North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

A strong transatlantic bond in uncertain times

Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at an event hosted by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF)
2016-11-18

(As delivered)

So Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, first of all thank you for this very warm welcome.

And thank you to the German Marshall Fund and to Ian for hosting me and all of us today. The German Marshall Fund is a truly transatlantic organization and the German Marshall Fund is important for many reasons but especially because the German Marshall Fund is really contributing to strengthening the transatlantic bond and to build bridges across the Atlantic. And the GMF has been doing that for decades. And this is as important as ever in the uncertain times we are living in today.

I will give a speech and then afterwards I am happy to answer your questions and to take part in a dialogue with all of you. But let me start by just stating the following and that is that Europe needs America and America needs Europe.

So, this morning I want to talk about what binds us together. To explore the fundamental connection between the transatlantic bond and European security. And to outline what I believe we need to do to sustain that bond, and maintain that security.

******

Today marks exactly one hundred years since the final day of the Battle of the Somme. One of the bloodiest campaigns in the First World War. A battle in which over a million men were killed or wounded. On the eve of the First World War, British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey had been sure that peace would prevail.That if war threatened, European nations would, in his words, “call a halt, and recoil from the abyss”.He was wrong.Like so many others.

The European powers could not call a halt.The result was utter destruction.

Two decades later, Europe was once again engulfed by war.

And the sons of those Americans and Canadians who had fought in Flanders Fields were asked to fight their way across the beaches of Normandy.But soon after the liberation of Europe, an Iron Curtain fell and divided the continent.

Two World Wars – and the Cold War – have taught us that the security of Europe relies on the United States.And that the United States has a profound strategic interest in a stable and secure Europe.

Today, the United States continues to demonstrate its commitment to Europe's security.It will deploy a new armoured brigade to Europe.And deliver equipment and supplies to support future reinforcements, if needed.

And at the same time Europeans have always been there for Americans too.Since NATO was founded in 1949, America has had no more steadfast and reliable partner than Europe.Europe is America's best friend.

NATO has been a unique force multiplier.A platform from which to project strategic interests.And for working seamlessly with Allies and partners around the globe.

So we have to remember that the only time when NATO has invoked our collective defence clause, Article 5, was in solidarity with the United States. As a direct response to the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

Since then hundreds of thousands of European troops have served in Afghanistan.Over a thousand have paid the ultimate price.And NATO continues to play a crucial role in the fight against international terrorism.

Every NATO Ally is part of the US-led coalition to counter ISIL.Drawing on decades of experience working together in NATO exercises and operations.

Our AWACS surveillance aircraft support coalition air operations.

NATO is training Iraqi officers to better fight ISIL.And we work with others throughout North Africa and the Middle East to help them improve their security.

Europe and the United States are close economic and trade partners.Together, they account for one third of world trade and half of global economic output.

A stronger, safer, and more prosperous Europe means a stronger, safer, more prosperous United States.

That is an essential lesson of twentieth century history.And we should not forget it.

Especially in uncertain times such as these.

Russia, breaking international law.Turmoil in North Africa and the Middle East.The refugee and migration crisis.International terrorism.Hybrid warfare.And cyber-attacks.

These are pressing challenges.Requiring unity and resolve. And a strong transatlantic bond.

To do that, we Europeans recognise that we have work to do.
Crucially, Europe must do more on defence and security.
And an important part of that is closer cooperation between NATO and the European Union.

I welcome ongoing efforts to strengthen European Defence.But we need to ensure it is done in a way which strengthens not weakens the transatlantic relationship.

For me, as Secretary General of NATO, there are three key points.

More money for better capabilities.Complementarity, not competition. And involvement of non-EU Allies.

First, some words about more money for better capabilities.

It is no secret that the United States has called for European Allies to spend more on defence.We have heard that call many times, from many American leaders.From President Obama and from President-elect Trump.From every senator and congressman I've met since becoming Secretary General.

And delivering on defence spending has been my top priority since the day I took office.

I raise this in every NATO capital I visit.
And I welcome the fact that Europeans are now stepping up.
At our Summit in Wales in 2014, all Allies made a pledge.To stop cuts in defence spending.And to gradually increase spending towards the goal of 2% of GDP within a decade.

Last year, for the first time in many years, we stopped the cuts across Europe and Canada.

This year, I expect a 3% real increase in defence spending in Europe and Canada.

But other than the US, only four NATO Allies currently spend 2% of GDP on defence.

If all Allies did, that would mean an extra hundred billion dollars.A one hundred billion dollar boost to our capabilities.

That's roughly equivalent to the combined budgets of the largest defence spenders in Europe: the UK and France. Every year.

So we still have a long way to go.But we are heading in the right direction.

This week, the EU also took steps in the right direction.

Agreeing on measures to implement the Global Strategy in the area of security and defence.

They should lead to more efficient spending and better defence capabilities.

One issue we need to address better is the fragmentation of the European defence industry.

Let me give you some examples.

The United States has one type of infantry fighting vehicle.In Europe, we have 19.The United States has three types of air to air missiles.In Europe, we have 13 different types.The United States uses 4 different types of naval frigates.In Europe, we have 29.

Think what that means for our ability to work together and fight together.

And the unnecessary costs involved.So, we need to spend more and we also need to spend better.

That leads me to my second point: complementarity, not competition.

NATO nations and EU members simply cannot afford two sets of forces and capabilities.

We share 22 members – so to duplicate would be like competing with ourselves.

I know that when it comes to European Defence, a number of proposals have been put on the table.And that debate continues.

I took part in this discussion when I attended the recent EU Defence Ministers meeting in Bratislava, and again this week in Brussels.

It was clearly stated that there is no intention to create a European Army;or establish a military headquarters similar to that of NATO's SHAPE.And it was also made clear that NATO remains the foundation for the collective defence of those countries that are part of the Alliance.

So at least some of the ghosts of the past appear to have been laid to rest.

To make sure that remains the case,we must have full transparency and the involvement of non-EU NATO Allies.That is my third point.

Allies such as the United States and Canada to the West;Iceland and Norway to the North;And Turkey and Albania to the South-East, are not members of the EU.But, together, they are essential for European security and will continue to be.

After Brexit, non-EU Allies will account for 80% of NATO’s defence spending.Three of the four NATO battlegroups to be deployed in Poland and the Baltic States will be led by non-EU Allies. So, we cannot afford to decouple European Defence from non-EU NATO Allies.

They all have an important stake in European security.And we must continue to acknowledge that.One way of doing so is by developing stronger NATO-EU cooperation.This will also reinforce the transatlantic bond.

The Joint Declaration that I signed together with Presidents Tusk and Juncker in Warsaw in July raised our cooperation to a new level.

Both organisations face security challenges of a new depth and complexity.And neither has the tools to overcome those challenges alone.

NATO has a unique set of experience, expertise and capabilities.A tried and tested command structure.

Key enablers such as AWACS surveillance planes.And high-end fighting capabilities.Our ability to do both collective defence and crisis management complements perfectly the wide range of capabilities the EU has to offer.

Together, we can be a formidable force for good.

Our combined efforts in the Aegean have been a major step forward.Helping to cut the lines of illegal migration.

Last week, we launched the maritime security Operation Sea Guardian.

With ships, submarines and maritime patrol aircraft operating in the Central Mediterranean.

Which will also be used to support the EU’s Operation Sophia.NATO and EU cyber defence teams already participate together in exercises.And have agreed to exchange information about threats, and share best practices.

We are working to implement the joint statement we made in Warsaw.And this is one the most important things when it comes to how to further strengthen the cooperation between NATO and EU and we are doing so with full respect for both organisations' distinct mandates, decision-making autonomy and institutional integrity.

Next month, High Representative Mogherini and I will present concrete proposals to further strengthen NATO-EU cooperation.In seven key areas:Countering hybrid threats, operations, cyber defence, defence capabilities, supporting the defence industry – on both sides of the Atlantic, exercises, and training and capacity building for our partners.

When NATO and the EU work together we can deliver real security.For our nations.And beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Exactly one hundred years after the final day of the battle of the Somme we must remember:

Peace and security in Europe cannot be taken for granted.

In these uncertain times we need strong American leadership.

And we need Europeans to shoulder their fair share of the burden.

But, above all, we need to recognise the value of the partnership between Europe and America.

A partnership on which we all rely.

And which we all need to nurture.

Because united we are stronger and we are safer.Thank you.

Moderator: Secretary General thank you very very much for that. You touched on a lot of extraordinarily important things and I'm sure you've spurred a lot of thought out in our audience, but before we come to all of you we wanted to have a little bit of a conversation up here and maybe elaborate on some of these things and maybe talk about some of the things that you might not have mentioned but you might like to mention. And maybe I can start this way I was very struck by your evocation of the Somme and it also reminded me in a way of a comment that we had from the famous historian Margaret McMillan at our Brussels Forum last year where she talked about the speed with which stability disintegrated in Europe in 1914 in a period of weeks, and at a time when I think most of us would agree things moved more slowly. And I'm wondering whether you would agree that we've been in some sense too complacent about European stability, maybe even about our critical alliance relationships. Is that a danger at a time of great political flux on both sides of the Atlantic?

Jens Stoltenberg (NATO Secretary General): We always have to be focused on potential dangers and one of my main messages in the speech today is that actually we are faced with more instability, more unpredictability and a more dangerous world than we have been for some decades especially after the end of the Cold War. But at the same time I'm actually impressed by the way NATO has been able to respond and by the way NATO allies have been able to adapt and respond. So that's in a way the big difference if you compare today with the previous centuries that we are responding, we are adapting to a more dangerous world and therefore I'm optimistic when it comes to our ability as a Trans-Atlantic alliance to continue to keep Europe stable and to respond to all the challenges we see both to the South and to the East.

Moderator: The Summit in Warsaw was widely hailed as a success and it accomplished a lot but clearly it, as you would imagine, left a lot of unfinished business as well. I mean could you say a few words about that, I mean looking towards the next Summit, looking towards the NATO agenda over the next months, a year, what is there at the top of the agenda for you?

Jens Stoltenberg: The Warsaw Summit in a way had three main topics. One was collective defense in Europe, responding to a more assertive Russia in the East but also partly in the South. Projecting stability, to address instability to our South with terrorism, ISIL, Iraq, Syria, and strengthen NATO- E.U. cooperation, and the good thing is that on all these three different

areas we are able to both identify a lot of progress which has already been implemented and to outline the way forward with a united alliance behind. Just briefly on collective defense in Europe we have done more over the last couple of years than for many many years.

We have implemented the biggest reinforcement of our collective defense since the end of the Cold War. We will deploy four battle groups in the Baltic countries and Poland. We have established small headquarters in seven countries in the eastern part of the alliance, I think actually its eight, and we have tripled the size of the NATO response force so we can reinforce quickly if needed and we have established this new high readiness joint task force. So, we have already done a lot when it comes to collective defense in Europe and we agreed to do more at the Warsaw Summit.

On top of that I'm also, as I say, at least encouraged by the fact that we are now seeing the increase, we are seeing the first steps towards increased defense spending in Europe and Canada. And to be honest with you I was not certain that that was going to happen because even if that was decided at the Wales Summit it has happened before that politicians meet, make decisions at the international meetings and then go back home and do not implement but this time actually the politicians met, made decisions and went home and started to implement. So that is really encouraging, still a long way to go but 3 percent real increase in defense spending in Canada and across Europe in 2016 is a significant step forward. And Estonia is already at 2 percent, soon the two other Baltic countries will be there, Poland is at 2 percent, Romania is close and, for instance, Germany has also now started to increase defense spending, and then you have U.K. and others which are already at 2 percent so Europe is moving in the right direction.

This has been my main topic in all my meetings with Heads of State and Government and also some Ministers of Finance in my different meetings in NATO capitals since I took over in October 2014. So collective defense we are delivering. On projecting stability, well we decided to continue in Afghanistan, that's part of our efforts to fight terrorism and we are stepping up our efforts to support the international coalition fighting ISIL. And then we have this new renewed efforts to strengthen NATO-E.U. cooperation. Only during this year we have been able to agree or have in place a formal arrangement between NATO and the E.U. regarding cyber defense. That is really an area where we have to, as I say, share best practices, work together and we also were able to implement an arrangement regarding the Aegean Sea, how to exchange information.

So the fact is that during this year we have been able to reach more formal arrangements between NATO and the European Union than in the previous decade. So we are moving forward on NATO E.U. cooperation and then we had of course the joint declaration between the Presidents Tusk and Junker and now we are following up that. So, my message - it was a brief question and a long answer - is that Warsaw was a success partly because we were able to take stock a lot of achievements, implementation but partly also it was because we

were able to outline the way forward and NATO stands united in a way, what should I say, uncertain time. Its good to see that NATO is so united as we are.

Moderator: And in balancing the challenges in the East and in the South that you've spoken about they are of course a very, very different kind and I was wondering if you could say a word about how the alliance balances that in terms of its own strategy. Do you need to think about a new strategic concept or do you sort of have the conceptual tools already in place to be able to deal with this?

Jens Stoltenberg: So first of all there's no way NATO can choose between either addressing the instability, the turmoil to the South, North Africa, Middle East or collective defense in Europe. We have to do both at the same time. Second, we have to understand that when we address instability to the South or even as far away as Afghanistan that is about our own security. The reason why we are in Afghanistan is to protect ourselves because the reason why we went into Afghanistan was in direct response to an attack on the United States. And the reason why we are so focused on the turmoil and the violence in Syria and Iraq and why NATO allies support U.S. led coalition and why NATO supports the U.S. coalition is of course that's something which endangers our own security with terrorist attacks in our own streets. So we have to be focused on both and that's also one of the reasons why we need more capabilities, more defense spending to be able to do more responding to uncertainty. Last thing is that for instance Russia is of course now present in the East, as Russia has always been but Russia is also present in the South in Syria, so to distinguish between East and West, no sorry East and South, and the different kinds of instabilities and threats is not as easy as it was before.

Moderator: Let me, maybe if I can just pick up on that point with Russia, I mean, simply understanding what Moscow wants is not an easy task and if you have a thought about that it would be great but beyond that the question of risk reduction with Russia, how we avoid accidents whether its in the Baltic or its in the Black Sea or its in the Eastern Mediterranean where, as you say, Russia is increasingly present again. Where do we stand on that part of the agenda?

Jens Stoltenberg: In the Warsaw, or at the Warsaw Summit we also agreed and we had the united alliance behind a very clear message about defense and dialogue, and I welcome very much that there is such a strong support for both messages. We need strong defense, we need deterrence and we are implementing and we are strengthening our defense on deterrence but at the same time we are underlining and underscoring the need for political dialogue with Russia. And I believe in political dialogue with Russia because Russia is our biggest neighbour, Russia's there to stay, there's no way we can isolate Russia. We have to manage our relationship with Russia and especially in times with when tensions run high its especially important to keep channels for political dialogue open with Russia, to address different issues but in particular everything related to transparency, risk reduction, because with more military activity close to our borders it is even more important that we try to have

mechanisms in place to avoid incidents, accidents and if they happen make sure that they don't spiral out of control.

You saw the downing of the Russian plane over Turkey last year and we have seen some incidents with very unsafe behaviour and of course we have to try to avoid that. We have a lot of exercises, non-notice exercises and all of this can create dangerous situations. So we have been able to have two or we had this year we had two meetings of the NATO-Russia Council and we sit down there and discuss with Russia, transparency, risk reduction and we continue the dialogue with Russia on these issues because with more military activity close to our borders its even more important to avoid any miscalculations, misunderstandings, incidents or accidents.

Moderator: Do you feel the Russians are open to this conversation?

Jens Stoltenberg: Yes, I feel they are open to the conversation. They have participated in the two meetings of the NATO Russia Council where exactly these issues have been addressed and I have also had meetings with Foreign Minister Lavrov and so they are open. That doesn't mean that we agree, that doesnt mean that we have been able to find solutions to all the problems. Some of them are, for instance, connected to something called the Vienna document which is a document regulating transparency, international observers to different military exercises and Russia has used many different kinds of loopholes and avoided international observation and inspection of their exercises.

This is something also which is undermining the transparency and the predictability which the Vienna document aims to achieve and that's one of the reasons why we are strongly in favour in NATO of the efforts to try to modernize this document to also include, for instance, short-notice exercises because the current regulations do not include short-notice exercises or no-notice exercises so therefore there is no international observation. There are so many of these no-notice exercises that perhaps we should look into whether short-notice exercises should then trigger short-notice international observation or inspection. So these are some technical issues but they are important because they are addressing how can we have the mechanisms, the tools in place to make sure that we have maximum transparency, predictability related to, for instance, exercises, military activities to keep tensions low.

Moderator: Do you think in that context but also in the broader strategic context that the alliance needs to have a look, a fresh look again at its nuclear strategy or its nuclear component of its strategy as it is?

Jens Stoltenberg: NATO remains a nuclear alliance and we deal with every issue related to nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence with a very responsible approach because we know that this is something we have to deal with with all the, what should I say, in a careful and measured way. Our aim is still a world without nuclear weapons but we have stated that as long as there are nuclear weapons NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. And at the Warsaw Summit we repeated that because our deterrence is based on everything from our

conventional weapons, our ability to respond to hybrid threats, to cyber threats, high-end capabilities up to nuclear and that will continue to be so.

Moderator: Okay, Secretary General maybe just finally I could step out a little bit and ask you to sort of broaden the focus somewhat and say a word about NATOs approach to global partnerships, like-minded countries around the world where NATO can help, where others can help NATO, where there's business to be done. How do you see that evolving?

Jens Stoltenberg: NATO is a regional alliance. NATOS responsibilities is to protect and defend all allies, North America and Europe but to do so it is in our interest to have global partnerships and to build global partnerships and we have seen that in many different ways. For instance, in Afghanistan the strength of NATO has been strengthened by global partners from Australia and New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, they have participated either with troops and/or with financial support. So for NATO global partnerships is partly about us helping other countries, working with countries in Central Asia, in Africa but also about many as you alluded to, many countries outside the North-Atlantic area helping us in our missions and our operations so we will continue to be focused on global partnerships.

Moderator: Maybe you'll allow me a last question and I cant help asking you, you've been very you know candid about the need for the new American administration to engage on these issues and to commit, re-commit if I can say to the alliance in traditional ways, well have to see. But you know at some point I suppose you're going to have a conversation with President-elect Trump or President Trump if he comes to the NATO Summit in May which I'm sure whenever it is in the spring that it happens. What's on your agenda, what are you going to say to him? And what do you expect - really openly - what would you expect him to ask of you as well because that's an important conversation?

Jens Stoltenberg: I will welcome him to the NATO Summit in Brussels and I look forward, I'm looking forward to welcoming him because I'm absolutely confident that President Trump will maintain American leadership in the alliance and will maintain a strong U.S. commitment to European security. That's important for Europe but its also important for United States because a strong NATO is also important for the United States as we have seen for decades. Two World Wars and the Cold War taught us that NATO is important for stability in Europe, but stability in Europe is also important for the United States.

And I'm absolutely certain that Donald Trump, President-elect Donald Trump, will therefore maintain a strong U.S. commitment to the alliance. I look forward to our next Summit which will then take place in Brussels. My staff is in contact with his staff the transition team - and I expect to talk to him very soon and then I will welcome him to Brussels and I will also address the need to continue to adapt NATO to a more challenging security environment, both collective defense and projecting stability, fighting terrorism, stability in our neighbourhood and I'm looking forward to work together with him.

Moderator: Thank you. Well let me open it up to all of you and if you would, there are microphones that will circulate around, and if you would just catch my attention but also please tell us who you are and where you're from that would be super and maybe if I could go just on the aisle right here first.

Q: Thank you. Colonel Sablon from the Belgian Armed Forces. Concerning Trump and his declaration do you think it will give a sort of electro-shock to the European member States to not only to talk about do more for their defense to spend more for the defense budget but its not the first time as you say that American leadership say that make that statement but do you think it will give a better impulse to the member States following this Trump declaration? Thank you.

Jens Stoltenberg: So during the election campaign President elect Trump stated clearly that he is a big fan of NATO and that he is all for it but he also underscored the importance of increased defense spending among European allies and a fairer burden sharing. That has been the message from so many American leaders for so many years. It has been a very clear message from President Obama, it has been a message from all the Senators and all the Congressmen I've met in Washington the time I've been Secretary General and it has been my top priority.

So, increased defense spending is the message from President Obama, from President-elect Trump, from me and actually from all leaders of NATO States and Governments because we decided in Wales that we should stop the cuts and start to increase, and the good thing and encouraging thing is that we have started to deliver. I'm not underestimating how far we have to move because there's a very long way to go but it is encouraging to see that after years of reductions, 2015 just some few months after we made the decision to stop the cuts we stopped the cuts, and we had a small increase in defense spending in 2015.

Then in 2016 we have - the best estimates tell us - 3 percent real increase in defense spending across Europe and Canada. And as I told you this around, if all NATO allies reach 2 percent it will be $100 billion U.S. dollars which is equivalent to the total spending of the two largest European defense spenders - U.K. and France every year. And of course the picture when it comes to defense spending is still very mixed because some allies have continued to reduce and some allies have just increased very little. But the picture is much better than it was just a couple of years ago and we will continue to push on that. That has been the main message in my meetings with President Obama and I expect that defense spending to be the main message from President-elect Trump and I will tell President-elect Trump as I told President Obama that my main priority is to make sure that European allies increase defense spending.

And the last thing I will say about that is that I of course its important that I tell that to Defense Ministers but to be honest all the Defense Ministers I meet they agree so that's not the problem and then I tell it to the Prime Ministers, they also normally agree, the problem is the

Minister of Finance. So I have started to meet them too, and I tell them too, and then I tell them that when I was Minister of Finance, Minister of Finance back in Norway in the 1990s I was cutting defense spending I was very good at that. But then when I became Prime Minister we started to increase defense spending in Norway because I actually think its absolutely understandable that many European allies reduced defense spending during the 1990s as we did in Norway when I was Minister of Finance because then tensions went down but the problem is that now tensions are going up. So if you cut defense spending when tensions are going down you have to be able to increase defense spending when tensions are going up. So I tell them to listen to Prime Minister Stoltenberg not Finance Minister Stoltenberg, and that works.

Moderator: If I could go just in the front here please if you have a microphone, Mark please, do you have a microphone just up here, thanks.

Q: Marc Otte, I am the Director General of the Egmont Institute in Brussels. Thank you Secretary General for an optimistic message after all because we need that. I want to come back on your insistence on E.U.-NATO cooperation and on complimentarity - not competition - I think its very important. I think it was the spirit since the beginning it has not always been implemented. There was one partner that has always been a bit difficult in that respect and its Turkey, whether its the Berlin Plus Agreements or other attempts at cooperation now that this cooperation is all the more important and as you underlined non-E.U. NATO countries contribution is essential, the problem seems to be a bit on the E.U. side, now the relations with Turkey are deteriorating seemingly by the day and its also about values but the alliance is also an alliance of values not only a military alliance so how do you see the way out of this now that sometimes politically the President of Turkey seems to cozy up to President Putin and where if sometimes in Syria and Turkey there seems to be a difference in the war aims between Turkey and other NATO allies?

Jens Stoltenberg: Turkey is a key ally for NATO for many reasons. One reason is just the location of Turkey, the strategic geographical location of Turkey bordering Russia in the North and the Black Sea, Georgia and then bordering Iraq, Syria to the South with all the turmoil, violence, ISIL and so just the strategic geographical location of Turkey makes Turkey a key ally. And not least with all the instability in the Middle East, with the refugee and migrant crisis I think its important to remember that Turkey holds around 3 million refugees and this is of course of great importance for Europe that we work with them, also addressing the migrant and refugee crisis. NATO is part of that with our presence in the Aegean Sea. That has been a successful presence, also partly because NATO has delivered some practical help to FRONTEX and the local Coast Guards but also because NATO has been a platform for cooperation between Turkey, a non-E.U. NATO ally, with the European Union, FRONTEX.

Turkey is also important because they contribute to our missions and operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo and other places and therefore especially when we see challenges both to the East and to the South we have to remember that Turkey is of great importance for

the alliance. I actually think that it is good that leaders in NATO speak to Russian leaders, or to President Putin. Many leaders in NATO have done that and that's a normal thing. It doesn't mean that we agree but it means that we have dialogue and after the downing of the Russian plane last year I actually called for direct contact Ankara-Moscow because I think its better to talk than not to talk. And I think also it is important to understand that of course there's a big difference between, for instance, the threats posed by ISIL. ISIL is an organization we try to eradicate not talk to but eradicate.

Russia is a challenge; its a neighbour but its going to be there so we have to talk to them so therefore I welcome that there are direct contacts between President Putin and President Erdogan. The last thing Ill say about this is that I visited Turkey in September and it made a big impression on me to see the Parliament being destroyed by artillery and by bombs from F-16s so during the failed coup attempt they actually bombed the Parliament with the Parliamentarians inside and that was a real it was an attack on the democratic institutions in Turkey and I met with many parties, several parties in the Parliament and they all told me how strongly they condemned the failed coup attempt. Turkey has the right to prosecute those behind the failed coup, but of course it is important that this is done in accordance with the rule of law and I also welcome that there is contacts between the European Council and, sorry the Council of Europe and Turkey because I was told so when I visited Ankara that that's the way also they are working on the issues, making sure that this is done in a way which is in accordance with the rule of law. I will go back to Istanbul, Turkey on Sunday and I'm looking forward to continue to discuss the wide range of challenges we face in that region and how we can work closely with Turkey addressing all those challenges.

Moderator: Thank you. If I might just go right on the aisle actually the two of you can maybe Terry first if you don't mind.

Q: Thank you.

Moderator: You'll both have a chance so please go ahead.

Q: Excuse me I am member of European Parliament. I am (inaudible) Lepen (sic) and I make this dialogue. I I am, what you say about easy about

Moderator: If you could tell us who you are?

Q: We have to eradicate easy (inaudible) and we have to we have to discuss this (inaudible) I do this. I do this it was not so easy in Dunbas and also in Russia and it changed. I hope that this will a new reality a new partnership a new dialogue and this is very important but now we have new reality in U.S. a new politic it is so a challenge for NATO for a new deal for reset and what will be this reset? Will be the truth about failure in Iraq and Libya and Syria and Ukraine is not more democracy. In Turkey I think you have speak I approve what you have speak and also a new reset we have to pay more but also NATO has to understand that we

are an alliance of independent States so what is with our reset with a new reality, with a new politic, with a new partnership? Thank you.

Jens Stoltenberg: The NATO is an alliance of 28 democracies and in democracies people elect different governments and for almost seven decades we have lived with the fact that in European, no sorry in NATO allied countries we have governments, political leaders coming from different political parties with different views on many things but the good thing is that we have always been able to agree on the fundamentals, on the important things that we stand together and protect each other. So of course we come from different political families, we have different views on many things but as long as we are able as NATO allies to stand together and protect each other then NATO delivers the defence and deterrence which is NATOs core task. And as I said Im absolutely certain that that will be the case also with the new U.S. Administration. It will stay committed to the alliance, to the security of Europe; strong NATO is good for Europe and for the United States. Then it was about, it was about many other issues but I cant remember to be honest. I think I mentioned the most important one.

Moderator: Thank you. Teri please.

Q: Thank you, its not going to get any easier now. Mr. Secretary General you mentioned that you're heading to Ankara, sorry Istanbul on Sunday Do you plan to bring up human rights with President Erdogan? There are basic fundamental principles that NATO allies are expected to adhere to; I'm wondering are you comfortable with how things are unfolding in Turkey right now? You have NATO, you have Turks stationed at NATO installations now becoming asylum seekers themselves due to policies in this country which is an ally so Id be interested in your - in your are you comfortable with the way this ally is handling human rights and what about these officers? Thanks.

Jens Stoltenberg: It is right some Turkish officers working in NATO command structure, some of them have requested asylum in the countries where they are working and as always this is an issue which is going to be assessed and decided by the different NATO allies as a national decision and a national issue. We have seen a number of changeovers in the NATO command structure where Turkish personnel has been changed and I expect Turkey to continue to fill all its posts at the NATO command structure and again this is a national decision of Turkey to decide who is filling the different posts of Turkish posts in the NATO command structure.

When it comes to the situation in Turkey more in general as I stated Turkey is a key ally because of its strategic location close to Russia in the North, Black Sea, the turmoil the violence in the South with ISIL, Iraq, Syria in the South. Turkey is also important for the migrant and the refugee crisis and a buffer for the rest of Europe and I think it is very important that the rest of Europe understands the important role Turkeys playing in managing

the migrant and refugee crisis. NATO is based on some core values, democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and I expect all allies to live up to those values.

When I visited Turkey in September the message from the Turkish leadership was that they would prosecute those responsible, and Turkey has the right to prosecute those responsible, those behind a failed coup attempt but the message was also that this would be done in accordance with the rule of law. They also told me that they are in contact with Council of Europe because the Council of Europe is responsible for the European Convention on Human Rights and that they are working with the Council of Europe to make sure that the rule of law is implemented in accordance with the Convention. And I'm looking forward to going back to Istanbul on Sunday also because the reason why I'm going to Istanbul is to attend the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly is an open democratic forum with people from - or with Parliamentarians - from all the NATO allies and that's an open forum where I expect to have an open debate. Again different views, different positions but being exchanged between allies, Parliamentarians from NATO allies in Istanbul in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and I think that just in one way underlines the importance of NATO; that NATO is a platform for also exchange of views and I expect that to take place in Istanbul when I meet them on Monday.

Moderator: Can I just go right on this side over here please and do please tell us who you are and where you're from.

Q: Thank you Ian. Excuse me, Julian Barnes with the Wall Street Journal. Secretary General as we've seen NATO make decisions over the the last couple of years bridging the divide between southern-focused allies and eastern-focused allies there has been an important role for the United States in building consensus, helping Europe overcome its divisions on security questions. Do you at all worry that a different more transactional approach by a new Administration might mean that there is less of a U.S. role in forging coalitions and could that mean that NATO moves slower in the future?

Jens Stoltenberg: So I'm confident that the new Administration will continue to provide U.S. leadership in NATO because that is in the interest of the United States. The different coalitions that have been forged and established either as a among NATO allies but outside the NATO framework like, for instance, the coalition fighting ISIL or the coalition which NATO is leading in Afghanistan are both examples of coalitions which are absolutely in the interests of the United States. So, I'm confident that United States will continue to see that this kind of coalitions where NATO allies participate is something which is of great advantage for the United States. The biggest coalition ever has been the NATO operation in Afghanistan, hundreds of thousands of European soldiers and also from Canada has been part of a military operation. NATOs biggest military operation ever as a direct response to an attack on the United States.

So, its in a way not possible to understand how the United States should have less interest in having that kind of coalitions where European allies are actually helping United States as they often help us and the same with the U.S.-led coalition fighting ISIL. This is not a NATO-led coalition but NATO plays a key role providing direct support with AWACS planes, with training Iraqi officers, also with the work we do for instance in Jordan and Tunisia and in the wider region but also the fact that the efficiency and the strength of the U.S.-led coalition fighting ISIL is very much based on the ability to work together which has been developed through decades of NATO exercises and decades of working together in military operations, NATO military operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere or in the Balkans. So, a strong NATO is good for Europe and its good for the United States and we have seen that over decades, not especially when NATO allies in different ways have contributed, helped, fought along with the U.S. in different coalitions fighting terrorism, instability.

Moderator: Well go just in the back, my colleague please.

Q: Hi my name is Corinna Horst I work for the German Marshall Fund but I'm also President of Women in International Security and I would like to ask you a slightly different but I think very related question. As you're trying to make the business case for NATO again are you at all considering diversity and what I mean by that and if you look at what private sector is doing really paying attention to diverse teams and diverse companies so they're reflective of the societies that they are serving or the clients that they try to attract its about covering each others blind spots and bringing new perspectives to the way of thinking and in your case it would be sort of policies and sort of directions moving forward. And I also would like to ask you and its related to this but you know diversity is more for me then just gender its about age, its regional representation, its political representation but I also in light of the new elected President I would like to know what does it really mean for you to be a feminist? Thank you.

Jens Stoltenberg: First of all NATO is an alliance of 28 nations, soon to be 29 and NATO, what should I say, organize, or is an alliance in composing countries from also United States all the way from the Pacific, all the way over the Atlantic to north with Norway and to the south with Turkey and then Baltic countries and and many different countries. So there is no lack of diversity, we have a lot of diversity in NATO. So my main challenge is not in any way to create diversity, my main challenge is to create unity out of all this diversity.

Having said that of course I welcome diversity I think that's one of the strengths and one of the good things with NATO is that we are a big alliance with 28 members, with people and cultures representing a wide range of diversity so that's the reason why I'm all for NATO because NATO is an alliance of representing different people, different societies, different diversities - - all of the North Atlantic area but where we agree on some core values and we agree on the importance of defending each other. So we are united in defending diversity and that's the beauty of NATO. I am a feminist because I believe in equal rights between men and women and for me, to be honest, its a bit strange for me to have to say that because for me

that has been obvious since I was born - or at least as long as I can remember, and if you have met my Mother you will understand why.

So, she taught me in a way the importance of feminism and of equal rights between men and women and I think perhaps I told some of you before that my first official post or appointment was to Chair the Norwegian Royal Commission on the role of men in the Norwegian society and that was a Commission which was established back in 1986 and it published many reports on how Norwegian men could contribute more to equal rights between men and women and we also put forward a very concrete proposal, many proposals but one of the most important ones was to have a leave for the Fathers which was exclusively for the Fathers when they became Fathers, when the family got a child. And I think now its 12 weeks in Norway, actually it was 14 when I was Prime Minister, it was cut to 10 I think, but that doesn't matter, at least it is some weeks which are exclusively reserved for the Father so in Norway men are staying home alone with the newborn children and I think that's good for the children, its good for the Mother and its good for the Father. Its a bit shocking for the Father but it contributes to equal rights between men and women.

Moderator: Just in the front here please if I could have a microphone.

Q: Thank you, yes Brooks Tigner, Jane's Defence. I just have one question to clarify the budget situation. Europe is faced with rapidly growing instability, you've said that yourself even more so than a year ago. So the Wales Summit and the 10-year schedule, do you think its still appropriate today or should the number of States, nations agree formally to accelerate that schedule? Growing instability, ten years to get there - is that good or bad? Thank you.

Jens Stoltenberg: Yes, I don't see any reason to change that decision. We actually reiterated the decision at our Summit in July, stopped the cuts, gradually increase, reach 2 percent. But of course there are many ways to reach 2 percent, you can go like this or you can go like that so in a way its better to the sooner the better, but the three main pillars of the decisions stop cuts, gradual increase, and reach 2 percent is a very robust message and its sufficient but I will push for as rapid implementation as possible and as I also said it is encouraging to see that we have started to move but its a very long way to go at least for some allies and therefore we should not relax and I'm expecting this to continue to be or, I'm not only expecting this will continue to be my main priority and I'm absolutely certain that President-elect Donald Trump would also make this his top priority in the engagement with European leaders.

Moderator: Thank you. Secretary General I'm also very conscious of your time and so maybe if I could group take two and with apologies to the many hands I see out there that would be great. Right here please.

Q: Thank you Secretary General. (inaudible) from the Global Relations Forum I have two questions. The first one is do you that think European countries shouldn't get apart from the increased capabilities a stronger leadership, a stronger voice, and more articulated interest in

order to make constructive proposals and not to be always in a wait and see attitude? And my second question is a bit confronting is it how European countries able to care themselves of their security, I mean apart from the United States you mentioned the fight against ISIL in Afghanistan where would it be without the United States? I mean so I'm its not only about interest capabilities but also about leadership and finally is this strategy, how the strategy interest of the U.S. not moving towards the East? Thank you.

Moderator: Right, well let me go right next door here. Thank you.

Q: Thank you very much. My name is (inaudible) I'm head of the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung Office here in Brussels. You stressed so much the need of more intense cooperation between NATO and E.U. but if you look at the European global strategy the new one its talking about strategic autonomy so my question would be how do you see the complimentarity between the E.U. and NATO? What can the E.U. maybe already do better than NATO or what would you envision should be the complimentarity between the two?

Moderator: Okay and thank you very much and I will apologize to all of you. I know there are a lot of a lot of hands but maybe we can turn to you Secretary General for those last two on U.S. leadership and the pivot the pivot question and the question of complementarity between the E.U. and NATO.

Jens Stoltenberg: So first of all I think it was Ursula von der Leyen, the German Defense Minister she has stated several times in the media that a stronger European defense is not an alternative to NATO, it is about strengthening the European pillar within NATO and I welcome that and I absolutely agree with her. So as long as stronger European defense is not something that is competing with or is presented as an alternative to NATO but is strengthening NATO, strengthening the Trans-Atlantic bond then its absolutely fine. And and in one way it would be strange to say that it is a problem that Europeans start to strengthen their defense because that's actually what NATO has been calling for for decades. So if the Europeans now start to deliver on that why should we regard that as a problem. So stronger European defense meaning for instance by addressing real problems like for instance the lack of capabilities its good for Europe, its good for E.U., its good for NATO, its good for the Trans-Atlantic bond and it will contribute to fairer burden sharing and therefore I think also would contribute to an even stronger commitment by the United States to the Trans-Atlantic alliance because one of the challenges for the Trans-Atlantic bond is of course if the burden sharing remains as an unequal as it is today, that can really undermine the Trans-Atlantic bond. So the only thing I'm worried about is that if the European Union started to develop command structures which are duplicating the command structures we already have in NATO, we don't need that, we have challenges enough with filling or in a way, those command structures are filled with people from the European Union, not all of them but many of them and again as Ursula von der Leyen stated in a meeting I attended that that will be to compete with ourselves because 22 European Union members are also member of NATO so that would be really to just duplicate ourselves. Its no problem, of course Europe should have

an articulated voice and Europe has an articulated voice as the United States has, as Canada has and as even Norway has. So we are an alliance of 28 independent sovereign nations and we all have articulated voices and that's again no problem as long as were able to meet, sit together and agree on collective defense, acting together and defending each other. So that's not again a problem its something we welcome, we like that, that's the reason why we are in favour of NATO because of 28 independent articulated voices standing together. And that unity is much stronger than a unity which is enforced on us, this is something we do by our own free will that we are part of this alliance. I'm actually now answering both questions in one.

Moderator: Perfect.

Jens Stoltenberg: Then, complimentarity with the E.U. NATO has some unique capabilities, capacities. I mention them for instance high end fighting capabilities, we have the command structure, we have some some specific enablers like AWACS and soon drones and other enablers but perhaps the most important thing we have is in a way the forces which are owned by the nations but which have been trained together, which are able to work together and with trust can do high-end collective defense if needed. For instance the NATO response force and so on. E.U., they have military capabilities but they also have civilian tools, diplomatic tools, economic tools, so many other tools that NATO does not possess and sometimes we also have some overlapping tools like for instance on cyber E.U. has a lot of competence, E.U. has a lot of tools, NATO has a lot of tools and the thing we have to make sure is that we are working together and if a member State or ally is under cyber-attack we have to be able to assist, help that State together and that's exactly what we are doing now - deploying, exercising together sharing best practices and being prepared to assist together a member State, infrastructure the same. So, so again as long as we have a pragmatic, relaxed approach I'm absolutely certain that well find ways to work together not duplicating each other but in a way be a formidable force for good because we work together in a good way.

Moderator: Secretary General thank you very very much. I think you'll all agree that we have had a very articulated voice from you and a very candid one on a lot of different issues. Its exactly the kind of conversation we hoped to have and we thank you very much for that once again.

Jens Stoltenberg: Thank you.

Moderator: Thank you very much.

Jens Stoltenberg: It was a great pleasure.

Moderator: Before we go let me also just express my thanks to my GMF colleagues here in Brussels and elsewhere for this and to all of you who've joined us here in the room but also via live stream we look forward to having you with us again soon. Thank you.

Moderator: Thanks.

Source: https://www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/events/transcripts/2016/11/18/a-strong-transatlantic-bond-in-uncertain-times