North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Remarks

by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Town Hall Event at the Southern Methodist University in Dallas
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JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: Thank you so much, Kay, and thank you for those nice words and thank you for introducing me and it's really a great pleasure and honour to be here today. And I have visited the United States many times as Secretary General of NATO, but this is my first visit to Texas as Secretary General of NATO.

And I think that it was about time to come here, not least because I'm able to go here together with Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison, which… and who is really a strong supporter of NATO and I really appreciate working together with her in NATO and she said many nice words about me, but you have to know that I appreciate very much working with her, because she brings a wealth of wisdom and experience from Texas, but also from the US Senate, and this… her knowledge and her wisdom and her political experience is of great importance for the Alliance. Because we need US leadership and she is showing that leadership by her excellent work in Brussels. So, it's great to be with you here in Texas.

Then, I like to be here, or it's great to be here today for actually several reasons. One reason is that I very much like academic institutions because many, many years ago I decided to not become a politician. I decided to pursue an academic career. After I finished my exams in economics at the University of Oslo, I started to work at the University of Oslo and in the Central Bureau of Statistics in Norway, because my plan was to become a professor in mathematics or econometrics. And I started that and then I was asked to become a Deputy Minister, or State Secretary, in the Ministry of Environment back in 1990. And I promised myself, and my wife, to do that for maximum a couple of years and then go back to the academic life and become a professor.

[laughter]

I know, I failed.

Because now I've been in politics for almost 30 years and I'm afraid that the academic career is… it's very hard to go back and to start again to do, especially econometrics, partly because I've forgotten everything.

And even if I was able to… what shall I say… relearn that, I think there is no way I am able to compete with people who are 19 or 20, or 25 years old, I will lose. So, I know my limitations,

so I think that econometrics… that is a lost career. But instead of then becoming an academic myself, I really like visiting academic institutions.

And therefore I like to, I appreciate really to be here, to sense the atmosphere, to know that the SMU is really a centre of academic excellence for more than 100 years, and the scientific work and the teaching which is taking place here is something really which is highly recognised and therefore is a special pleasure for me to visit SMU.

Also knowing that this university has had as students, senators, congressmen, and even a First Lady, they have walked the quadrangle, I think it is, and therefore this is an academic institution with a lot of proud history. So, that's the second reason why I think it's great to be here in Texas and at the SMU.

The third reason is of course that it provides me an opportunity to share with you some thoughts and some reflections on the challenges NATO is facing and how we are responding to them, and that is important for Europe, but it's also of great importance for North America and the United States.

NATO is the most successful military Alliance in history and the main reason why NATO is the most successful Alliance in history is that we have been able to change, to adapt, when the world is changing. And as many of you already know, NATO was established on 4th April 1949, so almost exactly 69 years ago.

For 40 years, from 1949 to 1989, we did only actually one thing, and that was to deliver credible deterrence against the Soviet Union. It was all about how to make sure that the Soviet Union didn't attack any NATO Allied country. And we did that quite successfully, based on the core principle of NATO, that… which is one for all and all for one. So, if one NATO Ally is attacked then it will trigger the response from the whole Alliance. Then it was 12 members, today it's 29 members.

And by having this one for all, all for one principle, we have been able to prevent any attack against any NATO Ally. And that's extremely important for all of us, but especially for small NATO Allies, as for instance Norway where I'm coming from, it was of great important to know that when we are sharing… Norway is sharing a border with Russia, and previously with Soviet Union, five million people close to a big nation, the Soviet Union and Russia later on. But we felt safe because we knew that if Norway was attacked, NATO, NATO Allies, the United States, they will come to our support. And as long as any potential adversary is certain that we will defend each other, they will not attack. So, the best way to prevent conflict is to have credible deterrence. And that's exactly what NATO did for 40 years: '49 to '89.

Then in '89 the Berlin Wall came down and the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact were dissolved. And then people started to ask, "Do we need NATO anymore?" Because the main reason why NATO was established didn't exist anymore and some commentators said that NATO either have to go out of area, meaning go out of NATO territory

in Europe, or out of business. And then NATO decided not to go out of business, but instead go out of area, and for the first time in our history we went beyond NATO borders. We helped to end two wars in the Balkans in the 1990s, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Serbia, Kosovo.

And later on, we launched our biggest military operation ever in Afghanistan, as a response to a terrorist attack on the United States, 9/11. And, as Kay just said, that is the first and only time we have invoked what we call Article 5, which is the collective defence clause of our founding treaty, the Washington Treaty, which says that an attack on one Ally shall be considered an attack on all Allies.

So then, for the first 40 years, we successfully deterred the Soviet Union and we were able to end the Cold War without firing a shot, but without moving beyond our borders. Then 25 years, from '89 to 2014, we did what we called crisis management beyond our borders, in the Balkans, in Afghanistan, fighting piracy off the Horn of Africa – so we did crisis management beyond NATO borders.

Then 2014 is a new pivotal year in the history of NATO, because in 2014 two things happened at the same time; partly we saw an even more assertive Russia. We saw the illegal annexation of Crimea, which is the first time since the Second World War when borders are changed in Europe by the use of force: one country, Russia, taking a part of another country, Ukraine, by annexing Crimea. So, that was extremely serious. Second, they continued to destabilise Eastern Ukraine and we saw, over a long period of time, a Russia which heavily invested in more military equipment, modernised their armed forces, also invested heavily in nuclear systems and then 2014 was this year they really started to use military force against a neighbour.

Then, in the same year, 2014, something very different happened and that was the rise of Daesh, or ISIL. And I remember when I was asked to become Secretary General of NATO in January 2014, the first time, then hardly anyone had heard about ISIL, or Daesh. Some months later, Daesh controlled territory close to NATO borders, in Iraq and Syria, as big as the United Kingdom and almost eight million people. So, that was really a threat.

And NATO proved again that we are able to adapt, able to respond, and we responded by implementing the biggest reinforcement to our collective defence since the end of the Cold War, and by stepping up our efforts to fight terrorism. So, I am actually quite impressed by the fact that NATO has proven again and again able to change, respond, when the world is changing.

And I will just briefly, and then I will be available for questions, describe how we have then once again changed or adapted in the light of what happened in 2014 and after.

First, the biggest reinforcement to our collective defence. We have for the first time in our history deployed combat ready troops in the eastern part of the Alliance. We call them

battlegroups. One is led is by the United States in Poland, then United Kingdom, Canada and Germany, they lead other battlegroups. But together, this is the strongest military presence NATO has ever had in the eastern part of the Alliance. The battlegroups are not very big, it's around 1,000 in each, but the important thing is that they are multinational. So, there are NATO troops already in the Baltic countries that are sending an extremely clear and strong message, that if anything similar to what happened in Ukraine happens against any of the Baltic countries, NATO will be there and responding immediately. So there is no way that can happen without triggering the response from the whole Alliance. That provides deterrence and that's extremely important for, especially the Baltic countries and Poland.

Second, we have increased the readiness of our forces, so we have tripled the size of what we call the NATO Response Force, which is a force around 40,000 troops, which are available and we can deploy them on very short notice.

And thirdly, we have seen, for the first time in many, many years that defence spending is again increasing, especially as the United States have already, has always spent a lot on defence, it has been a bit up and down, but 3/4%, more than that actually, always. But since the end of the Cold War, during the 1990s and up until 2014, we have seen a quite steady decline in defence spending across Europe and Canada. Then, in 2014, NATO Allies decided, as a response to what we saw with Russia in Ukraine and Crimea, and the rise of Daesh in Iraq and Syria, that we needed to invest more. And we decided to stop the cuts, gradually increase and then move towards spending 2% of GDP on defence within a decade. We decided that in 2014 and the first year after our decision, 2015 was the first year with increase in defence spending across Europe and Canada for many, many years. And then now we have had three consecutive years of a rise, of rising defence expenditures in… among European Allied countries and Canada.

That is extremely important because it shows that we are willing to invest more in our security when the world requires that.

Second, it is also a message to the United States that European Allies are stepping up, we take it seriously that we need a more balanced burden sharing. We still have a long way to go, but at least European Allies and Canada has turned a corner, showing that they will carry their part of the burden and are investing more in defence.

The other element of our adaptation is that we have decided to do more in the fight against terrorism. All NATO Allies are member of what we call the US-led Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. It has achieved a lot already. Almost all the territory controlled by Daesh, or ISIL, in Iraq and Syria, has been retaken, and all Allies have participated, but just to mention Turkey has been key in that fight.

Because sometimes it's easy to forget that Iraq and Syria, Daesh, is actually at the border of NATO, because Turkey is a NATO country. And we know that this is not only a threat against neighbours like Turkey, but it's a threat against all of us, because we have seen terrorist

attacks in the United States, in Europe, organised or inspired by Daesh, the so called Caliphate they try to establish in Iraq and Syria. So, this is not only about protecting the neighbours or Iraq and Syria, but also protecting all our countries. So, Turkey has been key because they have provided infrastructure, airbases, in the fight against Daesh.

I think that the lesson we have learned, being very different in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, other places, is that NATO and NATO Allied countries have to be ready to deploy large number of combat troops in big combat operations, as we for instance did in Afghanistan after 9/11, the attack on the United States. But in the long run, it is better to train local forces to enable them to stabilise their own country. And that's exactly what we are doing in Afghanistan.

We have trained the Afghans, so they are now responsible for the security in their own country, and when the Taliban attacks or when there are terrorist attacks in Kabul or elsewhere in Afghanistan, it is the Afghan Special Forces who goes out and respond. We help them, we support them, we train them, we advise them, but they are on the front line and that is a great achievement, that we have been able to train and build local Afghan forces capable of doing exactly that.

We are aiming to do the same in Iraq. Therefore, we are now in the process of planning to scale up and to establish a training mission, a NATO training mission, to train the Iraqi forces, to build the security institutions. Again, based on the idea that prevention is better than intervention and that, in the long run, we are safer if they are able to stabilise their own countries. It's not easy. We need different approaches to different countries, but our efforts to fight terrorism is very much about building local capacity.

Then of course we also have to address other threats, like cyber threats and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, North Korea. Fundamentally when it comes to nuclear and ballistic weapon threats, we respond in the same way as we have responded to ballistic and missile threats for decades, by deterrence. NATO, and again United States is the biggest Ally, we have the resolve, we have the capabilities, to respond if attacked, and that has been the best way to prevent the Soviet Union or Russia to attack, and I think also it sends a clear message to North Korea. At the same time, we work for a political solution, so we support all efforts of trying to find a political solution to the crises caused by the development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in North Korea, and to be able to reach a political solution we need strong pressure on North Korea, and therefore also we strongly support the economic sanctions against North Korea.

I will just share with also then one reflection and then I will end and open up for questions, and that is that one of the challenges we face today is that it is a much more blurred line between peace and war than we have seen before. In the old days, war was something a nation declared. The ambassadors went to the capitals and said, "We now declare war against your country". And it was easy to say exactly when the war started and when it was over, or ended. And in my country, Norway, we know exactly when the Second World War

started. It started the 9th April, when we were attacked by German forces, and it ended the 8th of May. And that was a clear date and we knew exactly which countries that were neutral and which countries which were a part of the Second World War. Norway, Denmark, we were a part of the Second World War, Sweden was not.

When it comes to today, we see threats which are extremely different. For instance, the fight against Daesh and ISIL, it's very hard to say when it started, it's very hard to say exactly where it takes place. We know that it has taken place in Iraq and Syria, but it has also taken place in our own streets, in our own capitals. And there are different groups claiming to be part of ISIL, we don't know exactly whether… how close the connections are, but we know there are several terrorist attacks which are more or less linked to Daesh. So, the war takes place also in that sense in our own streets. Then of course Iraq and Syria, but we have Daesh in Afghanistan, in North Africa, in Asia. And we have Daesh operating in cyberspace. And I think it's very hard to tell when the fight against Daesh is over.

So, classical old kinds of war, they were well defined in time and space. Today, war is hard to define when and where. And we have a very blurred line because there are what we call hybrid tactics, which is a mixture of military and non military means of aggression, covert and overt operations, cyber interventions, we saw in Salisbury the use of a chemical nerve agent, and so on. This is a great challenge for NATO because we have to be strong, we have to respond, but we have to respond in a measured way, and sometimes attribution is extremely difficult, especially when it comes to cyberattacks.

So, that's also the reason why we are modernising the Alliance, not only by strengthening our conventional forces, but also by more intelligence, better situational awareness, higher readiness, and for instance investing more both in cyber defence, but also in our capabilities to deal with chemical weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction.

I will just end by saying that I am optimistic on behalf of NATO because NATO is strong, because we have proven able to adapt. And the impressive thing is that, despite of the consensus we need - because as Kay said that's sometimes quite demanding to reach consensus among 29 Allies - we have been able to take decisions. And for instance, we were able to invoke Article 5 just hours after the attack on the United States, we were able to take over the responsibility for air operations over Libya within days, we have high readiness forces. So we can take decisions fast, or quickly, if needed. But I strongly believe that the fact that NATO has proven able to change and the fact that we have been able to stand united for almost 70 years, provides the best basis for that NATO will continue to be the most successful Alliance in history, good for Europe and good for North America and the United States.

Thank you so much.

[applause]

MAN#1: …gathering I mentioned earlier, involving Russia, Iran and Turkey, and of course US troops are nearby and… [audio cuts off] … or keep in mind about that gathering and its future implications.

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO General Secretary]: The reason why US troops are in Syria and also the… some other NATO Allies are in Syria as part of the efforts of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, is to defeat ISIS. So, that's the reason why some NATO Allies went into Syria with some ground troops, to train and assist and advise local forces, but also with some air forces, to help defeat ISIS. NATO is not on the ground in Syria, but NATO is a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and of course it is a national US decision how long the US will have forces in Syria, but the understanding and the common approach in the Global Coalition is that we will be, the Coalition will be there as long as it takes to be absolutely sure that ISIS is defeated. And we have… the Coalition has achieved a lot by being able to retake almost all the territory ISIS controlled, but we see still some pockets of ISIS presence, both in Iraq and in Syria, and that's the reason why NATO will do training in Iraq and that's the reason why also some NATO Allies, as part of the efforts of the Global Coalition, still is present in Syria. Then of course we are aware that Turkey is present in Northern Syria. They are… they have some legitimate security concerns. No other NATO Ally has suffered more terrorist attacks than Turkey. They have suffered a very bloody, or brutal, coup attempt back in July 2016, where they actually bombed a parliament building with parliamentarians inside the building, and Turkey has the right to defend itself and to address those security concerns.

At the same time, we have stated clearly that this of course has to be proportionate and measured, and of course we have to make sure that the Turkish presence in Northern Syria is… what shall I say… is conducted in a way which doesn't weaken the efforts to defeat ISIS. But again, since NATO is not present on the ground, this is a dialogue and context which are taking place directly between NATO Allies, and especially Turkey and United States. I welcome the fact that United States and Turkey are addressing this issue to make sure that they are as coordinated as possible in their presence in Northern Syria.

MODERATOR: OK, let's… your questions, please. Why don't we start with this gentleman here, and if you would please introduce yourself and then share your question.

QUESTION [Zack Miller]: My name is Zack Miller. I am a Tower Scholar, so I study Public Policy and International Affairs at the Tower Center. My question is kind of a two part question. The first part is about nuclear sharing in NATO and as we see an evolution, like you said, in the type of warfare that is carried out, whether or not you see the nuclear sharing in NATO becoming obsolete as we shift more towards cyber warfare. And then in particular I wanted to ask about nuclear sharing particularly with Turkey, given their domestic kind of internal disputes and conflicts within the country, and whether or not that has come in to play in any instances within NATO.

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO General Secretary]: First of all, credible deterrence, which is the key way to prevent conflict, also has a nuclear component, so meaning of course we need strong conventional forces, we need cyber capabilities, we need many different capabilities, but nuclear forces is part of NATO's deterrence. And again, the United States is by far the most important country when it comes to nuclear capabilities, but also other NATO Allies, UK and France, have nuclear weapons. For NATO, it is important to distinguish clearly between nuclear capabilities and conventional capabilities, and the circumstances in which any use of nuclear weapons would be considered is extremely remote. But we need to have them to be able to have the ultimate deterrence which are connected… or which is connected to nuclear weapons. Nuclear sharing, for those who don't know that, is something we have had for many, many years in NATO, meaning that the United States they have the weapons, but then other NATO Allies, for instance deliver the planes that can carry the nuclear bombs. So, then different nations work together to provide a nuclear capability. That's nuclear sharing and we have done that for many years. We exercise and we have the system where the UK and also the United States and some NATO Allies then work together with delivering that part of the nuclear deterrent.

This is not… it's not obsolete. We still need it because we see that many countries invest heavily in nuclear weapons, especially Russia. They have modernised their nuclear capabilities very much over the last years. We see other countries developing nuclear weapons. We are strongly in favour of nuclear arms control, partly by strongly supporting those agreements which are in place, for instance the START… the new START agreement which came into force on 5th February this year, putting a ceiling on the total number of nuclear weapons at 1550. And also something called the INF Treaty which is about intermediate weapons, missiles, which has… actually has abolished the whole category of intermediate forces, or weapons systems. But as long as there are nuclear weapons, we will remain a nuclear alliance. I cannot comment on which countries that are a part of our nuclear sharing arrangements, so you can Google and you can decide whether you trust the information reading Wikipedia or not, but I cannot comment on specific nations.

MODERATOR: Another question. Yes? Wait for the mike if you would, please.

QUESTION: Hi. My name is [inaudible]. I'm a senior here, President Scholar at SMU, studying Finance and Math. I just wanted to bring up, Ambassador Hutchinson had mentioned that when NATO first started considering new member applications, they very heavily scrutinised whether those applicants had established stable democracies in their countries, already there. And I was wondering if there are any mechanisms within NATO now to ensure that those same liberal democratic ideals are maintained within the current member states and, if there are, how those conversations happen in Brussels.

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO General Secretary]: You're right that in Article 10, which is the Article in the Washington Treaty where we defined how we can become… or so how NATO can enlarge with new members, it is stated that any new country has to live up to the NATO

standards and NATO is based on some core values; democracy, the rule of law, and individual liberty. So when, for instance, Montenegro applied and went through a big process of reform to become our latest member, the 29th member, they became member last year, we… part of that was to make sure that they developed democratic institutions and lived up to the NATO standards when it comes to rule of law, fighting corruption and so on. And of course that values… these values are values we expect all Allies to respect and when questions are raised about whether NATO Allies don't fully respect those values, of course that gives reason for concern and I stress, when I travel round the NATO Allies, the importance of that all NATO Allies respect those values. I also know that individual Allies, in their bilateral engagements, also raise issues related to the rule of law, democracy and so on. But we don't have any specific mechanism in NATO dealing with that. For instance, the European Union, they have some mechanisms and some systems so they can launch processes where they assess whether the member states live up to different requirements. They have the process now related to Poland, for instance. But that's according to agreed processes and mechanisms in the European Union. We don't have anything similar in NATO, so this is partly about the political… how shall I say… focus of me, of the rest of NATO, but also the dialogue between NATO Allies which has to address concerns about human rights or the rule of law, individual liberty.

MODERATOR: Yes, sir?

QUESTION [Jack Vaughan]: My name is Jack Vaughan, I'm a local businessman and former Chairman of the John Tower Center for Political Studies here at SMU. Is the Iran nuclear agreement still effective, in NATO's view?

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO General Secretary]: Whilst it is important to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, and that's important because any proliferation of nuclear weapons is dangerous, we strongly support the Non Proliferation Treaty, which is about avoiding or preventing other countries from developing nuclear weapons, and when the Iran deal was agreed we welcomed, all 29 Allies welcomed the deal. But for any deal to be effective, it has to be fully respected and implemented, and therefore we are underline… NATO and NATO Allies underline the importance of the full implementation of the Iran nuclear deal, to make sure that Iran is not able to develop nuclear weapons. NATO is not directly part in the Iran deal. It was signed by the United States, several other NATO Allies and then it… and Iran of course, and then it was later on agreed by the UN Security Council as a decision by the UN Security Council, so now it's a UN Security Council decision, where France, Germany, the United Kingdom, United States, not Germany but some other countries, France, UK and United States, among others, were a part of that decision, Germany participated in negotiations. So, it's not… NATO does not possess the mechanisms to assess whether the Iran nuclear deal is fully implemented or not. I think it is extremely important that we leave that to those countries which signed the deal and to the United Nations, which is now responsible for the deal.

QUESTION: So, just to extend on that; is it correct then to understand that NATO is not involved in actively monitoring nuclear activity through technology on the ground or satellite surveillance? So, is it correct to understand…

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO General Secretary]: NATO is not directly involved in monitoring the implementation of the Iran nuclear deal. It was actually… because we were never asked to do so and it's the International Atomic Energy Agency which is responsible for that, which is an international body. So, I think… I know that this is issue is also a bit sensitive and it will only create move confusion if I started to comment on something which is not my mandate. There are other international institutions that has been mandated to do so and of course, NATO Allies were heavily involved in the negotiations that led to the Iran nuclear deal, we welcomed the deal when it was agreed, but again the implementation of the deal is not for NATO, that's for other international institutions and therefore, I think it will only undermine the efforts to make sure that the deal is fully implemented if I started to comment on that, based on the fact that NATO is not directly involved.

MODERATOR: Yes, this young lady over here.

QUESTION [Hunter Collin]: Hi, my name is Hunter Collin. I'm a sophomore, a Tower Scholar and Hunt Scholar. First, I just wanted to thank you for coming and speaking with us. I know all the students that are here are really grateful for this opportunity. But I wanted to ask, you mentioned briefly about cyber warfare and cyberattacks, so I was wondering if you could talk about how NATO has prepared to handle cyber warfare and cyberattacks, and like how you guys define that on a global scale.

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO General Secretary]: We have responded and adapted our cyber defences in many different ways because we regard cyber threats and cyberattacks as something potentially very serious, and it's actually not only something which is potentially very serious, it's actually something that takes place almost every day. Because, when it comes to conventional attacks, that's a potential threat in the future, while cyberattacks actually happens almost every day. So, it's not something that may happen in the future, it's something that takes place now. So, we have done many different things.

Perhaps the most important thing we did, back in 2014, was that we decided that cyberattacks can be as damaging, as serious, as dangerous, as kinetic attacks. So, we made the decision back in 2014 that cyberattacks can trigger Article 5, meaning that if a country is attacked in cyberspace, we can go to NATO and say that this is an attack on the whole Alliance. And that sends a clear message that the collective security guarantees does not only apply for a conventional attack or a nuclear attack, but also for cyberattacks. Then of course it's up to NATO Allies to assess whether the scale and the seriousness of the cyberattack is big enough to trigger Article 5. But that's another issue, the thing is that we have clearly stated that cyberattacks can trigger Article 5, and that was the first thing. The second thing is that we have done a lot to strengthen our own defences of… defences for

NATO networks and cyber systems. Because in all our headquarters, in all our missions and operations, be it in Afghanistan or the headquarters in Brussels or whatever it is, or the deployment in the Baltic countries, are heavily dependent on cyber networks, and it's not possible to envisage any military conflict without a big cyber dimension. So, we have done a lot to improve the cyber defences of our own networks. And we have seen… as we see… we have seen many, many attacks, as we see many attacks every day, against our networks, but that's everything, you know, from small attacks to big attacks, state actors, non state actors, many of them are very hard to attribute, and we are able to protect our networks because we have strongly improve d the way we protect our own networks.

In addition to that, we have also established teams of experts who are ready to be deployed 24/7 to member states, to help them defend their networks, be it their military installations or civilian institutions or energy networks. Of course, United States has a lot of capabilities themselves, but many other Allies they don't have so much capabilities to protect their own networks, so we can deploy and help them protecting their networks. And thirdly, we do a lot to share technology, to exercise and to share best practices. We have a centre of excellence in Tallinn only focused on cyber defences. So yes, we do a lot, but we need to continue to improve our systems because cyberattacks is something that constantly evolves and requires better and more sophisticated systems.

MODERATOR: Young lady right here.

QUESTION: I'll be recording, is that OK?

MODERATOR: I don't know if it's… I don't know if we're allowed to record.

QUESTION: Oh, we're not? OK. OK, hi. I am a student here and I also correspond for Deutsche Welle. My question is; the Alliance between NATO and Pakistan and with Pakistan fighting terrorism on its own soil, how challenging it is, and if NATO is helping Pakistan accomplish those goals. And another question, out of curiosity, in the past I know that some NATO trucks were hijacked by terrorists on Pakistani soil, which was very dangerous, and then they used those weapons against Pakistanis. What do you have to say about that? Thank you.

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO General Secretary]: The Pakistan is a country which… with which we have of course a political relationship for many reasons, not least because NATO is heavily involved in Afghanistan, a neighbour of Pakistan, and we have also used Pakistan as a way to move equipment and forces into Afghanistan. We are not directly involved in any military activities or any practical cooperation with Pakistan when it comes to, for instance, addressing the terrorist threats inside Pakistan, but we have several times underlined the importance of that we need a regional approach to address the Taliban and the threat the Taliban poses, especially to Afghanistan, but also to the wider region. And therefore, we also call upon Pakistan to engage and to work closely with Afghanistan in addressing the threat of the Taliban and make sure that there are no safe havens, no sanctuaries for Taliban in

Pakistan, which helps them both to organise terrorist attacks against Afghanistan, but also destabilise Pakistan.

MODERATOR: OK, we'll take one last question. This gentleman right here.

QUESTION [Alexander Stevenson]: Thank you. My name is Alexander Stevenson. I'm a senior here at SMU with a Major in Political Science. We addressed earlier technology a little bit with cyber security and cyber warfare, but I was wondering if you could touch on how NATO is responding to non state actors and their constant ability to attain new technologies, such as 3D printing, such as artificial intelligence, and how they are using it in their warfare capabilities. Thank you.

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO General Secretary]: NATO is responding to those kinds of threats in many different ways and actually you mentioned different kinds of threats. One is of course the technological development and then NATO and NATO Allies have to make sure that we keep the technological edge, which has been a big advantage for NATO for as long as we have existed. Therefore, one of the reasons why we are focused on why we should invest more in defence is that that provides also more money for research and development. And we have not only stated that we should all spend 2% of GDP on defence, but we have also stated clearly that we should spend 20% of that budget for investments in new equipment and research and development, which will then provide the funding for development of new and advanced technologies. So, we keep the technological edge, we have the most modern systems, more modern than our adversaries. Then of course related to that is the danger or the threat of non state actors, terrorists, getting hold of advanced technology, weapons of mass destruction or whatever it is, then that’s partly about intelligence, partly about cooperation between NATO Allies and partners, and partly of course also about police, civilian intelligence, which is a bit outside the responsibility of NATO, but of course NATO Allies are engaged on how to make sure that non state actors or criminal groups, or terrorists, get hold of technology or weapons, which are extremely dangerous.

So, I think that’s the brief answer to that.

Source: https://www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/events/transcripts/2018/04/05/remarks