

Excellencies,

- It is good to be here with my President, President Joe Biden. I used to be a young staffer to him when he was on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.
- This Alliance will not allow authoritarianism to extinguish the flame of democracy.
- This Alliance will not allow President Putin to stamp out the embers of democratic ambition, wherever they burn.
- People are dying in Ukraine as we speak for daring to embrace the democratic ideal.
- For daring to associate themselves with us - an Alliance that through solidarity, sense of purpose, and courage won the Cold War.
- And while we have not always been perfect, we have always aspired to the democratic standard of our founding treaty.
- And we have through that aspiration, broadened liberal democracy on this continent.
- We are no longer a band of a brave few, but a band of many.
- A band everyone wants to join. And Finland and Sweden will do so and we welcome them.
- If we want to continue that success;
- If we want to be something more than just a military bloc that doesn't like Russia;
- If we want to gird ourselves against the march of authoritarianism which has in recent years quickened its step;
- We must move beyond the rhetorical in our commitment to democratic institutions.

- After 73 years, the Assembly believes it is past time for NATO to establish concrete architecture dedicated to the advancement of democracy.
- That is why we have proposed establishing a Democratic Resilience Center within NATO itself.
- Not to be a watchdog, but to serve as a resource to propound democratic values and protect the institutions that keep our democracies strong.
- We have overwhelming support for this idea among all of you.
- My first memory of the Cold War was 1956, the Hungarian revolution. I remember seeing the tattered Hungarian flag flying over Saint Stephen's and the Soviet tanks trolling downtown streets.
- Even at the age of six, I could recognize that one side was fighting for freedom. The other was trying to suppress it.
- We see the same thing in Ukraine today.
- To reject this proposal is to turn a blind eye to what Putin is doing in Ukraine and let a cancer that threatens our future continue to grow.
- I say this with a healthy dose of humility as someone who was in the United States Capitol on January 6th as a violent insurrection raged at the doors to my House Chamber where I sat on the floor.
- Russia's ultimate goal is to undermine democracy, to upend European security and to destroy the international rules-based order. We need to contend collectively with this strategic reality.
- You have reaffirmed our ironclad commitment to Article 5 and collective defense and reset our deterrence and defense posture. We must now deliver the troops and capabilities to ensure we can deter and defend every inch of NATO territory.
- To support this new posture, the 2014 Wales Defense Investment Pledge must be met by all and become a minimum commitment for the long term.

- As you have directed, we also need to deter and defend more effectively below the threshold of Article 5 and step up our support to other NATO partners subject to Russian pressure, including Georgia, Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- However, notwithstanding Russia and its threat, we must take cognizance of other threats and challenges, as the Strategic Concept does.
- For the first time, the Strategic Concept recognizes that China's stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values.
- Our Assembly has long supported a common transatlantic China policy based on engagement, competition, and the defense of Allies' security and democratic interests.
- We also support a vision that addresses the persistent, direct threat of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Which addresses instability in the South - which you are going to talk about today, and other neighboring regions. And which addresses the impact of course of climate change which you, Secretary General, addressed at the Public Forum earlier this week.
- Our collective response during this critical moment for the Alliance will hew a path in human history.
- On behalf of the Assembly and our 30 respective parliaments, thank you for your leadership and your commitment to our shared democratic values.