discussed and vigorously debated pipelines. You remember the pipeline debates from the Soviet Union in the eighties, huge debates in NATO. So, and I myself

have discussed energy questions at NATO--so this is something that NATO is beginning to get its mind around; it's a critically important issue. There are various views in Europe; the Poles are at sort of one end and their view very strongly is, Europe needs to reduce its energy dependence on Russia, but not eliminate it. The Poles don't, they don't want to not buy gas from Russia, they want to also buy it from other sources so no one has a monopoly, and the market forces can then prevail. Other countries think, well, there is less of a problem than the Poles think that Russia needs to sell gas to us as much as we need to buy it from the Russians, so this isn't as big a deal. Nevertheless, NATO may have a niche capability here, and so our view that NATO ought to think about this--it's a large complicated problem, and NATO may have a role. Hope I answered it.

Q: I wonder if you could speak broadly about what you see is the extent Russian cooperation with American diplomacy these days. From time to time, Sergey Lavrov seems to kind of flamboyantly show his unwillingness to play along with us. Others suggest maybe this is a show; maybe Putin is more cooperative. Could you just run through the list--where are they helping us? How much of an obstacle do they want it to appear? Do they want it to appear more uncooperative than they are?

A: That's an interesting way you put it--they're better than they seem. Mark Twain on Wagner's music; it's better than it sounds. (Laughter.) The US-Russia relationship is very broad and runs through a spectrum. In some areas we are cooperating quite well. Let me give you an example. Nuclear proliferation issues and counterterrorism--really working very well together. Bob Joseph and Sergey Kislyak help run a global initiative on countering nuclear proliferation. I want to start by identifying areas where we really are working very well together, couple areas I've got. Then there are some areas where we are basically on the same side--we wish that the cooperation was a little smoother, but we are on the same side. Iran is an example, North Korea we're working pretty well together. On Kosovo, we have been working well together, I hope it stays that way, they're part of the contact group. There are issues--on economic issues, we range from good cooperation, US investment in Russia is climbing, both energy and non-energy industrial investment. We've signed a WTO bilateral agreement, finally. It's a good achievement. There are areas where we wish that the Russian energy sector were more open, but that's an area of cooperation. There are other areas where we have different points of view, Georgia, for example. I was in Moscow last week; I had about two-and-a-half hours with my Russian counterpart about Georgia. You know, areas where we think we can work together, areas where we have real differences, and so we're working through this. You can't describe the US-Russia relationship using any particular word. We are realistic about Russia's achievements and its problems. We cooperate wherever we can. Where we disagree we say so, we push back, and we do that openly. So that is not the kind of relationship where we're wildly enthusiastic about everything or we're really mad at the Russians; those are two (inaudible) that American Administrations in the past have indulged themselves, and neither one is particularly appropriate. We have

a partnership with Russia, it's realistic I think on both sides; areas of cooperation, areas of disagreement, but I think we're pretty open-eyed on both sides about this relationship.

Q: Do they sometimes want their music to appear worse than it is?

A: I think there's a range of views in Russia about the United States which reflects the Russian debate about what their place is in the world. They're debating issues themselves; Eurasianism, third way, Russia as a part from the rest of the world, or Russia as more cooperative with the United States, more cooperative with Europe. These are debates that Russians have had for some time, and you see that refracted in different views by different people. In the Russian point of view, they see their country as having regained some of the strength from a period of national chaos and decline in the 1990s, again, that would be their view as I've heard it expressed. They think they're back, they want to be more of a power in the world, but that doesn't mean they want to have a hostile relationship with us. Now, that's their point of view. We want to cooperate with them wherever we can. We have our own concerns about some of the developments in Russia we expressed, and this is something we work at every day.

Q: Can I take you back to energy? (Question inaudible) successive chunks of the supply chain. They see Russia as having (inaudible). What's your view or what's the US view about what (inaudible) Russia's energy (inaudible)

A: Well, we say and see the same things that a lot of Europeans say. We've talked about it with the Europeans. We believe that energy markets ought to be open, that supplies ought to come from multiple sources, both functionally, both fossil fuels, non-fossil fuels exotic sources, nuclear, there ought to be variety of supplies functionally and geographically. It's probably a bad idea to rely on only one national supplier for your oil or gas. That just strikes me as a principle, not anything particular to Russia but in general you want to have options. Therefore, we think that multiple pipelines make a lot of sense. This is actually, an open investment system is going to be, an open energy system is going to be good for Russia. That will mean that investment will flow based on commercial terms in a more efficient manner. But if Russia energy policy isn't written in Washington; it's written in Moscow. Our view is that opening up multiple sources is probably a good idea. And that's what we support on commercial terms; we don't believe in politically chosen routes, we believe in commercially chosen routes, but with that general caveat in mind, if I can use the caveat word in a different context.

Q: (inaudible)

A: I'm not sure that that's accurate. I remember the discussion this debate starting 10 years ago about the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline, and the Shah Deniz gas pipeline where it

was argued that it didn't make commercial sense. That in fact it would be better just to go through Russian-controlled pipelines, but it turned out if you actually, and by the way, I'm incapable of doing this, but if you crunched the numbers Bacu-Ceyhan was in fact commercially viable, it was the best route, just on price terms alone. And therefore, the problem you're trying to outline doesn't arise. I'm not in a position to talk about trans-Caspian routes and for instance, whether Kazakhstan feels in the North Caspian Sea would be better sent through Russian pipelines or through trans-Caspian South Caucasus pipelines. I don't know the answer to that question, but I suspect that just as it's a good idea to have multiple sources of supply, a seller may want to have more than one option for selling gas as a prudent policy. Look, this is for the Kazakhs, but we think that companies ought to be able to crunch the numbers, and pipelines ought to be built where it makes commercial sense, and obviously environmental sense, too.

Q: I'll take you back to caveats, if you will. Which countries do have troops in Afghanistan? Which ones don't have caveats on them, and what are you doing to change that if anything, will we see anything happen in Riga? And do you have any reason to believe that those caveats will change?

A: A list of countries with caveats--I don't have a list of countries with caveats. There are 32,000 almost 33,000 NATO troops. The big contributors are US, UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada, Italy, France, Romania, and the Poles are going to be a big contributor. They're sending in a mechanized infantry battalion without caveats early next year.

Q: Who doesn't have caveats?

A: Honestly, I am not sure which ones don't have caveats so you're not going to get a list like that. But we've got some of the countries in the north, some of the countries in the west, we went into the south earlier and the Dutch and the Canadians agreed to take this on. The Dutch, this is a tough debate in the Netherlands. I was in the Netherlands almost a year ago and talked to their defense minister, foreign minister, chief of their general staff. They knew this would be tough; it's a good thing they debated it because had they not, their publics would say, why the hell didn't you tell us? But they did know it'd be tough, and they've done a good job.

Q: But we know that the US doesn't have them, Canada, Netherlands don't have them.

A: Well, they're in the south. The countries in the south are the UK, US, Netherlands, Canada, and there are others--the Estonians have a small contingent in the south, and I'm sorry I don't have a list based on geography, I've got a total list.

Q: Is it possible for us to maybe get one later, because this gets talked about all the time?

A: Fair question, I'll see what I can get you.

Q: And do you have any reason to believe that it's going to change and are you going to take any steps to change it elsewhere?

A: I think countries are beginning to debate this. And I think what precipitated this is not so much what the United States did, it's the fact that the Canadians and Dutch were doing a lot of fighting, and the Canadians especially said, wait a minute, how come us? Why do we draw a short straw, and shouldn't allied solidarity mean at least countries are going to be standing at our back? And I must say the Canadians rather have a point. But again, I don't mean and I don't think the Canadians meant to say that any other kind of a mission is not a worthy mission, so it's not that kind of a debate. We think caveats are a bad idea. We had them, anybody who follows Kosovo probably remembers the March '04 riots where because of national caveats, NATO lost control of the situation for about a 24-48 hour period. I hated that. I was in Slovakia meeting with the then-Serbian defense minister, now the President of Serbia. Churches were being burned; these were riots. And NATO, K4 was not able to do its job because of the caveats. We've since eliminated them for Kosovo, and the force there is much more ready. God knows; I hope it doesn't get tested, but it is in better shape to deal with these sorts of contingencies. You shouldn't reintroduce these kinds of things in ISAF. (Remaining audio is cut off from recording.)

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