

JASON Institute, 45th Anniversary
'The Changing role of NATO: Challenges on all fronts'

Opening Address by Co-founder/First Chair Rio Praaning Prawira Adiningrat

Grote Kerk, The Hague, 9th April 2021

May I first congratulate Chair Nina van Eer and her Board with this grand occasion of JASON's 45th anniversary. Allow me to also congratulate and support the people of Myanmar with their courageous opposition to military oppression. And congratulate Indonesian President Joko Widodo with a carefully crafted and balanced approach to the powers in this region – based on democracy, the Rule of Law and the Law of the Sea.

Welcome everyone! My name is Rio. I come from the Planet Jason – as I think many of you. The planet was discovered 45 years ago. Some of you may ask: What was life like on JASON?

Well, life was about Openness. About all Parties and all Ideologies. No subject was banned. Any political creed or even ideology was welcome. There was no assumption of right or wrong. There was a focus not just at speaking, but listening. JASON organised travels. Not to confirm *one* truth but to celebrate *the difference*. So on this planet, our first JASON conference addressed not how to defend or promote NATO. The choice was to address the North-South Dialogue. Afterall, tension and conflict emanate from *inequality*. From *poverty*. From *lack of progress*. The key question was whether the relationship with the South would strengthen or weaken the Atlantic Cooperation. Issues of raw materials, exploitation, lack of democracy, Soviet involvement and the prospect of *interdependence* were addressed.

How do I know this? I checked the old JASON Magazines. The first thing that fell out was a note of former Ministerial speechwriter and JASON Editor Guido Vigeveno. "You owe me 70 guilders", he wrote. OK, Guido, it's in my pocket now!

The first JASON conference in the end seemed to opt for *interdependence*. Ever since, how did Europe, NATO, deal with Africa? Did we see China coming? Well, with hindsight we appear not to have acted on dire underdevelopment. That set in motion a migration, the sour fruits of which we consume today. Neither did we see the Chinese demographic overstretch, raw material dependence and environmental nonmanagement. Today, these threaten China's strategic water and food supplies. It is an essential part of China's Belt & Road strategy to cover these vulnerabilities. Unless this is recognized and addressed – possibly through a renewed *strategic interdependence approach*, confrontation rather than cooperation will continue. Yet

cooperation with the world's second largest yet still underdeveloped economy is the only answer to current strategic questions. But cooperation can only be sustainable in a global context, *if this is based on equality, transparency and the Rule of Law*. Only then there may be no losers – except may be the Russians who seem the only unchanged actor in the international political playing field today.

But how transparent is The Netherlands, today? To what extent have we applied our lessons to Asians and Africans about democracy and transparency to ourselves? Is the Second Chamber really informed about all Government operations? Why is it necessary for Informateur Tjeenk Willink to first of all state that “Governments must say what they do and do what they say”? At European level it is not much better. How can it be that the average civil servant in EU Brussels feels *irritated* over Parliamentary questions? How can the Chair of the ENVI Committee be treated like a criminal before entering a room to study a redacted document on Covid vaccines? Do we know what happens in the many Commission/Member State bureaucratic working groups? Don't you have the right to follow these international considerations that actually determine the safety of our food, the availability of our medicines, the tax monies supplied for innovation and who gets to spend it? Does anyone actually know what instructions national Capitals provide to civil servants when they decide *if, how and where* new Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients, or APIs, should once again be produced in Europe – in order to repair Europe's dramatic dependence on pharmaceutical production in Asia and notably in India and China? Are we all aware that each year 58,000 Indian babies die at birth of Antimicrobial Resistance because European Governments allow the European Commission to import the cheapest antibiotics because European industries produce these in India without any concern for the environment or basic human and child rights?

Many rightly worry about Chinese involvement in African and Asian countries. Successive US Governments point at the 'Debt Trap' that weak economies and Governments are exposed to, once they open up for sometimes seriously corruptive loans the conditions of which they cannot meet – leading to loss of sovereignty. I have worked in Ecuador, in Sri Lanka, in Indonesia, and I have witnessed rather close-by what happens if there is no *balance in offers of loans and aid*. When will the European Investment Bank be equipped to engage? Did anyone ask why the 500 billion euro 'Juncker Plan' was only targeted at Europe and, according to the EU Court of Auditors, without much success? Why are European multinational infrastructure and construction companies globally losing terrain to Government-supported Japanese, Korean and Chinese industries? Do we know that around 80% of Europe's employment is created by SMEs and that exactly these SMEs are generally missing in emerging economies? Do we understand why EU Brussels and the Member States rather ignore the innovative power of SMEs both inside and particularly outside the EU?

Dear friends, Planet JASON is alive and kicking. It needs to involve itself in international security debates, BUT through a broad prism. On our 45th birthday we need to thank former Defence Minister Wim van Eekelen. 5 years ago he admitted that his best Government subsidy decision ever was the 10,000 guilders – less than 5,000 euro – provided to send JASON into its future. Through cyberspace I look at top lawyer Winfried van den Muijsenbergh, Ambassador Kees Nederlof, Shell Planning Director Joop de Vries, Shell Public Affairs Manager Marianne Carlier and Ambassador Marijke van Drunen Littel, and many others, who pushed JASON in the right orbit.

And I look at all of you. Your presence here proves that it is entirely possible to disagree yet unite under the banner of equality, transparency and the Rule of Law – all of which are *the true past and future engines* of the Atlantic Alliance. In that sense, the Atlantic Alliance is not something you look at from the outside in. It is the expression of our societies holding hands despite, or better, because of our differences. In that sense, the debate on a separate European Security is somewhat futile as it is not just an area we defend, but these indispensable elements of humanity. Dear friends, these two words are crucial: equality and transparency. Our societies cannot live without them. Other systems cannot live with them. Friends on Planet JASON, reach out!

Thank you very much for your patience.

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