

**PRESS CONFERENCE BY NATO SECRETARY GENERAL JENS
STOLTENBERG AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE BRUSSELS
SUMMIT**

12 July 2018

Good afternoon.

We have had a very good summit.

Over the past two days, we have taken major decisions to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defence.

To step up in the fight against terrorism.

And to ensure fair burden-sharing among all Allies.

I told you earlier this week that I expected frank discussions on burden-sharing.

And that's exactly what we had.

That is what we do among friends and Allies.

All Allies have heard President Trump's message loud and clear.

We understand that this American president is very serious about defence spending.

And this is having a clear impact.

After years of decline, when Allies were cutting billions,
now they are adding billions.

Before, the trend was down.

Now, the trend is up.

In fact, since President Trump took office, European Allies and Canada have added an additional 41 billion dollars to their defence spending.

And all Allies have committed to raise this number substantially.

So we are stepping up as never before.

Allowing US spending to go down.

There is a new sense of urgency due to President Trump's strong leadership on defence spending.

Today, all Allies agreed to redouble their efforts.

And this will make NATO stronger.

All Allies are committed to NATO.

And that was very clear from all the 29 leaders around the table today.

Because NATO is good for Europe.
And it is good for North America.
Two World Wars and a Cold War have shown us that we are stronger together than apart.

The only time NATO invoked our collective defence clause, article 5, was after the 9/11 attacks on the United States.

As a result, hundreds of thousands of European and Canadian soldiers have stood shoulder to shoulder with America in Afghanistan.

Over a thousand have paid the ultimate price.

Moreover, the US presence in Europe is vital for the projection of US power to Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

To prevent turmoil there from reaching our shores.

And European forces, infrastructure and intelligence also help to protect the US, as we all face a more assertive Russia.

In short, NATO is a force multiplier for the US.

And despite our differences, we are doing more together for our security.

At this Summit, we decided:

to raise the readiness of our forces;

to increase our ability to move them across the Atlantic and within Europe;

to modernise our command structure;

and to set up a new cyber operations centre and counter-hybrid support teams.

We also decided to boost NATO's contribution to the fight against terrorism.

With a new training mission in Iraq;

more support for Jordan and Tunisia;

a fully operational Hub for the South;

and a package of additional measures for the south.

And we made clear NATO's door remains open by inviting the government in Skopje to start accession talks.

Today, we also decided to sustain our presence in Afghanistan until conditions indicate a change is appropriate.

And we extended our financing for Afghan security forces through 2024.

This will help them further develop their Special Forces and Air Force, as they continue to fight international terrorism.

We also expressed strong support for President Ghani's bold peace proposal.
And our continued commitment will strengthen Afghanistan in its efforts to create the conditions for lasting peace and reconciliation.

We also met with the Presidents of Georgia and Ukraine.

Together we discussed shared concerns.
Including Russia's threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Today, we agreed to continue working together to prepare Georgia for NATO membership.
And to step up our support in areas like crisis management, and training and exercises.
We recognise the significant progress on reforms which Georgia has made.
And we appreciate Georgia's major contributions to our mission in Afghanistan.

We stand by our earlier decisions in light of Ukraine's aspirations to join the Alliance.

We look forward to further progress in Ukraine's reforms.
And we'll continue to extend political and practical support as the country faces an active conflict.

Last night, we discussed major global security challenges.
Together with the Presidents of the European Council and Commission,
and our colleagues from Finland and Sweden.
We addressed the challenges from the Middle East and North Africa.
The situation on the Korean Peninsula.
And a more assertive Russia.

NATO remains committed to our dual-track approach to Russia: defence and dialogue.
We continue to aspire to a constructive relationship.
When Russia's actions make that possible.

NATO embodies the vital bond between Europe and North America.
Our Alliance guarantees our security, our freedom, and the values we share.
Including our commitment to defend each other.

Our decisions at the Brussels Summit show that, as the world changes, Europe and North America stand together and act together in NATO.

With that, I am ready to take your questions.

Oana Lungescu: Okay we go to Reuters in the front row here?

Reuters: Secretary General, President Trump has called on NATO allies to raise spending to 2% or the US will go it alone, how do you respond to that?

Jens Stoltenberg: We had a very frank and open discussion on burden sharing both yesterday and today and actually, I think that discussion has made NATO stronger. It has created a new sense of urgency when it comes to the importance of investing more in defence and new money has come in. Because since President Trump was in Brussels last time, the last summit last spring, allies have added \$41 billion extra for defence spending. So we are committed. I think that the fact that we had this open discussion has also clearly stated that we will re-double our efforts and it also shows that the clear message from President Trump is having an impact.

Oana Lungescu: Okay we go to Washington Post and the gentleman with glasses?

Washington Post: We had a question from Reuters just now about Trump's rhetoric, some officials after the first session this morning appeared concerned that Trump could pull the US back from the summit declaration, kind of a repeat of what happened at the Group of Seven summit last month. What is the effect on deterrence against Russia and other NATO rivals when it's so clear that there are divisions within the alliance? And can I also ask Trump at his press conference this morning said that you would be announcing or NATO would be announcing some specific new commitments from NATO allies on spending. Could we have some clarity about what was actually committed to this morning in those sessions? Thank you

Jens Stoltenberg: The fact that there are different views and differences between allies is not a problem as long as we are able to conclude and make decisions and that's exactly what we do now. Yes when we arrived yesterday we saw differences. And it has been an open discussion. But we also made decisions, we have arrived on conclusions and I really feel that NATO is more united now than before the summit. Because we had this very open and frank discussion also without pre-written manuscripts. And by having that I think we all developed a better common understanding of the challenges, the urgency of spending more and allies committed to spending and to investing in our shared security. And I think that what the President referred to was that I was going to announce or share with you the specific numbers when it comes to the new money which has come in since he took office. And if you look at the press release we issued yesterday. I think it is Table 2. Then you will see the numbers for the different nations and based on that you can summarise and then you will see that the total number is \$41 billion in constant prices. So actually in running our current prices is even more. And \$41 billion extra money is substantial but allies agree that we need further substantial increase.

Oana Lungescu: NPR/Deutsche Welle. Lady over there? No lady behind? Thank you

Terri Schultz: Hi Terri Schultz, thank you very much. NATO solidarity is not only about funding. It's also about trust. And can you really say after this meeting that the European allies have as much trust that the United States would come to their defence if necessary as they might have before these threats to go alone. And also on the urgency. Why would it take the United States to make allies feel that the funding is needed more urgently? I mean the point is to do it for their own militaries. Why did it take this kind of a push from the United States to make them understand that that was necessary?

Jens Stoltenberg: There are in a way two reasons for especially those allies spending less than 2% to invest more. One is that we live in a more unpredictable and dangerous world which requires that we invest more for our own security. But the other reason is, of course, that any additional funds or investments from those nations who spend less than 2% will help to improve burden sharing. So it's a kind of double reason to invest more. It increases our capabilities to respond to a more demanding security environment and it helps improve burden sharing within the alliance. I actually believe that the fact we now have this increased sense of urgency through this very open and frank debate yesterday and today; the fact that we made all the decisions on increased readiness, on the new command structure, on many of the issues which will improve our ability to strengthen our collective defence – the fight against terrorism, the cyber operations and other elements related to how to strengthen our collective defence – combined with this unity we see after our open and frank discussion actually is good for NATO. Meaning that we are stronger and we are more united.

Oana Lungescu: Associated Press, third row.

Lorne Cook: Thanks Secretary General, Lorne Cook from the Associated Press. You said you had a very good summit, I can tell you it was fairly chaotic out at the media centre there with the different reports we were getting. I wondered just a couple of things about Russia. The US President was asked and it must be difficult to deal with someone quite so unpredictable but he was asked about whether he might consider pulling out of exercises when he meets President Putin, say Trident Juncture or something like that as he has done in the past. And he was non-committal about that he said we'll see was basically his answer. So I wonder if that's of concern. But also speaking of Russia what's happening in Greece at the moment. The expulsion of Russian diplomats and possible interference in Macedonia's referendum. Has this reached NATO's table? Is this something you are concerned about as well?

Jens Stoltenberg: First we had a good summit not because it was fully pre-scripted but because it was really an open and good discussion. Where we had frank and also respectful exchanges of arguments and views. So if you by good summit means a summit where everything is pre-planned and pre-scripted, well then it was not that. But it was a good summit. Meaning that we reached conclusions. We made decisions and we showed that NATO is delivering. And for me in the long run the most important thing is substance and on substance this summit delivered. B. That we also delivered on the sense of understanding that we are dependent on each other but we are stronger together and that we need fair burden sharing. And also an increased understanding of the urgency of that. So all of that has made NATO stronger. Then President Trump stated in the meeting but also with the press afterwards that he is a strong supporter of NATO. Committed to NATO. And the US is present in Europe. European allies are stepping up and we are increasing our ability to move forces quickly – both over the Atlantic with the new Atlantic command with the readiness initiative but also with the new command in Germany in Ulm in Germany. When it comes to FYROM any interference from other countries is unacceptable. And we just welcome the agreement between Skopje and Athens and this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for FYROM to join NATO under its new name Republic of North Macedonia.

Oana Lungescu: Financial Times in the first row.

Financial Times: Thank you. Michael Peel, Financial Times. On the substance. Can you confirm then that nothing was agreed this morning either formally or informally that commits member states to going beyond the Wales 2% target, or indeed any other commitment? And

secondly what was it exactly that caused you to call this extraordinary session this morning? What exactly was said and how did people react?

Jens Stoltenberg: I think we all felt that we hadn't finished our discussion about burden sharing. Burden sharing was one of the main topics during the first working session yesterday. It was also part of the discussion during the dinner. Then we had a good meeting with Georgia and Ukraine. But we felt that we needed some more time to finish the discussion about burden sharing. So therefore we added the session and we had an extra meeting. Where I felt – we all felt -- that we needed some more time for a good discussion on burden sharing. And we had a good discussion about burden sharing. But even more important, we have made conclusions at this summit which confirms our support for NATO, the importance of investing more. And all allies agree that we need to deliver on our commitments. There is new sense of urgency and all allies agreed to re-double their efforts. And as I said new money is coming in – more than \$40 billion since President Trump was here last time.

Oana Lungescu: Politico over there.

Question: Inaudible

Jens Stoltenberg: Well as I said we have made many decisions. You can read them in the Declaration. And this is about making sure that we deliver on our commitments and that we continue to add more billions to our defence budgets.

Politico: Secretary General, David Hurson from Politico. Can you just help to follow up on that question? The Declaration was agreed yesterday. Burden sharing was not on your agenda for today. So what was it that had to be re-addressed? What did President Trump want to go back at that he felt was not understood and did the Declaration change in any way? We understand that perhaps he made some demands regarding the written spending plans from some allies that have not been submitted. But can you just clarify why because as far as we know burden sharing was not on the agenda and you talked about the importance of making decisions. We thought those decisions were made yesterday? Thanks

Jens Stoltenberg: Well we after initiated by President Trump last year we agreed to develop national plans. We have clearly stated that this year that we need credible national plans. And I expect all allies to follow-up on their national plans. And the national plans are a very powerful tool to make sure that we deliver and that we increase defence spending substantially. I think that what is important is not only that we made the decisions but also that we have a common understanding of how to follow-up the decisions. And that was the importance of the discussion we had both yesterday and today.

Oana Lungescu: Okay we'll take one last question. Gentleman over there. Yeah

Afghan Media: Thank you. This is Nasser Mymanagan from inaudible. My question is on the commitment of funds for Afghanistan. Can you tell if there is an increase or not and what is the total amount going to be? Also you said that this will also pay for the increase in the number of special forces of Afghanistan as well as the investments on air force. How will that affect other areas of defence spending for Afghanistan? Thank you

Jens Stoltenberg: We provide support to the Afghan security forces or army and security forces in different ways. We provide training but we also provide funding. And what we

decided today was to continue with both training and funding. Our current commitment to funding is to 2020. Now we decided to have funding to 2024. The current level of funding from non-US allies and partners is around \$1 billion, if you add what we give to something called the ANA Trust Fund and to the Afghan National Army and also to the UN managed trust fund for police, LOTFA. The exact numbers varies a bit year by year. But the commitment is close to or is \$1 billion so it is something around there. But it varies a bit from year to year. The money and the trainers we provide will be used to strengthen the Afghan forces in many different skills and areas but we are specially focused on three areas. Special operation forces. They have proven extremely important in the fight against the Taliban and terrorism in Afghanistan. In new air forces which is very helpful and play an important role. And also to improve command and control to develop and build the military academies and military schools.

Oana Lungescu: Thank you very much. This concludes this press conference and thank you very much for all your work.

Jens Stoltenberg: Thank you.

* * *

Source: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_156738.htm?selectedLocale=en