



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

NATO FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING, 2 APRIL 2020

Policy Brief

077 SPE 20 E | Original: English | 6 April 2020

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NATO FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING, 2 APRIL 2020: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Top of the agenda: NATO's **response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

NATO Foreign Ministers agreed to:

- reinforce NATO's **response to the COVID-19 pandemic**;
- launch the **Reflection Process** to further strengthen NATO's political role;
- expand **activities in the NATO Training Mission – Iraq** (training and education);
- enhance **partnerships with Georgia and Ukraine** (exercises, countering hybrid threats, situational awareness); and
- strengthen **cooperation with the United Nations** (peacekeeper training).

Notable points:

- NATO remains **fully focused and ready on core tasks**: "*NATO's core responsibility is to make sure that this health crisis doesn't become a security crisis*" (Jens Stoltenberg).
- Ministers discussed next steps to support stability in the **Middle East and North Africa**.
- Troop reductions in **Afghanistan** will remain conditions based, Jens Stoltenberg stressed.
- This was the first ministerial meeting with **North Macedonia** as an Ally.
- This was the first-ever meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers via video conference.

Next steps:

- **A special Defence Ministers' Meeting** will take place in mid-April to review decisions and decide on further possible efforts in **response to the COVID-19 pandemic**.

I. NATO'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Faced with an unprecedented health crisis, ministers reviewed **actions already taken**, discussed **further requests** for support, and took **next steps**. They also issued a [Joint Declaration](#).
- NATO's initial and main focus has been on preventing contamination among NATO staff and military personnel and ensuring **business and operational continuity**:
- NATO remains fully **focused on and ready to perform its core tasks** (collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security). In the words of the NATO Secretary General, "*NATO's core responsibility is to make sure that this health crisis doesn't become a security crisis*".
- Even though some military activities have been affected, NATO military medical staff remain vigilant, and NATO is monitoring the impact for troops deployed on operations.
- Allies are also working together in:
 - providing each other with **medical professionals, hospital beds, and medical equipment** including through the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre;
 - providing, coordinating, or facilitating **military airlift** for delivering medical equipment from within and outside NATO;
 - harnessing **medical, scientific, and technological knowledge and resources**; and
 - ensuring public access to information about COVID-19, which is transparent, timely, and accurate, to **counter disinformation and propaganda efforts** during the crisis.
- For more information and concrete example of bilateral and NATO assistance to Allies, see the NATO factsheet [NATO's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).
- Ministers decided on the following next steps:
 - NATO SACEUR General Tod D. Wolters will **coordinate the necessary military support** in the COVID-19 crisis and **facilitate military flights through European airspace**.

- NATO will, for example, identify the **necessary airlift capacity, coordinate on surplus capacity or stocks, better match requests** for support with offers from Allies and partners.
- NATO will organise a **special Defence Ministers' Meeting** in mid-April to review decisions and decide on further possible efforts.
- NATO will examine the **medium- and long-term implications** of the health crisis, for example on **resilience, civil preparedness, and the geostrategic environment**.

II. REFLECTION PROCESS

- Ministers launched the **Reflection Process** to further strengthen NATO's political role.
- The process will lead to recommendations on how to **reinforce Alliance unity, increase political consultation and coordination, and strengthen NATO's political role**.
- The NATO Secretary General chose 5 women and 5 men for a **Group of Experts** among nominations from Allies (see appendix 1). Experts do not represent their countries, however.
- **Thomas de Maizière** (Germany) and **Wess Mitchell** (United States) co-chair the Group.
- The Group will engage with capitals, the North Atlantic Council, and other relevant stakeholders and **report back to the Secretary General**.
- The NATO Secretary General will then deliver his own recommendations to Allies **before the 2021 NATO Summit** (Dates TBD).
- This process is similar to the one used for the elaboration of the 2010 Strategic Concept, which involved a group of experts led by Madeleine Albright.

THE NATO PA & THE REFLECTION PROCESS

- The **NATO PA is a key stakeholder**, as the NATO Secretary General made clear during the joint meeting of the North Atlantic Council-NATO PA in February.
- After consultations with the Bureau, the NATO PA Secretary General will deliver **a roadmap for the NATO PA contribution to the Reflection Process**.

III. PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

- Ministers discussed next steps in **counter terrorism efforts, building stability, and strengthening partnerships** in the Middle East and North Africa.
- Among the options are further **defence reforms and capacity building, NATO-led counter-terrorism exercises, and deeper partnerships** (for example with the African Union).

IV. NATO MISSION IN IRAQ

- Ministers decided to take on **additional activities under the NATO Mission in Iraq** to strengthen Iraqi forces and prevent the return of Daesh and other terrorist groups.
- These activities are currently conducted under the auspices of the Global Coalition and include **training and the education** of non-commissioned officers, engineers, and federal police.
- The Iraqi authorities, the Global Coalition, and NATO are **in full consultations** on this transfer.

V. AFGHANISTAN

- Ministers discussed the state of affairs in Afghanistan.
- The NATO Secretary General welcomed efforts to set up an inclusive team for the **inter-Afghan negotiations**.

- He called on the Taliban and all political actors to play their part, including a reduction in violence.
- As part of the 29 February deal between the United States and the Taliban, NATO will reduce its troop presence from the current 16,000 to **12,000 personnel by mid-2020**.
- No further reduction was agreed. All further steps will remain **conditions based**.

VI. SUPPORT FOR GEORGIA AND UKRAINE

- The meeting planned with Foreign Ministers of Georgia and Ukraine could not take place.
- However, Ministers agreed to enhance NATO's **partnerships with Georgia and Ukraine**.
- NATO will increase **exercises** with these countries in the black sea region, reinforce joint efforts to **counter hybrid warfare**, and share more **air traffic radar data** with them.

VII. DEEPENING PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

- The Alliance strengthened cooperation with the **United Nations (UN)**.
- A new package of measures will **support un peacekeeper training** in the areas of medical care, countering improvised explosive devices, and communications.

APPENDIX 1: BIOGRAPHIES OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS IN SUPPORT OF THE NATO SECRETARY GENERAL'S REFLECTION PROCESS

CO-CHAIRPERSONS

THOMAS DE MAIZIÈRE (GERMANY)

Current positions:

- Member of the Federal Parliament (since 2009), Germany
- Chairman of Deutsche Telekom Stiftung, Germany
- Honorary Professor, Constitutional Law, University of Leipzig, Germany

Recent career highlights:

- Minister of the Interior, Germany
- Minister of Defence, Germany
- Deputy President of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (*Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*), Germany
- Chief of Staff, Federal Chancellor's Office, Germany
- Minister of the Interior of Saxony, Germany
- Minister of Justice of Saxony, Germany
- Minister of Finance of Saxony, Germany

Education:

- PhD in Law, University of Münster, Germany
- BA in Law and History from the University of Münster & University of Freiburg, Germany

WESS MITCHELL (UNITED STATES)

Current positions:

- Vice Chairman, Center for European Policy Analysis, United States
- Senior Advisor, US Institute of Peace, United States
- Non-Resident Fellow, Applied History Project, Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, United States

Recent career highlights:

- Assistant Secretary, European and Eurasian Affairs, Department of State, United States
- Chairman, Europe Working Group, John Hay Initiative, United States
- Adviser to the National Security Transition Team for the Mitt Romney Presidential Campaign, United States
- Co-Founder, Center for European Policy Analysis, United States
- Research Associate, National Center for Policy Analysis, United States

Education:

- PhD in Political Science, Otto Suhr Institute of Political Sciences, at Free University of Berlin, Germany

- MA from the Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, United States
- BA in History from Texas Tech University

OTHER MEMBERS

GRETA BOSSENMAIER (CANADA)

Current position:

- retired from the Civil Service of Canada

Recent career highlights:

- National Security and Intelligence Adviser to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Canada
- Chief, Communications Security Establishment, Government of Canada
- Senior Associate Deputy Minister, International Development, Government of Canada
- Deputy Minister, Afghanistan Task Force, Privy Council Office, Government of Canada
- Associate Deputy Minister, Foreign Affairs, Government of Canada
- Executive Vice-President, Canada Border Services Agency, Government of Canada
- Vice-President, Innovation, Science and Technology, Canada Border Services Agency, Government of Canada
- Chief Information Officer and Director General, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Government of Canada

Education:

- Master of Science, Operational Research, School of Engineering, Stanford University
 - Bachelor of Commerce, Faculty of Management, University of Manitoba
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ANJA DALGAARD-NIELSEN (DENMARK)

Current positions:

- Director, Institute for Strategy, Royal Danish Defence College, Denmark
- Professor, Centre for Risk Management and Societal Safety, University of Stavanger, Norway
- Consulting Scholar/Affiliate, Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC), Stanford University, United States

Recent career highlights:

- Board-level Director, Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), Denmark
- Head of Research Unit, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Denmark
- Senior Researcher/Researcher, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Denmark

Education:

- PhD from Johns Hopkins University SAIS, United States
 - MA in Political Science from the University of Aarhus, Denmark
 - MA in Public Management and Governance from Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
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HUBERT VÉDRINE (FRANCE)Current positions:

- Founder, Hubert Védrine Conseil, France
- President of the François Mitterrand Institute, France
- Member of the Board of Directors, LVMH, France
- Member of the Board of Directors, French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs (IRIS), France

Recent career highlights:

- Author of the 2012 *Report for the President of the French Republic on the Consequences of France's Return TO NATO's Integrated Military Command, on the Future of Transatlantic Relations, and the Outlook for the Europe of Defence*
- Minister of Foreign Affairs, France

Education:

- National School of Administration (*Ecole Nationale d'Administration*), France
 - BA in History from the Paris Institute of Political Studies (*SciencesPo*), France
-

MARTA DASSÙ (ITALY)Current positions:

- Senior Director, European Affairs, The Aspen Institute, Italy
- Member of the Board of Directors, Finmeccanica, Italy
- Member of the Board of Directors, Trevi Finanziaria, Italy
- Member of the Board of Directors, Fondazione eni Enrico Mattei, Italy
- Member of the Board of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)
- Vice President, The Centre for American Studies in Rome, Italy
- Member of Advisory Council, European Institute of Peace (EIP), Belgium
- Member of Strategic Council, European Policy Centre (EPC), Belgium
- Member of the Board, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), UK
- Member of Board of Directors, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Italy
- Member of the Scientific Committee, LUISS School of Government, Italy

Recent career highlights:

- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Italy

Education:

- Contemporary History at the Università degli Studi di Firenze, Italy
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HERNA VERHAGEN (THE NETHERLANDS)Current positions:

- CEO, PostNL, The Netherlands

- Chairman, Remuneration Committee & member, Nomination and Corporate Governance Committee, ING, The Netherlands,
- Non-executive board member & chairwoman of the nomination committee of Rexel, The Netherlands
- Supervisory board member of Goldschmeding Foundation, The Netherlands
- Supervisory board member, member of the nomination committee & member of the funding committee, Het Concertgebouw, The Netherlands
- Board member, VNO-NCW, The Netherlands

Recent career highlights:

- Vice Chairman-Supervisory Board, SRH, The Netherlands
- Director, PostNL, The Netherlands
- Member of Management Board, PostNL, The Netherlands
- Managing Director, TNT Post, The Netherlands
- Managing Director of HR, TNT Post, The Netherlands

Education:

- MA in Law from Nijmegen University, The Netherlands
- MA in Human Resources from Tilburg University, The Netherlands

ANNA ELZBIETA FOTYGA (POLAND)

Current positions:

- Member of the European Parliament (Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs & its Subcommittee on Security and Defence of the European Parliament)
- Member of the Delegation of the European Parliament to the NATO PA

Recent career highlights:

- Chair, Subcommittee on Security and Defence, the European Parliament, Belgium
- Member of the Delegation of Poland to the NATO PA
- Chief, Chancellery of the President, Poland
- Minister of Foreign Affairs, Poland
- Deputy Mayor, Gdansk, Poland
- Foreign Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister, Poland

Education:

- University of Gdansk, Poland
- Danish School of Public Administration, Denmark

TACAN ILDEM (TURKEY)

Current positions:

- Retired Ambassador, Turkey

Recent career highlights :

- Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy, NATO, Belgium

- Permanent Representative of Turkey to the OSCE, Austria
- Director General for International Security Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey
- Turkey's Permanent Representative to NATO, Belgium
- Ambassador of Turkey to the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Chief of Cabinet and Principal Foreign Policy Advisor to the President of the Republic of Turkey

Education:

- Political Science Faculty, Ankara University
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JOHN BEW (UK)

Current positions:

- Professor in History and Foreign Policy, War Studies Department, King's College London, UK
- Number 10 Policy Unit (for the Prime Minister), UK

Recent career highlights:

- Henry A. Kissinger Chair in Foreign Policy, John W. Kluge Center, US Library of Congress, United States
- Co-Director, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, King's College London, UK
- Lecturer, Modern British History, Harris Fellow and Director of Studies at Peterhouse, Cambridge University, UK

Education:

- PhD, Pembroke College, Cambridge, UK
 - MPhil in Historical Studies, Pembroke College, Cambridge, UK
 - BA in History, Pembroke College, Cambridge, UK
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