North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Adapting NATO for 2030 and beyond

Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the 66th Annual Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly
2020-11-23

(As delivered)

Thank you so much, President Mesterházy, dear Attila.

And thank you for your leadership of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in this very difficult period.

I really enjoyed working with you and appreciate also the many phone calls we had during your tender as the President of the NPA.

Honourable members.

Dear friends and colleagues.

It is a pleasure to be with you all again.

I last addressed your Annual Session a year ago in London.

Since then, COVID-19 has changed our lives in ways we could barely have imagined.

None of the countries and communities you represent have been left untouched.

NATO Allies and our militaries have been supporting each other and our partners throughout this pandemic.

Transporting critical medical supplies, patients and experts. Setting up military field hospitals and securing borders. Supporting civilian efforts and helping to save lives.

As we now face the next wave, NATO has established a stockpile of medical supplies in Italy. It’s already being used to provide for Allies in need.

Just in the last few weeks, we have distributed hundreds of extra ventilators to our Allies in Albania, the Czech Republic, Montenegro and North Macedonia.

And we are ready to provide further assistance.

At the same time, we remain vigilant and ready. Because NATO's main responsibility is to make sure this health crisis does not become a security crisis.

Our military readiness has been upheld. And our missions and operations continue.

From our battlegroups in the east of the Alliance. To Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq.

This is NATO adaptation at its best.

And this is what I want to talk to you about today. How NATO can continue to evolve, in the face of an ever-more uncertain world.

Last December, NATO Leaders asked me to lead a forward-looking reflection. To future-proof our Alliance. That is why I launched NATO 2030. To make our strong Alliance even stronger. And fit to face any challenge. In the next decade and beyond.

My priorities for NATO 2030 are:

To ensure NATO remains a strong military Alliance. Becomes stronger politically. And takes a more global approach.

Let me go briefly through each of them.

First, we already are a strong military Alliance. In fact, in recent years we have had the biggest increase in our collective defence for a generation. With more investment. Modern capabilities. And higher readiness of our forces. This must continue.

I know that prioritising defence spending in the middle of a health crisis is not easy. But the threats that existed before the pandemic have not diminished. On the contrary. So the commitment we have all made to invest more in defence is as relevant as ever.

One of the reasons we need a strong military is for our fight against international terrorism. As we have been doing in Afghanistan for almost 20 years.

As you know, the United States has announced that it will reduce its presence in Afghanistan. But the NATO mission will remain. And we will continue to provide support to Afghan security forces.

No Ally wants to stay in Afghanistan for longer than is necessary. But we cannot risk Afghanistan becoming once more a platform for international terrorists to plan and organise attacks on our homelands. And we cannot let ISIS rebuild in Afghanistan the terror caliphate it lost in Syria and Iraq.

Therefore we will address NATO's future presence in Afghanistan at our next Defence Ministers meeting in February. We will be faced with a difficult choice.

Either stay – and pay the price of a continued military engagement.

Or leave – and risk that the gains we have made are lost. And that the peace process falters.

This is not the time to conclude. But we have to remember that we went into Afghanistan together. And when the time is right, we should leave together, in a coordinated way.

The second priority of NATO 2030 is to strengthen NATO as a political Alliance.

NATO is the only place where the countries of Europe and North America meet every day. We need to build on this and use NATO even more as a forum for frank discussion, on a wide range of security issues. From Russia to the Middle East.

And from the security impacts of a rising China to climate change and arms control.

As well as how we deal with new and disruptive technologies.

For NATO to become stronger politically, we must continue to acknowledge that yes, we have our differences.

We have had them in the past, and we have them now. We must continue to address any differences frankly, as Allies and as friends.

This is what we have been doing, for instance, in the Eastern Mediterranean.

NATO provided the platform for Greece and Turkey to come together. On the basis of international law and Allied solidarity.

To establish a military de-confliction mechanism. And to cancel some planned military exercises. This type of military de-confliction can prevent dangerous incidents and accidents in the Eastern Mediterranean.

And it can create the opportunity for political discussions and diplomatic solutions to address underlying disputes.

Even in the most heated debate, we should not forget that what unites us is stronger than what divides us. That ultimately, we are NATO Allies. Committed to our core mission. To protect and defend one another.

And committed to our core values. Democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Our voice is more powerful when we stand united.

The third priority of NATO 2030 is to take a more global approach.

We are a regional Alliance and will remain a regional Alliance. But the challenges we face are increasingly global. Terrorism, cyber threats, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, pandemics and disinformation campaigns. None of our countries, even the biggest ones, can deal with such challenges alone.

This is also true of our approach to China. China is not our enemy, but its rise is fundamentally shifting the global balance of power. Bringing many opportunities, especially for our economies. But also challenges to our security and our technological edge. Increasing the pressure on our values and our way of life.

And multiplying the threats to open societies and individual freedoms. So the rise of China requires our continued collective attention. To fully understand what it means for our security. And to act accordingly. Including by boosting the resilience of all of our nations. And by working even more closely with like-minded countries, and with organisations like the European Union. To defend the global rules and institutions that have kept us safe for decades.

I welcome the active contribution of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly to NATO 2030. Including through the survey of your members you conducted over the summer.

Your written report and discussions with the expert group. The lively debate you had last month with the Deputy Secretary General.

And the reports and resolutions to be adopted later at this Annual Session.

Your input will feed into my recommendations for NATO Leaders when they meet next year.

I am also consulting with youth leaders, civil society, industry, partners, and of course, with Allied capitals. All of you in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly play a crucial role in preparing NATO for the future, as we look to 2030 and beyond.

You ensure we stay safe militarily by deciding our defence budgets.

You make us stronger politically by upholding our values, debating our differences, and keeping our democracies strong.

And you help us take a more global approach. By bringing together well over 300 parliamentarians from all NATO Allies, associate countries and observer delegations.

So thank you for your many contributions, and for your continuing support for NATO.

I look forward to your comments and to your questions.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much, the general secretary, and now we come to the Q&A period. I would like to inform you that the Secretary General has to leave at 4.30. Therefore I'm setting up one minute limit for questions to ensure that as many delegates as possible can participate. I will call delegates to ask questions in groups of three. When I call delegates names, can they press the request to speak button on Google.

After the questions have been asked, the Secretary General, will reply to the questions, so let's start the first three questions. And I would like to give the a floor, as the first question, to

Marietta Giannakou, who is the head of the Greek delegation and I'd like to thank all the efforts you have done, and your government, the preparation of this meeting, and we regret very much that we cannot be there in person. Perhaps next time so Marietta, please, the floor is yours.

Marietta Giannakou: Chairperson, we are very glad to have you with us. And of course the Secretary General, and we fully support his initiative. This initiative NATO2030, can meet all these three objectives. We need another, which would have military force, would be politically united and will play an international role. Within this framework, Secretary General Cooperation of NATO with the EU is of paramount importance. However, the 2016 declarations and 2018 declarations, and the 74 common objectives are not moving forward, because a NATO member state does not recognize the EU, as a total. How can you overcome this difficulty because the role of NATO and the EU in supporting democracy and the rule of law is very powerful internationally in order to improve situate the situation. Thank you very much.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Question from, our Vice President, Mr. Osman BAK, head of the Turkish Delegation. Osman, please the floor is yours.

Osman Askin BAK: Thank you very much, Secretary, thank you Mr. President. I will. for the the past two decades, the EU has been deliberately excluding Turkey as a non EU ally from its own defence related initiatives and NATO has not been successful in defending the rights and interests of non EU allies vis-à-vis the EU, in despite of the agreements between the two organizations against this backdrop. Why should we assume that the EU security and defence initiatives, which are obviously in the direction of a more autonomous Union are good for NATO, as you often suggest publicly. How do you plan to uphold non-EU allies' rights and interests in the time ahead. Yesterday, the German warship and helicopter stopped and searched a Turkish commercial ship in an abusive and hostile manner. The ship was carrying some commercial goods and mostly humanitarian assistance, don't you agree that this kind of exclusive and uncoordinated operations did further complicate and harm the Alliance. Thank you.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much Osman. And the Third one, Karl Lamers, who is the Vice President from Germany.

Karl LAMERS: Secretary General, thank you very much for your great work in these turbulent times for your excellent speech and kind regards from Berlin. The Corona pandemic is having a big economic impact on all NATO member states. This means the GDP, might go down, and the 2% target might be reached more easily, but important for us is to increase the capabilities of NATO. Do you think that the NATO 2% target is still appropriate in these circumstances, or do you believe that there are alternative ways of fair and effective work sharing. Thank you.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much and now is Mr. General Secretary, the floor is yours.

Secretary General STOLTENBERG: First, I would like to say to the Greek representative, my thought that that we all of course very much would like to be in Athens, but we all understand that because of the pandemic, that's not possible, then I think this virtual meeting is a good alternative. Second, I had the pleasure of visiting Athens, some weeks ago, and it was good to sit down with the Greek Prime Minister and discuss the way forward. Also in some of the challenging issues we face when it comes to the situation in the eastern Mediterranean. There are always some challenges when we try to expand and strengthen NATO EU cooperation.

But I strongly believe that we have made significant progress we have for the first time, agreed statements, created the political platform for further strengthening the EU NATO cooperation through the declarations I signed with President Tusk and President Juncker, in ’16 and ’18, where we identify the 74 different areas, and we are working on them to deliver. Meaning, for instance, things like real time warnings on cyberattacks sharing information on malware and we have also stepped up a cooperation when it comes to exercises. I met recently President von der Leyen, and one of the issues we discussed was how we can do more when it comes to for instance military mobility.

So there are a wide range of areas where NATO and EU has a lot to do, working together. Yes, there are some challenges as there has always been, but the reality is that we are able to lift the NATO EU cooperation up to unprecedented levels, we have never seen such close cooperation between NATO and the EU, as we do today and then we need to continue to address some of the obstacles.

Then, Osman, it's great to see you again. Again in the same issue. NATO EU cooperation. Well, I strongly believe that, first of all we have to respect that NATO and the EU, we are two different organisations so we need to respect the integrity, the decision making procedures, of both EU and NATO. But as long as we do that I think there is absolutely value in looking into how we can work together, partly because we share most of the same threats and challenges, we are in the same neighborhood, we are faced with the same security challenges towards Russia, with the rise of China, with terrorism, within stability to the south.

All of this is relevant for NATO, and for EU countries. Secondly, we share to a large degree the same population more than 90% of the people living in EU, they live in a NATO country. So for me, this highlights the importance of strengthening cooperation. And also that we had to make sure that we are able to include also all non EU members, when we work together on concrete projects with the European Union, as NATO.

Then, to Karl, first of all, again, great to see you again, too. As a burden sharing is about many things it's about contributions to NATO missions and operations, like for instance Germany's leading, one of the lead nations in our presence in Afghanistan, or Germany's

leading the battle group NATO has deployed in in Lithuania. So that is about contributions and capabilities are also part of the burden shame within the Alliance. But that doesn't replace the importance also the burden sharing when it comes to spending, to investing in our defence, and what we have seen, of course, is that with pandemic, our allies are faced with more demanding budgetary constraints, but the threats and the challenges that made us agree to the defence investment pledge, the pledge to invest more. They have not gone away. They are still there.

And we also saw during the pandemic that the military has been extremely helpful and supportive and critical in providing support to the civilian health services and dealing with the pandemic I have seen myself many places; NATO and military, helping to set up field hospitals, transporting a lot of critical, equipment, between NATO allies and as I said, there is now a stock in place that actually provided some extra help over the just last few weeks. And so far we have seen no indication that the willingness of allies to invest in defence is going down, actually, Allies continue to be committed to the defence investment pledge. I know that there are many questions so I tried to be not too long, so that's as much as I have to say about the, the four questions. Thank you so much, so far.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you much. Now the second round of questions is, in the second round. The first one is Gerry Connolly, our incoming president, so Gerry, the floor is yours.

Gerry CONNOLLY: Thank you very much, Attila. Thank you, Mr. Secretary General for being with us again. I guess I have two questions if I may. One is we're going to be considering your resolution to China lately and you stated that China is not our enemy. But you emphasize clearly China, nonetheless, represents a direct challenge to the liberal democratic values that bind the Alliance together. And it is not shy about challenging, those values and attempting on occasion to undermine those societies that embrace those values.

I wonder if you could elaborate a little bit on how best you think the Alliance going forward needs to organise itself to meet that challenge. And my second question may be a little more close to home. But as you undertake the work of looking at NATO of 2030, how do you see the role of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. I believe that we need to seat at that the table is part of that process. And I think all of us would like to hear how you envision that happening. Thank you.

Attila Mesterházy(Moderator): Thank you for your remarks Gerry, and now Philippe MICHEL-KLEISBAUER, the head of the French delegation.

Philippe MICHEL-KLEISBAUER: (translation interruption) : …France and Germany is necessary, is strategic competition, you said Russia, also sometimes allies go against the grain of the efforts of the international community, you took the responsibility of this political reform of the Alliance. What role do you see for the Northern Atlantic at the outcome of this reform. We need De-conflicting groups, do you agree with this, and in the framework of the

consensus, which should be the decision maker movement. Finally, do you think that new means can be found to help allies to improve at work on collective defence so I'm thinking here about what is being done by the European Union, with the budgetary tools that are being used to try to improve the standards in general.

Attila Mesterházy(Moderator): Thank you, Philippe, and now Alec SHELBROOKE from the United Kingdom, the head of the British delegation I hope we can put him on screen. Yeah, Alec, the floor is yours. Please.

Alec SHELBROOKE: Thank you Attila, and greetings with Secretary General from London. I'd like to focus my question on the high north, an area in which the two state actors are most important to NATO, China and Russia, have significant strategic interest. We know that China as a near Arctic state has ambitions to build an Arctic Silk Road and is exercising in the Baltic Sea. We also know that Russia's submarine presence in the North Atlantic is now higher than it was in 1983, that its shipbuilding programme is the third largest in the world that is currently rearming its northern Sea Fleet building new icebreakers and figures to protect the area closest to its northern sea routes, and that this area will be of increasing importance to her over the next few decades.

In September this year the UK demonstrated its commitment to the high north by leading a multinational Task Group into the region, sailing above Scandinavian countries into the North Cape, successfully operating in challenging sub zero conditions, gaining valuable experience of operating in the frozen high North environment and further enhancing the UK’s capability. Norway, Mr Secretary General is of course a fellow member of the joint Expeditionary Force UK led high readiness force of Northern Europe nations that is capable of countering hybrid and conventional threats as well as northern Group, a UK initiative formed of 12 nations aimed at providing effective defence security cooperation in the region. But I'd like to know what short and medium term plans NATO itself is developing to ensure the protection of its own strategic interest in that area. And what NATO is asking of member countries in terms of encouraging them to develop increased naval assets drones and Arctic ready material,

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much, and now the answers.

Secretary General: Thank you so much. So, first to Gerry. I know that you're not yet elected as the next president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly but as far as I understand you are the only candidate so I take the risk of congratulating you on the upcoming elections and looking forward to working with you and it's also great to see you again. Then you ask about China.

NATO has to address China in many different ways and again, China is not an adversary, China is not an enemy, and we all know that the rise of China has been extremely important for our economies, and it has helped to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. And this has been enormous progress for the people of China and for the rest of the world. Having said that, we are of course concerned about the fact that we now have a power, which is

becoming stronger and stronger, stronger, economically, technologically and militarily, that doesn't share our values, we are seeing what they've done in Hong Kong undermining the democratic rights of the people living there. How China is dealing with minorities in their own country. And also, how they behave for instance in the South China Sea, or in approaching countries all over the world.

For instance, when it comes to countries which behave in a way that China doesn't like we have seen it against Australia, we have seen it against Canada, in Sweden. And when I was Prime Minister in Norway, some years ago, in which Nobel Committee awarded the peace prize to a Chinese dissident and actually China then tried to coerce Norway to issue a public excuse for that decision. We didn't do so, but it just shows the way, China is behaving and trying to intimidate, coerce other countries to act in accordance with their wishes. The idea that the main response to this is that that we have to stand together. Both when it comes to responding politically, but also investing in technology, military capabilities, standing together.

And when I go to the United States, sometimes I hear concerns from politicians, decision makers in United States that that they are concerned about the size of China that their economy is China's surely will bigger than the US economy. They have investments in military capabilities they need in some technological areas. Then my answer is that well, if you're concerned about the size of China, then it's even more important for the United States to keep friends and allies close. And that's exactly why NATO is also important for the United States, not only for Europe and the rise of China, if anything, it just makes a NATO even more relevant and even more important. Very briefly, resilience, or society social support to how we need to deal with some of the threats and challenges received from rising China.

Then, NATO 2030, I really believe that the North Atlantic Parliamentary Assembly, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly can play and has already played an important role in NATO 2030, putting forward all your ideas, sending and submitting your proposals, your survey and everything you have done, as part of this project, but I also strongly believe that you can be important in in the future. Because one of the main objectives of NATO 2030 is to strengthen NATO as a political alliance, bringing together North America and Europe, the only place that happens every day, and also being a place where we can have frank and open discussions when we disagree.

Because I think the only way to address differences is not to shy away also from discussing them. And then I think actually the NATO Parliamentary Assembly is a perfect platform, because you bring together so many countries, allies, partners, serving delegations, and you have a long tradition of having open and frank discussions. So I think the NATO Parliament assembly as a political platform will be even more important in the future.

Then, Phillipe, I welcome EU efforts on defence. I think that's helpful and important. And of course, for instance, the only way for European countries to come stronger militarily, is by investing more in their armed forces. And NATO has called for more defence investments for

years. So when European allies now really have started doing more, then, that is something we absolutely welcome. So, more defensive investment by European allies, is something which is good. And something that NATO has been asking for many, many years, so it will be strange if we were to regret that, because we're asking it to happen. The same when it comes to defence industry.

One of the challenges and this is not me saying but actually the European Union says but I agree. Is that one of the main challenges the European countries have is the fragmentation of their defence industry. There are so many different types of battle tanks, of helicopters, of all kind of frigates ships. So, the cost per unit the cost per plane or per battle tank is much higher than when you have large amounts, and the large numbers, the economy of scale, and therefore, any effort to try to overcome this fragmentation of the European defence industry, we welcome, we are called for, and we strongly support. And therefore I think that the potential of some of these mechanisms like European defence fund and so on, can be extremely helpful. So, this is something we support.

Having said that, the only message we have is that this will have to happen within a NATO framework, meaning that of course to strengthen NATO European allies cannot happen outside NATO because NATO has the core responsibility for the security of European and NATO members and the EU cannot defend Europe. 80% of NATO defence expenditures comes from, non EU allies. Three of the four battlegroups we have in eastern part of Europe are led by non EU allies. United States, Canada and United Kingdom. And this is not only about battlegroups or numbers - so the spending - but this is about geography in the north you have, Norway, extremely important for the strategic high North Atlantic and Iceland, and then in the south you have several countries but also Turkey, very important for fighting terrorism instability to the south. And then in the West you have United States, Canada, but also, United Kingdom- the largest defence spender in Europe, is outside EU.

So, EU efforts on defence, we strongly support, but you cannot replace NATO. And any attempt to weaken the transatlantic bond will of course weaken NATO. If we divide, Europe, and North America, but it will also divide, Europe, because many European allies, they will understand that then they need to make bilateral arrangements with North America. I believe in larger institutions, and therefore believe in a strong NATO, bringing Europe and North America together.

Then, Alec from the United Kingdom. High North has been, still is, very important for NATO, if anything is becomes more important with the melting of the ice and more Russian military capabilities, and also increased China's interest for the high north. We said, always before I remember that high North should be characterised by a low tensions. That's still my aim, but the increased military presence of course makes that a bit more difficult. But I think that we should continue to have a dual track approach dialogue, but also then presence and strength.

So, NATO has increased its presence in the high north. We expect allies to invest in key capabilities, the UK has already started to invest in some more naval capabilities and maritime patrol aircrafts. Denmark, Norway, Canada, the US have done the same. Anti-submarine capabilities. We need to protect the North Atlantic we need to protect all the cables, which actually IP for transmission of more than 90 - almost all data which is transmitted by cables. And then, and then we need more exercises we had the Trident Juncture exercise.

We're actually for the first time in decades we have an aircraft carrier deployed in the northern part of the Atlantic, and we also have this UK, and also a US naval presence in the balance, is all this shows that NATO is stepping up part of NATO defence planning processes that we identify a specific capability targets for each and every ally, and that also includes maritime capabilities which are highly relevant for the high north. The last thing I'll say is that we have established this the new NATO command for North Atlantic in Norfolk, Virginia. That's also demonstrates the increased weight, we give to the North Atlantic.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much. The third round is coming from Ojars Eriks KALNINS Latvia, is the head of the Latvian delegation, and we like to give him the floor. Yes please.

Ojars Eriks KALNINS: Secretary General, greetings from Riga, Latvia, and also from the EfP troops that are stationed here, including our newest member Iceland, we're very happy to have Iceland join the EFP battalion. My question is very simple and it's about the open skies treaty. Today, formally the United States leaves this treaty. And I was wondering if you could say something about how this would impact NATO, our strategies, policies, is this being also looked at within the NATO 2030 programme. And do you see any prospect of perhaps the new administration rejoining the open skies treaty. Thank you.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much Ojars, and Luca Frosone, from Ital, Head of delegation, Luca the floor is yours.

Luca FROSONE: Thank you and good afternoon to everyone. Thank you for having spoken about NATO as a forum for debate and diplomacy. This must always be underscored but let me ask you, my question. You also spoke about Afghanistan in your remarks, and over and above the development of this very important mission, I think we all need to learn a lesson in connection with that very mission. There are some concepts like the stability policing notion might be an instrument that we might consider strengthening and therefore using more and more in the future. So this is my question to you, Secretary General, with regard to the 2030 process. Shouldn't we include something of this kind, how do you think this might develop in the future. Thank you.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much. And now Christian TYBRING-GJEDDE from Norway delegation, head of delegation.

Christian TYBRING-GJEDDE : Secretary General, Yes. I asked you this question earlier I know in Norwegian, when you visited Norway. So here, I was talking about the superior values of NATO and we all agree that the NATO nations have superior values compared to many other nations world. But right now we are fighting and defending those values, weapons in Afghanistan, for example, and done this for 19 years and made a lot of sense, we went in there to take Al-Qaeda leader Bin Laden in the mountain and fighting the Taliban. But there are a lot of challenges left in Afghanistan and you're still there. And is there any, you have any ideas or any, let's say propulsive what it means to be victorious in Afghanistan, how can you find an exit strategy if we cannot stay there forever. What does it mean to win in Afghanistan, could we declare victory and how do you tell me what happened to the… (inaudible).

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Mr. Secretary General

Secretary General: First question from Latvia on open skies, I cannot and I will not speculate about what the new US administration will say about that issue, it is is almost at the time in United States and the transition will take place on the 20th of January and until then we work with our current US administration, I will not speculate about what the new administration will say or think about the open skies treaty. What I can say is, of course, we have all seen that there are some differences between NATO allies on that issue, the United States has decided to leave.

While all the other allies have decided to stay in the open skies treaty because they believe that contributes to transparency and predictability about military posture, in the different countries which are party of the treaty. At the same time, all NATO agrees that Russia has imposed restrictions inconsistent with the treaty, they have restricted the possibility of NATO allies to fly over all the Russian territory, including Kaliningrad. And we have seen some kind of selective implementation by Russia of its obligations under the open skies treaty. So these are concerns we all have. But there are some differences on what kind of consequences, we should draw from the selective Russian implementation of open skies treaty.

Then Italy. Well if I understood you right it was about what the lessons we can learn from Afghanistan, and to some extent, this is also what Tristan, from Norway asked me about, I think. I think we all have to be honest and admit that the most difficult decisions, we take as allies, and as an alliance is when to use military power and when not to use military power. And the problem is that we'll never know what would happen if we hadn't used in power, or vice versa. But what we know is that for instance I remember when I was still a politician in the 1990s that the international community was very much criticized for not using military power to stop the atrocities, we saw in Rwanda in the 1990s. Then we were criticized again for not stopping the atrocities in Bosnia Herzegovina and in not stopping Srebrenica.

So then actually, we decided to start to use military power when we saw the atrocities continued and the fighting in Bosnia Herzegovina continued and NATO was key, NATO troops

NATO mission in Bosnia Herzegovina was key to end the war there, and the fighting there stopped the atrocities and lay the foundation for the Dayton Agreement which actually celebrated I think was yesterday,the 25th anniversary of the Dayton Agreement. I'm not saying that everything is fine in Bosnia Herzegovina, but I'm saying that compared to where we were in the 90s when there was a bloody war going on at least NATO has helped, and the use of military power helped in 1990s to stop a terrible war to stop atrocities, and help to create the foundation for this state, which is functioning, with all these challenges with all these problems but much better than where we were before NATO went in with military power. Serbia and Kosovo, a few years later, most people deem that that was a necessary use of military power that helped to stop fighting and create the conditions for development which has been more in accordance with our values than what we saw before we went in and used military power.

In Syria, we have not used power. And well, it's not going in the right direction. We used military power in Libya, at least we stopped the attacks against civilians. And it's very hard to compare different countries to different situations but it illustrates at least that there is a cost of using military power, but there's also a cost of not using military power. So this is a cost of action. But there's also a cost of inaction. And in Afghanistan. Again, I can spend hours telling you about all the problems in Afghanistan all the risks we are faced with, but we have to remember that the reason we went into Afghanistan was to prevent Afghanistan from being a safe haven for international terrorists, and we have achieved that. And now the question is, can we leave and, and still prevent that from happening. That will not be an easy decision.

But my only message is that whatever we do, we need to do it, coordinated and in an orderly way. And also take into account that not so many years ago we had more than hundred thousand NATO troops in the combat operation there. Now we are less than 11,000 troops in the training and advice mission. So the character and the size of and the scope of the NATO presence in Afghanistan is totally different from what it was just a few years ago. I think that Luca asked me, and my answer to Christian is that our values, require sometimes that we are willing to use military force. And fundamentally military force is about deterrance, and protecting our own nations, but also of instance, using military force to fight ISIS in Iraq and Syria, we would never have liberated the territories controlled by ISIS without using military force. But military force is not the only answer and it's not always the right answer, and the challenge is to find out and decide when to use military force, and when to not do so.

The last thing I'll say about Afghanistan, one of the lessons learned from Afghanistan, and this is for Luca. Is that the sooner we can start to build local capacity to train local forces to build local security institutions the better, if there's any lesson learned, or is one lesson learned from Afghanistan: That will be that we should perhaps have started earlier to train the Afghans, to enable the Afghans to stabilise their own country. Training local forces is all the best weapons we have in the fight against terrorism, and therefore I think it's extremely important that you for instance do that in Iraq as NATO does, we plan to scale up the training mission in Iraq, because that's the best way to prevent ISIS from coming back and also the

best way to prevent to create a situation where we are forced to come back in a full scale military operation.

So then I actually think I've answered both Norway and Italy at the same time.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you. And now, two of my vice presidents, firstly Sir Philippe FOLLIOT from France. Yes, the floor is yours.

Philippe FOLLIOT: Yes, Hello, Secretary General, I wanted to ask you a question related to the 2% issue, we can see that with the crisis. GDP has fallen in several countries, or actually, in most countries in the Alliance. And even though we will have a level that will be the same in terms of defence spending in relative terms, it will increase the percentage of defence spending for Allied states. Even though there will not be any extra money. And therefore, I would like to understand if, in your opinion, the 2% target is still something that has to be reached ocean to be adapted given the current situation, because the situation will not be exactly what had been planned, even though the allies will try to reach this 2%, there will be a fall in GDP in allied countries. So the amount will be different, so there will not be greater spending in defence.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much Philippe. And now Lord Campbell from the United Kingdom.

Lord Campbell: Thank you very much Secretary General, it's always a pleasure, you have a very direct and comprehensible way of dealing with these things and its always much appreciated. First of all, I support very much what you said about common procurement and the need to try to do more of that to get more value for our money. And second, what you said about Bosnia. As a member of the United Kingdom Trends committee I went there on several occasions, at the height of the troubles, and it may not be perfect, but that's one of a hell of a lot better than it once was. Can I ask you this, does NATO 2030 now have to have a new strategic concept ? I saw that because the traditional domains of land sea and air have now been added to by space and cyber. Should we not be taking into account these changes?

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): thank you and now Mike Turner, from the United States.

Michael TURNER: Hello Secretary General, hello from Dayton, Ohio, good to see you. I really appreciated your commitment to working with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and of course our President Attila, and your pledge to work with the incoming president. We're very proud of the US delegation of his upcoming leadership. I want to thank you for your strong words with respect to Afghanistan, they have been very important here in the United States, as we have been taking up in Congress with debate on the issue of Afghanistan and the drawdown of forces. They've been very helpful and I greatly appreciate it.

My question is sort of a follow on to Lord Campbell's as you looked at 2030, you identified that China is not an adversary or enemy certainly we don't identify Russia as that either. But

their modernization efforts certainly do look at threats which should be translated for us into capabilities. In the United States we look at the potential adversaries capabilities and how they can be a threat, and when we tried to scope in fashion our own. I chaired the defence committee and yesterday we were told of Russia's modernization they identified their victory weapons as the most modern world of course they're pointed at us. How in the 2030 process are you looking to the modernization of our adversaries, and how that might be a map, if you will, of what we need to undertake. Thank you.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much, and now Secretary General.

Secretary General: First to Philippe about the 2%. You're absolutely right and valid and very relevant point and I think also I was asked that question, a bit earlier in this same round of questions. And of course what matters for NATO and for our defences in the different allied countries is absolute number of money invested in our defence. So the percentage in itself is not in a way, what decides whether we have enough money or not, it is the absolute number of dollars or euros or whatever it is that we are making available for our armed forces for our defence budgets. Of course when GDP goes down some, or then then the percentage will go up. Even without any increase in defence spending that's in a way, obvious, but I think that the 2% guideline still matters for a couple reasons.

First of all, the size of the economy, says something about the ability, the strength, the kind of income for an ally to spend. So when we speak about burden sharing, of course, a country with a very small economy, compared to going to with a big economy we need one way to be able to compare, then it's not fair in a way to, look at the total defence spending of a country like Norway and compare it to the full defence spending of United Kingdom or US with many times as big economy and we know that in April, even smaller countries with even smaller GDP. So the reality is that we need a way to compare. And then the GDP makes sense, because that reflects the size of the economy. And that's the reason why we also use 2% when we speak about burden sharing.

So I think the 2% guideline still is important for comparing burden sharing between allies, absolute numbers make zero sense to compare economies in different sizes. Second, we all hope that that the GDP will start to grow again. So I agree that this year maybe next year there will be, you know, some allies increasing their share, not because they spend more but because GDP is going down. Having said that, even with the current estimates for GDP, the majority of NATO allies will not be a 2% so it's a plenty room to increase, and remember also that in the Wales declaration, they refer to the 2% as minimum. So if allies are able to spend more than 2% they're more than welcome and what we have said these are the 2% should be something we all try to move towards.

So I hope that answered your question, I agree that absolute numbers is what counts at the end of the day, the GDP matters because it says something is about burden sharing and when you compare nation's. Second GDP will start to increase again. And the Thirdly, it's

absolutely possible to spend more than 2% and some allies already do. For instance, the UK just presented a defence plan where they actually increase further over 2% and the United States also spends clearly more than 2%, I think it's 3.5 or something like that. So, so that's about 2%.

Then, Lord, Campbell. So first of all, I think the time has come to update our strategic concept for many reasons. But not least for the reasons you mentioned; space, cyber, new challenges, new threats. And I think that the process of updating our Strategic Concept will improve our understanding and improve our common understanding of the threats and challenges we are faced with so therefore, I think the time has come to conduct a process of updating the strategic concept. I don't expect that to happen at the upcoming heads of state or leaders meeting or summit in 2021. But I hope that the leaders will be able to agree to task me through to do that process and then at the at the leaders meeting after that, they can then agree, a new strategic concept.

Then, Mike Turner, again, Mike, it's great to see you again. And it's always good to see you in United States when I go down to the Congress and you are always such a great supporter of NATO, and you know NATO very, very well and these, especially you know the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, very well. China. Well also one of the main purposes of NATO 2030 is to make NATO more global, and to have NATO have a more global approach, then I know that some people get a bit scared because they think that means that we should start to have members from all over the world. No, I don't think so I think that NATO should remain a regional Alliance, North America and Europe. But the fact is that the threats we face are more global, and the challenges we face are more global.

And of course this is not moving, NATO into the South China Sea, but it is about taking into account that China's coming closer so much more than just in cyber, in our infrastructure. And we need, and also their military capabilities, are more and more long ranging. So of course, all this matters for NATO when we assess, analyse potential threats and challenges that we will face in the future. China is a great power, they don't share our values, and therefore we need to stand up for our values we need to work with like minded countries, and I believe, especially that we should strengthen further our cooperation with like minded countries in the Asia Pacific region. I visited Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand four strong dedicated committed partners of NATO, they all want to work more closely with NATO.

And I think that our political response to the political challenges we see from China not sharing our core values, democracy, individual liberties, just makes that cooperation with other like minded partners even more important. Then, we see a significant military modernization going on in China, all with the second largest budget investing heavily in military capabilities and combined with new advanced disruptive technologies like for instance, artificial intelligence that just underpins the importance of NATO investing in defence, in military capabilities, but also of course in technology and that we bring all

together, including in working with our industries to make sure that we maintain the technological edge, which has been so important for NATO for decades.

And the third area I will mention is, of course, resilience, we see more and more Chinese investments in critical infrastructure in ports and airfields in airports in railways, and also in telecommunications, and 5g, and we have agreed some baseline requirements in NATO, to make sure that our infrastructure is safe, our telecommunications are safe and secured, including in those based on requirements is that they have to address the risks related to foreign ownership, foreign control, of critical infrastructure, including 5g. So we need to do more on resilience, we need to do more on technology and defence spending, we need to stand up for our values, working with like minded partners to protecting our political advantage. That's at least some of the things we need to do as part of the 2030 and beyond.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much and now could go to Utku CAKIROZER from Turkey, you should request the floor.

Utku CAKIROZER : Thank you very much for your presentation. I would like to ask you, how do you assess the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, after the recent agreement, which has been struck by Russia. Both Azerbaijan and Armenia are partners of this alliance, don't you think a more determined stance by NATO would have been consistent with the Alliance’s principled stance on territorial integrity of its partners in the region, such as Georgia and Ukraine. Do you think that NATO's stance vis-à-vis with this recent conflict, it was a mistake and NATO has thus left and rented space to Russia, which now deployed peacekeepers in the region, and what might be the regional, and global strategic and tactical consequences of Russia's increased military presence in this region. Thank you.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you, and Jürgen TRITTIN from Germany.

Jürgen TRITTIN : I have two questions. The first one is, you referred that NATO will discuss the problem of Afghanistan in February. If it's come true, what it's very likely that the more or less unconditioned withdrawal of the US will take place in December or January, don't you think that February is a little late. The second question I have is, with a reference to Vice President Osman.

It's to be very frank Turkey is not sharing the values of NATO, the turkey is no rule of law, but now the Erdogan regime has reached a new level. Threatening vessels of NATO partner Germany today, of NATO partner France, some months ago, massive breach of an UN arms embargo on Libya, Turkey is violating Europe's exclusive economic zone, and they enabled Azerbaijan to break the truce in Nagorno Karabakh. Shouldn't we look at Turkey, not as a partner, but as a spoiler, and a threat to NATO,

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much and Yehor CHERNIEV, from Ukraine, Head of delegation. Please request the floor.

Yehor CHERNIEV: Greetings from Kiev, Ukraine. Dear Secretary General, distinguished colleagues. Unfortunately, Russia continues its aggressive policy towards the countries of Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region, threatening not only their neighbors but also global security. The militarization of the Black Sea has reached unprecedented proportions and according to some sources nuclear weapons have already been deployed in Crimea. The civilized world can only resist this threat together, and without their active participation of Ukraine, which is already the flank of NATO it will be very difficult to constrain Russia. In our opinion, it would be logical and useful for all countries to jointly resist the Russian Federation as alien, and an important step for this would be their provisional map the grandest implementation of the decision of Bucharest, Summit 2008. But for now I would like to ask you the Secretary General, what steps, NATO will take in the near future to constrain Russia in the Black Sea and facilitate the de-militarization of this region. Thank you very much.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much and now the answers.

Secretary General: First on Nagorno-Karabakh, from Turkey, You're absolutely right that both Armenia and Azerbaijan are partners of NATO. But, NATO is not part of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.I think it's important to be aware of that because that's the reason why we have not of course, been involved in the conflict, we welcome the cessation of hostilities, we take note of the recently signed agreement, and we strongly call on all sides to refrain from actions that could lead to the resumption of hostilities, again. And then we also believe that unresolved issues should be dealt with at the negotiating table, and not on the battlefield. And we hope that that can now be the case, as we move forward.

Then, the question from Jurgen, from Germany and again, good to see you again. The US has not decided to withdraw to leave Afghanistan, what the US has decided is to reduce their number of troops from 4500 to 2500. At the same time, the US has made it absolutely clear and our military commanders have confirmed that they will maintain enablers as the support, especially aviation support helicopter, support fixed wing and rotary wing support to the NATO missions, including the German mission which has been extremely important element part of all of the NATO presence in in Afghanistan. But the reason why I believe that the Defence Minister meeting in NATO in February is also important, is that the United States and the Taliban signed an agreement that this agreement has been welcomed by all NATO allies. And in that agreement, it is stated that all international troops should be out of Afghanistan by the first of May.

At the same time we know that this is a conditions based we will only leave if the Taliban has met their side of the agreement. So early next year around the defence ministerial meeting, we need to assess whether we believe that Taliban meets the conditions. And therefore we need to then decide whether we think the time has come to leave Afghanistan, risking that we can lose the gains we have made, including risking that Taliban will be back controlling the country. And of course that ISIS can also gain ground and try to re establish the caliphate, the terror caliphate that they lost in Iraq and Syria, they will try to reestablish that in Afghanistan.

Or we can stay. But then, of course, we will be involved. Once again, in a military presence in Afghanistan, which has a high price, economically, but not least politically, and most important role when it comes to human lives.

So, I'm only saying that this is an extremely difficult decision. We all saw the importance of using military power to defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria. We all know the risk that if we leave too early from Afghanistan they can come back, about the same time we have been there for many, many years. So there are also many allies who are looking for the possibilities to try to reduce their presence on Afghanistan. My message today is that whatever we decide we have to do it in a coordinated way we should avoid any rush to the exit any, and any attempts by individual allies to take unilateral decisions, and I welcome the strong commitment of Germany, and also the clear message from Germany to be coordinated with all their allies.

Then also, Turkey. Turkey is a valued ally, and an important ally, because they play a key role for instance, in the fight against the international terrorism, Turkey is the only country, bordering Iraq and Syria. They've been important in providing the infrastructure and platforms for liberating the territory controlled by ISIS. No other allies suffer more terrorist attacks than Turkey, and no other ally and hosts more refugees, close to 4 million refugees. At the same time, there are some issues, and there are some concerns. And I have expressed those concerns related to for instance the consequences of the Turkey’s decision to acquire S400 air defence system.

The situation, Eastern Mediterranean, Libya, and on the other issues. I have raised, these issues in Ankara. I also stated that NATO is founded on some core values. The rule of law, democracy individually within and I attach great importance to those values, myself, but I strongly believe that NATO is a platform where allies when they disagree on issues with Eastern Mediterranean, or s400 or any other issue, then we use NATO as a platform for this to address those values and see how we can try to reduce tensions and try to find some kind of unity. As we tried to do with the de-confliction mechanism that was established at NATO, to reduce the risk of for instance in eastern Mediterranean between two valued NATO allies in Turkey, and Greece.

Then, on, Ukraine. On the Black Sea, and we are stepping up, we have increased our presence in the Black Sea region. We're working with Ukraine, we're working with Georgia. And of course we have also NATO members who are littoral states, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania. And, we have increased our cooperation with our two valued partners, Ukraine, and Georgia. We will also have a foreign minister meeting next week. And then we have a dedicated session to Black Sea security (vaccine security), and we invited the Foreign Minister of Ukraine and the Foreign Minister of Georgia (Prime minister of Georgia) to participate in that meeting.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you so much and now the last round of questions, Njall FRIDBERTSSON who is the head of the delegation of the Icelandic delegation. Njall, please

request the floor.

Njall FRIDBERTSSON: Thank you, Secretary General, I want to start by expressing my contentment to see that there will be a special debate here today on furthering the implementation of the landmark resolution of the United Nations Security Council 3025 on women peace and security. The resolution that celebrated its 20th anniversary last month, was the first to recognise the important roles that women play in peace and security. Opinion polls show that women are less supportive of NATO and are less familiar with the Alliance. Efforts to address these weaknesses are welcomed but more needs to be done. Mr. Secretary General in parallel to pursuing more efficient policy on gender equality, do you see increased focus within the Alliance on issues relating to gender equality and will NATO, strengthen efforts aimed at women in its future work.

Thank you.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator). Thank you too much, and Osman, from the Turkish delegation. He's Head of Delegation, my vice president.

Osman Askin BAK: Thank you very much General Secretary, for your comments about Turkey as a valid NATO ally, and for your assessment, concerning the issues complex. We are always open to dialogue, but first I'd like to say that I don't agree with my German colleague, which words he spent about Turkey and I condemn what he said about Turkey and our President. Turkey is a democratic country, and Turkey’s a valued ally and Turkey is taking part in all NATO missions. Turkey, as Mr. Secretary General mentioned, is the only country fighting against ISIS chest to chest on the ground in Syria. So, they all know this issue. So, there are of course problems within the eastern Mediterranean and other issues to be discussed, and always attended the meetings. Our President and Secretary General in Ankara. So, thank you very much for his comments about Turkey, and I don't accept what the German colleagues said about Turkey. Thank you.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much. And now Athanasios DAVAKIS from the Greek delegation deputy head of the delegation now. And he will end the Q&A session.

Athanasios DAVAKIS. Yes, thank very much, Mr. Secretary. In the field of cyber security and defence. How do you see NATO moving towards deeper cooperation with the private sector. Thank you.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much. And now, Secretary General, the floor is yours.

Secretary General : Thank you so much. First, when it comes to Iceland. Women peace and security is of great importance for NATO I personally really believe that this is important for the Alliance, but of course it is also extremely important for women in the countries where we are operating. We have spoken a lot about Afghanistan, and the importance of not to NATO,

leaving too early. There are many reasons for that. The main reason for that is to fight international terrorism, but we just have to understand that the NATO presence in Afghanistan has helped to make enormous progress for women. Before we came, women were denied the right to take education. And we had brutality, when it comes to dealing with women which is hard to imagine, and now.

Women have a much stronger position in Afghanistan that they have had for many years, including immediate positions in politics in the parliament in media and culture. And in academia, this will be threatened if NATO leaves too early and I think it shows that NATO presence is a way to try to also strengthen the role of women and empower women. That's one reason why we have gender advisors in our missions. And we focus on training women, I have seen myself in both Afghanistan and Iraq how we train, women, women are female pilots trained by a NATO. That was for the Afghan Air Force but those are good for creating new role models for women in a country like Afghanistan. Sexual Violence is something we focus a lot on to make sure that that's not used as part of armed conflict. So we will continue. And, for instance, our training mission in Iraq has a gender perspective. Because we know that women peace and security is important for the whole Alliance.

Then, Osman, that wasn't actually a question to me, it was a comment, and I think I've already commented on all those issues, so thank you for your comments.

Then, cyber Greece. Well, NATO has really stepped up when it comes to cyber.

First of all we have established cyber as a domain, alongside the usual domains alongside air, land and sea, and also space, that reflect the importance we attach to cyber. Second, we have decided that cyber can trigger, our collective defence goals, Article five. And thirdly, we are deeply involved with the industry, and to work with them to strengthen our cyber defences, but also develop what we call national cyber effects but in reality, offensive cyber. For instance in the fight against ISIS NATO allies used offensive cyber to take down the cyber networks of ISIS home pages, communications, which ISIS used to recruit to finance and to get out their propaganda.

So, cyber will be an integral, integral part of any potential conflict in the future, from fighting terrorist to air adversaries in the potential future conflict, cyber is not a potential partner conflict in the future. Cyber will a part of any potential conflict in the future. And therefore, we need to work closely with industry. And that's exactly what we do. And also make sure that we also account for cyber and maintain our technological edge. Once again, Attila, thank you so much. It's also been great to see you and all the best to you and thanks once again for our excellent cooperation and has it been a pleasure to work with you and I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. Many thanks.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much. Thank you so much for your very detailed answers, we are used to it. So thank you again for that and for your time

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much, the general secretary, and now we come to the Q&A period. I would like to inform you that the Secretary General has to leave at 4.30. Therefore I'm setting up one minute limit for questions to ensure that as many delegates as possible can participate. I will call delegates to ask questions in groups of three. When I call delegates names, can they press the request to speak button on Google.

Attila Mesterházy (Moderator): Thank you very much. And now Athanasios DAVAKIS from the Greek delegation deputy head of the delegation now. And he will end the Q&A session.

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