

Memorial Meeting held
on the occasion
of the anniversary of the foundation
of the Hungarian Atlantic Council



Table of Contents

5

Speech by E. Szilveszter Vizi
President of the Hungarian Atlantic Council

11

Speech by János Martonyi Minister of Foreign Affairs

17

Speech by Csaba Hende Minister of Defence

21

Speech by Karl A. Lamers MP President
of the Atlantic Treaty Association

29

Welcome Address
by Ambassador Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis

“We are believers
of European integration [...] but
European integration cannot be conceived without
trans-Atlantic cooperation.”

Dr. József Antall

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
It is with these words by the late **Dr. József Antall**,
Hungary’s first freely elected **Prime Minister**, that
I wish to offer for your kind attention the festive
speeches made at the memorial meeting organised
on the occasion of the **20th anniversary** of the
founding of the **Hungarian Atlantic Council**.

Budapest, December 2012.

Professor Dr. E. Szilveszter Vizi
President
of the Hungarian Atlantic Council



Speech by

E. SZILVESZTER VIZI
PRESIDENT OF THE HUNGARIAN ATLANTIC COUNCIL

on the occasion of the celebration of the 20th Anniversary
of the founding of the Hungarian Atlantic Council



October 5, 2012, Stefánia Palota, Budapest

*Excellencies! Her Excellency Ambassador Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis!
Ladies and Gentlemen!*

We are very pleased to have with us so many distinguished guests, 27 ambassadors of NATO members, accredited in Budapest, friends of the Hungarian Atlantic Council, and friends of America.

It was 20 years ago, on the initiative of Prime Minister József Antall, that the Hungarian Atlantic Council (HAC) was founded in 1992 as a non-profit NGO (the founding members of the HAC were Iván Bába, Ákos Bod Péter, György Csóti, Csaba Ferencz, Tamás Katona, Tibor Kiss, Gyula Kodolányi, Ferenc Mádl, György Osváth, Gábor Perjés, Ágnes Szent-Iványi, Csaba Varga and Márta Varga). Its original mission was to promote Hungary's NATO accession and to ensure the most broad-based acceptance possible of Euro-Atlantic principles and values in Hungarian society.

After the political changes, the indispensable requirement of the democratic transformation process in Hungary was to redefine and reorganise of the alliance relations that linked us to the previous

system. Early on, the Antall government recognised that the assistance of the United States was necessary for this.

Our intention to leave the Warsaw Pact was announced by József Antall in Moscow at the meeting of the Political Negotiation Body of the Pact on June 7, 1990.

After the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact on July 1, 1991, on the initiative of Hungary, the Hungarian government started negotiations with the NATO countries about the conditions of accession to NATO.

On July 8, 1997, NATO invited three Central European countries, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland, to join the organisation. The Hungarian Parliament announced a referendum for a decision on the issue that was held on November 16, 1997.

Yes: 85.33%

This was the highest percentage of votes in favour that has ever been achieved in a referendum in Europe.

Material and human (intellectual) capital is highly appreciated in the world. However, social capital has received relatively little attention. Social capital includes confidence accumulated in human communities, willingness to cooperate, and social cohesion.

Social capital determines how the citizen relates to his or her government, to the actions his or her government takes with respect to other governments, or, to cite a concrete example, how a Hungarian citizen looks upon the involvement of the United States, NATO and Hungary in Afghanistan (See: "The well-being of nations: the role of human and social capital" by OECD).

A relationship based on trust had been created between the United States and Hungary in connection with the crisis in the region of former Yugoslavia. Hungary's international role gained a higher value.

The challenges of the XXIst century are different from the ones we experienced during the Cold War years.

New threats:

Intercontinental ballistic missile attacks; cyber attacks; terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their carriers;

energy security; threats to the infrastructure of the energy industry. The current threats include ethnic and religious confrontations, competition for natural resources, massive migration and organised crime.

Our co-operative activities:

Organised by the HAC and the Hungarian Institute of Foreign Affairs, the conference of the Atlantic Councils of the “Visegrád 4” was held in April 2010. It concluded with a joint communiqué by the presidents of “Jagello 2000” – the Czech Euro-Atlantic Council, the Hungarian Atlantic Council, the Polish Euro-Atlantic Society and the Slovak Atlantic Committee.

Before the Warsaw Summit on Eastern Partnership, and with the participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense, the HAC and the Hungarian Youth Atlantic Council (HYAC) organised an international conference with renowned speakers about NATO’s present situation and its future tasks and challenges. At the conference, with Hungary’s Minister of Foreign Affairs János Martonyi as Patron General, H. E. Roman Kowalski, Poland’s ambassador, made a presentation. After welcoming words from Prof. Dr. Szilveszter E. Vizi, the conference was opened with a keynote address by Péter Sztáray, political director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hungary’s Ambassador at Large, Gábor Bródi, coordinator of the European Neighbourhood Policy of the EU, moderated the conference, raising higher the professional standard of the deliberations. Experts, instructors and researchers on the theme made these discussions substantive and successful with their high-quality lectures.

A national campaign was launched by the HAC in 2010, which began with presentations by military attachés Col. Evan Roelofs and Paul O’Friel (USA), as well as with a lecture at the Zrínyi Miklós University by Mr. Karl Lamers, President of the NATO Parliament in Brussels, entitled “NATO’s evolving New Strategic Concept and Hungary”, and with substantial support from the Society for the Dissemination of Knowledge about Natural Sciences (TIT), Friendship Circles of Defense Forces and Society (HTBK) and the HYAC.

We went on a road show until the end of the year, visiting 14 localities in the country.

Another example must be mentioned: organised by Executive Vice-President Anna Felkai, we had a “sold out” event in Szombathely in 2011 (an audience of more than 400, with celebrities such as Minister of Defense Csaba Hende, State Secretary Lajos Fodor and the commander of the Hungarian contingent just back from Afghanistan, as well as Péter Sztáray, political director of the MFA). The media, both printed and electronic, continued to cover the event in Western Hungary for days.

The HYAC is exceptionally successful. It is always among the winners in international competitions. It plays a key role in the provinces and in training the next generation of activists. The youth organisation of the ATA (Atlantic Treaty Association) has a Hungarian Secretary General.

The secret of our success:

We have always communicated from the perspective of the citizen. In our understanding, this means that the HAC represents the people of Hungary. So far, all the Hungarian governments have been sincere supporters of the Euro-Atlantic ideal.

I would like to thank you, Madame Ambassador Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis, for your personal help, and I appreciate your sincere intention and dedication to disseminate the ideology of Atlanticism and to establish a real friendship between the Hungarian and American people. This is especially important for me; I have been working for years in the United States, and I am very grateful to your country, and personally to you, Madame Ambassador, and also to the former American Ambassadors who have served in this country.

We have had help from Mr. Karl Lamers and from the Hungarian government, primarily from Ministers János Martonyi and Csaba Hende, and the senior leaders of their respective ministries (Lajos Fodor, Péter Siklósi, Péter Sztáray, Gábor Bródi, etc.).

With the help of the Vice-Presidents and members of the Hungarian Atlantic Council, to whom I hereby express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation, we have successfully coordinated the Atlantic and the national ideals, the Euro-Atlantic and national interests, the joint representation of which had a major significance in creating consensus in the past as well as now. Let me quote Secretary General Rasmussen’s still very timely words:

“NATO was a family in which members assisted each other and would continue to do so.”

Accordingly, the task for the HAC is to demonstrate and reinforce the trans-Atlantic relationship, our commitment with which we can safeguard our common security, our shared values, having in mind NATO’s global security interests which are those of our greater family, NATO’s member states. We must convince people that these are, at the same time, national interests. This is our mission, this is what we have been doing for the past 20 years.



Speech by

János Martonyi Minister of Foreign Affairs

on the occasion of the celebration of the 20th Anniversary
of the founding of the Hungarian Atlantic Council



October 5, 2012, Stefánia Palota, Budapest

Dear Friends,

I beg your pardon for not going through the list of greetings and welcomes. If I did that, I would not be able to stay within the 10 minutes allocated to each speaker.

I would start with a small story. When sometime in the early 1992, an Atlantic Council – there was no Hungarian Atlantic Council at that time – it was the Atlantic Council of a NATO country, specifically, it was the Atlantic Council of Iceland which invited me to go to Iceland and speak about Hungary’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations, and to meet the leaders of the Atlantic Council there. I did go and had a very nice journey – at that time traveling was still enjoyable – and my hosts told me about the tasks of their Council. Mr. President just a few minutes ago spoke eloquently about these tasks. In Iceland, indeed, it was more difficult to carry out these tasks, as pacifism and the anti-American emotions were extremely strong and, indeed, the Atlantic Council of Iceland had achieved a lot to make Iceland’s NATO accession a reality without any major shock, and had created a solid working membership in the alliance thereafter. I told them at that time: “Well, if you have such a problem, I can offer you a deal – we would be more than willing

to take over your NATO membership.” So, I said, if they believe that the accession really does not matter too much for them, while we would like to have it very much, then - in fact - we could have such a deal. Their answer was: “Well, such a deal is ruled out. We do not have armed forces, but we do have a geographic situation and the related security issues, which are very important for us.” The point is that already then, we decided very clearly and without any doubt what we wanted, we wanted membership in the European Community, we wanted membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Everybody knows, particularly the more senior generation, that this was one of the central and cardinal elements of the transformation of political and social systems in Hungary and Central Europe. I do not wish to tell the whole story here, as we are going to listen to other speakers who will tell us all the details. However, I can tell you that much that it was in March of 1993 that a letter was sent to Manfred Wörner. I stress this point now mainly because we need to devote a moment also to pay homage to Manfred Wörner’s memory. He had done a lot for us and for Hungary’s NATO membership. A word has been said already about the referendum, and then the Parliament passed a resolution on February 9, 1999, in which it adopted the act on the articulation of the Washington Treaty. My personal great experience came three days later when, together with Bronislaw Geremek and Jan Kavan, the foreign ministers of Poland and Czechoslovakia, respectively, as well as the Secretary of State of the USA, Madeleine Albright, we deposited the accession documents in the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri. This was and will be one of the greatest experiences of my life. I must add that twelve days later the first armed intervention in the history of NATO started, in the form of bombing Kosovo, but this is another story. Many people had asked at that time, in view of what happened twelve days later: “Did you not regret becoming a NATO member?” and we answered: “Not at all, on the contrary!” Imagine a situation: if this operation with an – at least - indirect impact on our territory was to take place without our NATO membership! Indeed, we felt we were in far greater security just because less than two weeks earlier we had deposited the accession documents. However, I do not wish to speak about the past as the future is more important. And the future

can be summarized in very simple terms. We have our future here, in the Atlantic alliance, in the trans-atlantic system. In this very family that Mr. President spoke about a minute ago. So many things are changing in this world, and a lot is being said these days about these changes; the world economy, the geopolitics are undergoing changes, there is an immense and, I believe, substantially natural transformation going on. However, there are certain things which do not change. Our values do not change. They are the same. And NATO is basically an alliance based on shared values. Our security is of great importance to us. Security is important for everybody, however, our values are even more important. We can be truly secure and safe as we are part of a value community where we can mutually count on each other, where we have confidence, understanding and agreement among each other. These will be the issues of the coming decades, just like these have been the issues of the past decades. It is certain that the circumstances are different, but the Treaty is the same and our values are the same. And if we already speak about the Treaty, of course, we have to interpret Article 5 in the context of the times that are changing. Mr. President spoke about the cyber-attacks. Just a few hours ago, we have closed a two-day conference on this subject. Réka Szemerényi said that it was a major success. One of the key subjects was precisely the cyber war, how the future wars will be waged in the cyberspace. I just said, the future wars, and, politely, I did not mention the cyber attacks which have taken place so far. I did not speak about the essential dilemma either: at which point would an armed attack start. How shall we interpret our Article 5 if this is going to be a really serious situation. Because Article 5 continues to be the most important for us. Hungary's security is built on Article 5. This is one thing that we must never forget. Our security rests upon the strength and solidarity of the allies. And, of course, there will be new dangers, but our security will remain unchanged. I do not wish to ponder about wars, as - really - we do not wish to speak about war but peace and security. We cannot foresee the future wars. There is much talk about these subjects, exciting discussions are going on. I do not believe that a cyberwar would be more humane than a non-cyberwar. Just take this point: hundreds of millions could be deprived of food, energy and water, so human suffering would be much greater

than in the case of a shooting war. So it is not a solution, nobody should believe that wars would become humanized and we will live a peaceful and quiet life here on planet Earth while wars will be waged somewhere up in the outer space. No, because, in the end, territory will have to be occupied somewhere. Territory must be defended and we can defend our territory only if we can count on collective defense and on our allies. Therefore, our place is now within this alliance, and it will remain so in the coming decades and years. It will remain so until this world becomes a perfect place, the globe of absolute peace. One can and should believe in this, but the sure thing is if we have reliable allies. And, of course, the mission of the Hungarian Atlantic Council has changed over the past years. Its main task had been to explain to the Hungarian public opinion why NATO accession was so important for us and why the supporters of NATO accession had to win the referendum with such a majority. The task is the same now: we had faced a test immediately twelve days after depositing the accession documents. Many doubts were raised already at that time as to why we did have to support the accession. The tests do come back time after time, and I believe that the Hungarian society handles these tests with genuine strength.

I was asked by President Lamers today how the Hungarian society looks upon our presence in Afghanistan, whether there were any powerful protests. In my answer I told him that the Hungarian society was not really pleased but it did accept our involvement there. I believe we can all agree on this point. And as far as the future is concerned, I believe that we shall all need the Hungarian Atlantic Council just like before. It is so exactly, because a lot of confusing ideas circulate in the world today, there are many doubts in the minds of people and some believe that we should reconsider our values. My view is that our values are right, there is no need to reconsider them. I believe that our Atlantic Council will continue to be active in this direction. We should all thank them for what they have done over the past twenty years and I commend them in advance for what they are going to do in the decades and years to come. Thank you very much for your kind attention.





Speech by

CSABA HENDE MINISTER OF DEFENCE

on the occasion of the celebration of the 20th Anniversary
of the founding of the Hungarian Atlantic Council



October 5, 2012, Stefania Palota, Budapest

*Dear Madame Ambassador, Dear Mr. President, Distinguished Audience,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

we all came here together to celebrate and to remember. To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Hungarian Atlantic Council: a mission completed in an exemplary manner and work performed with success. To remember everything that we have done together and what we have been through together. To remember and to remind ourselves of the reasons why we have done all this.

20 years is a long time, as our forefathers used to say: a whole generation. The world has changed a lot since that time. We lived our young years here in Hungary and Central Eastern Europe under the dictatorship of the existing socialism. We placed our hope, which was often excessive and not free of illusions, in winning the freedom as defined and exercised in the Atlantic world. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was self-evident that the free Hungary turned towards the Atlantic world and NATO: it is because our interests and values were the same and we share them also today: common security built on the granite foundation of freedom.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

the original mission of the Hungarian Atlantic Council was to promote Hungary's accession to NATO, to popularize the Euro-Atlantic values and principles. It was also due to the work of the Hungarian Atlantic Council that in the accession referendum the share of votes in favour of joining came to 85%, which was an extremely significant achievement even at that time.

The Council has not lost its significance after Hungary's accession either, although its activities have undoubtedly changed: on the one hand, its primary task has become the broad-based popularization of NATO, the dissemination of credible relevant information and, on the other hand, the promotion of cooperation among the Euro-Atlantic countries. In a world undergoing extremely rapid changes, where new and newer crisis spots crop up very quickly, the strengthening of the transatlantic relations and the popularization of the Atlantic thought are today more timely and more topical than at any time before.

The European NATO allies are struggling with the economic crisis - clearly, this also has an impact on the defense sphere: the funds available for the development of defense capabilities are much more limited than earlier. This further widens the capability gap between the two shores of the Atlantic Ocean. At the same time, while emphasizing the importance of the alliance with Europe, the global attention of the United States is increasingly diverted to the Pacific region as demanded by the political and economic interests of the US.

In this political environment, the promotion of the Euro-Atlantic principles and values, the reinforcement of the trans-Atlantic cooperation considered to be the foundation of European security have an even greater significance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

it is in Hungary's interest that this community which advocates identical values should have as many members as possible. Therefore, from the beginning, we have supported the continuing enlargement of the Alliance, primarily, the accession of the countries in our direct neighbourhood, as a contribution to the stability of our region and, thereby, of the entire Euro-Atlantic area. A significant role is being played also by the

Hungarian Atlantic Council in disseminating the ideology of Atlanticism to its partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

NATO is a huge system, with the objective, task, mission and purpose to guarantee security for the members of the Alliance, for the Atlantic world. For everyone, with no exceptions: one for all, all for one!

It is a great challenge and everyone has a part in it. The endeavour we all are working on is the same, only the roles are different. Hungary and the Hungarian Defense Forces are fully committed to serving the cause of the Alliance in the missions and they appreciate very much all the assistance received from our allies and, above all, from the United States of America. In line with the growth of its economic capabilities, our country is also committed to reinforce its armed forces and to equip them in accordance with the requirements of modern defense technology.

The geopolitical situation has changed a lot over the past twenty years. However, our trans-Atlantic commitment has remained unchanged during all that time. Membership in the Alliance continues to mean guarantee for security, which has no alternative.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

„Remembering the past is the commitment to the future” – said Pope John Paul the 2nd. A new generation of politicians has grown up and come to the scene over the past 20 years, and they gradually take their place at the world's great discussion tables in order to participate in seeking solutions for the new problems of new eras. We, who imagine our future together in the Atlantic world, must remember the road we have walked along together. We must remember in order to know: we can count on each other. We can rely upon each other in the joint work of our everyday and, also, in the decisive moments of history.

The mission of the Hungarian Atlantic Council is not over. May I wish you all that the Council continue to serve this great mission well in the next 20 years, relying on the upcoming new generation.



Speech by

Karl A. Lamers, MP
President of the Atlantic Treaty Association

on the occasion of the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the
founding of the Hungarian Atlantic Council



October 5, 2012, Stefánia Palota, Budapest

A.

Mr President Professor Vizi,
Mr Minister Dr Martonyi
Mr Minister Dr Hende
Her Excellency Ambassador Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis,
Members of Parliament,
Members and supporters of the Hungarian Atlantic Council,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

*Tisztelt Hölgyeim és Uraim,
megköszönöm kedves meghívásukat az Önök csodálatos fővárosába,
Budapestre. Nagy öröm és megtiszteltetés számomra, hogy ma este az Önök
vendége lehetek.*

Ladies and Gentlemen,
many thanks for giving me the chance to be here with you today. It is
always a pleasure to visit Hungary.

And it is a distinct pleasure to be here in Budapest on invitation from
the President of the Hungarian Atlantic Council, Professor E. Szilveszter

Vizi, to whom goes my gratitude for leading the organization. For your dedication and passion, I would like to offer you my most sincere and heartfelt thanks.

And I'm very delighted that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Janos Martonyi and the Minister of Defence, Dr. Csaba Hende, as well as her Excellency Ambassador of the United States of America in Budapest, Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis, are with us today.

This celebration testifies the great success of the Hungarian Atlantic Council.

I.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

two days ago, on 3 of October, we celebrated the Day of German Unity with a festive event in Munich as well as with a grand event in my constituency Heidelberg. In my address I stressed the very important role Hungary has played for the German unification.

It was an outstanding and historic moment when Hungary began cutting a remarkable hole in the Iron Curtain in 1989. I mentioned the "Pan-European Picnic" on the Austrian-Hungarian border when several hundreds people fled to the West on 19 August 1989. And I thanked Hungary and its people for their great support. Respect. We will never forget!

And as a saying proves: "*Mountains and valleys will not come together, but humans do.*"

II.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

we are living in very challenging times, as we now face threats from within our region and abroad. Although terrorism has been partially defeated, its fluid nature requires our constant vigilance.

Threats no longer need a physical territory to operate from and the realm of cyberspace has become increasingly volatile.

But above all, the greatest challenge of all is to maintain the promises set forth in the Atlantic Alliance more than 60 years ago: The promise of solidarity across the Atlantic, the quest for peace and for effective rule of law.

III.

This is the core mission that the Atlantic Treaty Associations and its members have been pursuing in the twenty-first century. The Hungarian Atlantic Council is part of this mission.

Hungary has a special place in our transatlantic family. It was on 31 of October 1992 that Atlantic Treaty Association took the historical decision of accepting the newly established Hungarian Atlantic Council as its first observer from a former Warsaw Pact country.

Only one year later the then President of the Hungarian Atlantic Council Dr. Peter Akos Bod officially accepted the invitation by the ATA Board of Directors to become the first full Member of the ATA.

Doctor Peter Akos Bod was the right man at the right time. He served his country with dedication and committed himself to the Atlantic cause when it was not fashionable.

He helped the transition from the old to the new system, ensuring that Hungary would play its part in the renewal of the transatlantic link.

Hungarian Atlantic Council has been an important component of this renewal. Only a few years after it joined, in 2000, the annual General Assembly of the ATA was organized in Budapest.

On that occasion, the Hungarian Atlantic Council leadership demonstrated once more its forward looking approach to international security. They were instrumental in supporting the membership of Atlantic Councils from Austria, Latvia, Finland and Croatia, but above all in supporting Bosnia-Herzegovina and Moldova, who all became ATA members in Budapest.

Amongst the many I wish to acknowledge the role played by Gyula Kodolanyi, a statesman and a poet, who embodied the quest for democracy and freedom of the Hungarian people much before the democratic transition started. And respect to Agnes Szent-Iványi!

And I also wish to emphasize the immense contribution given to the Atlantic Treaty Association by Dr. Ferenc Somogyi and Ambassador Gyorgy Banlaki who served as ATA Vice President respectively from 2000 to 2003 and from 2006 to 2009. They have been invaluable contributors to ATA dynamism and they are deeply missed.

IV.

Today, the role of the Hungarian Atlantic Council is as vast as before, and it spans from the organization of security related public events, to the engagement of political leaders and opinion makers in the NATO debate.

In the past 20 years, thousands of Hungarians have been exposed to the values of freedom, liberty and peace thanks to the unwearied commitment of a few brave Hungarians who supported the Atlantic cause in your country and in Europe.

And, not to forget, it has made a huge contribution to the work of the Atlantic Treaty Association strengthening reliable transatlantic relations and helping building a civil society support for transatlantic cooperation.

V.

As President of the Atlantic Treaty Association I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations – both – to this anniversary, but also to your successful work.

In my opinion, two decades of existence of your Atlantic Council means twenty years of successful work for peace, security and stability.

Moreover it means twenty years of convincing engagement and great efforts for the transatlantic partnership as well as for our common goals and values.

B.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

since its foundation in 1954, ATA has strengthened reliable transatlantic relations and it has helped to communicate about what NATO is and what it does.

Further ATA has helped to draw together the leaders of today and tomorrow. It has helped to develop the values of the North Atlantic Treaty: Democracy, Freedom, Liberty, Peace, Security and the Rule of law.

In my opinion one of the most important challenges is: The communication with the public and a public debate about NATO. It is my firm belief that this is crucial for the future of the Atlantic Alliance.

We must in general continue to improve and intensify our cooperation within the ATA and with NATO. We must also strengthen our ties with the younger generations. We must encourage the youth to participate in shaping their future, our future and must therefore find new and interesting methods in reaching out to them.

C.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

the idea of the European Integration was born and realized after World War II to avoid that a war would ever happen again in the heart of Europe.

We should be always aware of that - especially against the background of two current occasions:

I.

The ongoing financial crisis in several member states of the EU and its impact on the Euro has led to a discussion of the future of European Integration and European solidarity.

Moreover the crisis is not only a major challenge for EU but also for NATO. We must not react to this by cutting our budgets and capabilities in a way that leads to a security crisis. The obvious answer to the financial crisis is to seek out efficiencies through cooperation. Cooperation is not only an option. It is a necessity!

I therefore very much welcome the commitment of NATO leaders at the Chicago Summit to move ahead with “smart defence” by better coordination of military planning; pooling and sharing equipment; and the development of national specializations to avoid costly duplication of assets.

D.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

the vision of a world in peace, freedom and security, this is the vision of the Atlantic Treaty Association and its national chapters.

This is the vision of all of us.

I am very proud, that we are fighting for the same goals and sharing the same values. I am proud, that we all together belong to a community of peace and freedom.

Let us stand together in the future as well: With mutual respect. With mutual trust and in friendship! That is how we will face all challenges.

As Henry Ford once said:

“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.”

As President of the Atlantic Treaty Association I have to say that we are very proud that the Hungarian Atlantic Council with President Professor Vizi in front is one of our great members. President Vizi, you are a great friend and a distinguished President of the Hungarian Atlantic Council.

Thank you and all members of the Council very much for your convincing work and a very close and trusting cooperation!

I wish you an interesting and fruitful celebration and a happy birthday!





Welcome Address

BY **AMBASSADOR ELENI TSAKOPOULOS KOUNALAKIS**

at the 20th Anniversary of the founding
of the Hungarian Atlantic Council



October 5, 2012, Stefánia Palota, Budapest

- as delivered -

Thank you for the kind introduction and for inviting me here today. Minister Martonyi, Minister Hende, Dr. Vizi, Dr. Lamers, Dr. Gulyas and so many others, it's a great privilege to be here and I am very happy to join you in congratulating the Council on reaching this very important milestone, and applaud its continuing dedication to promoting transatlantic understanding.

The need for this cooperation is greater than ever. Over the past weeks and months, the disturbing incidents in the Middle East and North Africa have made clear not only that democratic transition is difficult and sometime dangerous, but that our partnership with Europe is vital to pursuing a safer world. The tragic loss of our colleagues in Benghazi underscores once again the critical nature of our partnership, and of our Alliance, as we work together to face down threats to peace, stability and security. I'd like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the Government of Hungary, and many individuals here, for their thoughtful words following the loss of Ambassador Chris Stephens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty on September 11. As President Obama said, these public servants "exemplified America's commitment to freedom, justice, and partnership with nations and

people around the globe, and stand in stark contrast to those who callously took their lives.”

As I've said many times, our relationship with Hungary and Central Europe is based on shared values and interests, and on the shared responsibilities that we now face together as allies. Twenty years since the region's successful transition to democracy and integration into NATO, the question the United States is asking is no longer “what can we do for the nations of Central Europe?” It is now “what can we, together with the European Union and the nations of Central Europe, do together for the rest of the world?”

That's why one of the most important and successful areas of cooperation between Hungary and the United States remains international security. Although our security relationship goes back only twenty years, it has brought substantial benefits to both of our countries, to Central Europe and indeed to the world. I have had the privilege to observe, together with Minister of Defense Csaba Hende, Hungarian troops in action in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Bosnia. I have met many of the fine Hungarian men and women who serve in Afghanistan along their American brothers- and sisters-in-arms. Hungary is providing invaluable assistance out of a shared sense of duty, shared values and a common assessment of the threats we face. During these past 20 years, the United States has invested over 50 million dollars in education, training and equipment for the Hungarian Defense Forces here on the ground. We have sent hundreds of officers and NCOs to training in the United States and U.S. facilities in Europe. And HDF and American forces have participated together in countless exercises and operational deployments together.

In September, Secretary Panetta welcomed Minister Hende to Washington and expressed our government's deep appreciation for Hungary's participation in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. This included thanking Hungary for the work it is currently carrying out at Regional Command North and for Hungary's plan to lead the force protection mission at Kabul International Airport this fall.

We appreciate Hungary's engagement in the Balkans and its advocacy for NATO's open door policy as well. Hungary has also worked closely with the United States and other partners as we and our allies have

sought to respond to the political changes in North Africa and the Middle East, and particularly in Libya and Syria. As I have said before, the United States was truly grateful for Hungary's assistance as our Protective Power in Libya, and we are fortunate to have Hungary's continuing diplomatic presence and expertise in Syria and in Libya.

Ladies and gentleman,

it is truly a pleasure to be here with you today to celebrate the Hungarian Atlantic Council and the transatlantic relationship. Let us continue to work together, through organizations such as yours, to strengthen that relationship. Let me finish by saying that the past two and a half years in Hungary have expanded and enriched my knowledge and appreciation for all things Hungarian. This has deepened my conviction that Hungary is a multi-faceted and complex nation, full of potential and talent – and a true friend to the United States. Thank you.

http://hungary.usembassy.gov/kounalakis_10052012.html

Published by Véd-Komm Ltd.

Editor: E. Szilveszter Vizi

Proof-reader: Dezső Kiss

ISBN 978 963 08 7053 5

Pictures: MAT

Printed by Keskeny Printing House Ltd.