



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

# SUMMARY

OF THE MEETING OF THE

## 22<sup>nd</sup> PARLIAMENTARY TRANSATLANTIC FORUM

5-7 December 2022

*National Defense University*  
Washington, D.C., United States

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. On December 5-7, 104 members of parliament from 29 NATO Allied nations, and one Associate nation gathered in Washington, D.C. for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's (NATO PA) 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Parliamentary Transatlantic Forum. The forum was hosted by the National Defense University and co-sponsored by the Atlantic Council. NATO PA President **Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam** (FR) opened the forum, which, as always, was conducted under the Chatham House Rule. She highlighted the importance of this transatlantic meeting and the record participation this year. She also thanked the National Defense University (NDU) for its invaluable support and underscored its role in training future stakeholders in US foreign policy and Alliance security.

2. NDU President, Lieutenant General **Michael T. Plehn**, noted the alignment of Assembly and NDU work strands and topics of focus, including encouraging the positive role of democracies in global security. He also pointed out challenges the University faces when training national security leaders. The range of persistent strategic and kinetic threats posed today, coupled with an eroding technical edge, means it is important decisionmakers are prepared to outthink adversaries rather than solely relying on US military or technological advantages. NDU puts a premium on investing in the qualitative capabilities of current and future leaders.

3. In her opening speech, Senator Garriaud-Maylam recalled recent decisions taken by the NATO PA in Madrid and by NATO Foreign Ministers in Bucharest. It is crucial to take stock of what Allies have provided to Ukraine and how deterrence and defence capabilities have adapted. It is equally important to understand where we can do more, starting with ensuring that political decisions are translated into concrete guidelines. Here, the Assembly plays a vital role in holding leaders accountable and communicating policy decisions to citizens. The Senator called on attendees to urge their national parliaments to publicly acknowledge Russia's current regime as a state sponsor of terrorism and encouraged collective action for the establishment of a criminal tribunal to prosecute Russia's war crimes. While translating high-level political decisions into actions, Allies must remain steadfastly committed to transatlantic values. These values underline NATO's role in defending democracy. This is the spirit in which the Forum has been conducted since its first iteration in 2001 – it is the largest annual gathering of transatlantic legislators, and it is an essential element of the transatlantic link. The need to safeguard and strengthen NATO's democratic principles also continues to inform the NATO PA's advocacy for the creation of a Centre for Democratic Resilience at NATO Headquarters.

4. **Dr Matthew Kroenig**, Acting Director of the Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, welcomed participants on the second day of the Forum on behalf of the Atlantic Council. He noted that NATO and the transatlantic community have been central to the Atlantic Council's work since its founding. The Alliance remains critical to European security and the rules-based international order. This inflection point in global security requires NATO to re-commit to its 3 core tasks as well as adaptation, modernisation, and short- and long-term defence investments. Allies must also re-commit to and reinvigorate transatlantic values, as this is the only way to foster international stability.

## II. US AND ALLIED RESPONSES TO RUSSIA'S WAR: MAINTAINING SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE AND IMPLEMENTING NATO'S NEW DETERRENCE AND DEFENCE POSTURE

5. The Biden administration will continue with its strong support for Ukraine's Armed Forces and policy to reinforce and strengthen Allied deterrence and defence. The US government remains committed to help Ukraine defend itself for as long as it takes, and experts pointed out the vital role that the Ukraine Defense Contact Group has played in fostering aid coordination and broader alignment among NATO Defence Ministers.

6. Allies have opportunities to support Ukraine beyond the scope of the Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP). In addition, key initiatives deserve increased Allied attention, among

them the funding of training programmes for Ukrainian soldiers, assisting with Ukraine's transition to NATO standard equipment, building on the Wales Summit commitments including agreeing to a new Defence Investment Pledge, and, in line with this, meeting national capability targets - the Wales Summit Defence Investment Pledge should be seen as the floor for future benchmarks, not the ceiling. Allies must also prepare to support Ukraine's post-war rebuilding efforts, from humanitarian and financial assistance to rebuilding modern institutions, with Allies focused on helping with the Defence sector. As one US official noted, NATO Allies and partners must construct a kind of Marshall Plan for Ukraine after the conclusion of the war. In communicating these efforts, policymakers and legislators alike must demonstrate how Allied support is making a difference daily and remind citizens that the war is about more than territory. Ukraine shares NATO's values, and these values are worth protecting.

7. Participants agreed that Allies should strive to help Ukraine reach the position to conduct negotiations on its own terms. However, some asserted that too much focus on a future negotiated settlement has the potential to undermine Ukraine's ongoing heroic efforts on the battlefield. Furthermore, even in a post-war environment, several guests noted that Russia must be viewed as a long-term strategic challenge as its government has proven its intent to destabilise, undermine and intervene in peaceful societies. Following an end of kinetic warfare, Russia is likely to rely on hybrid operations and possibly nuclear coercion as it rebuilds its conventional capabilities.

8. In the near-term, Allies should implement lessons learned from the war so far. For example, sharing intelligence among Allies and, when possible, publicly, creates opportunities for coordinated and unified decision making. Inter-Allies, it is clear logistics, military mobility and infrastructure investments will also be increasingly important and will require continued strong transatlantic cooperation to meet the standard of a new, strong and effective baseline for defence and deterrence. Allies must also pay attention to the demands future wars will likely make on their defence industrial base, at the current rate of strategic stock depletion as Allies support Ukraine's self-defence efforts.

### **III. INAUGURAL OJARS KALNINS LECTURE**

9. Ivo Daalder, President of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and former US Ambassador to NATO, delivered the first Ojars Kalnins Lecture in which he recognised the singular impact of contributions by Ojars Kalnins, former NATO PA Vice-President and Head of the Latvian Delegation, who fought for democracy and freedom his entire life. In paying tribute to the late Mr Kalnins, the lecture emphasised the need for persistent effort to defend and promote NATO's values such as democracy, rule of law and territorial integrity. Speakers also provided an overview of the NATO-Latvia relationship and the work of Mr Kalnins and others who enabled Latvia's accession to the Alliance.

### **IV. THE STATE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP**

10. Threats to Euro-Atlantic security have not been so acute in decades. NATO, however, is stronger, more united and better prepared to defend itself than ever – the accession of Finland and Sweden will only make the Alliance stronger. The United States will maintain its strong support for NATO at all levels and will continue to lead in providing aid to Ukraine as it continues its legitimate self-defence, with the help of strong bipartisan support and a population that recognises what is at stake. The United States has not acted alone, however. For example, the humanitarian aid Allies have provided so far has been remarkable and will be particularly vital this winter. The EU has been an essential partner, especially on sanctions. Furthermore, the recent oil price cap decision illustrates the innovative efforts being made within and beyond NATO. These unified actions are unprecedented and will ensure that Russia pays for its actions and can no longer use energy as a tool of war. This unprecedented unity must carry over into a post-conflict environment. Allies must contemplate not only how to win the war, but how to 'win the peace'. This will require aid providers to keep Ukraine accountable and encourage the strengthening of democratic systems.

The United States will also keep Ukraine as strong as possible on the battlefield until it decides to move to a negotiated settlement.

11. China's government seeks to impinge on the values and structures underpinning the Alliance. This poses a threat to Euro-Atlantic security and meeting this challenge will require close consultation with partners, particularly those in the Asia-Pacific. China seeks to reshape the framework of the rules-based international order (RBIO) and is watching Allies' actions carefully with regard to its aims in Taiwan. The United States and others must continue to engage with China thoughtfully. At the same time, Allies must improve mechanisms for countering Chinese destabilising grey zone tactics, including disinformation, on the national, EU and NATO level.

12. Some participants questioned the United States' ability to tackle challenges in the Euro-Atlantic and Asia simultaneously. However, the majority agreed that issues of strategic importance to the Alliance can no longer be viewed as separate, and maintaining global awareness requires a collective approach together with partners. Attendees also discussed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), with some noting its ambitious commitment to fighting climate change and others asserting that the IRA will damage European industry at a time when the EU is already feeling the economic impacts of Russia's war in Ukraine more acutely than the United States. President Biden has committed to minimise the unintentional negative effects of the legislation by working together with European counterparts, primarily through the new US-EU Task Force on IRA.

## **V. THE WAR IN UKRAINE: THE VIEW FROM THE BATTLEFIELD AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR LONG-TERM US-RUSSIA POLICY**

13. It is difficult to extract lessons from an ongoing conflict. However, some takeaways are clear. The new role of unmanned systems has moved centre stage. The importance of scale and quantity (still a quality of its own) has been demonstrated, and information dominance has become necessary (good intelligence, command and control abilities). In addition, the imperative of having a strong industrial base is clear. The war has also illustrated the effects of having large conventional forces at the expense of more sophisticated capabilities. Additionally, Russia has made numerous misjudgements and Allies underestimated Ukraine's ability to utilise new equipment effectively. It is also clear that militaries reflect their societies, the will of Ukrainians and the leadership of President Zelenskyy have been decisive factors.

14. Allies and partners will be coping with the consequences of Russia's war for many years. NATO needs an updated strategy of containment, for which Alliance cohesion is crucial. This strategy will require further isolating Russia diplomatically and economically, re-starting military production, implementing a systematic approach to countering disinformation, and maintaining a wide array of non-strategic capabilities for escalation and de-escalation. Russian aggression will be a possibility as long as Putin is in power, regardless of the war's outcome. Given this, NATO should reassess its nuclear policy while maintaining a possibility for Russian participation in arms control agreements. Furthermore, Allies should be proactive with contributions to collective defence, which will also prove useful if the United States is unable to act as a first responder. NATO Europe can mitigate the burden sharing challenge by committing to 50% of NATO equipment needs by the end of the decade.

15. The majority agreed that re-engagement with Russia cannot occur without regime change, and Allies should signal that they are ready to engage if responsible leaders emerge.

## **VI. CHALLENGES TO GLOBAL DEMOCRACY**

16. China and Russia seek to create a world in which the actions of autocracies are unchallenged, including violating human rights and coercing weaker states. Allies should view this threat through a common prism and align resources and strategies for long-term competition. This includes

revamping avenues of cooperation, rekindling global support for democracy and keeping autocratic powers in-check by supporting civil resistance and imposing sanctions. Participants agreed that this discussion underscores the need to create a Centre for Democratic Resilience at NATO Headquarters. Additionally, competition for influence in the global south also raised concerns. This region will be key for defending the RBIO; therefore, Allies should present strategic incentives to regional partners while working together to counter malign influence and demonstrate the success of democratic systems.

17. Human rights were under assault in Russia long before 24 February. The current estimates of political prisoners are likely much lower than the reality. Allies should avoid treating human rights as a political issue or providing assistance as charity. When human rights are ignored in one nation, these violations will inevitably spread to others. Although many oppose the Russian government, it is important for Allies to understand that the majority of Russia's population has been indoctrinated for nearly 2 decades and alternative narratives to Putin's no longer exist publicly in Russia. For this reason and others, it is essential that Russian war criminals are held to account for their actions.

## VII. THE ECONOMIC FALL OUT OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

18. After Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, the United States and Europe worked to create an enforceable system for sanctions and a framework for international coordination to mitigate backfilling and evasion. These efforts enabled the swift actions of the transatlantic community following Russia's full-scale invasion. The long-term impacts of current sanctions against Russia will be debilitating, especially with regard to technology, but will take time to fully appear. Other effects, such as deterrence, are important but difficult to measure. By imposing sanctions, the Euro-Atlantic is signalling that using aggression will not be tolerated, which is a powerful message for all adversaries. Whether sanctions will have a direct impact on war efforts remains to be seen, but they have already served as an effective tool for punishment.

19. The cost of reconstructing Ukraine will be much higher than current estimates due to recent bombings of population centres. In addition to the economic cost, Allies should also understand the social cost. For example, poverty in post-war Ukraine will be extremely high. NATO and other IOs must set goals based on urgent and long-term needs such as EU-compliant roads, demining, and de-contamination. Success will depend not only on public means but will also require massive support from the private sector. It is, therefore, vital to de-risk investment and incentivise private entities to be involved. Donors should strive to put as little burden on Ukraine as possible when providing donations, through donor coordination, utilising existing systems and providing grants. To maximise the impact of donations, financial engineers will need to work with politicians, development organisations and private entities. Policymakers should seek to create a governance framework that enables transparency and consider creative solutions to speed up recovery, for example, lifting bans on land sales to allow for agricultural reform. Ukraine's recovery is part of a holistic goal for shared prosperity and Allies should remember that the war has also affected the global south.

20. The Head of the Assembly's Ukrainian Delegation, **Yehor Cherniev**, provided an overview of current developments on the ground in Ukraine. Mr Cherniev also laid out potential scenarios for how the war may end and urged Allies to act swiftly when making key decisions.

## VIII. SHARED ENERGY CHALLENGES

21. Understanding current energy challenges requires a holistic view, as well as recognition that the majority of the energy crisis effects have so far impacted Europe more than the United States. The war and resulting sanctions will eventually destroy Russia's ability to be an energy power. In the meantime, novel efforts such as the oil price cap will weaken Russia's ability to sell oil at market prices. Lawmakers should consider policies that help cut gas demand and prepare for the fact that

addressing energy challenges will likely be harder next year. Allies should also support the role of the United States as an LNG exporter despite reservations in Washington. Additionally, building redundancy into systems and preparing for worst case scenarios will be crucial going forward.

22. Biden is the first US President to make climate change one of the administration's top 4 priorities. Although Russia's war has impinged on these aims, it is still a key priority. Balancing energy and climate priorities will continue to be a challenge, as both are crucial, but energy solutions are even more urgent. Allies must avoid creating stranded assets and invest in redundancies, supply chains and solutions that reduce demand for natural gas in the short-run while helping to reach climate goals in the long-run. The IRA is the most ambitious climate legislation the United States has ever passed, it includes innovative solutions such as providing direct consumer incentives and tying environmental aims to creating well-paid jobs.

23. Some participants expressed interest in taxing the profits of gas revenues and using funds for Ukraine aid. The majority felt that building redundancies into energy systems and decreasing dependence on China in addition to Russia will be increasingly necessary.

## **IX. CHINA AND A CHANGING ASIAN LANDSCAPE**

24. The US and Asia-Pacific (AP) partners are at 'peak convergence', both on security and economic cooperation. AP partners are investing in national military capabilities, strengthening alliances with nearby partners and resisting Chinese coercion while maintaining normalised relations with China. More broadly, Southeast Asia has never been more open to US partnership than it is now.

25. Russia's war has highlighted the importance of the RBIO, and China is the only actor with the means and intent to undermine it. China is increasing efforts to expand military power and it applies coercion tactics across domains. Containment is not viable, and de-coupling from China is infeasible for most actors. US-China integration alone includes tourism, foreign students and labour, not only trade. Furthermore, it is necessary to engage with China on climate and health issues and keep communication channels, especially on national security and macroeconomic issues, open to maintain stability. The United States focuses on working with AP partners in key areas to influence the strategic environment. It seeks to shape choices in the region, not to provoke China or change policy.

26. Some participants noted the importance of safeguarding democratic values in relation to Taiwan, and experts pointed out that if China achieves its aims in Taiwan, this will have implications for the entire world. Values must remain at the centre of Allies' decisions on China.

## **X. VIEWS FROM CONGRESS ON THE STATE OF TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS**

27. Representatives underscored the overwhelming bi-partisan support for Ukraine in the US government and noted the importance of President Zelenskyy's presence on the frontlines serving as a reminder of daily realities. Going forward, the United States will continue to support Ukraine, while placing a greater emphasis on missile defence at the national level and intelligence sharing at the international and multilateral level. While support remains strong among lawmakers and constituents, there is also the recognition that Europeans are being hit harder by the economic effects of the war. Representatives asserted that Russia's defeat will likely be more economic than strategic. Lawmakers also noted that failing to punish Russia for its actions would lead to additional future territorial violations. One panellist called for NATO to develop a comprehensive Black Sea strategy, due to its impact on trade and food supplies. Speakers expressed differing opinions regarding how Allied governments should communicate about potential nuclear escalation to citizens.

## XI. THE CORRUPTION-SECURITY NEXUS AND US FOREIGN POLICY

28. Countering corruption is a core US national security priority, but it should also be seen as a foreign policy issue. Assisting partners requires both capacity building and political will. The effects of corruption on military effectiveness can be significant and recent developments in the Russian Armed Forces serve as a lesson to both the United States and partners regarding security sector governance and accountability mechanisms. These issues are especially relevant in the context of strategic competition between democracies and autocracies. Powerful democracies and their partners must cultivate trust with citizens that resources are being used properly, and no nation should become complacent when it comes to safeguarding against corruption, domestically or internationally. In Ukraine, Allies should not equate solidarity with lax oversight, while also understanding that expectations for anti-corruption measures in Ukraine must remain limited while the conflict is ongoing. Parliamentarians will play a crucial role in oversight in post-war Ukraine and can already plan for how to support reform now.

## XII. NORDIC AND ARCTIC SECURITY CHALLENGES AND NATO'S EVOLVING NORTHERN VOCATION

29. The United States addresses Arctic policy at the executive, congressional, state and local levels of decision-making. US strategy has evolved in recent years, with a cooperation-centred approach under President Obama and an extraction-focused approach under President Trump. Now, the United States is in an era of cooperation plus power projection in the Arctic, and the Biden administration has also put an emphasis on working with partners, while keeping security, prosperity and values in mind at each decision-making level.

30. Although accession is progressing quicker than in previous cycles, Allies should work to integrate Finland and Sweden as soon as possible. Due to their long-standing close partnership, both nations will immediately be a security provider for NATO, aid decision-making at all levels, and offer unique knowledge, for example regarding Russian hybrid threats and vulnerabilities in undersea infrastructure. Additionally, current limitations on cooperation and intelligence sharing will ease following accession. The United States supports a quick solution to incorporating Finland and Sweden into the Alliance. Participants were interested in discussing potential challenges posed by the expiration of the New START, possibilities for future maritime disputes and Chinese influence in the Arctic.

## XIII. CONCLUSION

31. This year's Forum provided a platform for in-depth discussions on many diverse topics. Although several key themes resurfaced throughout discussions, three primary points stood out during the meetings.

32. **Political unity.** Numerous speakers and participants pointed out the remarkable and unprecedented unity displayed throughout the Forum on issues of strategic importance to NATO, most notably support for Ukraine. Despite minority opinions, policymakers have a clear-eyed understanding of what is at stake in Ukraine and acknowledge the necessity of communicating the truth of the war to their citizens and, when possible, to Russians.

33. **The role of legislators.** Experts also continuously noted the role of legislators and the NATO PA in fostering Alliance unity on wide-ranging topics. Lawmakers possess unique opportunities to inform public opinion, shape security, economic and humanitarian assistance packages, and hold leaders accountable not only for creating a policy-strategy match, but also for translating policy into action. Experts noted that the Assembly's work by extension serves as a vital link between NATO, legislators and civil society. Participants expressed keen interest in setting up

a Centre for Democratic Resilience to further foster political unity and defend the values that link the transatlantic community.

34. **The future of China policy, climate action and post-war Ukraine.** Throughout the Forum, experts also demonstrated a forward-looking approach on China and climate policy as well as on the reconstruction of Ukraine. Speakers underlined the need to translate NATO's assessment of China outlined in the Strategic Concept into clear guidelines for Allies. US officials noted the Biden administration's ambitions for mitigating climate change and willingness to work together with Europe to lessen negative secondary effects of US policies. Lastly, attendees clearly acknowledged that support for Ukraine requires long-term commitment and investment as well as working closely with non-governmental actors to rebuild and win the peace, after Ukraine wins the war.