

**SPEAKING NOTES OF MR. CORNELIU DOBRIȚOIU,  
MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**

*Ladies and gentlemen,  
Distinguished guests,*

**F**irst of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the representatives of "Carol I" National Defense University, the Academy of Romanian Scientists and the Center of Security Analysis and Studies for their valuable contribution to the organization of this seminar. I feel deeply honored to have been offered today the opportunity to share some opinions on 'Smart Defense', a topic which has been for some time at the core of the technical and political debates on the NATO agenda. At the same time, I would like to wish a warm welcome to our distinguished guests from NATO and the European Union, to our friend Harlan K. Ullman, and to salute the defense industry representatives, whose practical view of the topic will certainly add more value to the conceptual debates.

Today's fiscal environment induces an undeniable reality: increasingly more NATO members can no longer meet their financial commitments within the Alliance, which directly impacts their capacity to preserve and develop the necessary capabilities. Almost half of the NATO members currently allocate 1% or even less of their GDP for the defense area, while the budget decline is relentless.

Earlier this month, the ministerial meeting we had in Brussels underlined again the fact that the under-budgeting of defense fosters additional vulnerabilities in a world in which the security challenges are increasing.

Unfortunately, it is obvious that there cannot be a short-term solution to these issues. An optimistic remedial approach to the current deficits can be based at best on a medium-term perspective.

It has become clear that the major challenge consists in the collective capacity to maximize results at the capabilities level with the available, though limited resources. The Chicago Summit formalized this 'challenge' and opened the 'Smart Defense era'.