

Dear Friends:

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

I would start with a small story, when some time 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 Island had achieved a lot to make Iceland's NATO accession a reality without any major shock and a solid working membership in the alliance thereafter. I told them at that time: "Well, if you have such a problem, then I can offer you a deal - we would be more than willing to take over your NATO membership." So 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 paying 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, i.e. it adopted the act on the articulation of the Washington Treaty. My personal great experience was 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 the greatest experiences in 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 that time in view of what happened twelve days later: "Did not you regret becoming a NATO member?" and we answered: "Not at all, on the contrary!" Imagine a situation if this operation at least with an indirect impact on our territory, was to take place without our NATO membership. Indeed, we felt a far greater security just because in 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 family, that Mr. President spoke about a minute ago. So many things change in this world and a lot is being said these days about these changes; the world economy, the geopolitics are undergoing change, 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. Our values 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 if 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. This will be the issues of the coming decades, just like these have been the issues in 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 as the times are changing. Mr. President spoke about the cyber-attacks, just a few hours ago we have closed a two-days conference on this subject. Réka Szemerkényi Réka said that it was a major success. One of the key subjects was exactly 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 the armed attack start. How shall we interpret our Article 5 if this is going to be really serious. As 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, however, 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. Much is talked 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, then human suffering would be much greater than in case of a shooting war. So it is not a solution, nobody should believe that wars become humanized and we will live a peaceful and quiet life here on the planet earth and the war will be waged somewhere up in the outer space. No, because at the end territory will have to be occupied somewhere. The territory must be defended and we can defend our territory only if we can count on the collective defense and our allies. Therefore, our place is now in this alliance, and it will remain so in coming years and decades. It will remain so, until this world becomes perfect, the globe of absolute peace. One can and should believe this, but the sure thing if we have sure allies. And of course, the function of the Atlantic Council has changed over the past years. Its main task had been to explain the Hungarian public opinion why NATO accession was important for us and why the supporters of the NATO accession had to win the referendum with such a majority. The task is the same now: we had faced tests immediately twelve days after depositing the accession documents. Many doubts were raised already at that time, why did we have to support the accession. The tests come back, time after time, and I believe that the Hungarian society faces these tests with genuine strength.

I was asked by president Lamers today how the Hungarian society related to our presence in Afghanistan, were there any powerful protests. In my answer I told him that the Hungarian society was not really pleased but they accepted our involvement. 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 Atlantic Council just like before. It is so exactly because a lot of confusing ideas circulate in the world today, there many doubts in the minds of people and many 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 the 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 thank them in advance for what they are going to do in the coming years and decades. Thank you very much for your kind attention.