

**National Opening Session:  
Wednesday, 7 June 2006**

# Message of Greeting<sup>1</sup>

Dr Kurt WALDHEIM  
Former Federal President of Austria

Distinguished guests of honour!  
Dear guests of this festive meeting!

I take this opportunity to extend my cordial greetings to you all and to thank you for your important commitment and service across so many borders. I am glad that it is on Austrian soil that, in this year, you are dealing in depth with, and working to intensify further, the military co-operation that already exists amongst yourselves for the sake of the maintenance of peace.

I am addressing the great topic that has set the tone of my life, and it is in hindsight that I see with even greater clarity that the hopes of my country, my personal tasks, and the great goals of the United Nations converge in the maintenance of peace.

Literally ever since she was reborn after dictatorship and war, Austria has made the notion of international security a key element of her own identity. Already in the first governmental Statement of Policy of April 1945, the almost yearning sentence can be found: *May the Republic soon succeed in sharing in the community of all nations and peoples of the world and contribute, with her modest*

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Kurt Waldheim had accepted to speak at the National Opening Session. However, he regrettably was not able to attend and asked the President of the Forum to read his Message of Greeting to the audience.

*forces and means, towards the solemn goals that those powers have set themselves!*

This great task has always been with me, over the decades, at the many stations of my professional life, be it as a diplomat or foreign minister, be it as Secretary General of the UN or Federal President. And it has joined together the United Nations and the Republic of Austria in a specially intensive and successful co-operation, a success story that has not only substantially contributed towards Austria's national identity. It has also provided our country with added global prestige and continuing esteem. It has thus made an essential contribution both to our national and to international security.

I myself belong to the generation whose sorrowful personal experience of war has produced in ourselves a special longing for peace and stability. And whose disappointment is even greater when individuals and peoples, and those that bear political responsibility, believe that they can only resolve their conflicts by the use of force.

To contemplate strategies of avoiding this resort to violence, or at least mitigating its gruesome effects, through peace education, mechanisms of conflict resolution, and crisis management, is one of the great intellectual challenges of our time. The advance of globalisation has taught us that security, of large and small nations alike, will in the long run only be ensured through the co-operation with other nations.

Recently, quite a new form of co-operation has been developed between the UN, the European Union, and NATO, and ever more intensive multilateral co-operation has evolved in Central Europe. It is with pleasure and confidence that I observe this development, which strengthens the possibilities of swift and efficient international operations and is key to the promotion of stability.

Political resolve, high military competence, and intensive relations are necessary in order to put that development to effective use. I view the *Blue Helmet Forum Austria 2006* as an important and exciting arena of those efforts. I extend my thanks and my greetings to the Austrian *Blue Helmets* under General Greindl, to the Austrian Armed Forces under their Chief of Defence Staff Roland Ertl, and to all of you who have come to Graz. Your work is work for peace in the best sense of the word.

Dr Kurt Waldheim  
7 June 2006