



NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire de l'OTAN

1 June 2004

His Excellency Gerhard Schröder
Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany
11012 Berlin
GERMANY

Mr Chancellor:

At their recent meeting in Bratislava, members of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly discussed at length an issue of considerable urgency, the apparent inability of the Alliance to meet its commitments in Afghanistan. Several members of the Parliamentary Assembly recently returned from visiting Afghanistan. They were unanimous in their praise for the professionalism of our soldiers, but were equally convinced that without additional resources, the Alliance faces failure in Afghanistan and risks losing all that it has currently invested.

The problem as noted by these members is the unwillingness of Alliance member countries to provide the personnel and key air assets required to deploy additional all-important PRT's and especially to provide ISAF with the extra forces needed to give the forthcoming elections the best chance of success. This is a matter of great urgency! If we do not commit more forces and the support assets to sustain them by late this summer, then the September elections in Afghanistan will likely do little more than legitimize the warlords and drug traffickers who control much of the country.

Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer has stated repeatedly that the credibility of the Alliance is at stake and so, it should be emphasised, is the future of the Afghan people. We have already made remarkable progress in this troubled country and, with a little more effort, our goal of bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan is achievable.

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The President – Le Président

Place du Petit Sablon 3, 1000 Bruxelles - Belgique
Tél: (32) 2 513 28 65 - Fax: (32) 2 514 18 47 - e-mail: slunn@nato-pa.int - website: <http://www.nato-pa.int>



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As Alliance legislators we urge our respective governments to examine carefully what further assets they can individually commit. We recognize that many of our NATO countries already deploy substantial numbers of forces in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Yet, compared with the total resources the Alliance can call on, the numbers needed now are not great. Their likely impact, however, is crucial. Time is not on our side. Excuses will not suffice. We must secure these assets now. To fail to do so will place in jeopardy all we have achieved thus far in improving stability in this crucial region.

In an extraordinary step, Members of the Assembly have asked me, in my capacity as President of the Assembly, to communicate personally these views to you and to the heads of government of all NATO countries in the fervent hope that effective action can be taken quickly and the necessary forces provided.

You also should know that our members additionally have committed themselves to raising this concern in their respective national parliaments in order to generate the widest possible parliamentary support for the required resources to be made available.

Respectfully,

DOUG BEREUTER
President, NATO PA

cc: Mr Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, The Secretary General of NATO
Chairpersons of all Parliamentary Defence Committees
Chairpersons of all International Relations Committees