

What makes a great  
political speech?



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What a great speech should contain is determined by a lot of factors. The most important factor is that the content of the speech should be appealing to the audience. This is very hard, because every person has different preferences. This could be done by using an actual topic so that the audience can relate to it and that the content can be useful for themselves. Also knowing a lot of this subject is a key factor. The structure should be a clear sequence of points. The presentation is also an important part of the speech, because you should speak clearly and in an interesting way but also with confidence, charisma and appropriate humour.

Barack Huessein Obama II was born on August 4th, 1961. He is the 44th and current President of the United States of America. He is the first African American ever to hold the office. Before this he served as an United States Senator in Illinois, from January 2005 until he resigned after his election.

His parents Barack Hussein Obama I and mother Stanley Ann Dunham met in 1960 in a Russian language class at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, where Barack was a foreign student on scholarship. The couple married in 1961. In 1964 they divorced. Barack I remarried and returned to Kenya, visiting Barack in Hawaii once in 1971. He died in an car crash in 1982. Dunham married an Indonesian student Lolo Soetoro, who was attending college in Hawaii. In 1967 Suharto, a military leader in Soetoro's home country, came to power. So all Indonesian students studying abroad were recalled. The family had to move to the Menteng neighbourhood of Jakarta. Till the age of ten Barack Obama II attended local schools in Jakarta. In 1971 he returned to Honolulu. In 1972 Obama's mother returned to Hawaii until

1977, when she went back to Indonesia for work. In 1994 she returned to Hawaii and a year later she died of ovarian cancer.

Of his early childhood Obama says that he had to struggle as a young adult, because of his multiracial heritage. His mother was white, while his father was black.

## **Compare and contrast Obama's inaugural speech and the I Have a Dream speech by M. L. King**

Include historical and cultural contexts. Make reference to the books (and IB topics) you have read.

The “ I have a dream” speech of Martin Luther King is full of hope. This is because the world is in crisis or actually war with the different races, but he wants to fight war against the suppression to the black people. With fight fighting he does not mean with weapons and wrong deeds, but with words. So like a peaceful fight. He also does not want them to hate the other races, but just fight for their own. He does not tell the listener that white people are bad, they should not be banned or killed by anyone as the white people have done with the black people, but they should be put into their right place.

The inaugural speech from Barack Obama, is full of remarks of the previous presidents of the United States, because he wants to handle better than they did. It is also full of words of hope just like the MLK's speech. The country is in state of crisis and not in a state of peace and happiness. He wants to give the public hope and peace through his words. He also wants to give the public change, while keeping the good things that are already existing intact. With these words he tries to activate people to make change themselves by

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searching. With this speech he makes a lot of promises, which he wants to do in the upcoming 4 years when he is the president. He also wants to make clear that he is not somebody being intelligent or extraordinary rich, but just a normal man who is being lucky.

The first comparison is that both speeches try to activate people to take action and search for change in their own society. Another comparison is that they both thrive for equality of all men, no matter what religion, skin colour or religion they have. The reason for highlighting this is for Obama that he is the president and he should not distinguish people by their race. And for King it is obvious, because the whole speech is about this topic.

The first thing you notice about MLK's speech is the repetition of the sentence ' I have a dream'. He does this before every important statement that he would like to change. Obama also uses repetition but not with one sentence. But in the last parts of his speech he uses a lot of ' we will'. This also before a statement that he wants to change. So they are quite the same, because they both insinuate hope and change. But ' I have a dream' is aimed at the future, and the path to it, while ' we will' is aimed at the present, that action will be taken right now.

The most important contrast between the two speeches is that MLK's speech tries to make people fight for equality, while Obama's speech does not do this. This explains the different purposes of these speeches. Obama's speech has the purpose of explaining his promises and how he wants to do it different than the old presidents. MLK's speech has the purpose of striving for freedom for everyone and not only the white people. In the current

society, the blacks are still suppressed in the United States of America right now by the white people, but it is almost invisible. This is why Martin Luther King pays a lot of attention to it. People are suffering right now and he wants you to take action.

Another important contrast is that the speeches are aimed at a different public. MLK's speech is aimed at all the inhabitants of the United States of America, while Obama's speech is aimed at the Christians, and when being more specific the Negro Christians. Another contrast between the speeches is the different culture while presenting these speeches. Since MLK's speech is written in 1963 and Obama's speech in 2010. The society and culture with this has changed a lot in 47 years.

The 'I have a dream' speech is an important link to the book 'The Bluest Eye' because it states all the important factors of black being discriminated, what is happening with Pecola. The time the speech took place is also the time the book takes place.

In the inaugural speech Obama talks about greatness that it is never given and must be earned. That this path is not for the faint-hearted, but for those who take risks and work. I think you can link this to the journey Ishmael Beah had. He had to struggle to stay alive and to come to the United States of America. He had to work hard and take risks to get where he is now.

While you do not see it immediately the speeches do have a lot of comparisons, but also a lot of contrast.

## **Find an excerpt of what you consider a brilliant speech.**

Give a 3 minute presentation analysing its components

(Purpose/Audience/Context)

I chose a speech from Anders Fogh Rasmussen

I chose this excerpt from the speech:

This is my first appearance at the Munich Security Conference, and I have been looking forward to coming here. This Conference has become a focal point for the international security debate – a sort of “away day” for security discussions. And from the day I started my job as Secretary General of NATO, this weekend has been blocked in my calendar.

So let me get straight to business. In my remarks today I want to make three points:

First, that in an age of globalised insecurity, our territorial defence must begin beyond our borders;

Second, that our success in preserving our shared security – including through NATO — increasingly depends on how well we cooperate with others;

And third, that NATO should become a forum for consultation on worldwide security issues.

In short, we must take NATO’s transformation to a new level — by connecting the Alliance with the broader international system in entirely new ways.

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I chose this speech, because I think he did great things during his time as a chairman of the VN. He tried to create stability in the world. This by improving the cooperation with the soviet union. He also send a lot of safety troops to the third world countries, to protect the politics stability. Nowadays he is also a secretary general at NATO. I chose this speech because it is a really recent speech and topic. And I think it also shows the charisma he has.

This speech is about the NATO. This speech is presented at the Munich Security conference. Rasmussen wants to take the NATO to a higher level, by making it broader and more international. He wants to make people aware of the great things that can happen when making the NATO more international. And how he wants to do this.

The structure of this speech I find conveniently arranged. First he makes a short introduction, which I think makes a pleasant impression. Than in his words he comes 'straight to business'. He explains his three points. And after this expert he explains them thoroughly and with every detail. This excerpt is just a short piece of what he wants to do. This makes you interested to read further. You already know what he wants to do but how and in which way? The sentences are short and straight to the point, which makes it more clear and easier to understand.

I think it is a great speech thanks to all these points, and the topic was actual and interesting.

[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_61395.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_61395.htm)

NATO in the 21st Century: Towards Global Connectivity

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## **Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Munich Security Conference**

Ambassador Ischinger,

Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is my first appearance at the Munich Security Conference, and I have been looking forward to coming here. This Conference has become a focal point for the international security debate – a sort of “away day” for security discussions. And from the day I started my job as Secretary General of NATO, this weekend has been blocked in my calendar.

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In short, we must take NATO's transformation to a new level — by connecting the Alliance with the broader international system in entirely new ways.

My first point: territorial defence today begins beyond our borders. Of course, NATO's core task is to defend its member states. This was the Alliance's purpose when the Washington Treaty was drafted more than 60 years ago. It remains the main purpose of NATO today. And it will be our main job tomorrow.

We have the plans, capabilities and solidarity to defend our members. It is as simple as that.

What is changing is how we do it. Because the meaning of territorial defence is changing. Terrorism has mutated into a global franchise. Cyber attacks or energy cut-offs can seriously destabilise a country. Iran and North Korea have made the risks of nuclear proliferation very clear. Piracy has mutated, once again, into a major threat to international shipping. And I predict that, soon, we will also see climate change affecting our security – through humanitarian disasters, conflicts over arable land, and mounting competition for natural resources.

Against such threats, the approaches of a bygone era simply no longer work. Static, heavy metal armies are not going to impress terrorists, pirates or computer hackers. And we cannot bury our heads and hope that these threats will just fade away. Security today is about active engagement, possibly very far from our own borders.

Look at Afghanistan. A failing state halfway around the world is having a huge impact on our security at home – from terrorism, extremism and drugs.

The recent London conference on Afghanistan showed the commitment of the international community to remain in Afghanistan until the job is finished. And that includes NATO. ISAF will further grow in strength this year, with more than 39, 000 extra troops — to protect the population, and train Afghan forces.

But our troops should not, and will not always be in the lead. Afghanistan is a sovereign country. It has to stand on its own feet, and defend itself.

So where and when conditions allow, we will start to transfer lead security responsibility to the Afghans. And while I don't know when the process will be complete, I know I think it should start: this year.

But to make a lasting difference, we also need a “ civilian surge”. This means “ good governance”: Afghan institutions that are able to provide basic services. It means helping Afghanistan to create an economy that is not running on drugs. And it means helping to re-establish a universal education system – one that offers women their share of participation and opportunity.

To achieve these goals, all major players have to pull together, and in the same direction. We need the UN to lead the overall process – in close coordination with the Afghan government.

NATO will continue providing the security in the initial phases, to train the local security forces, and to support the civilian effort as well.

We need the EU to support civilian projects. We need the IMF and the World Bank to fund civilian reconstruction, from streets to schools.

And we need Pakistan and all the other neighbours of Afghanistan to be engaged in a constructive way.

But this can't all happen in parallel. It has to happen together, in a coordinated and mutually supporting way. This is a key lesson we are learning in Afghanistan today, but which has much wider implications: we need an entirely new compact between all the actors on the security stage.

We've already made some progress. We signed a Joint NATO-UN Declaration not too long ago which sets out a number of areas for closer cooperation.

We've helped escort World Food Program supply ships into Somalia.

NATO and the European Union are also working more closely together, not just in the Balkans and in Afghanistan, but also fighting piracy.

We have worked with the World Bank in several projects in Afghanistan. And we are also helping newer international institutions, such as the African Union, to be more effective. So we are on the right track.

But to tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow, we all need to do much more. With a few exceptions, the various parts of the international community who do peace operations still don't train together. We don't really plan together.

We aren't joined up in the field. Nor do we analyse together what we might be able to do better. And many NGOs still resist closer contacts with the military, out of concern that this could compromise their impartiality.

Ending this fragmentation will require a real “cultural revolution” – breaking with conventional thinking, and re-organising to be able to work together more effectively. That is very much the direction in which NATO has moved these past few years.

And I am pleased that the United Nations has started to invite other organisations, including NATO, to discuss how we can enhance our cooperation.

Our Afghanistan experience also leads me to my third point: the need to turn NATO into a forum for consultation on worldwide security issues. Not as a competitor to the United Nations. That is not possible, nor is it desirable.

But NATO is a framework which has already proven to be uniquely able to combine security consultation, military planning and actual operations for more than just NATO members themselves. Again, look at Afghanistan.

The 28 NATO-allies already cooperate with 16 partners within ISAF. We consult intensively with troop contributing partners from Australia to South Korea to Sweden and Finland. And today, the bulk of the decision-shaping on this mission includes all our partners. This is a sea change in the way NATO has done business for over 60 years. It works. And it shows old dogs can learn new tricks.

Of course, Afghanistan is not an island. There are no solutions to Afghanistan's problems solely within Afghanistan's borders. As with any conflict, the region matters. Which is why NATO has engaged in a political and military partnership with Pakistan.

But even that isn't a wide enough lens. India has a stake in Afghan stability. China too. And both could help further develop and rebuild Afghanistan.

The same goes for Russia. Basically, Russia shares our security concerns. If Afghanistan once again becomes a safe haven for terrorists they could easily spread through Central Asia to Russia. Not to speak about drug trafficking which constitutes a major problem for Russia. I think there is scope for further Russian engagement in our operation in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a vivid example that, in the 21st century, security can't be a relay race, with one individual handing the baton to the next runner. That's the way we used to do it. That has to change. Now it has to be a team effort, with all the players, in their respective positions, working towards the same goal. Because nobody succeeds until we all do.

Let me reiterate: Territorial defence of its member states is the core function of NATO. And NATO is first and foremost a transatlantic Alliance. Our centre of gravity will remain the bond between Europe and North America.

But we cannot meet today's security requirements effectively without engaging much more actively and systematically with other important players on the international scene. It can't be ad-hoc. It has to be the way we do business.

That is why, to carry out NATO's job effectively today, the Alliance should become the hub of a network of security partnerships and a centre for consultation on international security issues – even issues on which the Alliance might never take action.

NATO can be the place where views, concerns and best practices on security are shared by NATO's global partners. And where, if it makes sense – if we decide that NATO should have a role – we might work out how to tackle global challenges together.

I know very well that this idea might seem a bit ambitious. But is it really? Who stands to lose if NATO and other international institutions were to move closer together? The record shows already that it makes sense – we should just do more of it.

What would be the harm if countries such as China, India, Pakistan and others were to develop closer ties with NATO? I think, in fact, there would only be a benefit, in terms of trust, confidence and cooperation.

And let me address a concern which I can already see forming. No, I don't see this proposal as competing with the UN. Because I don't think it does compete with the UN. We are talking here about a group of nations consulting, formally or informally, on security. Nothing more.

In fact, I think it would actually benefit the UN. NATO is operating almost without exception in support of UN resolutions. Allies are all strong and active UN members. A stronger, more inclusive security coalition, with NATO

as the hub, would, to my mind, be firmly to the benefit of the UN, and to the principles of the UN Charter.

And we don't have to start from scratch. Already today, the Alliance has a vast network of security partnership, as far afield as Northern Africa, the Gulf, Central Asia, and the Pacific.

I believe that this network of consultation and cooperation would be even stronger if countries such as China and India were to take part as well.

Successfully completing our mission in Afghanistan; promoting a new compact between international institutions; and making the Alliance a clearing house for global security issues – all this is a pretty tall order.

It will require a strong sense of purpose among the Allies, and a clear view of NATO's future evolution. And this should be reflected in the new Strategic Concept.

Madeleine Albright, who is leading the panel of experts I chose to start the reflection process, will be on the next panel, and might share her own thoughts on this as well.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To me, transforming NATO into a globally connected security institution is not a matter of choice – it is a matter of necessity. Globalisation has become an irreversible fact of life.

Our institutions must not only acknowledge this fact, they must also adapt to it and provide security under radically different circumstances. I have no

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doubt that NATO and the transatlantic community must, can and will rise to the challenge.

Thank you.