"How NATO adapts to a changing world"

Lecture by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Leiden University College, The Hague
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(As delivered)

Thank you so much and thank you for that introduction. It's a great pleasure to be here for several reasons. It's a great pleasure to be here because it's a great honour to be introduced by you, former Secretary General of NATO and you were responsible, you had the mandate when NATO actually had to respond to many difficult challenges at the same time. During your mandate, NATO was responsible for implementing, I think the biggest enlargement of our Alliance, so with many new members. Then we as an Alliance under your chairmanship we acted in a calm but also firm, and measured way to Russia's aggression against Georgia. And then, also when you were Secretary General we increased our presence in Afghanistan. Conducting the biggest and most difficult military mission and operation that NATO has ever conducted. So, for me it is a great honour to follow your footsteps and to meet with you and to be introduced by you here at the Leiden University. So thank you.

Then, the second reason why I like to be here is that I like being in the Netherlands, in the [inaudible], and in this country. It's very flat compared to my own country in Norway, but despite that I like it. Because I like the people, I like the culture, I like the atmosphere, and therefore it is always nice to be in the Netherlands. The only thing I really don't like with the Netherlands is that you have the bad habit of beating Norwegians when we do different skating races for instance in the Olympics. So if you want to change that habit, there will be nothing wrong with the Netherlands.

The third reason why I actually like to be here is that I like academic institutions. I like the place, institutions, the buildings, where scientific work, teaching is taking place. That is extremely important, and especially at a university like this. The oldest university in the Netherlands. I think it brings a lot of knowledge and experience, which is important for us all. Actually, I like academic institutions so much, that actually I only once really made a deliberate decision on what to become, when I grew up, and that was to become an academic. So my big ambition in my life was to become a professor, as you have now become. So I don't know what you have done but you have succeeded in what I have never succeed to become a professor. Because when I finish my exams back in Norway as economist, I remember we actually read some books of a Dutch professor called Jan Tinbergen, a great economist and he actually won Nobel Prize in Economics together with Ragnar Frisch, a Norwegian economist. Then I decided to leave politics because I had been

active in youth politics, student politics, and do some real work. To start to do scientific work. And I worked in the research department of the Bureau of Statistics, working on econometrics and mathematics for two years. Then, I was asked to become Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Environment in Norway. And I said I will do it for one, maximum two years, then I will go back to this beautiful life of academics. I've been in politics since then. I've never managed. Also it is a disaster, my academic career is a disaster, because I've spent so many years in politics and therefore I will talk to you afterwards, and find out how you manage to become a professor, because that is actually an aim in my professional career. So therefore since I've not been able to pursue an academic career, it is even greater to visit academic institutions and to have some kind of atmosphere and to breathe in some of the air from academic institutions like this university.

But the most important reason why I appreciate to be here today is of course that it provides me with the opportunity to say some words about NATO. How NATO is responding to a changing world. I will not cover all the issues, not all the items which are important for NATO and our security, because I will really try to not be too long meaning that we will have some time for questions and comments afterwards and then you can raise the issues I don't in my introduction.

NATO is the most successful alliance in history. And the main reason why NATO is so successful is that NATO has been able to change when the world is changing. For forty years, since NATO was founded 1949, and the Netherlands was one of the founding members, forty years, from 1949 to 1989, NATO actually did only one thing, and that was to deter the Soviet Union during the Cold War. And we did so quite successfully, because we were able to end the Cold War without firing a shot in a peaceful way. And the Cold War ended when the Berlin Wall came down in 89 and soon after the Soviet Union was dissolved and the Warsaw Pact was dissolved. And then people started to ask do we need NATO anymore. Because in a way the reason why we were established, the reason why we existed, didn't exist anymore. The Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact didn't exist, so why should NATO continue to exist. And then some people also said that either NATO has to go out of area, meaning go out of NATO territory, or NATO has to go out of business. And what we did, was we actually went beyond NATO territory. Meaning for that twenty five years, we were not so focused on deterrence defence in Europe, deterring the Soviet Union or Russia. But we were focused on crisis outside NATO territory. First in the Balkans we helped to end two wars in the Balkans. Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Serbia and Kosovo. And we went to Afghanistan where we helped to fight terrorism. We've helped to fight piracy of the Horn of Africa and our focus was outside NATO territory, mainly outside of Europe.

Then in 2014, that's another pivotal year in the history of NATO, and in the history Europe, and our security. Because in 2014, two things happened. The first thing was that Russia illegally annexed Crimea. That's the first time since the Second World War that one country grabs or annex a part of another country, when Russia annexed Crimea in the spring of 2014. Then, they also started to destabilise eastern Ukraine providing support and also have some

military presence in the eastern part of Ukraine and they continue to do so also today. That was a more assertive Russia in Ukraine, using military aggression against Ukraine.

The other thing that happened in 2014 was that we saw a new kind of terrorism and a stronger and more dangerous type of terrorism, we saw Daesh or ISIL. And I remember very well when I was asked to become, first there was some consultations whether I was interested in becoming Secretary General NATO in general in 2014, that was before anyone had heard about Daesh, it was only some few experts. Then some few weeks or months later, Daesh or ISIL controlled big part of Syria and Iraq, 7, 8 million people a territory as big of the [inaudible] and they were actually in the process of threatening Bagdad.

So then, NATO had to change again. And NATO has since 2014 implemented the biggest adaptations of our Alliance, the biggest change to our Alliance since the end of the Cold War. And we have done that because for the first time in our history, we have to both address collective defence, deterrence defence in Europe, but at the same time address the issue of projecting stability, stabilizing our neighbours and fighting terrorism beyond our borders. And we do that based on the core principle of NATO which is "one for all and all for one." We have in our founding treaty we have something called paragraph 5, our collective defence clause say that if one Ally is attacked that will be regarded as an attack on all Allies. And that’s the strength, because then also small countries know that if they are attacked the whole Alliance will be behind them.

And the purpose of those security guaranties, so that collective defence clause, Article 5, is of course to provide what we call credible deterrence and the purpose of credible deterrence is not to provoke a conflict but it is to prevent a conflict. Because as long as all potential adversaries should know that if they touch or attack, or are aggressive against one Ally the whole Alliance will respond then there will be no attacks. That is in a way the simple idea of deterrence. So, the purpose is not in a way to win the war, the purpose is to prevent the war. And we have successfully been able to deliver that credible deterrence for almost seventy years and that’s perhaps the longest peace in Europe for almost ever, at least for hundreds and hundreds of years. Because NATO, but also the European Union have helped to stabilize and prevent military conflict in our part of the world. Now we are, now we need to deliver the same kind of deterrence, collective security guarantees, in a different world than we have done up to now.

We are responding partly by implementing a big reinforcement of what we call collective defence, meaning our joint defences. We have for the first time in our history, we have deployed NATO troops, battle troops, to the eastern parts of our Alliance. Especially to the three Baltic countries, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, but also to Poland. And we also increased our presence in the Black Sea region. These battlegroups are not very big. They are around thousand each of them. The Netherlands is part of the battlegroup, you provide around more than 250 troops to our battlegroup in Lithuania, as I said well around thousand in each of them. But the important thing with those battlegroups is that they are multinational.

Meaning that Germany leads the battlegroup in Lithuania, the United States leads the battlegroup in Poland, the UK leads the battlegroup in Estonia, and Canada leads the battlegroup in Latvia. And then there are many other NATO Allies providing troops. And by having combat ready troops in the Baltic region, along our eastern borders, we send a very clear message that if any other Allies are attacked, if any of these Allies are attacked, then NATO is already there, it will trigger a response from the whole Alliance. So that's the best way of providing credible deterrence by having troops already deployed in these countries.

Then, we are increasing the readiness of our forces, meaning that if any Ally is attacked we are able to reinforce to move forces to help and to support. We are doing all the things addressing for instance what we call hybrid threats and cyber, and adapting also in many other ways. I can go into more details afterwards if you want. The thing is that we are significantly strengthening our deterrence and defence in Europe.

We do that in a measured and defensive way. Because we don't want a new Cold War. We don't want a new arms race, so we have to find the balance between being strong to deter any attack, but at the same time not provoke, overreact and increase tensions unnecessarily. And therefore we are pursuing what we call a dual track approach to Russia. Meaning that we are strong, we provide deterrence and defence. But we also work for dialogue. For us, for NATO, there is no contradictions between deterrence and defence and political dialogue. Actually, we believe as long as we are strong, we can also engage in political dialogue with Russia and that is exactly what we are doing. Because Russia is our neighbour, Russia is here to stay, Russia will not go away. And therefore we have to continue to strive for a better relationship with our neighbour Russia.

And even if you don't believe it is possible to improve the relationship we have to manage the relationship with Russia. We have more military presence, we have more exercises, we have higher tensions, and then we have to make sure that we don't have accidents or incidents. We saw the downing of the Russian plane over Turkey a couple years ago. We have to avoid that kind of incidents and accidents. And if they happen, prevent them from spiralling out of control and creating a really dangerous situation between NATO and Russia. So we need transparency, we need predictability, we need dialogue with Russia to try to calm down, and reduce tensions and manage our relationship with our biggest neighbour.

Then we are responding not only to a more assertive Russia, but also to the increase terrorist threats. Fighting terrorism is about many different means, or we need many different tools in the fight against terrorism. We need police, we need intelligence, we need border control, we need also social workers, teachers. Addressing some of the neighbourhoods in our own countries, in our own countries, where some of the terrorists are recruited from. This of course is not a NATO responsibility. But it is extremely important in the fight against terrorism. To do something with the [inaudible] causes in our own countries that create extremism in our own countries. But there is also role, an important role for NATO in the fight against terrorism. And that is to project stability as you called it, or to address some of the conflicts which is the

breeding ground for at least some of the terrorists and some of the terrorist attacks that we have seen against in our own countries. And that's for instance why we are in Afghanistan. We are to remember that the reason why NATO went into Afghanistan, our biggest military operation, is a terrorist attack on the United States and that is the only time NATO has invoked our collective defence clause, Article 5, was after the terrorist attack on the United States, 9/11/2001. We have been there to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for international terrorists, a place where they can train, prepare, organise terrorist attacks against our countries. We are in [inaudible] we do some training there. And also NATO Allies are part of the Global Coalition to defeat Daesh. And we work with countries like Jordan, like Tunisia, our aim is to enable them to fight terrorism.

The message from NATO now is that of course we have to be able to deploy large number of combat groups in big combat operations, as we have done before for instance in Afghanistan. But the message now is that more important than deploying NATO troops in combat operations it is to enable local forces, train local forces to stabilize their own countries. Because we will always be foreigners. It will always be difficult to deploy Dutch or Norwegian or British troops in Afghanistan or in Iraq or wherever it is, because we will always be foreigners. So it's in the long run it is better if we are able to train local forces, build local capacities, build local institutions, and enabling them to stabilize their own countries, and to fight terrorism themselves. That's the reason why we have ended the combat operations in Afghanistan. That's the reason why we have started to train and advise the Afghan National Security Forces, but also while we plan to do more training and advising in Iraq. Because we have to make sure that ISIL is not coming back, and the best way of preventing that is to enable the Iraqis themselves to avoid that instead of us coming back and conduct a big combat operations. Prevention is better than intervention therefore we have to train the local forces.

We are also responding to many other challenges, cyber, proliferation of nuclear weapons, what you call hybrid threats and many other ways, and this is part of the broader adaption and change of NATO which is taking place.

But my last message to you is that the world has become more unpredictable, more uncertain, in many ways we live in a more dangerous world, therefore we have to invest more in our security. And security does not come for free. And I told the Defence Committee, in the Dutch Parliament this morning that when I was Minister of Finance in Norway in the 1990s, I was responsible of cutting defence budgets, so I know how to reduce defence spending. And then people ask me why can you argue in favour of increase defence spending, since you as Norwegian politician, were responsible for reducing defence spending. My answer is that when tensions are going down, when threats are reduced, then it is right thing to reduce spending as long as we are able to increase defence spending when tensions are going up.

So yes, all European countries, the Netherlands, Norway, many others, they spent less on defence after the end of the Cold War, and that was right. I am able to defend that today. As

long as we are able to prove that we are able to increase defence spending again now when tensions are going up. I welcome that the Netherlands has started to increase defence spending. But it’s more, [inaudible] need to do more because we have agreed that we should spend 2 % of GDP on defence based on the idea that we stand together and we all have to protect each other.

So let me end by just saying that what has really impressed me with NATO since I became Secretary General is that it’s not that all 29 Allies able to stand together, but it’s actually 29 Allies able to stand together and then change, and adapt and respond when the world is changing.

MODERATOR: Well, Secretary General, thank you so much for this introduction and now it's over to you guys, because Secretary General, as I said, has accepted a substantial Q&A. Stupid questions do not exist, as you know. Who is going to be the first and the courageous first? We go for ladies first, please, go ahead?

QUESTION: I was just wondering, as the world is changing and NATO has to adapt to different things, with the climate change and the melting of the ice caps, does the Article 5 apply to that situation, where all the member countries have to like work together to solve that issue or what is your opinion on that?

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: NATO is a military alliance, so NATO doesn’t have the tools to address climate change. Having said that, climate change is important for our security, meaning that climate change will most likely lead to that people will start to move, it may lead to new conflicts about water, about agriculture, and it may also, you know, change for instance transport routes. I know that, for instance, many people are now looking into the possibility of starting regular commercial ship sea links … sea lanes of transportation from, for instance, Antwerp or Rotterdam to Asia, not through the Suez Canal or around Africa, but over the North Pole or the North East Passage because the ice is melting. So, climate change has security consequences and NATO has recognised that in what we call the Strategic Concept, but to address climate change is about how to reduce emissions, how to develop cleaner forms of energy, how to make sure that we are able to protect the rainforest and develop technologies which allow us to… driving cars which are not polluting and so on. It's important that NATO Allies engage in that, but it's not for NATO to in a way develop windmills or clean energy, because we have other institutions and organisations for that.

MODERATOR: Yes, please?

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr Secretary General. I would like to ask you a question, a very specific question, and it's about the tension between Turkey and Greece at the moment. And I would like to ask you, is it enough for NATO… the fact that both countries are members of NATO, is it enough for NATO, in order for it to use it as a justification, as… yeah, as a justification for it not to take a clear stance on the issue when a country is breaching

international law and is invading many times in… even within days, invading airspace and waters of another country member of NATO? Is it enough for NATO to use it as an excuse? Thank you very much.

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: NATO is the answer to many problems, but NATO is not the answer to all problems. And meaning that NATO is established: we have structures, we have mechanisms, we have forces which are assigned to and which are tasked to address threats from countries outside and from threats coming from outside the NATO Alliance. I say this also because with any decision taken by NATO has to be by consensus. So, if we were going to do anything, we need not the majority of the Allies to agree, but all of the Allies to agree, and the only way we can have that kind of decision-making procedures is of course that we know that we will never be able to take a decision which is contradicting the interests of one Ally.

So, when NATO was founded, the way we are constructed makes us unable to address disagreements between Allies. So, I accept that there are differences between Turkey and Greece. I have spoken with the Greek Prime Minister, I have spoken with the Turkish President, I've been briefed many times. This is about islands and territories and airspace in the Aegean Sea, and I recognise that this is a challenge, but it's not something that NATO can solve; it is something that has to be solved in the spirit of cooperation between Greece and Turkey, and I welcome that. I know that recently the Greek and the Turkish Prime Ministers spoke and I encourage them to continue to do so. But since NATO is an alliance based on consensus, it goes without saying that of course there's not much NATO can do when Allies disagree, because we have to agree at 29 to do anything.

MODERATOR: I think there's another question there. Yes, please? And then, in the back.

QUESTION: So, recently the United States has ended the Long War, the War on Terrorism, or at least the Pentagon says so, and in the United States National Security Strategy in December 2017 and recently the Comptroller for Pentagon outlined in the budget that, in the future great power competition would be the greatest security to United States security and, by extension, NATO as well. So, I was wondering will NATO try to revise their nuclear strategy to accommodate great power competition, rather than relying on Cold War bipolar strategies?

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: The national security strategy is the US strategy, but NATO believes that we need a strong nuclear deterrent and of course, we are constantly making sure that we have an effective and secure nuclear deterrent. Nuclear weapons plays an important role in the deterrence I just described. We have conventional weapons, but we also have nuclear weapons and we have to make sure that they are effective and safe and secure. And therefore, we will constantly assess what we have to do to make sure that that’s the case also in the future. NATO's goal is a world without nuclear

weapons and therefore we believe in arms control negotiations, and I think it's important to protect those arms control arrangements and agreements that we have in place.

MODERATOR: I think in the back here, you're close to the microphone, yes?

QUESTION: European Union is also developing defence structures, infrastructures. How do you see that working together with NATO and where does it conflict?

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: I welcome stronger EU efforts on defence and we have to remember that the EU and NATO have very much in common. We share much of the same territory in Europe. We share many of the same members and more than 90%, actually 94% of the population living in the European Union, they live in a NATO country. So, when NATO is strong, also the protection of European, or EU, members is strong. I welcome stronger EU efforts on defence because I think that that can lead to more European defence capabilities: planes, tanks, drones, whatever, and brigades and divisions and different defence capabilities, which NATO has called for, for a long time, and if Europe is going to do more to provide that we should welcome that.

I also think that stronger European, or EU, efforts on defence can help EU and NATO Allies to work more closely together, which is also a good thing. The only thing we have to make sure, and EU leaders have stressed that many times, that they will prevent that from happening, is to see the European Union starting to develop competing structures and duplicate what NATO does. That will weaken our capabilities and our strength. And therefore, as long as the European Union complements, not competes with NATO, as long as we don’t see EU developing and duplicating command structures or structures in general, we should welcome stronger EU efforts on defence.

MODERATOR: We're going to do something about the gender balance. Please, yeah? Pass the microphone.

QUESTION: Firstly, thank you so much for your talk. And perhaps building on the question that was previously asked and also on a point that you made in your speech, which was that NATO is in need for police forces, I was just wondering what is the nature of the relationship between NATO and, for example Europe, on Interpol?

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: It was not my intention to say that NATO should develop police forces. If I said that, that was a mistake because NATO is not responsible or we will not develop police forces, but of course we work with Allies and institutions, for instance when it comes to exchange of intelligence because we have so many threats which requires partly military response and partly response from police, and I think I referred to the need to have police in the fight against terrorism. But those police forces will not be provided by NATO, they will be provided by NATO Allies, but in the national capacities, or for instance by Europol. So, we work with these Allies, addressing common threats and

challenges, but NATO is in a way looking outwards, national police will then look inwards at each and every NATO Ally.

MODERATOR: Next? The microphone is already with you. Yeah?

QUESTION: First of all, thank you very much again. I was wondering, since he got into presidency, Donald J Trump has expressed that he's not that much into NATO anymore, and I was wondering how is NATO planning on dealing with the possible threat of Trump of leaving the Alliance, seeing also that the United States is the main financial contributor to it? Thank you.

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: The NATO is an alliance of 29 democracies and different political leaders are elected, representing different political parties, coming from different countries with different political cultures, from the right to the left, and we are different in many, many ways. And that's for me, not a weakness, but actually a strength. Because we have proven that, despite those differences, we have always been able to unite against or around the core responsibility of NATO that is to protect each other. And President Trump has clearly stated that he is committed to NATO. This has also been supported by his security team, Secretary Mattis and all the other people surrounding him, which give him advice on defence and security.

But, even more important than words and commitments and language on support or providing support for NATO, is the fact that the United States actually now increases its military presence in Europe. After the Cold War ended, the US gradually reduced its presence. During the Cold War, the United States had 300,000, more or less, troops in Europe. Then, after the Cold War, this was gradually reduced, to 60,000/70,000. Now, the United States… and the last US battle tank left Europe in December 2013. Now, the US is back with not one battle tank, but with an armoured brigade. They invest heavily in something the US call The European Deterrence Initiative, I think it's US$5/6billion for equipment, for training, for supplies and for more military presence. And this is happening now, so actions speak louder than words. So, not only has Donald Trump expressed his support to NATO, but he has also proven that by more spending and more presence, more exercises, more US military personnel in Europe.

So… and when I met President Trump in the White House last spring, he declared at the press conference that NATO… he used to say, he said, he used to say that NATO is obsolete, but NATO is no longer obsolete, he said. So, that's a clear message.

MODERATOR: I'll go for one more in the back. I have tons of questions, so Secretary General, if you agree, I'll cluster a few. So, first we go to the back there, the lady at the back. And then we come to the centre and I have two gentlemen here. And then later we'll see. Please.

QUESTION: Thank you. I was wondering what's your take on Finland joining NATO due to increased tension with Russia? Would Russia take that more as a threat or like that would clearly provide security to Finland, but would it be… for NATO, would it be actually beneficial or not?

MODERATOR: Okay, please?

QUESTION: I'd like to ask you about defence budget policy, and what do you see the… how do you see the trend after 2014 and what NATO itself can do against it?

MODERATOR: Thank you. And final question in this round

QUESTION: You mentioned with respect to the recent… or to the developments in the Arctic and also you mentioned how NATO has increased its presence in the East. My question is about NATO has a relatively small presence in the North, particularly Norway, and now after 20 years there is finally a major operation, or exercise, the Trident Juncture is being held in Norway, and so what do you… what's the significance of this and to what extent do you believe that NATO should increase its presence in Norway and Northern Europe in general?

QUESTION: Thank you for giving me the final question and thank you for your talk as well. My question was originally going to be about EU-NATO cooperation, but now a little bit more specifically, we were told during a visit to the European External Action Service that occasionally intelligence-sharing between NATO and the EU does not run as smoothly as it ideally would. For instance, in the case of Turkey and Cyprus, who are respectively in NATO and an EU member state, but not vice versa, their disagreement, politically speaking, hinders intelligence-sharing on an institutional level, so a lot of different actions have to be taken by experts and ministers just to make sure that all members states of the both organisations have all the intelligence that they need. So, how would you envision that being solved or working out on the longer term? Because that is obviously not ideal or sustainable.

MODERATOR: Secretary General, please?

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: First, on Finland: the answer is that that’s for Finland to decide whether they want to join NATO or not. And if Finland decided to apply, then of course we would assess that… or consider that application, and then it will be for 29 NATO Allies to decide whether we would deem or consider Finland qualified to become a NATO member. Finland is a very advanced country, so I think that will not be a big issue. But the main issue is whether Finland would like to apply and that’s for Finland to decide. So far, Finland has clearly expressed that they appreciate very much a strong partnership, we work closely with Finland, we have exercises, we work with them in different ways and Finland contributes to NATO missions and operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere, but Finland has clearly stated they are not interested in applying for membership.

The important message is that Russia, or any other third country, does not have a say in whether Finland should join, or any other country should join NATO, because it is an absolute fundamental principle that each and every sovereign nation has the right to choose its own path. So, the whole idea of big countries having some kind of right to decide what small neighbours can do, that's a very dangerous idea, so the idea of kind of spheres of influence around big countries denying for instance Finland or Norway the right to join NATO, is violating fundamental principles when it comes to the sovereignty and independence of all nations.

Then the 2% spending: well, we are moving in the right direction, meaning that when NATO Allies, back in 2014 after the illegal annexation of Crimea and the rise of Daesh, decided in September 2014 to stop the cuts and then gradually increase and then move towards spending 2% of GDP on defence within the decade, then actually we were only three nations meeting the 2% target. Now we are eight. And also, those who are not at the 2% target, they have started to move. All Allies have increased defence spending in real terms. So, I'm not saying that everything is fine, but I'm saying that, after years of decline in defence spending, defence spending has started to increase. We have turned a corner and the picture is still mixed, but much better than it was just a couple of years ago. And we didn't promise 2% within the year, we promised 2% within the decade, and we are really moving in that direction so we have… it's a good start, what we have seen since 2014.

Then on the Arctic: we used to say that in the High North we have low tensions and I would like to continue to work for that being the case because yes, we have seen increased Russian presence, we have seen more naval presence, more submarines, more exercises, but at the same time I think it is important that we try to keep the tensions low in the High North and we also see some cooperation with Russia within the framework of the Arctic Council, that, as a Norwegian, we also know that Norway actually, being a neighbour of Russia, we work with Russia on many different areas. When I was Prime Minister, I remember we negotiated with Putin and Medvedev on a delimitation line in the Barents Sea. We agreed that delimitation line up in the Barents Sea, in the Polar Sea. This is a continental shelf, potentially a lot of oil and gas. We agreed the line. We worked together with Russia on the fisheries, managing a big common cod stock, on environmental issues, border issues, search and rescue, and so on. So, I believe that we should continue to engage with Russia up in the High North. It's in our interest and in Russia's interest. But the message is the same: that we have to be firm, we have to be capable of delivering credible deterrence, and therefore NATO also needs more, for instance, naval capabilities. And also the new F35s are critical for the presence of NATO in the High North.

NATO is present in the High North because the Norwegian military presence in the High North is NATO in the North. Then of course, we need more. We have some Danes. They are in several places in the North. And I know also we like… Norwegians like Danes, but … we were a joint kingdom for some years and we have some kind of different views on how that was. And then of course we have Canada and the United States, Great Britain, and we have

all Allies, but not with big military bases, but with the capabilities to deploy forces, to project power, if needed, also up in the High North.

Then it was the question about intelligence: No, there are some challenges because there are of course some NATO… the majority of EU members are also NATO members and many NATO members, actually the majority of the NATO members are EU members. But not all EU members are NATO members and not all NATO members are EU members.

MODERATOR: Please write that down!

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: So yeah, you understand. So, the thing is that you have Norway being member of NATO but not being member of the EU, you have Austria or Finland, Sweden, being a member of EU but not member of NATO. And therefore, there are some challenges related to, for instance, how to share intelligence. But we have found practical ways of sharing information. We have, for instance, a NATO presence in the Aegean Sea, helping to implement an agreement between Turkey, a NATO member, and the EU on the migrant and refugee crisis, helping to stop the flow of illegal migration. And they will work together with Frontex, and we have been able to find pragmatic, practical ways of also sharing information. So, we haven't solved all the problems, but I think that pragmatic approach both from the EU and NATO, respecting the sovereignty and the decision-making integrity of both of the organisations, have enabled us to work together.

MODERATOR: All right. Secretary General, thank you so much. I see at the back and then we'll cluster again, see many fingers, but we'll wait and see. Please, go ahead?

QUESTION: Mr Secretary General, thank you very much for your speech. My question concerns Turkey and the change in dynamics in the Middle East. So, we have seen, after the low peak of the downing of the Russian jet, improvement in the relationship between Turkey and Russia in recent times, and in December 2017 there has been the - let's call it scandal - of Russia buying S400 systems from… of Turkey, sorry, buying S400 systems from Russia. What's your take on that and NATO's take on that? And how do you see the future development in the relation between Turkey and other NATO Allies? Thanks.

MODERATOR: Second finger I saw there. Yes, please.

QUESTION: Yes, thank you for coming and well, my question pertains to the Skripal case in the United Kingdom and well, the use, or illegal use by international law, of the Russians of chemical weapons on British subjects and how… and is that not… does that not trigger Article 5 for NATO?

MODERATOR: Thank you so much. I see a third question here.

QUESTION: Yes, some of my friends think of Russia as this big enemy of the West and by experiment, I visit the country last summer and was surprised to find that a lot of young people there are very nice and similar in thoughts about good government and everything.

So, my question is how can NATO improve the more informal relationship between Europe and Russia?

MODERATOR: If you pass on the microphone then we have another question here.

QUESTION: So, there has been a lot of talk about whether… to what extent NATO should concern itself with terrorism, with all these new challenges emerging, and I was wondering how… what your view is on how much international cooperation… coordination is necessary in that field and maybe reflecting on your own experiences in dealing with the terrorism attack against [inaudible] which was very much domestic?

MODERATOR: Final question this round here in the front, please?

QUESTION: Thank you from my side as well. Secretary General, I'm wondering if you could tell us more about strategies of NATO against Russia's influencing strategies, which are apparently happening all over Europe? So, for example, the use of social bots and adverts on social media or the funding of right-wing parties. Because these are not necessarily physical military threats, but they could be on another level when they undermine trust and legitimacy of countries. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Thank you. Secretary General, please?

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: Thank you. First, on Turkey: Turkey is an important Ally because I think… I don't know if I already said that, but Turkey is important for NATO for several reasons, not least because of its geographic location, bordering Iraq and Syria, and it has been a key Ally in the fight against Daesh, where we have used Turkish airports, infrastructure, bases, to conduct airstrikes and other operations against Daesh. Turkey is also important because Turkey has suffered many terrorist attacks, no other NATO Ally has suffered more terrorist attacks than Turkey and of course Turkey has the right to address these legitimate security concerns and what we have conveyed is that we expect that to be done in a measured way and in a proportionate way and also in a way which is in accordance with the rule of law. And that's an issue which has been discussed many times with also the Turkish authorities.

Then, on the S400, which is an air defence system, as you mentioned, that's a national decision. So, the acquirement of military capabilities by different NATO Allies is not a NATO decision, that's a decision by each and every NATO Ally. What matters for NATO is whether this system is going to integrated in what we call the Integrated NATO Air Defence where, you know, we link the different air defence systems, we link the radar, we share information. That's extremely difficult to do with the S400 and it has also been clearly stated by Turkey that this is a system which they don't foresee integrated into the NATO Integrated Air Defence system, and that there has been no request for integration of the Turkish system into the NATO Integrated Air Defence system.

On the Skripal case: all NATO Allies have strongly expressed support to the United Kingdom, we have reacted in a coordinated way; NATO Allies, EU members, expelled Russian officials after the use of a nerve agent in Salisbury. That's the first time a nerve agent has been used on NATO territory. And I live in Brussels, not far away from Flanders and in Flanders 100 years ago, we saw the horrific effects of chemical weapons where… when chemical weapons were used in the First World War. And a few years after that, we had the first international ban on chemical weapons and we also have now a convention on prohibition of chemical weapons. And one of the reasons why we reacted so strongly after the attack… or the use of chemical weapon… a nerve agent in Salisbury, but also after the use of chemical weapons in Syria, where three NATO Allies conducted airstrikes against the Syrian chemical weapons facilities, was that we have to uphold the ban on chemical weapons and not accept that the use of chemical weapons is normalised or accepted. And NATO has to respond in the proportionate way and a measured way, and it's serious what happened in Salisbury, but it's not an attack or an incident which requires Article 5. We have to remember that we have invoked Article 5 only once and that was after the 9/11 attack where thousands of people were killed in the United States. We don't trigger Article 5 every time there are serious incidents or that kind of attacks as we for instance have seen in Salisbury. But we will continue to provide support to the United Kingdom and we will continue to support the ban on chemical weapons, and that's also the reason why we take so seriously what happened in Syria.

Then on Russia: first of all, I think it is important to convey that when we criticise Russia for their behaviour in Ukraine or their support to the Assad regime or their development of nuclear weapons, or whatever we criticise them for, it's important to underline that we criticise the policies of the Russian government; we don't criticise the people of Russia. Actually, I know many Russians. During my life as a Norwegian politician, I met Russians in many different capacities, working with them on many different issues, also people-to-people contact. Again, referring to Norway, up in Norway we have something called the Barents Corporation; we have visa-free travel for people living on the borders, on the Russian side and the Norwegian side of the border, and I believe in contacts, I believe in people-to-people contacts, and I believe also in trying to avoid any kind of … [inaudible] of other countries. We disagree, we criticise them, we are firm, but also measured and defensive. Because Russia is our neighbour and we have to continue to strive for a better relationship with Russia.

Then international cooperation: yes, of course, we need international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and we need it on all levels. We need it of course when we work together in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, or Daesh, we need it in Afghanistan, we need in Iraq, and we have a lot of international cooperation in NATO, but also in, for instance, the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. And we have achieved a lot. We have to remember that not so many months ago, Daesh controlled big parts of Iraq and Syria, now they have lost almost all the territory they controlled. That hasn't just happened, it has happened before because a lot of NATO Allies and other countries have devoted a lot of capacity and military resources,

soldiers, planes to defeat Daesh. But of course, we need also international cooperation in many other areas. I mentioned police, intelligence and so on, which is partly outside NATO responsibility.

Then, was that all?

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: Cyber?

MODERATOR: Perhaps on cyber?

JENS STOLTENBERG [NATO Secretary General]: Oh, disinformation, yeah, sorry. Yes, of course, that's something we take very seriously because what we see now is that we have what we call hybrid threats. Before, it was very easy to define peace and war. For instance, I think that's the same for the Netherlands as for Norway, we had… when we speak about the war in Norway, we speak about the Second World War and we knew exactly when it started and we knew when it ended and we knew where it took place. The war in Norway started 8th… 9th April and then it ended in 1940, and it ended 8th May. And then Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, we were part of that war, Sweden and Switzerland was not. So, it was very clear - the difference between peace and war. Now, the problem is with hybrid threats, it's a much more blurred line between peace and war. It's hard to say. For instance, it's very hard to say when did the war against Daesh start. And it's very hard to say… and to be honest, I don't expect that we can have a date where we celebrate that we ended the war with Daesh. And it's actually also hard to say where does it take place. We all know that it takes place in Iraq and Syria, but it also takes place in our own streets, in Asia, in Africa and in cyberspace. So, that's what hybrid threats is all about, this blurred line where there's a mixture of military and non-military use of aggression, disinformation, cyber, covert operations and all that. And therefore, NATO has to be able to respond also to disinformation. We do that… and propaganda. I believe that the best response to propaganda is not propaganda. The best response to propaganda is the truth and the truth will prevail. Of course, NATO and NATO Allies, we can provide facts, we can counter when we see that there is disinformation being presented and we do that, we have teams, we have people who share the truth and the facts, when we see that this disinformation is presented in different ways. But perhaps the best tool against disinformation is a free and independent press. Is to have journalists, media, newspapers, TV channels, which ask the difficult questions, who are able to check the sources and to ask all the difficult questions, to make sure that we have the truth and not propaganda presented to us.

MODERATOR: Secretary General, thank you so much on behalf of all of us, not only for your speech but also for the open and frank way you have answered all the questions, almost all the questions, because there were many more from our students. Thank you so much for it. We wish you all the very best in your… all your activities in NATO, more specifically, as I said, preparing a very important Summit in the second week of July. Secretary General, I'm going to give you a small token of our appreciation, remembering… cufflinks of Leiden University,

remembering that when President George W Bush gave me cufflinks he said, "Secretary General, here are cufflinks, but I don’t want to see them on eBay in a few days". I know you're not the person to do that, neither am I, but as a token of our appreciation, cufflinks of Leiden University and thank you ever so much for having come.

MODERATOR: And I would ask the students to remain seated for a moment because we do a bit of Leiden promotion and we'll make a picture with the Secretary General and I think with the Rector in front of you, so that we can see that you're real students.

MODERATOR: Well, Secretary General, thank you so much for this introduction and now it's over to you guys, because Secretary General, as I said, has accepted a substantial Q&A. Stupid questions do not exist, as you know. Who is going to be the first and the courageous first? We go for ladies first, please, go ahead?

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