



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO, CHAIRMAN OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

ON THE

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
ADOPTED IN 2019 BY THE NATO
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

RESOLUTION 454

on

REAFFIRMING COMMITMENTS TO NATO'S FOUNDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES*

The Assembly,

1. **Celebrating** the 70th anniversary of the transatlantic Alliance – a unique political-military community of like-minded nations and a bulwark of the free world;
2. **Convinced** that the enduring prominence of this Alliance as a major international actor not only stems from the military, economic, and technological strength of its members, but also from the commitment to the shared principles and values that underpin the transatlantic community;
3. **Recalling** that the North Atlantic Treaty, signed on 4 April 1949 in Washington, D.C., stipulates in its preamble the determination of the Allies “to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law”, and that, in Article 2, the Allies express their commitment to “strengthening their free institutions”;
4. **Noting** that, particularly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, NATO contributed significantly to the spread of democratic principles across the Euro-Atlantic area, and beyond, through political statements, the Open Door policy, and partnership mechanisms;
5. **Recalling** its own role as a forum to discuss the democratic credentials of NATO members during the Cold War and its activities in the post-Cold War era, supporting new democracies and helping them to develop mechanisms of parliamentary oversight of the defence and security sector;
6. **Stressing** that after the end of the Cold War, many nations broke free and were able to join NATO, and **lamenting** that some of them are still fighting for their freedom and their right to freely choose their foreign policy vector and to join the Alliance;
7. **Mindful** of the ongoing paradigm shifts in the global political and security landscape as a result of significant technological, economic, and demographic developments, and **aware** that these developments can empower autocrats and lead to a global erosion of democracy and human rights standards;
8. **Deeply concerned** that the Euro-Atlantic nations are not immune to phenomena such as decreasing popular confidence in political institutions, disenchantment with mainstream parties, and media and general democratic backsliding, which can jeopardise the trust among the Allies;
9. **Deploring** external interference, particularly by the Russian Federation, in the democratic processes in North America and Europe, the aggression against Ukraine and Georgia, and attempts to undermine the Alliance’s unity and deepen internal cleavages through cyber intrusions, social media manipulation, and other hybrid tactics;
10. **Emphasising**, nevertheless, that the founding principles and values of the Alliance remain valid and continue to define the Alliance’s identity;
11. **URGES** member governments and parliaments of the North Atlantic Alliance to take a more proactive approach in promoting and protecting democratic values within the Euro-Atlantic community and beyond, and in particular:

- a. to consider designating a structure within NATO institutions with a mandate and capacity to monitor and report – in a respectful and constructive manner – on the democratic credentials of member and candidate states, when there is reasonable ground for it, and to offer assistance to member states on election integrity and security, judicial independence, press freedom, and other aspects critical to maintaining a vibrant democracy;
 - b. to consider updating NATO's Strategic Concept to include stronger commitment to democratic values and to expand references to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in NATO's external communication, including NATO Summit Communiqués;
 - c. to ensure adequate support to relevant Centres of Excellence, particularly the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, and the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, in order to support democracy resilience programmes in member states;
 - d. to exchange best practices and innovative techniques and to develop further cooperation with the EU in enhancing the cyber literacy of citizens and in tackling disinformation, hate speech, and other hybrid threats;
 - e. to identify national electoral systems as strategic infrastructure and provide them with adequate protection and to raise awareness among officials and participants of electoral campaigns on how to detect and prevent hostile interference;
 - f. to support the NATO Public Diplomacy Division and relevant national actors, including parliamentarians, in their efforts to reach out to new generations of Europeans and North Americans and to spread awareness of NATO's core missions and values;
 - g. to reaffirm commitment to NATO's Open Door policy as a tool to spread the zone of stability and democratic standards in Europe, to support the Euro-Atlantic integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Ukraine, and to help strengthen their resilience against foreign interference;
 - h. to support multilateral efforts to sanction human rights abusers;
 - i. to foster the implementation of NATO's Women, Peace, and Security agenda and to mainstream gender through all NATO policies;
 - j. to redouble efforts on the national, regional, and international levels to tackle the root causes of public discontent, including migration and income inequality;
 - k. to encourage authoritative figures in politics, culture, and science to help rebuild public support for democratic values and the rules-based global order;
 - l. to continue using the NATO Parliamentary Assembly as a venue for Allies to exchange their views on how to defend and promote NATO's core principles within the Alliance and beyond.
12. **URGES** international social media corporations to allocate sufficient resources to work with relevant international organisations, including NATO, its member states and partner nations as well as their civil societies, to identify and counter disinformation and social media manipulation efforts aimed at influencing the free electoral choices of member and partner nations.

* Presented by the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security and adopted by the Plenary Assembly on Monday 14 October 2019, London, United Kingdom.

COMMENTS ON RESOLUTION 454

I welcome the emphasis that the Assembly puts on shared democratic principles and values as the underpinning of the transatlantic community. The principles outlined in the North Atlantic Treaty have guided the Alliance throughout its 70-year history, and will continue to do so. This is underlined in our Strategic Concept and successive statements agreed by Allied Heads of State and Government, Foreign and Defence Ministers over the past few decades, including the London Declaration issued at our Leaders' meeting there on 3-4 December 2019.

In response to the Assembly's suggestion in serial a. of Resolution 454, I believe that organizations like the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Council of Europe, are well placed to continue to set norms, advocate, monitor and report on issues like election integrity, judicial independence, and media freedom.

This being said, NATO must and will continue to play its part in reinforcing the resilience of our democratic societies, including by strengthening our cyber defences, stepping up our response to hybrid threats, and ensuring that our critical infrastructure, energy security, and communications are resilient.

With due regard for different legal and constitutional arrangements in individual member states, and on the basis of policies supported by all Allies, NATO's Public Diplomacy Division (NATO PDD) leads an overall effort within the Alliance's civilian and military structures to disseminate facts, data, statistics and promote narratives explaining NATO's goals, posture and policies, as well as to increase awareness of activities aiming to undermine our unity, values, and institutions.

Over the past few years, supporting the efforts made by individual Allies, NATO PDD has refocused its activities and programmes towards audiences showing consistently less support for NATO, including through opinion formers such as parliamentarians. In order to achieve better synergies, NATO PDD has consulted with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's Working Group on Education and Communication on the basis of the results of the survey conducted by the Assembly on how NATO is taught at schools.

NATO and the EU have and will continue to work together in tackling the challenge of disinformation and promoting common values. For example, our Press and Media Section amplifies through its social media channels all relevant "myth-busting" corrections of disinformation or propaganda that originate from the "EU vs Disinfo" taskforce. On a case-by-case basis, the NATO Spokesperson also discusses and coordinates messaging on security threats with her EU counterparts.

NATO will continue to lead by example in upholding democratic principles and values, including by promoting robust policies to advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda, good governance of the defence sector, and transparent and accountable defence institutions under democratic control.

The NATO/EAPC Women, Peace and Security Policy and Action Plan are based on the principles of integration, inclusiveness and integrity. NATO is currently undertaking a review of the implementation of the WPS agenda across NATO since the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, the first resolution on WPS, in 2000.

In November 2019, NATO Foreign Ministers endorsed the first NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Sexual exploitation and abuse runs counter to NATO's principles and core values, and undermines the effectiveness and credibility of the Alliance. Therefore, NATO has a zero tolerance approach to all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse.

I welcome the Assembly's support for NATO's Open Door policy as a unique tool to extend the zone of stability and democracy in Europe. At their meeting in London in December 2019, NATO Leaders also restated their commitment to the Open Door policy, which strengthens the Alliance and has brought security to millions of Europeans.

In February 2018, Allies signed the Accession Protocol for the accession of North Macedonia into the Alliance and work is now under way to prepare for the full integration of the country into NATO structures. We are looking forward to welcoming North Macedonia as the 30th member of the Alliance very soon.

We also remain committed to the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Euro-Atlantic community and to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a stable and secure Bosnia and Herzegovina. NATO is committed to supporting the country with its reforms across the full political, economic, defence, and security spectrum for the benefit of all people of the country.

NATO also continues to stand by its decision made at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Georgia will become a member of the Alliance, with Membership Action Plan (MAP) as an integral part of the process. NATO Ambassadors and Georgia adopted a NATO-Georgia statement on the occasion of their visit to Batumi, Georgia, in October 2019, in which they welcomed the significant progress made by Georgia since 2008.

Georgia's relationship with the Alliance contains all the practical tools to prepare for eventual membership, in particular the NATO-Georgia Commission, the Annual National Programme, and the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package. Allies recognize the significant progress on reforms which Georgia has made and must continue, which are helping Georgia, an aspirant country, progress in its preparations towards membership, and which strengthen Georgia's defence and interoperability capabilities with the Alliance.

Allies also stand by their decisions taken at the Bucharest Summit and subsequent Summits in light of Ukraine's restated aspirations for NATO membership. In my speech to the Ukrainian Parliament on 31 October 2019, I underscored that Ukraine has the right to choose its own security arrangements and that, for those who seek it, the road to NATO membership requires dedication and substantial reform. NATO is supporting Ukraine on this path through the Annual National Programme and the Comprehensive Assistance Package. It is also supporting Ukraine's efforts to strengthen its own resilience against hybrid threats.

RESOLUTION 455

on

SUPPORTING NATO'S POST-INF TREATY DEFENCE AND DETERRENCE POSTURE*

The Assembly,

1. **Recognising** that the Alliance's populations and territories, particularly its eastern territories, as well as neighbouring countries, already face significant and escalating conventional and hybrid threats;
2. **Alert** to efforts by states such as North Korea and Iran to develop new, powerful, and precise ballistic and cruise missile systems and, given these countries' disregard for international law and potential willingness to arm these weapons with nuclear warheads, **concerned** about the threat that this poses to international security;
3. **Aware** of China's renewed focus on its nuclear capabilities to enhance the size, robustness, precision, and mobility of its nuclear systems and **recognising** that China's efforts to modernise and expand its nuclear arsenal threaten to destabilise international peace and security;
4. **Concerned** about Russia's concerted efforts to modernise its existing strategic and tactical nuclear forces and **troubled** by its endeavours to develop new destabilising nuclear weapons with the goal of overwhelming any defences against them;
 1. **Emphasising** the dangers associated with Russia's renewed focus on nuclear weapons development, as illustrated by recent incidents involving Russia's experimental nuclear weapons systems;
 2. **Underscoring** that Russia's use of aggressive nuclear rhetoric, the combination of conventional and nuclear elements in its military exercising, and the continued ambiguity of its nuclear doctrine signal a potentially lower threshold for the use of nuclear weapons;
7. **Regretting** that these developments demonstrate Russia's determination to use nuclear weapons as a key means to assert its position as a global power;
8. **Underlining** that, despite the Budapest Memorandum, which guarantees the respect of Ukraine's existing borders, security and sovereignty, Russia's attack on Ukraine, its subsequent annexation of Crimea and occupation of certain territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions has undermined global nuclear non-proliferation efforts;
9. **Reprehending** Russia's preparations for deployment of nuclear arms in Crimea;
10. **Condemning** Russian violations of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which had been a pillar of stability in European security for over three decades, and **strongly supporting** the United States' decision to withdraw from the treaty after that country's extensive efforts to bring Russia back into compliance;
11. **Blaming** Russia's actions for the failure of the INF Treaty and diminished trust and stability within bilateral arms control frameworks, which may result in negative impacts on future efforts to limit the development and deployment of nuclear armaments;

12. **Underscoring** NATO's decision to respond to the end of the INF Treaty in a "measured and responsible way" with regard to the deployment of new land-based missiles in Europe;
13. **Strongly endorsing** the Alliance's announcement that it will both ensure that its nuclear deterrent remains safe, secure and effective and explore options to "work on issues" such as: exercises, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, air and missile defences, and conventional capabilities;
14. **Reiterating** NATO's longstanding commitment to arms control, as stated in the 2018 Brussels Summit Declaration, and its enduring support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT);
15. **Noting** the ongoing debate about the potential extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), now the only remaining strategic nuclear arms control agreement between the United States and Russia - which is due to expire in 2021, and **encouraging** its extension;
16. **Affirming** that, as long as they exist, nuclear weapons must remain a core component of the Alliance's defence and deterrence posture and that NATO's nuclear declaratory language must signal Allies' preparedness to take the steps necessary to defend themselves;
17. **Highlighting** that nuclear modernisation efforts by the United States, France, and the United Kingdom are necessary to ensure the safety and reliability of existing arsenals and to respond to the evolving nuclear environment, and that they do not contravene these countries' international treaty commitments and obligations;
18. **Underscoring** the necessity of maintaining the full complement of NATO's nuclear deterrence mission, including Allied support for US forward-deployed nuclear weapons and the systems necessary for their maintenance and potential deployment;
19. **URGES** member governments and parliaments of the North Atlantic Alliance:
 - a. to continue to support the Alliance's maintenance of a safe, secure, strong, capable, and survivable nuclear deterrent as a central pillar of its defence and deterrence policy in order to ensure the peace and security of Allied populations and territories and to mitigate against the dangers of an evolving international security environment characterised by the development and deployment of modern and destabilising nuclear weapons;
 - b. to continue the investments necessary to modernise existing nuclear systems and their supporting infrastructures across the full complement of NATO's nuclear mission, including the maintenance of US forward-deployed nuclear weapons;
 - c. to stand behind and adequately resource new defence and deterrence measures taken by the Alliance in response to the evolving post-INF Treaty security environment, including increased exercises, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, air and missile defences, and conventional capabilities;
 - d. to educate their populations about the indispensable nature of the Alliance's nuclear capabilities within its broader defence and deterrence posture and, therefore, about the necessity of providing sufficient resources to maintain safe and reliable nuclear capabilities;

e. to support NATO's efforts to maintain the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and to encourage other states to join international arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation initiatives reflecting the nuclear weapons environment that Allies seek to mitigate for the sake of broader international peace and security.

* Presented by the Defence and Security Committee and adopted by the Plenary Assembly on Monday 14 October 2019, London, United Kingdom.

COMMENTS ON RESOLUTION 455

I recognise the importance the Assembly places on supporting NATO's Post-INF Treaty adaptations of its Deterrence and Defence Posture. Resolution 455 echoes the 2018 Brussels Summit Declaration as well as the 2019 London Declaration in which NATO Heads of State and Government reaffirmed that NATO will remain a nuclear alliance as long as nuclear weapons exist. NATO Leaders in London also made clear that they remain open for dialogue, and to a constructive relationship with Russia when Russia's actions make that possible.

Resolution 455 also acknowledges the demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty which was a crucial element of Euro-Atlantic Security for decades. All Allies are in agreement that Russia bears sole responsibility for the demise of the INF Treaty based on its repeated violations of it, and that the United States' decision to withdraw from the Treaty in response to these violations is justified and appropriate.

I note the Assembly's wider concerns regarding nuclear deterrence and defence in the post-INF Treaty environment in which Russia's actions continue to undermine the global Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation system, Allies' security, and the rules-based international order. Russia's actions are likely to have both military and political aims: to gain a military advantage over NATO forces, and to sow division among Allies.

Resolution 455 alludes to a pattern of more assertive and aggressive Russian behaviour, including the violation of the INF Treaty as well as Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. Russia is presented with a clear choice: return to compliance and uphold its arms control commitments, or bear full responsibility for its irresponsible and dangerous actions.

I therefore appreciate the Assembly's strong endorsement of NATO's decision to respond to the end of the INF Treaty in a defensive, measured and responsible way. This includes NATO's balanced response package to Russia's development and fielding of the SSC-8 cruise missile. The implementation of this response package is underway, informing NATO's work on issues such as exercises, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, air and missile defences, and conventional capabilities.

Furthermore, I welcome the Assembly's reiteration of NATO's longstanding commitment to arms control. Allies remain fully committed to the preservation of and strengthening of effective arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation taking into account the prevailing security environment. Allies are strongly committed to the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in all its aspects, including nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Regarding public support for, and the effective communication of, NATO's response to the deployment of SSC-8 and the demise of the INF Treaty, Allies recognise that these aspects depend on Allied and partner audiences' accurate awareness and understanding of the true circumstances around these events. Allies should continue to identify potential opportunities to highlight that NATO is a credible and united nuclear Alliance and that maintaining nuclear deterrence is part of a defensive, balanced and comprehensive approach to the end of the INF Treaty.

I would like to offer some specific comments on a few further aspects of Resolution 455. The new START Agreement is now on the table as renewal is being considered. Taking into account the Alliance's aforementioned commitment to arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation, it is important to recognise how much has been achieved because of the START agreements. Before the first START agreement, there were around 12,000 nuclear warheads on each side, now there are 1,550 each.

I also note that Resolution 455 refers to state actors other than Russia in the context of potential nuclear threats in the post-INF environment. Recalling the 2018 Brussels Summit Declaration in which NATO Heads of State and Government reaffirmed NATO's 360-degree approach to collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security, I would highlight NATO's progress on Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) which is intended to defend against potential threats emanating from outside the Euro-Atlantic area. The development of a NATO BMD capability is an important component of NATO's core task of collective defence. NATO BMD Initial Operational Capability was declared in 2016 and the next major milestone is the completion of the core element of the NATO BMD Command and Control.

Specifically regarding China, Allies are aware of its growing nuclear capabilities. Allies welcome China's role in the P5 process and urge China to continue substantive engagement in the NPT process.

RESOLUTION 456

on

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN*

The Assembly,

1. **Recalling** that Afghanistan remains a high priority for NATO Allies and their international partners, whose principal mission is to actively support the stabilisation of Afghanistan and to contribute to the establishment of sustainable peace in this country, so that it will never again become a haven for international terrorism;
2. **Honouring** the more than 3,000 NATO and partner country forces who died as part of the effort to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan, and **recognising** the tens of billions of dollars contributed by those countries to rebuild and develop Afghanistan;
3. **Welcoming** the Alliance's decision at the 2018 Brussels Summit to maintain the *Resolute Support* Mission (RSM), which trains, advises, and assists the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) in their mission to protect the people and territory of Afghanistan;
4. **Concerned** by faltering progress in security sector reform in the country, which impedes ANDSF capacity and readiness and prolongs ANDSF dependence on external assistance;
5. **Worried** about increasing instability and a precipitous rise of civilian casualties due to the Taliban's intensified military efforts to seize more territory and maximise leverage at the negotiating table;
6. **Troubled** by the continued and escalating attacks by the international terrorist group, the ISIL-KP, also known as Daesh, in its effort to sow instability and jeopardise peace negotiations;
3. **Disappointed** the narcotics trade continues to flourish in the country, providing a key income source for the Taliban and other armed insurgent groups, fueling widespread institutional corruption, particularly in the security and justice sectors, and sustaining a nexus of destabilising criminal networks in the country, across the region, and globally;
4. **Encouraged** by the July 2019 Intra-Afghan Conference for Peace, which brought together a wide range of key stakeholders in Afghanistan and agreed on a formula for future inclusive negotiations;
9. **Urging** key parties to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan to strive for constructive and inclusive Intra-Afghan peace negotiations, in order to facilitate a settlement reflecting a shared understanding of Afghanistan's future;
10. **Concerned** by the impact of factional disagreements inside the National Assembly of Afghanistan on the execution of its duties, resulting in its increasing marginalisation by the executive branch in the policy-making process;
11. **Underlining** that only an independent, effective, accountable, and transparent justice sector can ensure the establishment of the rule of law, increase trust in the country's institutions, and mitigate corruption;
12. **Recalling** progress made in key areas to rebuild and strengthen Afghanistan since the fall of

the Taliban in 2001, including: improved access to running water, electricity, and medicine, increasing overall health indices; a stronger and more inclusive educational system; the incorporation of women into all sectors of society, particularly law enforcement and peace-building efforts; and a more diverse and growing economy;

13. **Encouraged** both by the significant advances made by Afghan women across all sectors of society and by the determination Afghan women have shown in seeking to preserve and safeguard those gains;

14. **Acknowledging**, however, that socioeconomic progress has been highly uneven across the country and that international financial support will remain vital to cover Afghanistan's continuing operational budgets and development programmes;

15. **Reaffirming** the commitment made by NATO member states to extend financial support for Afghan security forces through 2024 and **recognising** the vital role that this support and broader development assistance plays in developing the Afghan government and improving the lives of Afghans;

16. **URGES** member governments and parliaments of the North Atlantic Alliance and their partners contributing to international efforts in Afghanistan:

a. to continue to assist the ANDSF by enhancing the effectiveness of ongoing security assistance programmes to build a capable, self-sustaining, and professional military force working to create the conditions for enduring peace and stability in Afghanistan;

b. to maintain their security force assistance missions in Afghanistan until a peace agreement is reached to provide a necessary counterbalance to the ongoing efforts by insurgent groups to spoil a potential peace settlement, reconstruction efforts, and regional stability;

c. to fully support inclusive intra-Afghan peace negotiations and to help sustain a resulting peace agreement by providing long-term financial and technical assistance to major post-conflict challenges, such as the reintegration of former Taliban fighters into society, the promotion of economic growth, and the development of the Afghan National Police;

d. to support the Afghan parliament in its efforts to become an essential legislative body working for the broader good of the entire Afghan nation;

e. to do everything possible to ensure that Afghan women have seats at the table during peace negotiations and to support a final settlement that preserves the hard-won rights of Afghan women and girls;

17. **CALLS UPON** the government and National Assembly of Afghanistan:

a. to insist upon a peace settlement protecting the political, economic, and civil society achievements reached in Afghanistan since 2001, and to include the significant and enduring participation of women across all sectors of society in that settlement;

b. to stop factional infighting and respect the Afghan parliament's rightful role in the legislative process, and to accelerate broad-based institutional reforms to create the conditions necessary for legitimate and effective governance and the broad enforcement of the rule of law across the country.

* Presented by the Defence and Security Committee and adopted by the Plenary Assembly on Monday 14 October 2019, London, United Kingdom.

COMMENTS ON RESOLUTION 456

I welcome the views expressed in Resolution 456 and reiterate NATO's steadfast commitment to Afghanistan's long-term security and stability. Defence Ministers of countries contributing to the Resolute Support Mission reaffirmed this promise at the dedicated session on Afghanistan at NATO Headquarters on 25 October 2019. The Afghan government, in turn, reaffirmed their obligations to lead on security, peace and reform.

I honour the Allied and Partner servicemen and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice in their efforts to ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorism. I pay tribute to the Afghans who have lost their lives, limbs and homes in the senseless violence caused by the Taliban and other terrorist organizations.

NATO is proud of the courage and professionalism of the personnel from thirty-eight countries that are currently serving as part of the Resolute Support Mission. We work side by side with our Afghan partners who persevere, daily, to improve their country's security.

Over the past year, the security situation remained volatile but manageable for the Afghan security forces. The Afghan security forces were able to protect cities, secure the presidential elections and control or manage major roads while increasing offensive operations overall. The Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) and Afghan Air Force continued to demonstrate improvement with the ASSF increasing its number of independent, offensive operations. The Afghan government instituted a number of leadership changes in the security ministries to improve professional development in the Afghan security forces. Afghanistan's Ministries of Defence and Interior introduced reforms which allowed for the merit-based appointment of the next generation of Afghan officers to senior leadership positions.

NATO's Resolute Support Mission has supported implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda by helping facilitate Afghan women's integration into the security sector. We see the increasing participation of women in Afghanistan's ministries of defence and interior, and in the army and police, as a positive trend. Yet, setting the conditions for women to succeed in their jobs must remain the focus. This starts with changing perceptions and attitudes. It is coupled to providing opportunities for professional development such as Turkey's training programme for policewomen in Sivas.

Allies' agreement to extend financial sustainment of the Afghan forces through 2024 is conditional to the commitment made by the Afghan government to steadily increase its share of funding for the Afghan security sector. NATO's Afghan National Army Trust Fund is one of three funding mechanisms that finance Afghanistan's security roadmap. The roadmap aims to enhance national combat capabilities, counter corruption, develop new military leaders, and establish proper command and control arrangements among different elements of the Afghan security forces.

Afghanistan's presidential elections were held for the fourth time since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. Despite a number of high-profile attacks leading up to the elections, Afghans have shown immense courage in going to the ballots on 28 September 2019 and participating in the democratic process. The Afghan security forces were essential in securing the polling stations on the day.

I welcome peace talks in Afghanistan. The Taliban needs to make real compromises to achieve a credible deal. By maintaining support for a more professional and self-sustaining Afghan security sector, NATO is helping set the conditions for an inclusive and resilient political settlement.

I encourage regional actors to constructively contribute to the peace and stability of Afghanistan and its neighbourhood by fully supporting the intra-Afghan peace dialogue. Reducing external enablement of the insurgency is key to setting the conditions for a political settlement.

There is every reason to celebrate the improvements of almost two decades of transformation and development of Afghanistan. Millions of children are enrolled in schools; a national press has developed, vanguard for its openness in the region; the largest cohort of university students graduated across the country; skilled civil servants, women and men, are now in positions of leadership in the government; and Afghanistan's National Assembly has a higher percentage of female members of parliament than in many of our own countries. Afghans should take the credit for this transformation. NATO and the international community helped, and continue to help, catalyse this transformation.

RESOLUTION 457

on

NATO @ 70: CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF PEACE AND SECURITY*

The Assembly,

1. ***Underlining*** that NATO has advanced peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area for more than 70 years and ***reaffirming*** that the Alliance remains the cornerstone of transatlantic security;
2. ***Stressing*** that its unique strength lies in Europe and North America's commitment to ensure each other's security, and ***reaffirming*** that all Allies are committed to the fundamental principle, enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, that an attack against one Ally is considered as an attack against all Allies;
3. ***Acknowledging*** that threats such as extreme nationalism and polarised societies challenge the Alliance from within;
4. ***Welcoming*** the meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government in London in December 2019 to celebrate NATO's anniversary as an opportunity to ensure that the Alliance is prepared for future security challenges;
5. ***Noting*** that NATO continues to be the most successful security organisation because it has been credible and that that credibility is based on NATO's military capabilities and a common unity of purpose;
6. ***Emphasising*** that NATO's success is also due to its adherence to common values: a commitment to democracy, individual liberty, human rights, and the rule of law;
7. ***Welcoming*** the tangible progress on Allied defence spending and military equipment modernisation following the Defence Investment Pledge made at the 2014 Wales Summit, but also ***noting*** that the relative imbalance in defence spending and military capabilities within NATO remains to be addressed;
8. ***Convinced*** that the prospect of further enlargement and the spirit of cooperative security promote stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic region and ***reaffirming*** its commitment to, and support for, NATO's Open Door policy;
9. ***Stressing*** the crucial contribution of NATO partnerships, such as the Mediterranean Dialogue, to security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area, the MENA region and beyond;

10. **Applauding** the important steps taken to strengthen NATO-EU cooperation, and **recognizing** the strategic potential that could be realised by further exploiting their complementary capabilities;
11. **Recognising** that Russia's aggressive stance and actions and continued instability on NATO's southern flank challenge the security of NATO member and partner countries and pose new security threats, including in the cyber domain;
12. **Aware** that global trends such as shifts in economic and military power, demographics, and rapidly developing technologies require NATO to continuously revisit its strategic outlook;
13. **URGES** member governments and parliaments of the North Atlantic Alliance:
 - a. to update the Strategic Concept to reflect the new security environment, in particular with regard to cyber and hybrid threats, the aggressive behaviour of Russia, the growing prominence of China, the threats to the Alliance's southern flank due to the persistence of Islamist terrorist groups and the fragility of some state structures in that region;
 - b. to continue and reinforce efforts to implement the Defence Investment Pledge as fair sharing of the defence burden is crucial for Alliance cohesion and necessary to rebuild and maintain the military capabilities to deter and defend against potential adversaries;
 - c. to rededicate the Alliance to the shared democratic values that constitute its founding principles by developing democracy resiliency programmes in member states and by considering the creation of a Democratic Resiliency Coordination Centre (DRCC) within NATO's institutional structure in order to help NATO member states strengthen democratic institutions;
 - d. to ensure adequate support to relevant Centres of Excellence, particularly the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence and the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, in order to support democracy resilience programmes in member states;
 - e. to develop the NATO-EU relationship further, particularly in the fields of cyber defence and military mobility;
 - f. to continue supporting its partners in the East – Ukraine and Georgia in particular – against Russian interference, and to maintain, and if possible increase, assistance for their reform processes, especially for those countries aspiring to integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures (currently Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia and Ukraine);
 - g. to continue to develop political and practical cooperation with NATO partners, including the United Nations, the African Union, the Arab League, and the Gulf Cooperation Council;
 - h. to work towards opening up more partnerships with Latin American countries, following the example of Colombia, to strengthen the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area and to promote our shared commitment to democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and individual liberty.

* Presented by the Political Committee and adopted by the Plenary Assembly on Monday 14 October 2019, London, United Kingdom.

COMMENTS ON RESOLUTION 457

I welcome the strong support for NATO expressed in the Assembly's Resolution 457. NATO Leaders expressed similar strong support for the Alliance at their meeting in London in December 2019, and unity in particular on 3 points: First, an ironclad commitment to Article 5 collective defence; Second, the need to make further progress on burden sharing, and; Third, that NATO must and will continue to adapt, militarily and politically.

Like the Assembly, Leaders also stressed NATO's unique role as a political-military alliance – and that its military punch depends on the effectiveness of its political debate. Hence they agreed to initiate a forward-looking reflection process, not to question the purpose or fundamentals of NATO, but to further strengthen the Alliance's role as the only transatlantic forum for political consultation and decisions among Allies.

I welcome the call in Resolution 457 to develop the NATO-European Union relationship further. The EU remains a unique and essential partner for NATO, and there has been unprecedented progress in implementing the 74 proposals for NATO-EU cooperation agreed between our two organisations.

On military mobility, we have achieved coherence between the EU and NATO sets of military requirements, and have launched a Structured Dialogue on Military Mobility bringing together key stakeholders from both organizations. In the field of cyber defence, active interaction continues between staffs, notably with exchanges on concepts and doctrines and reciprocal participation in cyber exercises.

As Leaders also stated in London, NATO works to increase security for all. We have strengthened partnerships in our neighbourhood and beyond, deepening political dialogue, support, and engagement with partner countries and international organisations. NATO's partnerships are, and will continue to be, essential to the way NATO works, making a strategic contribution to Alliance and broader international security.

RESOLUTION 458

on

TACKLING SECURITY CHALLENGES FROM AFRICA*

The Assembly,

1. **Emphasising** that security on NATO's southern flank is closely intertwined with the stability of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which is itself heavily impacted by the volatility of the countries further south;
2. **Deeply concerned** about the deteriorating security situation in Libya caused by jihadists and the strengthening of Russian military support to Libyan militia leaders, which escalates insecurity and chaos and leads to further destabilisation;
3. **Recognising** that the interplay between corruption, weak institutions, radicalisation, terrorism, and illicit trafficking of arms, drugs, and people causes endemic insecurity in large parts of the continent;
4. **Recognising** that the expansion of militant Islamist groups beyond the Sahel region creates a belt of violent extremism in Africa;
5. **Welcoming** the decrease in irregular migration over the Mediterranean but **acknowledging** that the underlying causes driving migration have not yet been addressed;
6. **Noting** that NATO has recently been putting greater emphasis on challenges emanating from Africa and that the Framework for the South seeks to integrate and streamline NATO's approach to its southern neighbours;
7. **Applauding** the creation of the NATO Hub for the South in Naples, as it increases awareness of security not only in the MENA region but also in the areas south of it;
8. **Recognising** that NATO's approach to the South focuses on three pillars:
 - a) strengthening NATO's deterrence and defence against threats from the South,
 - b) contributing to international crisis management efforts in the region, and
 - c) helping regional partners build resilience against security threats such as terrorism;
9. **Underlining** the need for enhanced cooperation between NATO, the EU and the African Union (AU) to provide in-depth support to countries in Africa and the Middle East interested in comprehensive political and economic reform programmes;
10. **URGES** member governments and parliaments of the North Atlantic Alliance and NATO partners:
 - a. to improve situational awareness, by enhancing early-warning capabilities to monitor instability and security in Africa e.g. through improved intelligence sharing among Allies and partner countries at the Hub for the South and through greater coordination with the early-warning mechanism within the EU, in order to create a new NATO-EU cooperation area thus enhancing NATO's capabilities to monitor potential threats
 - b. to engage in capacity-building efforts, dialogue and information exchange, and training of security forces in the Sahel region to prevent regional terrorist movements from merging with similar groups, thereby creating an immediate threat to the security of NATO Allies, some of which are already taking action to provide an adequate response, including when their links with the continent

are more recent than those of the Allies with an established presence;

c. to strengthen assistance to partner countries of the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) in the development of adequate counterterrorism strategies that foster interethnic reconciliation and an inclusive political process;

d. to explore the potential that member countries such as Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece could offer for reinforcing security in Africa thanks to their privileged geographical position as a bridge between Europe and the African continent;

e. to explore options for a shared EU-NATO approach on promoting stability in Africa and the MENA region so that both organisations can pursue common objectives, identify necessary means and mutually reinforce the respective efforts of each other;

f. to further develop NATO's fledgling relationship with African actors, particularly the African Union;

g. to further develop the Alliance's cooperation with the AU on security- and politics-related topics, such as the operationalisation of the African Standby Forces (ASF) and the promotion of good governance through the expansion of NATO's Building Integrity Programmes;

h. to consider expanding NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) Programme to Sub-Saharan African states interested in formalising their cooperation with the Alliance on political and security-related issues in a manner which complements other missions engaged in stabilisation processes, including the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel.

* Presented by the Political Committee and adopted by the Plenary Assembly on Monday 14 October 2019, London, United Kingdom.

COMMENTS ON RESOLUTION 458

Building on the strong partnerships built over the years with Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) countries, NATO Allies are engaged in a range of activities to promote long-term peace, security and stability across the Middle East and North Africa region. Allies are also keeping a close eye on developments in the Sahel region and Sub-Saharan Africa and their possible implications for Allied security.

The implementation of Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programmes with MD and ICI countries has enabled us to tailor dialogue and cooperation to our partners' changing security needs and priorities. Our practical cooperation has steadily increased, helping our partners to further develop their defence capabilities in key priority areas such as counter-terrorism; small arms and light weapons; counter-IED training; cyber defence; mine detection; enhanced explosive remnants of war detection; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence; and civil emergency planning and crisis management.

In 2019, regional partners' have continued to actively participate in NATO's education and training activities in NATO schools and institutions. In-country training has also taken place with 37 mobile training teams in MD countries and 17 in ICI countries. MD and ICI countries' participation in NATO exercises has helped the modernization of their armed forces and their interoperability with NATO.

NATO's Defence Capacity Building Initiative has become a key tool to strengthen the defence capabilities of our regional partners, including Jordan and Tunisia. Defence capacity building in partner countries has also been identified as a key area for cooperation between NATO and the European Union. Our two organisations work in full complementarity in several areas, including good governance and education and training.

NATO's Hub for the South in Naples is contributing to the Alliance's situational awareness and understanding of regional challenges, threats and opportunities. It is supporting the collection, management, and sharing of information, and is contributing to coordinating NATO's activities in the South.

I share the Assembly's concerns about the deteriorating security situation in Libya. I fully support the efforts of the United Nations Special Representative for Libya aimed at reaching a political solution to the crisis. NATO remains committed to provide advice to Libya in the area of defence and security institution building, taking into account the political and security situation.

NATO and all NATO Allies take part in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. NATO's mission in Iraq is an important contribution to the Coalition's effort. At the invitation of the Iraqi government, we are helping to train forces and prevent the return of ISIS. Following developments on the ground and ensuing tensions across the Middle East at the beginning of 2020, Allies suspended our training on the ground and took all precautions necessary to protect our people.

The NATO-ICI Regional Centre in Kuwait is a hub for training and cooperation between NATO and its ICI partners, as well as Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Since its inauguration in 2017, the centre has hosted some 1000 participants from

ICI and GCC countries, as well as more than 200 experts from NATO nations. The purpose of the centre is to promote the exchange of expertise among professionals in the defence and security sector and improve interoperability between NATO and its partners in the region. Its activities have included cyber defence; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence and crisis management; maritime security; energy security; political dialogue; public diplomacy; and military-to-military cooperation.

NATO's practical cooperation with the African Union continues, including in assisting the operationalization of the African Stand-by Force, and through building integrity discussions. An updated AU-NATO agreement was signed in November to enable expanded practical cooperation as well as a more robust political dialogue.

NATO's partnerships are demand driven. Therefore, it is up to Sub-Saharan African states to take the initiative in approaching NATO. Recently, the Republic of Ghana expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of developing partnership relations with the Alliance.

RESOLUTION 459

on

STRENGTHENING NATO CYBER SECURITY, DEFENCE AND DETERRENCE*

The Assembly,

1. **Recognising** the increasingly complex international cyber threat landscape;
2. **Increasingly facing** persistent cyber campaigns falling below the threshold of armed conflict and **acknowledging** an important role for the Alliance in countering them;
3. **Remaining vigilant** regarding increasing cyber threats from terrorist and extremist groups;
4. **Underlining** that cyber attacks by states or their proxies present the biggest cyber threat to NATO;
5. **Stressing** that cyber attacks can threaten national and Euro-Atlantic prosperity, security, and stability and could, thus, lead to the invocation of the collective defence clause (Article 5) of the NATO's founding treaty;
6. **Underscoring** that Allies have an individual responsibility to maintain and develop both individual and collective capacity to resist cyber attacks, but **highlighting** NATO's crucial support role;
7. **Emphasising** NATO's defensive mandate, its continued adherence to international law, and the principle of strong political oversight of military operations;
8. **Recalling** the need to operate and defend in cyber space as effectively as in other military domains;
9. **Lauding** recent Allied and NATO progress on strengthening cyber security, defence, and deterrence;
10. **Recalling** the difficulty of attributing cyber attacks and **stressing** the danger of escalation and the need for states to decide on appropriate responses;
11. **URGES** member governments and parliaments of the North Atlantic Alliance:
 - a. to fulfil their national cyber commitments under the NATO Defence Planning Process and the NATO Cyber Defence Pledge;
 - b. to adopt a NATO cyber space doctrine by the end of 2019

Cyber Security and Defence

- c. to redouble their efforts on:
 - i. cyber capability development
 - ii. cyber defence expenditures;
 - iii. adaptation of Allied and NATO structures;
 - iv. integration of cyber effects into military operations;
 - v. refinement of cyber strategies and policies at the national and NATO levels;

- vi. cooperation and exchange of best practices;
- vii. situational awareness, information sharing, and assessment;
- viii. enhancement of skills and awareness across all national and NATO stakeholder communities;
- ix. fostering education, training and exercises;
- x. strengthening effective cyber partnerships with industry, academia, partner nations, and other international organisations, especially the EU as part of the NATO-EU Strategic Partnership;
- d. to strongly consider making defensive and offensive cyber effects available for NATO operations on a voluntary basis, if not already committed to do so;

Cyber Deterrence

- e. to continue to signal their resolve and credibility to deter cyber attacks;
- f. to maintain a cyber deterrence policy of ambiguity concerning the threshold at which a cyber attack is considered an armed attack and possible collective responses if that threshold is crossed;
- g. to continue to seek to reduce escalatory risks through clear diplomatic messaging and engagement, a high level of transparency on cyber capabilities and policies, and support to norm-development and confidence-building measures in cyber space;

Persistent Cyber Campaigns

- h. to recognise the long-term strategic risk constituted by persistent cyber campaigns and intensify consultations within the Alliance and with partners with membership aspirations;
- j. to counter persistent cyber campaigns with the right mix of security, defence, and deterrence, including increased civil preparedness and resilience;
- k. to attribute malicious cyber operations, when feasible, in a timely and coordinated fashion while respecting the sovereignty of governments; and
- m. to continue to refine their strategies for countering hybrid threats.

* Presented by the Science and Technology Committee and adopted by the Plenary Assembly on Monday 14 October 2019, London, United Kingdom.

COMMENTS ON RESOLUTION 459

I welcome Resolution 459 and the Assembly's attention to the improvement of Allied and NATO cyber defences. Significant work is underway to tackle cyber threats by increasing NATO's capacity as a collective defence organization; building resilience and capability across the Alliance; and working with our partners.

Allies stated clearly at the 2014 Wales NATO Summit that a cyber attack could lead to the invocation of Article 5, and hence cyber defence now is part of NATO's core task of collective defence. The 2016 Warsaw NATO Summit declared cyberspace as a domain of operations in which NATO must defend itself as effectively as it does in the air, on land, and at sea. Neither of these decisions alter NATO's defensive mandate or its commitment to act in accordance with international law.

At the 2018 Brussels NATO Summit, Allies agreed to establish a new Cyberspace Operations Centre, which will coordinate NATO's operational activity in cyberspace, build situational awareness, and integrate cyber aspects into NATO's planning at all levels. Allies also agreed how to integrate voluntary sovereign cyber effects into Alliance Operations and Missions, and to date nine Allies have publicly offered to use their capabilities in this context. Further, while recognizing that attribution is a sovereign national prerogative, Allies declared that individual Allies may consider, when appropriate, attributing malicious cyber activity and responding in a coordinated manner. Allies also affirmed their determination to counter the full spectrum of cyber threats, including those conducted as part of a hybrid campaign.

In February 2019, Allies agreed a NATO Guide that sets out strategic response options to significant malicious cyber activities. These response options focus on situational awareness, resilience, communications, and partnerships, and are designed to enable timely decision-making and action. NATO is an important platform for exchanging information, including on individual and collective responses by Allies.

In addition to these strategic and organizational changes, NATO must continue to improve its technical defenses. While we have extended and improved protection of our networks, cyber threats to the security of the Alliance are still becoming more frequent, complex, destructive, and coercive.

In the face of this challenging threat landscape, the capability and resilience of all Allies must be further strengthened. The Cyber Defence Pledge taken at the 2016 Warsaw NATO Summit commits Allies to continue to enhance the cyber defences of national networks and infrastructures as a matter of priority. In each of the past three years, Allies have assessed their own cyber programmes and reported on progress. The Pledge has helped drive senior political attention and investment in cyber defence, and to facilitate the sharing of national best practices. All Allies have made progress, but we must continue to advance: challenges remain in appropriately resourcing cyber defence and finding sufficient numbers of trained personnel. NATO will continue to serve as an impetus for improvement and forum for discussion on cyber defence issues.

Cyber defence concerns reach beyond NATO and its Allies -- to industry, academia, partner nations, and international organizations. We are stronger and better prepared when working together, and so we are always striving for closer cooperation with our partners to strengthen our cyber defence.

Through the NATO Industry Cyber Partnership, we are strengthening our collaboration with industry and academia on such critical topics as innovation. We also continue to engage closely with the European Union on cyber issues at both a technical and policy level. Focus areas are as diverse as integrating cyber into crisis management procedures, developing skills of cyber defenders, and the security of next generation communication networks.

The 2019 edition of 'Cyber Coalition' -- NATO's annual flagship cyber exercise and one of the largest in the world -- included a broad range of partners, including Ukraine, Georgia, Switzerland, Finland, Ireland, Sweden, and the European Union

Finally, while NATO itself does not set norms, it supports the work being undertaken in other fora such as the UN and the OSCE on confidence building measures and norms of responsible state behaviour. Allies have underscored the importance of prioritizing the implementation of such measures, including as part of current UN processes focusing on cyber stability between states.

Cyber defence is and will remain a top priority for NATO. Both NATO as an organization and Allies individually are taking important steps to build our defences, develop our capability and resilience, and strengthen our partnerships. Continued parliamentary support will be critical to the success of these efforts.
