North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Panel discussion "Can the great idea of Europe persist"

with the participation of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the "Menschen in Europa" event, Passau (Germany)
2016-10-10

Other panellists were Donald Tusk (President of the European Council) and Martin Schulz ((President of the European Parliament). Moderator: Hans-Ulrich Jörges.

HANS ULRICH JORGES (Moderator): Speaking German.

MARTIN SCHULZ (President of the European Parliament): Speaking German.

HANS ULRICH JÖRGES: Speaking German.

DONALD TUSK (President of the European Council): Ya, I have no doubt that this audience is absolutely discreet.

HANS ULRICH JÖRGES: Yes. We are sworn in.

DONALD TUSK: I have, first of all I have to correct your information because in fact I I earned more money as a publisher than as President of the European Council because I was quite successful as an author and and publisher of books about the history of my town.

HANS ULRICH JÖRGES: Back to back to my question.

DONALD TUSK: Okay. I am not happy of course and not only because now in Warsaw we have we have government which treats (inaudible) as as a main enemy and a main public enemy in fact but it’s not my personal private problem because…

HANS ULRICH JÖRGES: Is this government, (inaudible):

DONALD TUSK: I think it’s too much to say because in fact no one has chance in Poland today to win election with anti-European rhetoric and this is why I am not, today I’m not afraid that Kaczynski’s government or his political camp will try to to withdraw Poland from the E.U. from the European structure. No this is a pure illusion. I’m not sure what is his dream, political dream, but because of some political and (inaudible) reason I think that Poland is still safe as a member of the European Union.

JENS STOLTENBERG (NATO Secretary General): Well I have, I had good experiences with sharing red, green coalition in Norway. But to be honest with you that was not my favourite government. My favourite government was the government that owned the Social Democratic

Party. But but this was the way I was able to create the majority and I'm a very pragmatic man so then I joined the Green Party and the or the Centre Party and Left Socialist and we formed a government and I can think it was…

JENS STOLTENBERG: I just had to have more translation, yes.

JENS STOLTENBERG: But still NATO is bigger in Norway. As Norway is big of course but it's not as big as United States. So, I feel that I am Secretary General in an alliance which really represents the whole of almost whole of Europe and North America and it's almost one billion people so all respect for Norway's five million of course we are not as big and not as dominate as the whole of NATO so I am a modest man.

MARTIN SCHULZ: Speaking German.

DONALD TUSK: Just one remark. The truth is that in fact that the question about your personal career is also a question about the future of Europe because this is a question is Europe able to survive without Martin Schulz. It's what do you think, I think…I know what is your answer …….

DONALD TUSK: It means that we really understand with Martin Schulz each other and it's, even if my typical position was the right side of the pitch I was a mid-fielder but in fact we both very close to the centre of the European politics. My my opinion is and this is I think the substance of this problem that what we need for the future is not Schulz or Tusk in in the offices it's not this problem. I like my job but I can imagine also my return to Poland but the most important question today is how we can protect majority in European Parliament. We need the European Parliament for some very difficult issues. For example visa liberation for Turkey. If you want to, if you want to continue our cooperation with Turkey and this is an absolutely crucial part of the migration crisis solution in Europe then we need a real majority not only among my partners in the European Council but also in the European Parliament and for me Martin Schulz is the best person who can guarantee that the great coalition can be still the the basis of responsible and rational majority in the European Parliament. And the visa liberation problem was just an example but I can I can imagine more conflict in the European Parliament and then I know it's not only my experience then we need a very tough determined leadership in the European Parliament. I can imagine other other people but for sure Martin Schulz is is for now the best one.

JENS STOLTENBERG: Well that's up to the people, the voters of Europe and United States to decide and I'm glad we don't live in a world where NATO decide with our armies who's going to rule these countries. That's going to be decided through democratic elections.

HANS ULRICH JÖRGES: Yes, we know. Would that be a problem?

JENS STOLTENBERG: You know I think it's really extremely important that NATO as a military alliance, do not what I say try in any way to intervene in democratic processes in

different member countries. The important thing for us is that there are real democracy's in all the member states and I think we have seen again and again that there are different views, different opinions, discussions also disagreements about NATO inside NATO countries but again and again NATO has proven that we are able to gather the necessary support from the different nations and to stay united and then also adapt and respond to evolving security environment so I am very confident that our democratic societies are resilient and that we will be able to also manage different parties and different views inside the alliance also next year.

JENS STOLTENBERG: I am I am actually certain that whoever is elected as President of United States, NATO will remain a strong trans-Atlantic alliance and that's partly because that's an obligation, it's a treaty obligation that we stand united in NATO and protect each other. Second, we have to remember that NATO is important for Europe for European security but NATO is also important for the United States. So strong NATO is not only something which is nice for us Europeans but it's also important for the United States. It's a way to organize the world where the United States has have many friends and the closest friends are the allies in NATO and we have to remember that the first and only time so far we have invoked Article 5, the Collected Defense Clause in NATO, was not after an attack against European ally but it was after an attack on the United States 9/11. And thousands of European soldiers from Germany and other European NATO allies have served in Afghanistan; many have lost their lives in an operation which is a military response to an attack on the United States. So, I'm saying that I'm absolutely confident that United States understands that in the long run they are it's in their interest to have a strong NATO and they will continue to be a committed NATO ally.

DONALD TUSK: For sure not, I think that you can discuss about different divisions maybe more important and more dangerous for Europe than than some tensions between the Eastern part of Europe, (inaudible) and the old ones. It's well I'm absolutely sure that that's not the first problem for the E.U. But first of all I can't agree with this kind of pessimism, it's not about Martin Schulz but it sounded a little bit maybe pessimistic more than than always. I can't agree with this pessimistic assessment about Europe because you know as a historian not only as the President of the European Council I can compare today's situation to other, different times but also to other places in the world. And I totally agree with Mr. Ambassador. Europe is still the best place not only for us, compared to the rest of the world it's, really the best place not only because of economic circumstances but also of maybe mainly because of our political culture. For me, and this is why maybe your question is is is important that, because for me the real fear, when it comes to my part of Europe, is that we we can observe maybe not the crisis of pro-European mood atmosphere because as you may know in fact the Hungarians and Poles are still the most pro-European societies in Europe but for sure we can discuss about a crisis of liberal democracy not only in Poland or Hungary it's also in Germany. You mentioned very interesting women in politics you have also a new politician Frow Kapetra (sp?) for example in Germany, it's not only in French phenomenon, a Polish phenomenon, that we have also on the right side of the political stage also some interesting

women candidates. But for me the most important thing and this is a universal problem in Poland, in Germany, in France, in the U.K., in the United States that we have to defend today in Europe first of all our model of the liberal democracy. This is our first, second, third obligation and when we are talking about borders and that we that we should re-establish borders because of the migration crisis, I think it's it's of course it's logic, but for me the first goal today is to re-establish our ideological border. I mean, border which describe our liberal democracy in Europe, our traditional version of politics and to establish border means also readiness and will to protect this kind of borders. Because what I'm afraid, and it's not about only my country but today's populism, this is something like you know vials of poison which is coming from outside of Europe. If we observe our neighbourhood Russia, Turkey, Egypt but also today the United States, one thing is absolutely clear that today Europe the E.U. is, I hope, not the last but today I'm afraid the only island of a real democracy and we have to defeat this phenomenon you know on every cost.

DONALD TUSK: I think the idea is quite popular in every country, in every european country but I'm not sure that this is the best one because first of all what we have to avoid today is to to avoid the risk that and I know that for some politicians who advocate this idea of common European army this is, that they have this in their mind that this potential European army can be something like an alternative to NATO. I've heard some voices that we need European army because NATO is anglo-Saxon (sic). For example that we have too much America in our defense system. This is the most risky way of thinking we can even imagine. And this, I have no doubts that what we need today is better cooperation among Member States when it comes to defense. Member States should not, they must fulfill their obligation when it comes to two percent of GDP, when it comes to money for NATO for the national defense and generally speaking I have no doubts that for the for the future of Europe this feeling of security, real defense, order, these values are absolutely crucial. You know I have always in my mind this saying of, bless Pascale, that justice without force is completely powerless. Force without justice is something really dangerous and terrible. What we need today, if you want to save this liberal democracy, we have to show that justice, freedom, liberal democracy is able to build also force because without force we will be not only powerless but also you know pathetic. And for example our our wrong response in, during the first days of the migration crisis this was why it was so damaging for the political scene political stage in Europe. Because people felt that our European institutions, member States our democracy is not able to to, in fact, to to respect their own rules and to force our own rules.

JENS STOLTENBERG: No, I don't imagine that makes any sense, but to be honest I don't feel that that's the real debate inside the European Union. I attended the defense ministerial meeting of E.U. just a couple of weeks ago. There was no one there arguing in favour of a European army.

JENS STOLTENBERG: But what they are argued in favour of was a stronger European defense. That's something else and we have to distinguish those two debates. I asked…

JENS STOLTENBERG: But the debate which is going on now is not about establishing a European army it's about how can we strengthen the European defense.

HANS ULRICH JÖRGES: Inside NATO?

JENS STOLTENBERG: Because I think that stronger European defense that's something I'm very much in favour of and that will be good for the European Union. It will be good for Europe. It will be good for NATO. And we have to remember that most members of the European Union they're also members of NATO. 90 percent of the population living in the E.U. they live in a NATO country and there's no way we can strengthen the European defense without, at the same time, strengthening NATO defenses. And I welcome if Europe is able to develop new capabilities and spend more on defense, integrate and coordinate the defense industries, that's something I'd really welcome and actually NATO has called for that for a long long long time. What we have to make sure it has to strengthen European defense do not duplicate NATO, do not become an alternative to NATO, but is working together with NATO, and actually if you read the Lisbon Treaty it's clearly stated in Lisbon Treaty that European defense and security policy should not be an alternative to NATO but should be compatible with NATO and consistent with NATO. So, this should not be a competition, this should be something we do together and strong strong Europe is actually good for also NATO. And let me also add that of course trans-Atlantic bond is essential for Europe, especially after Brexit because with U.K. outside the European Union, U.K. being the European ally spending most on defense, 80 percent of NATO's defense spending will be non-E.U. and three out of the four battalions we are going to deploy in the Eastern part of the alliance will be non-E.U. it will be U.K., then after Brexit outside the E.U., United States and Canada. So we should just stop this discussion about either Europe or NATO. It's strong. Europe provides a strong NATO as long as we do it in the right way not duplication but in coordination and in cooperation.

DONALD TUSK: First of all maybe because of my former role, in fact I represent member State but it's also my my in fact my belief I can't imagine Europe without institutions but I can't imagine without member States and nations living in Europe. We have to stop this. It's my opinion this discussion about in fact very theoretical problems like ever closer union, it was quite clear during our negotiations with David Cameron that in fact it's this kind of discussions that's completely counter-productive, because what we need today is more responsibility in national capitals. I'm not here to to protect the reputation of national capitals because I think that today, and this is the most natural role of member States, in fact, the power of Europe is in national capitals, the money is here. Can you imagine our our common budget of the E.U. is less than the Bavarian budget. It's the real life, the real power, the real money is in member States and unfortunately member States are not responsible enough today and the migration crisis was maybe the best, I mean the worst demonstration of this very dangerous phenomenon. All of them, I mean all our partners they have hundreds of demands and requests from Brussel,s but at the same time, they are everyday they are ready to say Brussels has too many power, too much power and competence.

DONALD TUSK: I'm maybe because I'm Kashubian and my my region is very similar and as conservative as (inaudible) is I don't like this talks about permanent reforms and revolutions. Europe, the E.U., our institutions, our habits, our internal and external policy, all of this needs our protection, our patience, sorry for this word also our love, our positive emotions not the permanent discussion of new solution, new reforms and and something like during the Trotsky time permanent revolution in the E.U. This is what I can't understand because in fact as I mentioned just twenty minutes ago this is a really good place to live for all of Europeans. What we need is more strength, more determination but to protect what we have not to change everything. When I mentioned to Frau Kapetri (sp?) because I've read a very interesting article in New Yorker about about (inaudible) of about Marlene La Pen and Donald Trump and others. And, what was what is a common thing among this kind of politicians that it was an opinion of Madame Petrie (sp?) about Trump. She said he's for sure not a good leader but she guaranteed at least a radical change and I can hear this argumentation in almost all member States that some radical politicians, but also unfortunately, some centre orientated commentators and politicians they are talking always about change, change and change. My opinion isn't maybe because of my historical you know obsession but I deeply believe that Voltare was right when when he said that better is the enemy of good. It's banal but I think still valid and also for our…

DONALD TUSK: I'm not I'm against always against historical fatalism or political fatalism. For me I would be, you know, the happiest man on earth if the Brits would change their mind, maybe after our tough negotiations, because okay if we treat this process as irreversible it would be irreversible.

HANS ULRICH JÖRGES: Good. Speaks German.

MARTIN SCHULZ: Speaks German.

HANS ULRICH JÖRGES: Speaks German.

DONALD TUSK: I have quite tough opinion about putting politics even if in my country I have a reputation as a very moderate and even pro-Russian politician but of course in Brussels because I am a Pole some of our colleagues are looking at me with some suspicions, and you know its Pole about Russians always the same. But what is the truth today. First of all sorry for this remark you have used this term civil war in Eastern Ukraine. It's hypocrisy, it's not a civil war. From the very beginning of this process we have to do with an aggression in Crimea and in (inaudible). For me I, for me it's absolutely clear that we have to find a not a radical solution with Russia it's not in our interest especially when it comes to Eastern part of Europe. Believe me the conflict with Russia is really dangerous first of all for the Baltic States, for Poland, Slovakia and this part of, for this obvious reason not only because of geography. And this is why it's for me one of the most important goal is to re-establish a, you know proper and normal relations with Russia, but Europe is not, you know, we didn't provoke the

situation and this is why the only method, and I think that I am experienced enough to say this, the only method is to be not radical but tough and consistent with Russia.

DONALD TUSK: Today as you know we have we have prolonged our sanctions in June. Since June until now nothing changed. In fact the situation is worst because if we observe what Russian is doing in Aleppo in Syria it means that, sorry to and I should say it very openly some European politicians have presented a typical Western European illusion when they invited Russia to Syria as a method to solve the problem in Syria, and now we have new problem. I mean I I think I shouldn't describe the whole situation in Aleppo today and this is why I think that we have, it's obvious for me, that today the only the only way is to prolong the sanction against Russia, otherwise it would be a clear capitulation.

JENS STOLTENBERG: So first of all I think I have to just understand that we have seen a Russia which has really invested heavily in their defense capabilities over several years. Since 2000 they have tripled defense spending in real terms and during the same period Europe has decreased defense spending. We have seen that they have developed new capabilities, they have deployed more troops but of course most the most concern is connected to the fact that they have actually been willing to use force against neighbours. Ukraine, Crimea but also actually in Georgia, and they also have troops in Moldova against the will of the Moldavian government. So they have, we see a more assertive Russia, we see a stronger Russia and we see a Russia which is willing to use force, and now we have also seen they are deploying Iskander-M missiles in Kaliningrad. All of this is part of a pattern which has been there for a long time and NATO has responded. I think we have to understand that we have implemented the biggest re-enforcement to our collective defense since the end of the Cold War. We have tripled the NATO response force we will have four battalions in the three Baltic countries and Poland enhanced for presence as we call it. We have established eight small headquarters in the countries in the Eastern part of the alliance and we have also increased the readiness and preparedness of our forces. So we have responded in a very, what would you say, a strong and firm way.

JENS STOLTENBERG: We don't plan to increase our presence in the Eastern part of the alliance but we will of course continue to make sure that our forces are ready to re-enforce, if needed, in the Eastern part of the alliance which is the most vulnerable to the Russian aggression. But let me then add it is for us at the same time very important to avoid a new Cold War. We don't want a new arms race so I absolutely agree with Martin that we have to combine which is the idea of both strength, deterrence defense and dialogue. And for me there is no contradiction between strong defense and political dialogue. Actually I believe that we can only have a political dialogue with Russia as long as we are strong. That is a pre-condition and that's also something which I've learned from Norway, Norway is small NATO ally bordering Russia up in the north we had actually quite good relationship with Russia a pragmatic working relationship on energy, on fishery, on environment on the de-limitation line up in the Polar Sea and the Baron Sea and our pragmatic working relationship with Russia was not something we were able to establish despite our NATO membership but it was

because of NATO membership because we felt safe, secure being part of a strong military alliance. So as long as we are strong, as long as we are predictable and firm we can engage Russia also in a political dialogue because we need to strive for a more constructive and cooperative relationship with Russia. Russia would not go away Russia will be there Russia's our neighbour so we have to actually take forward an old German idea of a dual track approach, defense and dialogue at the same time and that's the message from…

DONALD TUSK: You know, it's a very uncomfortable situation for me, because it's, in fact, a question to the Germans. We have now a very complicated process, legal process in the Commission and of course we have some some objective legal circumstances barriers and, but of course the political will here is the key. And there are two reasons why I am so skeptical when it comes to nord-stream. First of all its unfair towards Italy, Slovakia of course Ukraine, Bulgaria because this is a clear alternative for so called south-stream (sic) and if we want to build real energy union with my my one of my main goal when I was Polish Prime Minister but also today if you want a real solidarity in energy area we need to respect interests of all our member States. Second I have no doubts it's not only my opinion that nord-stream (sic) is a good business for some companies and for some countries but the main reason is of course political reason to avoid not only Ukraine but in the future also Poland and other countries in the region. And it's against vital European interests I have no doubts. And this is why I think we have to we have to be very without any hypocrisy, we have to be very clear and open and frank with our, all European partners that, and the question is what is our main goal in energy area. Egotistic business for three four companies in Germany and the Netherlands and Russia or real energy security for the whole of Europe …

DONALD TUSK: We, Europe need and want a real diversification not only (inaudible) but also pipelines. This is the the first condition if we want to talk seriously about our energy security.

DONALD TUSK: I want to be very practical and pragmatic when it comes to migration. It's too many emotions and to many to many conflicts of interest of member States in Europe. And this is why what we need today is to find an effective method as is possible to start or to reduce this irregular influx of migrants. Sorry it sounds maybe brutal but I'm not here because of election or something like that. It's my belief and this is the first obligation when it comes to, the E.U. as an organization and also member States. First of all it was your question for me it's absolutely obvious we can't, we shouldn't and we will not return to the chaos from 2015. This is an an hypocrisy and illusion to say that we have an open and tolerant migration policy without any control of our borders. There's not migration policy without effective control on the borders. It's not a policy it's a vulnerability and if we if we want to be as open and as tolerant as before as a Europe, we have to we have to convince our social partners, our citizens, institutions, organizations that we are able to re-establish our borders. I've heard it was exactly one year ago that there are too many irregular migrants to stop them and this moment was for me like you know like an allumination because the truth is totally the opposite. There are too many irregular migrants not to stop them without tough and very rationale, without any ideological justification of it's not for me, it's but without rationale well

organized and sometimes tough measures and actions on our borders, we have no chance to to reduce this this influx. Today I have a good message because in fact our and we need comprehensive approach. It means the Turkish deal, it means effective control of our borders if not in Greece because it's impossible for some reasons okay then we have to build a second line it's today its Macedonia and Bulgaria and other Balkan countries. We have to cooperate as close as possible with Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and other northern and of course African countries, and sorry without any illusions. I know how difficult our our partners, there's no, we have no idea our neighbours today outside Europe, this is the truth. We have to choose. My choice is very clear. If we want to remain as a most tolerantly border open continent we have to strengthen our policies and our borders.

JENS STOLTENBERG: At least we are making a lot of progress. I think that you have to understand that it will take time before we're able to totally eradicate ISIS, Daesh but what we have seen during 2016 is that we are making progress. We have a very strong international coalition fighting ISIL. NATO allies and NATO is helping and supporting the coalition and we have seen that ISIS is now losing ground both in Iraq and Syria. I have no illusion for this will be easy and I don't have any illusion that even when we get rid of ISIL in Iraq and Syria they will still be around. They may come to North Africa, we have seen in Afghanistan but what, at least I think there is some reason for optimism because we have seen the international community kind of come together and really mobilize strong force in the fight against ISIL. Then I think it's important to underline that the fight against ISIL is partly about military means, air strikes, training soldiers and all that but it's also an ideological fight inside our own countries because we have to understand that ISIL and that extremist violent ideology has a lot of support or at least has too much support in Europe so this is partly what fighting ISIL outside of Europe but it's also about fighting extremism inside our countries. The last thing I'll say about ISIL and fighting terrorism is that sometimes NATO and or NATO allies have to deploy combat forces or to conduct air strikes as we have for instance have done in Iraq, Syria NATO allies or NATO's done in Afghanistan for many years. But in the long run it's much better to enable local forces to fight terrorism and extremism themselves. So I think that the viable long term solution is not us deploying our combat troops but us enabling local forces, local nations to fight terrorism themselves and to stabilize their own country themselves. And that's exactly what we are now doing in Afghanistan, we have ended the combat mission, we have trained Afghans so they are fighting the terrorists themselves, and it's much better instead of we fighting their wars they have to stabilize their own countries.

JENS STOLTENBERG: I think we have to understand that NATO has played an important role in the fight against terrorism for many many years. Of course NATO is not the only actor we have U.S. led coalition, we have police intelligence inside Europe, we have many many different tools but NATO is playing an important part. Our biggest military operation ever is our military presence in Afghanistan and the reason why we went into Afghanistan was to fight terrorism it was a direct response on the al-Qaeda attack on the United States. And the main reason why we are in Afghanistan is to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe

haven for international terrorists. We support a coalition, NATO allies participate in Syria and Iraq, NATO provides direct support soon we will support AWAC support and we train Iraqi officers who work with Jordan, we work with Tunisia enabling them. We'll start to train Tunisian special operation forces to enable Tunisia to build a stabilized and fight terrorism themselves. So NATO plays a role together with the European Union, together with many other nations and international actors. So, it's nothing new that NATO plays a role in the fight against terrorism. That's an important task and one of the main decisions made at the Summit in Warsaw was that NATO should step up our efforts to fight international terrorism. So, NATO is there for collected defense in Europe but NATO is also there as a tool to fight international terrorism.

JENS STOLTENBERG: We have increased our presence in the Eastern part of the alliance with what we call assurance measures and that includes more air policing, making sure we are able to protect our allies and also react to air space violations. Sometimes I think we, there's a danger that we mix or should I say dangerous incidents in international air space with violation of national air space but actually we have not seen more and more incidents in international air space which are dangerous. For instance Russian planes coming very close to NATO planes and or Russian planes buzzing or coming very close to, for instance, ships in the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea, so what NATO does is partly that we are present we do air policing but we are also working hard to establish more predictability, more mechanisms for risk reduction to avoid incidents and accidents from occurring and if they occur avoid or prevent them from spiralling out of control and creating really dangerous situations. So part of the dialogue with Russia is (inaudible) on how we can avoid dangerous situations for instance in the Baltic Sea.

DONALD TUSK: No, no maybe because maybe I'm in fact maybe less decisive person than my colleagues but no I think it's today I can say that because I was from the very beginning of this crisis I was absolutely convinced and the border control there was no chance to tackle this problem. Maybe you know in fact the today the only question I have is the same what what you asked a few minutes ago it's Libya because more or less we have under control today this Balkan route for irregular migrants. And I think you can feel this also here in Bavaria because in fact we have decreased the influx from Turkey through Greece and Balkans to the central and western Europe it's about 98% less than in September 2015. In one year ago only, the average per day was about 10,000 people, 10,000 people per day. More than in the last three months. It means that in fact it's of course it's still very difficult and fragile and politically very sensitive and we have no we are not sure what will be the future in Turkey and of course destabilization for Turkey is a main condition for them to maintain our deal, this is something very controversial for some member States but more or less I think this is under this route is under control. No one today has a realistic idea what we can do practically in Libya today. This is the truth, so…

JENS STOLTENBERG: But, you know…

HANS ULRICH JÖRGES: Please.

JENS STOLTENBERG: There are many challenges related to the migrant and refugee crisis but at least there's one positive, what do I say, message and that it has shown how NATO and the European Union can work together because NATO supports the efforts of the European Union controlling the Balkan route and the Aegean Sea. And we are present in the Aegean Sea and what NATO, what should I say, provides is some some naval assets and actually Germany was key in establishing that naval presence in the Aegean Sea working with the European Union but the other thing that NATO provides is a platform for enhanced cooperation between Turkey and NATO member but non-member of the European Union. So for me this is an excellent example of we need both European Union and NATO but working together addressing these challenges …

DONALD TUSK: I'm still under the impression that last night's debate and I feel I have conscious in fact because of this debate it was three o'clock… [panelists talking over one another] with my wife and my wife said it was a few weeks ago that one Donald is more than enough. It was maybe more about me and she knows what she's saying you know she's my wife of more than 37 years but this is right for me the first thing is of course the result of the American election. It's we can of course we can laugh, we can joke about the campaign in the United States, but the truth is that it's my feeling that it's still 50-50 and if we want to talk seriously about the future of Europe, NATO, our actions in Syria, migration crisis, our relations with Russia, etc., then the first condition to think about 2017 as a year of hope is a good result in the United States. It's not my role to comment of course on election on other countries but for me it's clear.

JENS STOLTENBERG: I also of course hope for a good result in United States, then as always then I would like to say I'm optimistic at least on two different levels. One I think we will make progress in the fight against terrorism because ISIL is really on the defensive. We will, the coalition or the Iraqi forces will retake Mosul and ISIL will lose even more ground both in Syria and Iraq. Then there will still be problems but at least they very different situation than we had just a year ago where ISIL really controlled more and more territory. In Europe I am certain that we will see European Union which remains united and we'll see a NATO that also remains united proving that security that NATO provides and the integration that the European Union provides will continue to protect our freedom and will continue to be the best places for economic prosperity in Europe and we should be proud of that in 2017. And I'm quite optimistic about that.

Source: https://www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/events/transcripts/2016/10/10/panel-discussion-can-the-great-idea-of-europe-persist