

Address by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Warsaw, Poland, 28 May 2018

(As delivered)

President Alli, Members of Parliament, Excellencies, dear friends, it is really a great pleasure to see you all here this morning, so good morning to all of you, and for me it is a great pleasure to be here for many reasons.

First of all to be able to thank you President Alli for your hard work and to thank you and your team for organising and hosting this event. I know that you have worked for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, you have been the President and you have really done tremendous work for many, many years for this organisation, so I thank you so much for that.

Second, I would like to thank all of you, the members of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly because the NATO Parliamentary Assembly is important for NATO. NATO is an alliance of 29 democracies and at the core of any democracy we have parliaments. And NATO is a value-based alliance based on the rule of law, individual liberty and democracy, and there for the fact that you are presenting the 29 democracies' parliaments and, in addition, many of you also representing our partner nations, that makes NATO the alliance which you want to be an alliance that represents democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty.

I've been a parliamentarian myself for 20 years, so I really understand the importance of parliaments in our democracies and also the importance of parliaments for defence and security policies because parliaments decide the guidelines, the framework for any government when it comes to conducting defence and foreign policy, but perhaps most important you decide the budget. So I am totally and NATO is totally dependent on you making the right decisions in the different parliaments, and therefore it is a great value that you gather in an assembly like this where you can exchange views, where you can learn from each other and then go back to your national parliaments and make sure that the NATO agenda is high on the national agenda and that you are implementing the different NATO decisions back home in your national parliaments.

The third reason why it is a great pleasure for me to be here today is that I would like to thank Poland for hosting us all today and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly; I understand it started on Friday, providing this beautiful hall and also of course the parliament of Poland hosting all of us here today. Warsaw is an historic city for many reasons, but also because Warsaw hosted the 2016 NATO Summit and that was a very important summit at that summit we made decisions which really have transformed and changed NATO. The main deliverable was perhaps the decision to increase our presence in the Eastern part of the Alliance with the four battle groups in the Baltic countries and Poland and with a tailored forward presence in Romania and the Black Sea region.

And now we are looking into how we must continue to adapt and change NATO because NATO is the most successful alliance in history because we have been able to change and adapt when the world is changing. And the Warsaw Summit made important decisions to

change NATO to a more demanding security environment. The security environment is more demanding for several reasons: we see more and more assertive Russia meddling in domestic, democratic processes, being responsible for cyber attacks, heavily investing in more modern military capabilities, blurring the line between conventional forces and nuclear forces; and, as we saw back in 2014, being willing to use military force against their neighbour illegally annexing Crimea and destabilising Eastern Ukraine. And as a direct consequence of that aggression against Ukraine we saw the downing of the MH17. And I agree with the Dutch Government which has called upon Russia to take responsibility, its part of the responsibility for the downing, and for fully cooperating, in a transparent way, to make sure that those who are responsible are to be held accountable.

As you also know, we don't only see a more assertive Russia, we see all the instability, the violence to the south of our Alliance: Iraq, Syria, the Middle East, North Africa. And then we see cyber and we see proliferation of nuclear weapons - North Korea - and many other challenges evolving at the same time. And that's the reason why NATO is adapting and that's the reason why the summit in Warsaw was so important. Now we are moving towards our next summit, which will be the summit in Brussels in just a few weeks in July this year and I believe that that summit also will be of great importance. I will briefly mention the main topics, the main issues, which we will address at the summit in July in Brussels. There are many issues and topics I will not go into, at least not in detail, but I promise to stay on after my speech and be available for Q&As, so then you can ask the questions about all the issues I don't have time to address in my introduction.

At the Brussels Summit we foresee five main topics: Topic number one is Deterrence and Defence and while the Warsaw Summit was mainly focussed on how to increase presence ... military presence in the Eastern part of the Alliance with the battle groups and the tailored forward presence, I believe that the main focus of the Brussels Summit in July will be about how to be able to reinforce because our deterrence and defence is not only dependent on the forces we have deployed, but it also very much depends on our ability to move forces ... to reinforce quickly if needed. And therefore we are discussing what we call a readiness initiative to increase the readiness and to identify specific forces that can be available on short notice. We are discussing reinforcements and we are discussing a military mobility, how to move forces across the Atlantic, because NATO is a transatlantic alliance and of course then we have to make absolutely sure that we are able to move the forces across the Atlantic, if needed.

But also across Europe and I expect Heads of State and Government, when they meet in July, to make decisions on reinforcement, readiness and military mobility. I also expect them to reiterate NATO's strong message on Russia, which is what we call the dual-track approach, which is about deterrence, defence combined with political dialogue, and I strongly believe that we have to understand that Russia is our neighbour, Russia is there to stay, so we need to find this combination of having a strong and firm message and being very clear when they violate international law, international rules, and when they are responsible, for instance, for cyber-attacks and we also have to see the Salisbury use of nerve agent against the background of a more reckless behaviour of Russia. But we have to combine that strong and firm message with an openness for dialogue, partly because we need to continue to strive for a better relationship with Russia, but even if we don't believe in a better relationship with

Russia in the near future, we need to manage our relationship with Russia because Russia is there, we see more military activity, we see more exercises, so at least we need to manage a difficult relationship, because we have to make sure that we don't have incidents, accidents, miscalculations that can lead into really dangerous situations.

So I believe it's possible to get the better relationship, but even without that we need to manage a relationship to our biggest neighbour, and a neighbour which has significantly increased its military presence along our borders. So that's the first issue, that's deterrence, defence including our relationship with Russia. The second issue is what we call in the tribal language of NATO 'projecting stability', and that's about projecting stability into our neighbourhood because we believe strongly that when our neighbours are more stable we are more secure, and NATO has... we have many neighbours so we speak about many different partnerships and many different ways of projecting stability. Partly it is about fighting terrorism, that's about our partnerships especially in the south. We strongly believe that the best tool we have in the fight against terrorism is to train local forces. I think that one of the lessons we have learned from Afghanistan, from Iraq, but also from Libya, is that in the long run it is better to train local forces, enable them to stabilise their own countries, instead of NATO deploying a large number of combat troops in big combat operations.

And therefore NATO has to be ready. So we have to be able to deploy forces in big combat operations again, if needed, but of course it's obvious that it's better that local forces, national forces stabilise their own country, and that's the reason why we have completely changed the character of our presence in Afghanistan from a big combat operation with a lot of NATO Allies and partner nations - many of you sitting here today - deploying combat troops in Afghanistan, more than 100,000 troops, many casualties, into what we have now which is a much more downsized presence, around 16,000 troops in that train, assist and advise mission. There are many problems in Afghanistan, but at least we have achieved at least one thing and that is that we have been able to train the Afghans to build local capacity so they are now responsible for security in their own country themselves. So when Taliban attacks, or there are terrorist attacks in Kabul or in other places, then it's the Afghan forces that move out and repel and respond. And that is a big improvement and therefore we need to continue to train, to help, to support, to fund the Afghan national army security forces, and that's also what we are aiming at in Iraq. We have NATO and the Coalition to Defeat ISIS where NATO is a member and all NATO Allies and many partners.

We have made enormous progress and ISIS is on the run in Iraq and in Syria. But we have to make sure that ISIS is not coming back and therefore we need to build local capacity, train local forces and that's the reason why we are working for the heads of state and government in July to launch a training mission in Iraq to scale up our present training activities in Iraq to make sure that ISIS doesn't come back and therefore make sure that we train local forces. That's also the reason why we work with countries like Tunisia and Jordan. We believe that prevention is better than intervention. Tunisia and Jordan are two islands of stability in a region with a lot of instability and we have to help them now so they remain stable and they can help us and contribute to the fight against terrorism. So that's projecting stability, but then there are other aspects of our effort to project stability, and that is to project stability to the Western Balkans together with our partners there. Or to countries like Ukraine, Georgia, close partners, and we will continue to provide practical and political support to Ukraine, to Georgia.

We will work with our partners in the Western Balkans, and I would like to highlight that NATO's door remains open; we proved that last year when Montenegro became the 29th member of the Alliance, and we are supporting also other aspirants on the path towards membership and towards Euro Atlantic integration and I'm certain I will get questions about that later on, so I will go more into details during the discussion on the open-door policy.

The third main topic of the summit will be NATO-EU corporation, and the good news is that we have really stepped up and we have been able to strengthen and establish a total new level of cooperation between NATO and the European Union. That's good for NATO, it's good for the European Union and we will continue to work for that also at the summit. In Warsaw in 2016 I signed a joint declaration with the Presidents Donald Tusk and Jean-Claude Juncker. We are planning to sign a new declaration in Brussels where we take the NATO-EU Corporation further with the declaration by the President Juncker, President Tusk and me. We have 74 concrete measures we have agreed on related to cooperation when it comes to cyber, hybrid, terrorism. We work together in the Mediterranean, in the Aegean Sea. We work together with the European Union on many different areas and this is something we would like to do more of in the months and years to come. I have also welcomed the efforts of the European Union to strengthen defence cooperation because I strongly believe - as many European leaders have stressed many times - that stronger Europe means stronger NATO. We have to remember that more than 90% of the people living in the European Union, they live in a NATO country, so there's no way we can strengthen Europe without at the same time strengthening NATO. But what we have to make sure is that the efforts of the European Union do not compete or duplicate but that they complement the NATO efforts. Meaning that we need coherence on development of capabilities. We need EU forces and capabilities available also for NATO missions and operations and we need non-EU NATO Allies fully engaged and as much included as possible in the efforts of the European Union.

The fourth item, or issue, is what we call modernisation, continuing modernisation and adaptation of NATO. We are now as you know in the middle of a big adaptation of the NATO command structure. It was downsized and very much changed after the end of the Cold War. Then we had more than 20,000 personnel in the NATO command structure at 33 different headquarters. Now we have reduced it to less than 7,000 personnel in the command structure at, I think it's seven headquarters, so it's a significant reduction. Much leaner than before which reflects the fact that tensions went down and NATO could downsize our command structure. But now we are faced with a more challenging security environment. NATO is stepping up, doing more both when it comes to collective defence in Europe, but also projecting stability, fighting terrorism and therefore we need to adapt the command structure once again and that's what we are going to do. And also step up, for instance, the capabilities within the command structure to address cyber threats.

I expect the Heads of State and Government to then agree on the new command structure, both the manning level, but also to establish two new commands: a command for the Atlantic which will be the main tool to make sure that we can secure the links between America - North America, US and Canada and Europe, sea lines of communications and all the vital links between Europe and North America which is where the North Atlantic is so important. And the US has offered to host that command in Norfolk, Virginia. And then one new command for what we call support or logistics. Germany has offered to host that one in Europe which

will then focus on how to reinforce and have the logistics in place for movement of forces across Europe. There are also other changes in the NATO command structure which are now proposed by strategic commanders and I hope that the Heads of State and Government will be able to make the final decisions at the summit in July. We are also implementing a reform of our headquarters: we are modernising and making sure that NATO is transparent, agile, effective and a well-functioning Alliance.

The fifth and final theme for the summit will be burden-sharing, and that's about cash capabilities and contributions. Burden-sharing within the Alliance is not only about spending, it is also about contributions to NATO missions and operations and providing the necessary capabilities to the Alliance. Since we are an alliance of 29 nations and we have promised to defend each other, it's also fair that we have fair burden-sharing, and therefore I welcome the fact that we are moving in the right direction when it comes to burden-sharing, both on contributions, more and more Allies are stepping up with troops to different NATO missions and operations, in Afghanistan, in Iraq but also in forward presence and other missions and operations in the Mediterranean. More and more Allies are delivering on the capability targets we have agreed as part of the NATO planning process, and more and more Allies are also stepping up when it comes to defence spending.

And as you all know, back in Wales in 2014 we agreed the defence investment pledge and the good news is that since then all Allies have stopped the cuts, and that's actually a big achievement because for many years Allies reduced defence spending. Now all Allies have stopped cutting defence budgets. Second, all Allies have started to increase defence spending in real terms, some increased a lot, others have hardly but at least there's a plus, and plus is better than minus. And more and more Allies spend 2% of GDP on defence. Poland is one example. Poland spends 2% of GDP on defence. Back in 2014 three Allies spent 2% of GDP on defence. Now this year we expect eight Allies to spend 2% of GDP on defence. And the majority of Allies have put forward plans, national plans, on how to reach the 2% within a decade. So we still have a long way to go, but the reality is we have a very good start. All Allies are increasing. More Allies reached the 2% and the majority of Allies have put forward plans on how to reach the 2% within a decade.

The last thing I will say is that I am aware, as you all are aware of, that we are an alliance of 29 different nations and over the last months we have seen disagreements on important issues. Because we are 29 Allies from both sides of the Atlantic with different history, different geography and sometimes also different political views on serious issues ranging from climate change, the Paris Accord, trade issues, tariffs, to the Iran nuclear deal, and these are serious issues where there are serious disagreements between NATO Allies. Having said that I think we have to recognise that we have seen differences between NATO Allies before, it's nothing new. Dating all the way back to the Suez Crisis in 1956 when some Allies invaded Egypt and some Allies were heavily against. I wasn't present there because it was 1956, but I guess the move was not the best one at the NATO meetings. And back in 1966 when France decided to leave the NATO command structure and NATO had its headquarters in Paris and we had to leave, and again I think it was interesting meetings.

Or in 2003 when some Allies supported the Iraq War and others were heavily against. I'm not saying that these were not serious disagreements on important issues, but what I'm telling you is that it's nothing new that there are disagreements. The strength of NATO is that we have been able to manage those disagreements without weakening the core responsibility of NATO and that is that we are standing united around our core task: that we defend and protect each other. And just to highlight that is that yes there are different views and of course the best thing would be if we were able to solve those disagreements, be it trade issues, trade tariffs, Iran nuclear deal, whatever, but as long as we're not able to solve those issues we should at least minimise the negative consequences for NATO. To be honest it's not for NATO to solve disagreements on climate change or on trade issues, but it is for NATO to make sure that those disagreements don't weaken NATO, and therefore I am actually inspired by the fact that despite these differences which we all see, we have been able to strengthen the transatlantic bond within NATO.

The US and Canada are now increasing their military presence in Europe. The US has this European deterrence initiative more than tripling the funding for US presence in Europe, with more troops, more exercises, more prepositioned equipment. So yes there are differences between Europe, or at least between European Allies and United States on some issues, but the US is increasing their presence in Europe. Canada is coming back and European Allies are stepping up. So what I'm telling you is that as a former national politician I'm aware that trade, climate, and also the Iran nuclear deal - which is also relevant of course for NATO - are important issues, but I'm inspired by the fact that despite those differences, NATO has been able to adapt, to respond and actually deliver strengthened transatlantic unity with more presence, the new command structure, more defence spending and more contributions to our missions and operations. So NATO is the most successful and the strongest alliance in history for two reasons: reason number one is that we have been able to adapt; reason number two is that we have been able to be united, despite the fact that we are representing 29 different nations. Thank you so much and I'm ready to take your questions.