

Delegation of 16 to NATO by UK Senior Liberal Democrats (Brussels)

A 16 strong Lib dem delegation to NATO, returned successful after in-depth meetings with senior officials, organized by Dr John Ryan, lead by senior lib dem member of the upper house lord Tom Garden accompanied by Parliamentary Spokesperson Qassim Afzal directly elected member of the executive



international relations committee, amongst many other lib dem colleagues.

Jonathon Parish-Political affairs and Security Policy Division.

Overview of current issues within NATO following the break up of the Warsaw Pact and hence the previous rasoin d-etre of NATO. Following a meeting in Reykyavik in 2002 the three new central pillars are now Operations and Missions, Capabilities and Partnerships.

Within this the central theme of NATO providing security for all member states, its continuing role as being an important centre for US-European dialogue on a daily basis. It also continues to play a central role in the intelligence gathering

VISIT TO NATO BY UK SENIOR LIBERAL DEMOCRATS 13-14 March 2005

PROGRAMME
8.3.05

Sunday 13 March

- 1442 Depart London Waterloo by Eurostar
- 1802 Arrive Brussels Midi Station; transfer by *Open Tours* bus to Jolly Hotel du Grand Sablon (bus driver will meet group at Eurostar exit, foot of the escalator mobile number of the driver will be provided)

Monday 14 March

- 0745 Depart hotel for NATO HQ
- +0830 Arrival at NATO and met by Alison SMITH, Visits Unit Security/passport control; check-in of large pieces of luggage, Proceed to conference room PEARSON
- 0900 Welcome by Mr Christopher BENNETT, Information Officer for the United Kingdom/Editor *NATO Review*
- 0915 Briefing and discussion on Current NATO Political Issues by Mr Jonathan PARISH, Policy Planning and Speechwriting Section, Political Affairs and Security Policy Division
- 1015 Coffee break
- 1030 Briefing and discussion on NATO-EU Relations by Mr Pol DE WITTE, NATO and Multilateral Affairs Section, Political Affairs and Security Policy Division
- 1130 Meeting with Mr Matthew KIDD, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to NATO
- 1230 Lunch in the restaurant as guests of Public Diplomacy Division
- 1400 Proposed meeting with Mr Ted WHITESIDE, Head, Weapons of Mass Destruction Centre, Defence Policy and Planning Division (*to be confirmed*)
- 1500 Tea break
- 1530 Meeting with Mr John P. COLSTON, Assistant Secretary General for Defence Policy and Planning
- 1615 Meeting with Mr John KOENIG, Acting Permanent Representative of the United States to NATO
- 1700 Meeting with Mr Jean FOURNET, Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy
- 1730 Departure by bus for Gare du Midi Eurostar terminal
- 1856 Eurostar departs for London Waterloo
- 2024 Arrive London Waterloo

HOTEL: Jolly Hotel du Grand Sablon, Rue Bodenbroeck 2/4
1000 Brussels, Tel: +32 2 518 11 00' Fax: +32 2 512 67 66



Jock
Gallagher
(FE)
DR Saddef
Alum
Marry Ross
And LibDems
Colleagues

Debrief over
dinner



Following this meeting NATO's sphere of influence will be extended beyond the defined areas of its member states, it was decided that if any threat to NATO members was perceived anywhere in the world then if the threat was real and all member states agreed then NATO would act to curb the threat. Described how all 26 NATO member states must agree in unanimity for it to undertake any action.

NATO & Kashmir

Qassim Afzal Parliamentary spokesperson for Gorton Constituency, questioned the NATO, representatives, that since peace keeping action took place in Kosovo, even though the issues there was two-tier, first NATO to have an active roll today, and also to make way for a political change, since this was successful then, why is it so that NATO can not use a similar but tailor-made strategy in Kashmir. Qassim elaborated that the UK and parts of my constituency and around such as Cheetham, there are a significant number of British Kashmiris, that would welcome a peace keeping force, especial since India and Pakistan are endeavouring to have tri-lateral talks, would it not be conducive for NATO to take a positive roll in a region which that has two nuclear powers.

It was obvious that the political will to take such a move was not really there under the current circumstances.

NATO forces would not simply act in a military fashion, it had been also highlighted then when NATO forces were acting in any particular field mission it was important to liaise closely with the civil administration of the country as well as NGOs to ensure the health, sanitation, education and food distribution and production of the country involved remained running efficiently.

Because of the changing role of NATO, it has led to a corresponding change in the number of personnel and equipment needed for its operations. Rapid reaction forces with highly specialised and lighter equipment than previously are required. Other than US, UK, France many of the other member states do not possess such capabilities, following the Istanbul summit in 2004 forces from all states are now going through vigorous training and certification to allow them to enter this role, a rolling rota of forces is now in place.

Mr Parish also outlined the current NATO missions, these include Afghanistan where ISAF forces have begun handing control to NATO forces, the coming 2 years will see NATO expand the operation of security in the country further west, then south west and finally south east towards the Pakistan border. In Kosovo, NATO continues to be involved in peace keeping and in searching for war criminals in the Balkans. In Iraq, NATO has a small force of only 300 who are involved in training the future military and security forces.

Operation "Active Endeavour" is a naval operation, with the Mediterranean fleet, policing this area looking for vessels which may potentially be carrying illegal weapons or material for use in WMD.

Mr Pol De Witte NATO and multilateral affairs section.

NATO Delegation 15/16 March 2005

Fifty word profile for:

Qassim Afzal, MA (profile)

Masters International Business, researching PhD Political Equality, seasoned Politician, Businessman, Broadcast Journalist, twice councillor, Local Government Association, Chaired: Ward, Constituency, City Party, elected NW Region, Policy Committee, Federal Conference Committee, Federal Executive, International Relation Committee, ELDR congress, Liberal International Congress, former Westminster, European parliamentary candidate, elected Interim Peers Panel.

Dr John Ryan, Lady Sue Garden, Dr, Lord Tim Garden **AIR MARSHAL SIR TIMOTHY GARDEN** a group captain, he was the Director of Defence Studies and Commander of RAF Odiham at the Ministry of Defence MOD appointment was as Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff



INTERNATIONALACTIVITY

Senior Representatives of the LibDems take part in Study Trip to NATO in Brussels, March 2005

25 April 2005

On the 14th March 15 Liberal Democrats visited [NATO](#) (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) headquarters in Brussels to attend a briefing by seven members of NATO's senior staff. The Liberal Democrat delegation included [Lord William Wallace](#) who is Liberal Democrat Spokesman on foreign affairs in the House of Lords, [Lord Tim Garden](#), [Marie-Louise Rossi](#) and [Qassim Afzal](#) who are both PPCs and [Matthew Waldman](#) who is the Foreign Affairs and Defence Advisor.

The briefings were given by [Jonathan Parish](#) - Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, [Pol de Witte](#) - also Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, [Matthew Kidd](#) - Deputy Permanent Representative of the UK to NATO, [Ted Whiteside](#) - Head of Weapons of Mass Destruction Centre, [John Colston](#) - Assistant Secretary General for Defence Policy and Planning, [Sherwood McGinnis](#) and [Jean Fournet](#) - Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy.

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NATO has 26 member nations, 20 partner countries, 7 Mediterranean dialogue country partners and 6 partners in the Gulf region. This makes 59 countries in the network overall, meaning that NATO's influence is extensive.

Four overall impressions were gained from the visit:

Firstly that there has been a definite shift away from restricting NATO's sphere of influence and action to its member countries. This is due to the nature of contemporary security threats going beyond any controllable borders encompassed by member nations to the extent that NATO justifies intervention. Indeed, previous to 2001 terrorism was mainly internal to a nation, which did not affect NATO's Euro-centric approach. Now the nature of terrorism necessitates a global view. This does not mean that NATO sees itself as a global policeman as it is a collective defensive organisation only and does not have either the wish or the capacity to assume this role.

The second impression is that NATO has begun to focus more on civilian consequences of military action and is adopting a role in post-conflict reconstruction. For example NATO is aiming to assist in hospitals and is pursuing co-operation with various NGOs. The third impression was that the USA is acting to improve relations with EU countries, which is taken to be a reflection of the different nature of Bush's second term and is demonstrated by his visit to Brussels in late February 2005. This movement is positive for trans-Atlantic relations but is potentially negative in terms of how people view the relations of the USA/NATO. There is a danger that the alliance may be seen as dominated by the USA

The final impression is that NATO is re-assessing its role in relation to other international organisations, which have proliferated since NATO's conception. This re-assessment was brought to light over [Chancellor Gerard Schroeder's](#) controversial remarks made in February 2004 in Munich that NATO was in need of reform. NATO sees one of its most important roles to be providing a forum for political dialogue across the Atlantic.

