

MAINTAINING ALLIED DEFENCE INVESTMENT MOMENTUM AFTER COVID-19*

RESOLUTION 462

The Assembly,

1. **Recognising** the devastating tragedy of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has claimed more than a million human lives and continues to upend economies and societies across the globe;
2. **Applauding** the important role of Allied forces and structures, particularly the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) and the NATO Support and Procurement Agency, in the coordination and oversight of hundreds of medical relief missions, in support of national medical and civilian services, which mobilised over half a million men and women to provide critical support to civilian responses in both Allied and partner nations;
3. **Praising** Allies' demonstration of strong solidarity by stepping up to assist one another and their partners via the provision of critical supplies, personnel, military transport, logistical, and other support when the need was acute;
4. **Encouraged** that, while NATO continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic via relief missions to assist Allies and partners, Allies are also preparing for any future pandemics over the horizon via strategic planning, stockpiling, and investing;
5. **Highlighting** that, despite their engagement in the delivery of critical pandemic-related assistance to Allies and partners, NATO forces have seen to the seamless delivery of credible, capable, and effective defence and deterrence, keeping Allied missions and operations staffed and focused on their objectives, thereby clearly demonstrating their ability to respond rapidly to any threat;
6. **Concerned** that, despite the ongoing pandemic, international security challenges for Allies have not diminished, but have in fact been amplified, adding further complexity to an already volatile and increasingly dangerous international security environment;
7. **Denouncing** Russia's continued provocations, which not only display its new military capabilities, but also seek to probe NATO forces' readiness on land, in the air, at sea, and in space;
8. **Concerned** that the COVID-19 pandemic and the attendant economic downturn will put pressure on Allied defence budgets;
9. **Reaffirming** the Alliance's commitment to guarantee peace and security for its populations and the sovereign integrity of its territories, and to working with partner nations to help improve security and project stability; also, **stressing** that such commitments necessitate sustained investment in Allied defence and security institutions;

* presented by the Defence and Security Committee and adopted online by the Plenary Assembly on Monday 23 November 2020

10. **Recalling** Allies' commitment in Wales in 2014 to reverse a downward trend in defence spending, which has resulted in six consecutive years during which total defence spending by European Allies and Canada has increased, resulting in over USD130 billion in new investments since 2016, and with 10 Allies surpassing the 2% GDP benchmark for spending on defence and others poised to do so;

11. **Remaining focused** on the central tenet of Article 3 of the Washington Treaty, which notes that all "Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack"; and **stressing** that each Ally's continued investment in its armed forces is what provides the Alliance with the means to fulfil its core tasks of collective defence, crisis response, and cooperative security;

12. **Determined** not to lose the defence investment momentum of the last six years, which has resulted in tangible gains and well positioned the Alliance to face the complexity of today's international security environment,

13. **URGES** member governments and parliaments of the North Atlantic Alliance:

- a. to recognise the essential role their armed forces have played in mitigating the impact of the pandemic;
 - b. to thereby recommit to increase their spending to at least 2% of their GDP on defence and invest 20% or more on major equipment, including research and development, with a goal of meeting NATO's capability targets and filling shortfalls;
 - c. to understand their continued increased defence investments act not only as a safeguard against future threats, but also against the next potential pandemic;
 - d. to remain committed to their national defence investment plans, which detail investments necessary to strengthen each Ally's contribution to the fair sharing of the burden for the whole-of-Alliance effort to maintain a credible and strong defence and deterrence posture capable of maintaining peace and security at home and projecting stability abroad;
 - e. to focus their efforts to reduce overreliance on any single supplier country of medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, and other technologies that may be critical during a future crisis;
 - f. to explore ways to strengthen Euro-Atlantic defence industrial cooperation, which will not only increase Alliance resilience, but also help revitalise defence industrial sectors that may be facing procurement and budgetary uncertainties as a result of the pandemic;
 - g. to increase investments in the medical components of member states' armed forces in order to maintain and improve medical expertise within Allied armed forces;
 - h. to better protect critical Allied infrastructure from predatory investments by external actors, particularly when the potential investor is a strategic rival;
 - i. to invest in the infrastructure and institutions necessary to strengthen resilience in the face of pandemics, which, in turn, will allow national armed forces to remain focused on potential external threats;
 - j. to increase cooperation with the EU, particularly on military mobility to facilitate more efficient movement of Allied forces across Europe and help speed up the delivery of medical supplies and personnel responding to potential regional health emergencies.
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