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REVITALIZING NATO FOR A CHANGING WORLD

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. HILL: Ladies and gentleman, as everyone's getting seated I'll start with the introduction. I'm Fiona Hill, the director of the Center for the United States and Europe here at The Brookings Institution. And on behalf of myself, Strobe Talbott, the president of The Brookings Institution, and all of our senior fellows and other staff it's a great honor for us today to be able to host Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the current secretary general of NATO.

Obviously, for everyone in the audience here we've been very much aware of the momentous events of the last several days and weeks. And when the secretary general announced that he was coming to Washington and asked if he could give a presentation here, let's just say this was not quite the agenda of items that all of us were anticipating. But as we know, events in the world change very quickly. The secretary general is very used to this kind of high-pressure environment and he's very kindly, obviously, adjusted some of the remarks that he was going to say today to be in fitting with the recent developments. And, of course, those have been very much on the agenda for his meetings here in Washington, D.C., with senior officials.

Now, the secretary general also has to be on a plane today to get back to Brussels. You can imagine there's probably an awful lot of things in his Inbox right now, so he has only exactly an hour with us. So we'll have to beg your indulgence and ask you all when the hour is up to stay seated so the secretary general can get out and make his plane. I don't want to somehow interfere with the larger important business because he's missed the plane as a result of us trying to stop him from getting out of the building.

But anyway, I think for this audience the secretary general needs very little introduction, so I'll keep it brief. All of us know he's had an extremely distinguished record in Danish politics, beginning back in the 1970s, when he was one of the youth leaders of the Danish Liberal Party, then moving up through the party ranks through

foreign policy, and becoming prime minister of Denmark from 2001 to 2009. He took over as NATO secretary general in August of 2009, exactly a year after the war between Russia and Georgia. So let's just say his secretary generalship, his tenure, has now been framed by two major events in the broader European security space: the war in Georgia in 2008, which came after the last NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008; and now what we're seeing unfolding in Ukraine and Crimea just on the eve, or at least a few months in advance, of the next NATO summit, which is to take place in the UK in September.

So without further ado, but again with great thanks and great appreciation given the incredible schedule that you're on today, sir, thank you very much for joining us. We will listen with great eagerness and interest to your speech. And then there will be time, and I'll move -- I won't take a moderator's prerogative, I promise, we'll turn right over to questions from the floor. So please, when we get ready for that, be prepared to identify yourself and keep questions as short as possible so that we can give the secretary general as much time as we possibly can to be able to answer and be able to engage in a real dialogue with you. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. RASMUSSEN: Thank you very much, Fiona, for that generous introduction. And I would also like to thank everyone at Brookings for the excellent job in organizing this event.

Ladies and gentlemen, we live in a different world than we did less than a month ago. Russia's military aggression in Ukraine is in blatant breach of its international commitments and it is a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The annexation of Crimea through a so-called referendum held at gunpoint is illegal and illegitimate, and it undermines all efforts to find a peaceful political solution.

This is a wake-up call for the Euro-Atlantic community, for NATO, and for all those committed to a Europe whole, free, and at peace. We know that we cannot take our security for granted. We have seen other crises in Europe in the past decades -- the

Western Balkans in the 1990s, Georgia in 2008 -- but this is gravest threat to European security and stability since the end of the Cold War. First because of its scale with one of the largest movements of troops for many decades; second because of the stakes, the freedom of 45 million people and their right to make their own choice; and third because this crisis is right on NATO's border.

But Ukraine cannot be viewed in isolation and this crisis is not just about Ukraine. We see what could be called 21st century revisionism, attempts to turn back the clock, to draw new dividing lines on our map, to monopolize markets, subdue populations, rewrite or simply rip up the international rulebook, and to use force to solve problems rather than the international mechanisms that we have spent decades to build.

We had thought that such behavior had been confined to history, but its back and it's dangerous because it violates international norms of accepted behavior. It exports instability, it reduces the potential to cooperate and build trust, and, ultimately, it undermines our security, not just NATO's or Ukraine's security, but also Russia's. If the rules don't apply, if agreements are not honored, certainly Russia also stands to suffer the consequences.

Russia was among those who committed in 1994 to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Russia pledged not to threaten or use force against Ukraine. By turning its back on that agreement, Russia has called into question its credibility and reliability as an international actor. And its steps to annex Crimea are a clear violation of the United Nations charter. Russia must honor its international commitments, cease all military activities against Ukraine, and seek a peaceful political solution, including through dialogue with the government of Ukraine because, on its current course, Russia is choosing increased international isolation.

There are no quick and easy ways to stand up to global bullies because our democracies debate, deliberate, and consider the options before taking decisions because we value transparency and seek legitimacy for our choices and because we see

force as the last, not the first, resort. The only way to address such challenges is for Europe and North America to stand together. This is what we have done from the start of this crisis. NATO's clear position has been to condemn Russia's military actions in Ukraine, to stand firmly in support of the government in Kiev, and to make clear that President Putin's decisions to escalate the situation have consequences.

As a first step, we have suspended joint planning for a maritime escort mission for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. This would have been the first joint operation of the NATO-Russia Council.

We also decided that no staff level civilian or military meetings with Russia will take place for now. And we have put the entire range of NATO-Russia cooperation under review. NATO foreign ministers will take decisions when they meet in Brussels early next month. At the same time, we have kept the door open for political dialogue in the NATO-Russia Council to give Russia an opportunity to engage.

We have also taken measures to strengthen NATO's readiness. They include more assets for our Baltic air policing mission, surveilling flights over Poland and Romania, and heightened awareness. Allies have taken further steps to impose diplomatic and economic consequences. These are not our preferred choice. They are inevitable and appropriate consequences of Russia's choices.

No one wants to turn away from our cooperation with Russia, but no one can ignore that Russia has violated the very principles upon which that cooperation is built. So business as usual is not an option.

Ladies and gentlemen, in times like this, when the security of the Euro-Atlantic area is challenged, the North Atlantic Alliance has not wavered and it will not waver. For 65 years, we have been clear in our commitment to one another as allies and to the global security system within which NATO is rooted. Our transatlantic foundation is our strength and it has given us the ability to consult, cooperate, and cope with any crisis.

This does not mean that NATO is the only solution to every crisis in the

Euro-Atlantic region, but I do believe it is part of every solution because the alliance provides three elements that are crucial for facing modern security challenges and that are vital for Europe's and America's defense. These are political legitimacy, tried-and-tested structures, and military strength.

Now, first, political legitimacy. The combined and voluntary will of 28 of the world's strongest sovereign democracies is an extremely powerful source of political legitimacy, something that unilateral action or coalitions of the willing simply cannot enjoy. This carries over into our missions and operations. It attracts partners whose political support and military contributions add to our broader international legitimacy.

Our ISAF mission in Afghanistan is a clear example. It has included 50 countries, all 28 allies and 22 partner nations. That's one-fourth of all the world's countries, the biggest and most effective coalition in recent history, a coalition that only NATO could have gathered and commanded.

And that leads me to my second point. NATO provides tried-and-tested political and military structures. We have a unique permanent forum for political consultation, where North Americans and Europeans meet every day to debate and decide how to ensure our collective security. Just two weeks ago, we met at Poland's request to consult within the framework of Article IV of the Washington Treaty. This allowed us to immediately address the security concerns of one of our members and to reaffirm our solidarity. Our political and military structures also provide us with a permanent crisis response system, so we can react quickly and effectively to any concern with political measures, with military measures, or an appropriate mix of the two.

We also have the permanent NATO military command structure, so when we decide to take any military action, we have the right framework with the right skills and the right people already in place. We have headquarters that can be deployed quickly to command operations and missions. We have reaction forces on standby. And we can bring the necessary military contributions together quickly from NATO allies as

well as from over 40 partner nations on 5 continents.

Time and again, when an ally has felt its security under threat, we have come together and quickly provided the necessary support: after 9-11, when we deployed surveillance planes here to the United States; during the Syria crisis, when we deployed Patriot missile defense systems to Turkey; and today, when our surveillance aircraft are monitoring our borders in Eastern Europe. Now, imagine that NATO did not exist. Every time a crisis broke out a political and military framework would have to be built from scratch. Political consensus would have to be forged, partners found, military plans developed, and capabilities designed, delivered, and deployed. This would be costly in terms of effective, in terms of money, and in terms of time.

Indeed, once the necessary elements for the response were in place, it could be too late to stem the crisis. So our standing structures save time, they save effort, and they save taxpayers money. They bring other advantages, too. They allow us to harmonize military requirements across the alliance; they support the equipping, training, and exercising of our troops; and they have helped us to build the most capable and connected military forces in history.

And this is my third point, NATO's unique military strength. It is a force multiplier and it allows every ally, even its most powerful one, to pack a bigger punch. Let me point out a few of the ways that American security has benefited from NATO's collective strength.

Again, Afghanistan is a good example. In 2010, as American forces surged, European allies surged and partners surged, too. Over the past 10 years, for every two U.S. soldiers who have served in Afghanistan, one European soldier has always served with them. Some 400,000 European soldiers have rotated through Afghanistan to help make sure it would never again be a launching pad for international terrorism.

In Libya, three years ago, European allies, Canada, and NATO partners

played a crucial role in enforcing an arms embargo, maintaining a no-fly zone, and protecting the people from attacks by their own leader. Today, in Kosovo, over 31 NATO, European, and partners countries are keeping the peace. And off the coast of Somalia, ships from four allied navies -- Spain, Turkey, Italy, and the Netherlands -- are sailing with U.S. ships, patrolling against pirates, and keeping vital sea lanes safe.

European nations are helping to ease America's security burden in other ways, too. For example, the European Union is running its own counter-piracy operation and several European nations have stepped up to respond to the growing instability in Africa, in particular in Mali and Central Africa.

So NATO makes a unique contribution to our security because only NATO brings together the world's most capable democracies in a permanent integrated political and military structure. And only NATO delivers the political legitimacy and military strength that no one nation or ad hoc coalition can deliver on its own. It comes down to a simple truth: shared security is better than solitary insecurity. And it's cheaper, too. It's why NATO is a great defender of America, a great deal for America, and it's why NATO matters to America.

That said, I'm the first to stress that Europe must do more. I take every opportunity to point out that there should be a fairer sharing of the costs and the responsibilities, both between North America and Europe, and within Europe. And developments in Ukraine are a stark reminder that security in Europe cannot be taken for granted and that neither Europe nor America can come up with a solution alone. That's why I will continue to remind European nations that they need to step up politically and militarily, to hold the line on defense cuts, to increase their defense spending, and to work together to fill key capability gaps, including missile defense, cyber defense, and joint intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance.

Later this year, in Wales in the United Kingdom, we will hold our next NATO summit. We need to take tough decisions in view of the long-term strategic



impacts of Russia's aggression on our own security. Our commitment to the security of allies is unbreakable. We will bring our ISAF mission to a close and prepare our future partnership with Afghanistan. We will ensure we have the right capabilities we need to address the modern threats we face, like cyber attacks and missile proliferation. And we will strengthen our partnerships with like-minded countries in our neighborhood and around the world. Our Wales summit will move us along a path we have paved together to ensure our alliance is even better suited to meet the collective security requirements of every allied nation, including your own, and fit to face any challenge the future may hold.

Ladies and gentlemen, as recent events have shown, we continue to face critical security challenges and new challenges are emerging all the time, an environment where countries decide they can redraw the geopolitical map, use the cyber domain to cause harm, or attack innocent people because of political and ideological disagreement. We must stand united in the face of all those challenges which make our world more dangerous and unpredictable.

Our common history shows us the way. In June, we will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings. I remember my own visit to Normandy together with my family, seeing the beaches where so many allied troops, European and American, gave their lives for freedom, walking past the rows of white headstones that mark those soldiers' graves. Those brave soldiers who stormed the Normandy beaches knew then what we must not forget now, that sharing security today means preserving freedom, democracy, and prosperity for tomorrow. That's the spirit in which NATO was founded and that's why NATO matters for the United States and for all the allies today and in decades to come.

Thank you. (Applause)

MS. HILL: Okay, are the mics working? Yeah. Sorry about the technical interruption there. We always have to wait until at least the technology on this side gets into play.

Secretary General, thank you so much for those very spirited and important remarks. I mean, it's very much, as we open up to the audience here, a time of anniversaries. And as you were speaking there about D-Day, of course, at that point in 1944, it wasn't just the Normandy Beach landings. It was also the Russians being part of that alliance on the Eastern Front. It's also all the anniversaries of the Siege of Leningrad, of Stalingrad, and of many other issues, so our World War II history was a time that we shared.

Unfortunately, it's also about the 160th anniversary of another series of crises in the Crimea. Again, as you were speaking, I started to remember that the Crimea War actually broke out around 1854, so, again, about 160 years ago. And that was also over a miscalculation, a misunderstanding about Russia's interests then and what was the Ottoman Empire and the role of Slavs and the Orthodox Christians that ended up, let's just say, with another series of events that led to also not just recriminations, but, unfortunately, military action on and around that same peninsula with lots of strange people on different sides. It gave us the Balaclava, which we've actually seen out in force with masked men in balaclavas, in Crimea on those various outposts. So as Mr. Putin reminded in his speech the other day, history, depending on where you want to pick it up, is never very far away.

But today, you've also said some very important things about the future as well as about the present. And I think that there's going to be a lot of questions about the things that you've said. We have many members here of the diplomatic corps in Washington, D.C.; many of our colleagues from other think tanks, which are very glad to see students from SAIS and other universities close by, we have SAIS across the road; and many other academics, and last and of course the members of the press corps.

So I'd like to hold it open now to the floor. I'll try to take, if it's okay with you, a couple of questions at a time. We've got exactly half an hour. So, again, if people could keep those short, and we'll start with this gentleman here at the front. If you could

wait until a microphone comes to you. Please identify yourself. And then the lady behind you.

MR. GORDON: Yeah. I'm Michael Gordon, *New York Times*. Sir, the United States has sent a dozen F-16s and several hundred service personnel to Poland as a reassurance mission. But if NATO is trying to send a message of resolve, shouldn't the reassurance mission be a NATO-led effort involving multiple countries on land, sea, and air, in Poland, the Baltic states, and the Black Sea?

And also, Ukraine has been seeking support for its military. Shouldn't NATO consider providing intelligence support, logistical support, and advisors to help strengthen the Ukrainian military and deter possible Russian military venturing in Eastern Ukraine? If this is the gravest crisis since the end of the Cold War, isn't something more required than suspending a joint maritime operation and stopping staff level meetings? Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thanks. If the microphone could go to the lady just behind you with the glasses.

MS. JAKES: Thank you. Lara Jakes with Associated Press. This is a good segue from Michael's question.

You mentioned ongoing NATO missions in Kosovo, off the Somali coast, and, of course, in Afghanistan. So as NATO now focuses on European security as a result of Russia's aggression and in a world of dwindling resources, how will that affect military operations or strategy in other missions, particularly Afghanistan? Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thank you. Secretary General?

MR. RASMUSSEN: Just now with the latter, we have the -- does it work? Yeah, now it works. We have the capacity to deal with several missions and operations at one and the same time, and ongoing events will not have any impact on our engagement in Afghanistan. We follow the plans as already outlined, which means completion of the ISAF combat operations by the end of this year and, provided we get a

signature on the security agreement, deployment of a NATO-led training mission from the 1st of January, 2015, and there will be no change in those plans.

On NATO engagement in the current crisis, yes, if we take the Baltic air policing, the United States took a quick step to augment their contribution to Baltic air policing, which is highly appreciated. The good news is that this initiative will now be followed by other NATO allies. A couple of days ago, the UK announced that they will contribute to augmenting or enhancing air policing over the Baltic states and other announcements will follow. So, you're right, it should be and it is and it will be a NATO mission. The same goes for the deployment of AWACS planes over Romania and Poland. These are part of a NATO operation.

But having said that, its normal practice that individual allies can take immediate steps and then it's followed by a more broad NATO mission. And I envisage further steps to reassure allies, to strength deterrents, and a collective defense in light of what we have seen.

SPEAKER: On (inaudible) Ukraine.

MR. RASMUSSEN: And then on Ukraine, which is the second part of your question, we have intensive consultations with the Ukrainians right now. We have had several meetings in the NATO-Ukraine Commission. I have met with the Ukrainian prime minister, the Ukrainian foreign minister. They have forwarded a number of requests. We are now looking into those requests and I would expect foreign ministers to take decisions on enhanced partnership, increased assistance to Ukraine, when foreign ministers meet on the 1st and 2nd of April. I agree that we should step up our assistance to Ukraine and I'm sure it will happen.

MS. HILL: Thanks. I'm trying to collect questions and I see hands coming up. There's over here at the front and then the gentleman here at the aisle. So if people keep their hands up, I'm trying to keep a track base. Thank you.

MS. TOCCI: Nathalie Tocci, Istituto Affari Internazionali in Rome. You

have explained very effectively, Secretary General, the logic of suspending cooperation under the NATO-Russia Council. How would you respond to two counterarguments to that? The first being that that cooperation is as much a NATO interest as is a Russian interest. And the second perhaps more important counterargument, that perhaps it is precisely at moments of conflict and disagreement that institutionalized contact between the two sides is most valuable.

MS. HILL: And the gentleman here at the aisle. Just wait one second, next time around. Thank you.

MR. KOLOSKI: Meto Koloski, United Macedonian Diaspora. This year marks -- and, first of all, congratulations on your Hillary Clinton Award this morning. Fiona mentioned a few anniversaries, but this year marks the 100th anniversary of World War I, and with, you know, Sarajevo. And then 15-10-5 years enlargement, you welcomed a delegation from Bosnia, I think, a couple of days ago and Macedonia's prime minister recently. What kind of message will the upcoming summit send on enlargement? Will there be a breakthrough on the Macedonia-Greece dispute, in your opinion, and perhaps a visit to the region if enlargement is not deliverable at the UK summit? Will you visit all the four countries?

Because I think we learned the mistakes of Bucharest with Georgia and Ukraine. Luckily, nothing of that sort has happened on Macedonia, but, you know, hopefully, nothing does happen. So thank you.

MS. HILL: Yeah. Secretary General?

MR. RASMUSSEN: Thank you. First on the NATO-Russia Council, actually I think we struck the right balance in what we have done so far. Because you're right, during a crisis it is important to keep open a channel for dialogue, so that's why we have suspended practical cooperation with Russia while we have kept the NATO-Russia Council as such open for dialogue. And actually, we have had a meeting already at ambassadors level within the NATO-Russia Council. I can tell you it was not a pleasant

meeting with 28 allies conveying a very clear message to the Russian ambassador, but I think it was a useful meeting. So that underlines your point that during a crisis we need to keep open these channels for dialogue, and that's exactly what we have done.

But, on the other hand, I also think the Russian behavior must have consequences. I mean, when I study the founding documents that create the framework for our partnership with Russia, I can see Russia in blatant breach of all the fundamental principles. Among those principles we have stated that we will not use force against each other or any other. Obviously, they did.

In 2010, at the NATO-Russia summit in Lisbon, we declared that it's our ambition to develop a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia. I'm a strong believer of that. Basically, I think we share interests. But when I witness the current Russian behavior, I ask myself should Russia be considered a partner or an adversary? I have to ask that question and many allies ask that question. So that's why we can't continue business as usual, but I think we struck the right balance in the way we dealt with this, and we have done it in such a manner that it opens the possibility to step up sanctions, so to speak, if the situation warrants that.

Now, on our open-door policy and perspectives of enlargement, we have four partners that have declared aspirations to become future NATO members: Georgia, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. As you know, this process is merit-based. Aspirant countries must fulfill certain criteria before they can join our alliance. We have now agreed internally in NATO on a procedure so that decisions on how we will address the open-door policy will not be made now, but later in the run-up to the summit. We will update individual assessment of each of the four aspirant countries before foreign ministers meet by the end of June, and then foreign ministers will take decisions by the end of June. So it would be premature to present any assessment as to how we will deal with each of the four aspirant countries.

What is clear is that the process is merit-based and each individual

aspirant country will be judged upon its own merits. But I think they all realize that they still have work to do.

But having said that, I'm clearly -- my position is very clear. I think the progress they have made should be appropriately reflected at the summit. It wouldn't be sufficient just to reiterate what we have said previously on our open-door policy. And, of course, what we have seen from the Russian side may also have an impact on the final decisions on how we will address the open-door policy. And not to be misunderstood, I think it's essential that we provide aspirant countries with a clear Euro-Atlantic perspective.

MS. HILL: Thank you. I have a question here, the gentleman with the pink bowtie, and then this gentleman over here afterwards. Sir.

MR. BORCHEVSKI: Hi. My name is Yanov Borchevski, Voice of America. Mr. Rasmussen, does the situation bring a new sense of urgency for NATO to accelerate with the enlargement process? In February, seeing the situation in Ukraine, 14 Congressmen sent a letter to Secretary of State Kerry urging him to support membership, especially for Macedonia and for Montenegro at this year's summit of NATO. Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thank you. And this gentleman against the wall here.

SPEAKER: Can it be without a mic?

SPEAKER: No.

MS. HILL: We need a microphone for purpose of recording, sorry.

MR. DE JONG: Sure, sure, sure. My name is Wessel de Jong of the Netherlands, public broadcaster.

Mr. Rasmussen, you just mentioned that the first joint operation with the Russians to evacuate chemical weapons from Syria will be aborted, will be stopped. Could you be a bit more specific about this? And is it a good idea to do this, would be my second question?

And brief third question, don't you think now Crimea is finally, well, part of Russia, so to say, don't you think the situation now will quiet down and should NATO react, well, also in those terms that you see that the Russians are toning down their rhetoric and the situation will become a bit more peaceful? But that's probably wishful thinking. What's your take on this?

MS. HILL: Thank you.

MR. RASMUSSEN: First on enlargement, you ask me in concrete terms whether ongoing events would justify to accelerate enlargement. Let me stress once again any enlargement process is merit-based. There's no shortcut to membership of NATO. Applicant countries must fulfill certain criteria. And that's -- I mean, for all four aspirant countries, the fact is that they do not yet fulfill all necessary criteria.

Now, you asked specifically about the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Already in 2008, we decided at the NATO summit in Bucharest that we are ready to extend an invitation to accession negotiations once a mutually satisfactory solution to the name issue has been found. That decision still stands. So once the name issue has been solved, we are ready to start accession negotiations. Unfortunately, we have not seen any -- any -- progress since 2008, which I strongly regret.

And, I mean, for each country there is specific issues and we deal with them individually. Montenegro, for instance, is a positive story. The Montenegrins have made a lot of progress, carried through a lot of reforms, but still there is a need for further reforms of their security sector, strengthened efforts against organized crime and corruption.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, we have granted Bosnia-Herzegovina a condition-based membership action plan. It will be activated as soon as the Bosnians carry through some very modest reforms related to defense property. I won't go into details, but just mention that since we did that in 2010, we haven't seen any progress.

I met yesterday with a member of the presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina.



He agreed with me, but political parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina have not been able to reach an agreement on this very, very modest requirement.

As regards to Georgia, we have seen a lot of progress. They have conducted successful parliamentary and presidential elections. They have reformed their defense sector, but they still have things to do within their security sector and also when it comes to their judiciary.

So this just to stress those certain conditions must be fulfilled and there's no shortcut and ongoing events will not change that. But, of course, we all keep in mind strategic implications of the events in Crimea and Ukraine. And faced with a more assertive Russian attitude, it is of utmost importance that we in the Euro-Atlantic organizations provide partners with a realistic and credible Euro-Atlantic alternative to the Russian pressure. That's my clear position.

On the maritime escort mission, as you know, the American vessel *Cape Ray* will carry out the task to destroy certain chemicals. Those chemicals have not been -- I mean; they have not left Syria yet, so that's one problem. But we have prepared everything to provide effective protection of *Cape Ray* during that process. And we had suggested that it could be a joint NATO-Russia maritime escort mission, the first ever, but now we have suspended it. But let me stress, you ask me is it a good idea, let me stress it will not affect the destruction of chemicals. That destruction will still take place, the ship will be appropriately protected, but without Russian participation. That's all.

MS. HILL: Well, there was a final point?

MR. DE JONG: Yeah. If the situation is not calming down.

MS. HILL: Ah, yeah.

MR. RASMUSSEN: Yeah, sorry, sorry.

MS. HILL: The wishful thinking, the hope. (Laughter)

MR. RASMUSSEN: Yeah. I think it is wishful thinking in a way because my major concern is that this won't stop.

MR. DE JONG: Well, that's a statement.

MR. RASMUSSEN: Crimea is one example, but I see Crimea as an element in a greater pattern, in a more long-term Russian, or at least Putin, strategy. So, of course, our major concern now is whether he will go beyond Crimea, whether Russia will intervene in the eastern part of --

MR. DE JONG: He says he won't.

MR. RASMUSSEN: Yes. (Laughter) And? (Laughter)

So we are vigilant. We have seen a pattern. I mean, if you have a look at the whole region, you'll see protracted frozen conflicts in Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, now maybe in another form, but still Crimea. I would add to this also Nagorno-Karabakh. And if you look at all this, you will see an overall Russian strategy. It serves their long-term strategic interests to keep instability in that region. That can be used, among other things, to prevent countries in that region to seek Euro-Atlantic integration. That's my major concern.

MS. HILL: Thank you. I fear, because we've only got five minutes left, that it may be difficult to get to all the questions. There was a cluster of the three people over here, starting with the gentleman with the glasses, the lady behind him, and then the other gentleman. So the gentleman with the glasses closest to the window first, sir, sorry, and then the lady behind you, and then back to you. Thank you. I'll just try to take the three of you together.

MR. SHAH: Hi. My name is Sahil Shah and I'm a second-year undergraduate at George Washington University. My question today is in regards to NATO's nuclear declaratory policy and the prospects for reducing reliance on nuclear weapons in NATO's grander security policy. Obviously, the United States' perspective, as long as U.S. tactical weapons remain deployed in Europe, all of NATO has a stake in their security, so how does the debate over NATO nuclear policy and non-strategic nuclear weapons deployed both by NATO and Russia also fit into September's agenda?

MS. HILL: Thanks very much. And if you'd just pass the microphone to the lady behind you, thank you.

MS. OSWALD: Hi. Rachel Oswald, *National Journal*. My question kind of follows that. There was a recent congressional report that found that the Pentagon's time schedule for achieving certain missile defense capabilities in Romania and Poland against, respectively, medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles could be too optimistic. What are your thoughts on that conclusion?

MS. HILL: Thanks. And then the gentleman who originally had the microphone.

MR. KANOPOULOS: Koznanus Kanopoulos from American University and the Transatlantic Academy. As the United States and the European Union are negotiating the Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership, the so-called economic NATO, don't you think that it's essential that we have a transatlantic conversation when it comes to security facts to a greater extent that the EU's delivered in December?

And then secondly, with the symbolic departure of the last U.S. tank in April from Europe and the end of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, don't you think that it's essential that NATO reexamines its role in the 21st century? Don't you think that the alliance maybe needs to reinvent itself as it after the end of the Cold War? Thank you very much.

MS. HILL: Thank you.

MR. RASMUSSEN: Yep, interesting questions. First, on our nuclear policy, we adopted a new strategic concept in 2010 and also in that strategic concept addressed the nuclear question. We declared that we subscribe to the long-term vision of a world without nuclear weapons. Actually that's not breaking news because most of the countries in the world subscribe to that vision already in 1970, when they signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, so we all committed to that long-term vision of a world without nuclear weapons. We also declared that we will work hard to create the conditions for

fulfilling that vision. But having said that, we added that as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance.

Now, we have also declared that we are ready to engage in negotiations on a reduction of the number of nuclear weapons, including tactical nuclear weapons. But we have added that it should take place in a balanced manner. And the fact is that since the end of the Cold War, NATO countries have reduced the arsenal of nuclear weapons drastically -- I emphasize, drastically -- while we have not seen a similar reduction on the Russian side. So there is a huge stockpile of Russian nuclear weapons and clearly an imbalance. So we shouldn't be naïve.

So while we will work towards a reduction in the number of nuclear weapons, we also need more transparency and we need to reduce in a balanced manner. So that's our clear position. Now, of course, I cannot exclude that the events we have witnessed in Crimea will also have an impact on the thinking about arms control, including nuclear policies.

On missile defense, according to all information I have got, there won't be any change of the timetable as regards the development of the NATO missile defense system, including the establishment of facilities in Romania and Poland. And the timeline is that we intend to provide full coverage by 2018, and, so far, I haven't seen any indications of changes in that plan.

Finally, on the transatlantic relationship, I agree that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership should actually be seen as what we might call the economic NATO. The interesting thing is that it has been foreseen already in the NATO Treaty, Article 2, that we should strength economic cooperation within or among allies, and, actually, I see the TTIP as an implementation of that article.

Now, following that, I also agree that we need more European contributions to our common security. But actually, I think the European Council meeting in December was a remarkable step forward, among other things because the European

Council focused on European investments in certain capabilities, among them drones, joint intelligence surveillance reconnaissance, but in a specific term drones; also, air-to-air refueling, which was one of the lessons learned from our Libya operation. They also mentioned cyber and satellite communication. So for the first time, actually, the European Council has committed to increased European investments in much-needed military capabilities. I consider that a very welcome step forward.

But having said that, let me reiterate what I said in my introduction today. The Ukraine crisis and what we have seen in Crimea has been a wake-up call and it must be followed by increased European investments in defense if we are to ensure a credible deterrence and collected defense in the future.

And finally, on NATO's role, well, daily I witness statements that reflect NATO's success. Every day, right now, during this crisis, I see expressions of gratitude among Eastern allies, gratitude that they are actually members of our alliance. I don't think they see a strong need for redefining the role of NATO. They became members of NATO to ensure effective defense and protection. They've got it. They're grateful for that.

As we draw down our operation in Afghanistan, we open new opportunities to actually address emerging security challenges in a much more efficient manner through investments in modern military capabilities, enhanced cyber defense, further development of our NATO missile defense, so there's no need to reinvent our redefine the role of NATO. Our core task remains the same, namely to provide effective defense of our populations and our territories. And actually the most effective defense is a strong and determined deterrence. That has been the essence of NATO since it was established in 1949 and it will remain the core task.

MS. HILL: Well, Secretary General, it seems a fitting end to the time, which has, unfortunately, run out. We really appreciate you spending this past hour with us. We understand, of course, that you have to move off very quickly. So, again, if

everyone could stay in their seats until the secretary general has left.

Thank you very much, sir, at this very difficult time for spending an hour with us and being frank and direct in answering the questions. A round of applause for the secretary general. Thank you. (Applause)

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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