

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

ASPEN SECURITY FORUM 2017

IS NATO UP TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW WORLD ORDER?

Thursday, July 20, 2017

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Is NATO up to the Challenge of the New World Order?

(2:45 p.m.)

MS. REIJULA: Good afternoon. If you could all take your seats, we're going to start our next panel. Good afternoon. My name is Lisa Reijula. I'm Program Director at Metro Chicago Exports, a public-private partnership that focuses on increasing Chicago's international trade. I'm a recipient of the Aspen General Scholarship for the 2017 forum, and I'd like to thank the Homeland Security Program for this amazing opportunity.

Our next session is titled "Is NATO up to the Challenge of the New World Order." The Kremlin has never been more aggressive and overt about its aim to undermine NATO. At the same time, there are epic threats from terrorism to cyber-attacks facing the alliance is an alliance that has been the bedrock of the international order for 70 years capable of rising to these modern challenges.

Moderating this session is Gordon Corera. Gordon is a Security Correspondent for BBC News where he covers national security, intelligence, and homeland security issues for TV, radio, and online. He has presented a number of documentary series for the BBC, most recently on subversion and the role -- the relationship between Russia and the West. He is also the author of two best-selling books. Please welcome Gordon.

(Applause)

MR. CORERA: Thank you very much. Thank you all for being here. This is my first time in the beautiful surroundings of Aspen. Now I'm guessing that if I had come here five, six, seven years ago, a bit like the conferences in Europe, there would have been a session on NATO in which basically the subtext would have been 'what's NATO for these days, does it really have a purpose?', and you could sense this idea of NATO almost casting around, looking at out-of-area operations, getting

involved in Afghanistan, maritime piracy, other issues is it sought that role in the post-Cold War era.

These days I think there are far fewer people saying 'what NATO's purpose?' but more people asking 'is NATO fit for its purpose, is it up to a new challenge?' And the new challenge is partly based on the return of an old adversary in the face of Russia, but as well as the new set of challenges that NATO is trying to deal with, international people flows and terrorism, and this old adversary and with the issue of tanks and aircraft, fighter jet, once again intercepting and flying close to each other over the borders.

You've also got the new challenges of hybrid warfare. How does an alliance based on deterrence, on the idea of having men and metal ready to deter or to meet Russian invasion work in an area of hybrid warfare of grey zones below warfare in which perhaps it's not tanks coming over the border but information and propaganda, or perhaps cyber-attacks, striking neighboring states and then spilling over into NATO states? These are some of the challenges for NATO and some of the challenges we're going to be discussing in the next hour with the panel I've got here. You might notice from the program that we don't have sadly the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine, who is unable to get to Aspen I think for reasons we can understand. There's quite a lot going on in her country, but we do have three excellent panelists, all ambassadors. So I'm going to be referring to them by their first name rather than going ambassador, because it'll get too confusing otherwise.

On my far right, we have Freytag von -- Arndt Freytag von Loringhoven, NATO's Assistant Secretary-General for Intelligence and Security. Then next to him we have Piotr Wilczek, the Ambassador of Poland to the United States, and next to me Peter Wittig, who is the Ambassador of Germany to the United States.

Now let me just start by quickly asking them all how each of you starting with Arndt, how effectively do

you think NATO has adapted to this new challenge in this new world?

MR. LORINGHOVEN: So 2014 was a major turning point for NATO with the Russian invasion in Eastern Ukraine, annexation of Crimea, and I saw attacks, and this caused a massive process of adaptation of NATO. We have seen the biggest increase in collective defense since the end of the Cold War, enhanced forward presence in the Baltic region, tailored forward presence, 48,000 strong NATO Response Force. We're developing a cyber-policy. There's a cyber-pledge. Cyberis now a NATO domain. We have the 2% defense spending gap, which we will probably come back to at a later stage, and let me just mention here that since then it was not only a declaratory turning point, but a real turning point because since then European and Canadian allies have been contributing more every year in terms of defense spending.

Now you pinpointed to a major difference in the security environment, hybrid and cyber, and I would also say that the multitude of potential crises, because NATO was designed to address one major adversary, a military -- a potential military war with the Soviet Union, and now we have to deal with a lot of things at the same time.

So I think we are in the midst of this adaptation process. We will need to do much more on the hybrid and cyber front to understand the challenge better and also develop a response there. And we have to -- we are at the moment in the process of reviewing the command structure of NATO. And finally, terrorism, of course, is seen as a very big issue for NATO as well.

MR. CORERA: And your position is a new position, Assistant Secretary-General for Intelligence. Is that partly reflective of this need to bring more intelligence to the NATO political and military leadership faster than it's been before when you've got potentially Russia acting very quickly in places like Ukraine and Crimea really before often Western countries have understood what's going on?

MR. LORINGHOVEN: Absolutely. I think there were two major reasons for this -- for this intelligence reform, which is why I'm here. NATO decided to create an Intelligence and Security Division and to create this new post of Assistant Secretary-General. One was to kind of streamline the intelligence picture that came out of the civilian and the military intelligence analysts, because sometimes they were duplicitous, sometimes they didn't come to the same conclusions.

So the Military Committee and the NATO Council were fed with different analyses. That had to change, but also I think the nature of the threats, the hybrid threats necessitates a common intel picture. And so there's a lot greater appetite by nations for intelligence analyses now.

MR. CORERA: Piotr, let me move on to you. What's the view from Poland, which is on the frontlines effectively for this new conflict?

MR. WILCZEK: Yes. Poland now is in a very, very special situation on the Eastern flank. Actually when I attended a few days ago an event celebrating Montenegro joining NATO, it's the most recent -- you know, the most recent new country in NATO, I was thinking about this battle of Poland and the Czech Republic and Slovakia to join NATO in the -- in the late '90s. So -- and I was thinking about the difference. You know, our -- first of all, at that time we were not thinking about the Cold War. The Cold War seemed like to be over. There was, of course, a kind of this one single major threat, but on the other hand our idea, I mean in Poland and in Central European countries, was just to join a very strong military alliance to be -- to be you know stronger together.

Now with Montenegro joining NATO, it's -- it's different because, first of all, we just saw in 2014 how -- how efficiently Russia can work, if they decide to do what they did in Ukraine in Crimea that they are very, very efficient. Their intelligence, their military, so we

could see -- you could see how it works. And now we have all these other threats also partly associated with Russia but not only, also global terrorism. And the second point is that the year 2008 was also important because of Georgia, you know. So even earlier than in 2014, we could see how -- you know how Russia can work, how can sort of blackmail, you know, other countries how it's -- how Russia made it more difficult for countries like Georgia and Ukraine to join NATO. So this is a completely new situation just after 15 years.

MR. CORERA: Do you worry not just about a kind of deliberate hybrid warfare move by Russia but actually miscalculation and escalation. I mean just -- just recently we've had -- you had I think a Polish jet intersect a plane with the Russian Defense Minister onboard and then a Russian jet came alongside.

MR. WILCZEK: Exactly, yeah.

MR. CORERA: I mean things -- things are happening pretty -- pretty fast on the-- on the ground and in the air in this case.

MR. WILCZEK: So things like that happen. Maybe they happened in the past as well. We -- we didn't have so good journalists who --

MR. CORERA: Discovered it.

MR. WILCZEK: -- revealed that. So I think --

MR. CORERA: Would you like to tell us about some other instance of that?

MR. WILCZEK: Such things happened I think all the time, but really there is a great tension. When you asked about our -- our position, there is a tension, there is this feeling of being surrounded. You know, you may, you know, for example, include in this story Kaliningrad, which is I think the most militarized, you know, part of Europe basically, bordering with -- with Poland and

Lithuania, the situation of the Baltics and Poland, and of course -- and of course, Ukraine.

So -- but now the situation is also different because of the decisions of the -- of the last NATO Summit. I mean the deployment of U.S. and NATO troops, you know, enhance forward presence, this is also a kind of response of NATO on this -- this very difficult situation.

MR. CORERA: Peter, how about you? You're from Germany. How well do you think NATO has adapted?

MR. WITTIG: It's great to be here again at this beautiful Aspen Security Forum, and I'm honored to be on that panel.

I think you're right. NATO is more relevant, more important than ever because of the new challenges and because of the new missions. Now how is it doing? I think we've got to unpack it. First challenge from the East, the newly assertive Russia. I think the NATO did pretty well. It reacted swiftly on that, you know, game-changing annexation of the Crimea, which basically meant the end of the Cold -- the post-Cold War order. It was stronger on defense and deterrence. It supported Ukraine. It supported by presence Southeast European countries. You know, it's sometimes underrated, the Russian footprint in the Balkans. It deployed four battalion-sized battle groups in Poland and the Baltic States. Germany is leading one of them. And it spends more money. And I know you want to come back to that. I'm happy to talk about burden-sharing. All in all, I think a great reaction.

Let's not forget it's not all about deterrence. It's also about dialog with Russia. We want to pursue a two-pronged approach here. It's good to keep the channels of communication with Russia open. We were instrumental in revitalizing that NATO-Russian Council that had been suspended after the annexation of Crimea. It's good to talk to Russia. We do that in this process -- of the Minsk process in discussing the Ukraine conflict.

Second challenge from the South; terrorism, migration, illicit trafficking of persons, the arc of instability from Syria to Libya. Here NATO is still adapting. It's a new task. You have to react differently, no boots on the ground here massively, rather enabling our regional partners to do the fighting, project stability there, not only with military means, also civilian means, and here we don't want to duplicate what the anti-ISIL coalition is doing. So we've got to calibrate rightly what the NATO role in -- in that arc of instability is.

Third challenge, cyber warfare, hybrid warfare. Here I think we are on a long trajectory. NATO reacted with the cyber defense plan in 2016. On hybrid warfare, you know, we are not good at that. The West doesn't practice hybrid warfare. So we were a little surprised when Russia pulled out all tools from the Soviet era, and we have all our problems with that in our domestic political scenes. So -- but here also important that member states of NATO increased resilience.

And I want to add a fourth challenge, and that's Afghanistan, sometimes forgotten. We still have a mission to do there. We should not pull out, drawdown the mission before the job is done, otherwise we'll see the return of the Taliban and the return of terrorism. It's important to be sustainably present there. I know that the U.S. administration is about to take a decision on its presence. We want strong continued leadership there.

So in a nutshell, I think NATO has done a good job in adapting. It is still our vital bedrock security in the West. And thanks to American leadership, and I hope it will continue, this has been the most successful defense alliance in recent history.

MR. WILCZEK: If I might add something.

MR. CORERA: Yeah.

MR. WILCZEK: I think when speaking about American leadership, I think that's -- right now it's very important that the United States confirms its commitment to NATO. You asked about Poland. I'm very happy that President Trump, you know, confirmed or acknowledged Article 5 in Warsaw during his speech in Warsaw. Of course, all these countries signed the treaty. So Article 5 is a part of this treaty, but after all these doubts before or during the campaign, you know, it's very important for I think European and other, you know, allies to -- to know that American leadership is really, you know -- is here.

MR. CORERA: Yeah. I mean Article 5 is totemic --

MR. WILCZEK: Yes.

MR. CORERA: -- to NATO, and I mean during that Warsaw visit by the President, I mean you could sense everyone waiting for the -- for the moment in which he would say in a speech. Let me ask a slightly heretical question, which is, is Article -- does Article 5 matter as much as it used to. What I mean by that is, obviously, it matters in the big scheme of things. But if Russia is able to carry out hybrid warfare and carry out activity below the threshold of, if you like, which meets the traditional idea of -- of a military attack and is able to annex her parts of countries, is able to carry out cyber-attacks, and yet it never quite reaches the Article 5 threshold, then does deterrence still -- still work? Have we found a way of NATO doing deterrence, which is beyond the kind of Article 5?

MR. WILCZEK: I think we should remember that -- that the Article 5 was used for the first and only time during --

MR. CORERA: 9/11.

MR. WILCZEK: -- 9/11, which was not a traditional war, by the way. So it's I think quite a

symbolic, you know -- symbolic thing that it was -- it was -- it was done in 2001 that's -- that's, you know, Article 5 was used in reaction to the non-typical, you know, war.

MR. CORERA: So it's got a symbolic role, Article 5, clearly in a political role, but practically how does NATO do deterrence then. If it's -- if it's symbolic primarily.

MR. LORINGHOVEN: I think, first of all, Article 5 is really the essence of NATO for me. It's the unity and solidarity that's enshrined in that -- in that principle it's the most important one. And as you said, it was -- it was never invoked in the Cold War, but -- but it was invoked for the first time afterwards, so against a terrorist threat. We still have terrorist threats, so it's -- it's clearly still highly relevant.

The really difficult issue will be hybrid, cyber, and Article 5 in the future, and NATO has already declared that a cyber-attack could lead to the invocation of Article 5, but we haven't gone through the process. There's no doctrine, there's no command and control. So this is one of the really important political issues that we will have to develop very soon. And, of course, in hybrid and cyber, the huge problem is the question of attribution, and you need that to invoke Article 5. So it's a very specific, extremely difficult situation, but it's very relevant, I would say.

MR. CORERA: Peter, let me ask you a bit about cyber as well. Germany's got elections coming up quite soon. The parliament got hacked I think two years ago, something like that, and it was attributed in many quarters to Russia. So some people wonder if emails might suddenly appear from that hack at some point, which could try and influence the elections. As you'd be aware, being an Ambassador in Washington that can create some news and have some implications. Has Germany kind of thought about that? Has it prepared a response? Has it thought about -- because, you know, we heard in the previous session, had Washington really thought about deterrence and how it

would respond and how to kind of communicate its response, is that kind of thinking going on in Germany?

MR. WITTIG: Oh, I think we're thinking about it all the time. We have elections in two months. We've seen what happened in the U.S. We've seen what happened in France. We don't want to be yet another victim of foreign intrusion and meddling in our domestic political scene. Our domestic intelligence chief has said there is evidence of increasing Russian meddling in our political life. So we've seen that in the hackings of the parliament of political organizations, we've seen that in a propaganda that targeted Germans of Russian origin, we've seen that in a media setup RT and other Russian media, and we've seen it in propaganda legends that were spread, including by high-level Russian officials.

What is important is, of course, one sort of cyber defense in terms of defending our infrastructure. I think we've been doing a lot there. The army, by the way, has created a cyber-defense as its own domain, but also the civilian infrastructure is, you know, we try to protect it. Of course, it's penetrable as all of them, but I guess even more important is the awareness of the people of the population, the awareness that it happens is sort of resilient against the impact of such, you know, cyber-attacks or hybrid warfare.

So I think that is the best defense in a way that people are aware that it happens, and they can decipher in a way the provenance and don't be fooled by fake news or by use of those cyber-attacks. And I think that there the previous experiences in the U.S. and France have helped.

MR. CORERA: Let me -- let's tackle the difficult issue of money. 1.22%, now I think you know what that figure refers to. I think that's the % age of GDP that Germany spends on defense. The target is 2%. When President Trump suggests that Europe has been free riding on American defense spending, he's got a point, hasn't he?

MR. WITTIG: Well, this is not a new discussion. First of all, you know, it emerged with the new challenges that we talked about, and we discussed this with the previous administration. And let me say upfront, it's a legitimate discussion. And I think everybody agrees, we've got to spend more on this, but we've got to have an honest discussion about it, and we've got to get the facts right. There are two things. You know, I recall in this pivotal year 2014, Russia invaded Ukraine, the leaders got together and decided the following. They decided we want to move incrementally over a decade to the goal of spending 2% of our GDP and have a share of 20% of our defense spending of investment. So over a decade, until 2014, we are called upon to reach the 2% goal, not in a big bang, not in one day, incrementally. That's what we're doing. We raised our defense budget by 9% last year, and we are fully subscribing to that -- to that 2% goal. The 2% goal is not everything. It's about capabilities. It's about input to NATO.

So let's -- it's not just money. It's about participation in missions. We are in Afghanistan, we are in various other missions, you know. And it is false to say that we're owing money to NATO or to the U.S. That means -- that is really therewould --

MR. CORERA: Which was the suggestion coming about this.

MR. WITTIG: But that's something that's just not correct and that enrages Germans. Of course, we pay our share for the common costs of NATO; 15%, the U.S. pays 22%, for the organization, for the missions, of course we do. And then there is this 2% pledge until 2024, and we are raising our expenditure, but that doesn't mean we owe anything to the U.S. or to other partners. That's -- those are two different things. But, you know, let me be very straight, we are doing more for defense; Europe has to do more; NATO, as I said before, is our vital security framework. We want to invest heavily there, politically,

militarily, and financially. And you can take us by our word.

MR. LORINGHOVEN: And just on the facts if I may add, 2014 was really a turning point here because until then nations were spending less and less on defense, and we can see that starting in 2015, they spend more and more. This year probably it'll be around 4.3% more. That's European allies and Canada, and we calculated that the sum of 46 billion is spent more on defense by European allies and Canada since 2015. So there's a clear trend changer.

MR. CORERA: Mr. Piotr?

MR. WILCZEK: Poland is among these few countries who reach this 2% on defense spending, but I agree of course that it's not only about numbers, but it's also about capabilities, about, you know, what we really do with this money, you know, in the defense budgets and how we use this money. So I think the discussion is not that simple that it's just about -- but I agree that a few countries who already, you know, have this 2%, so I think that's okay if we agreed to have it not, as you said, in one day or one month or one year, but it's both 2% and it's both on -- it's both about 2% and how this budget is really spent on what it's spent. So this is a much more complicated issue than just about money.

MR. CORERA: The debate about money the last few months I guess was symbolic of some tensions between the -- within the Alliance and some questions about whether the new administration here in Washington would with the movement "America First" position would have a different view of NATO. Of course, there were those comments I think during the transition about NATO being obsolete, now that word being used. At the same time in Europe, you've got Brexit to bring up that phrase and that word. But the -- do you think there's a shift? And we heard the German Chancellor talk about perhaps Europe needs to take on more of the responsibility itself that there was a sense that perhaps with Britain moving out of Europe, the EU might

take on more of a role and also with perhaps the Transatlantic Alliance not being what it was. Is there some big kind of tectonic shift you think going on at the moment? Or it's just a bit of politics at the moment?

MR. WITTIG: The Chancellor said that in the light of the G7 and the NATO meetings recently, but it was above all a wake-up call for the Europeans not to rely too much on allies but to take the fate of Europe in its own hands. And I think that she had said it before, but if you relate that to defense it's also true. Europe has to do more, not in competition with NATO, but in addition or in sync with NATO. And we can have so much more bang - let's say, big bang for the buck if we synchronize, if we harmonize our defense effort. It doesn't make sense to have 19 different infantry vehicle systems or 29 different systems for helicopters flying in NATO. We can, you know, elicit synergies if we cooperate better.

German and French new President Macron and German Chancellor got together the other day and they decided on a couple of common defense, armament procurement projects. This is the way to go, and I think their job Europe can do -- can deliver much better for NATO if it gets its act together.

MR. CORERA: Piotr, wonder from Poland's perspective, NATO is the central part of the military alliance, more than the EU, I'm imagining, in terms of the way it thinks about its defense and security.

MR. WILCZEK: Well, as far as defense and security is concerned for various reasons, it's NATO first, I would say. And just, you know, going back to obsolete, I think we should forget this word. This word was I think a part of negotiations. President Trump was negotiating. He all the time negotiate. So now we have this Brussels speech and the Warsaw speech. So I think the word obsolete no longer exists in this discourse.

MR. CORERA: It was to put pressure ahead of the negotiations.

MR. WILCZEK: Putting pressure. I think putting pressure and -- but again --

MR. CORERA: It worked to some extent.

MR. WILCZEK: It worked. I mean he said in Warsaw it worked, you know. I don't know details, but he knows I'm sure that it really worked. Going back to what is more important, as I said, as far as defense security is concerned, we concentrate on cooperation with NATO and this is -- this is the priority, you know.

MR. CORERA: Also for NATO, a lot of these new challenges like cyber, like hybrid warfare, information warfare don't necessarily sit back easily within the military alliance. They kind of cross over into the civilian world. That's a bit of a challenge, and do you think some of them sit more easily with the EU or in different formats than necessarily NATO?

MR. LORINGHOVEN: First of all, one of the big changes I think is that there is unanimity -- political unanimity between EU and NATO to cooperate much more than before. This is also a result of the changed security situation. It was particularly highlighted at the Warsaw Summit. We have a list of 42 concrete areas of cooperation where -- which I won't go through now, but it includes cyber, it includes terrorism, it's about the defense posture, and so on. This is very, very much consensual, and I think this particularly pertains to hybrid and cyber threats. For instance, the EU established a hybrid fusion cell about a year ago, and we now did the same in my division, and we will cooperate particularly intensely with each other and exchange analyses. We can't really exchange intelligence documents for political reasons, but we can talk about them and exchange analyses on hybrid threats, on cyber threats, and I think this would be very important for both of us.

MR. CORERA: One of the main sources of tension with Russia has been about NATO expansion, and I mean the

Russian view, as I'm sure people will be aware, is that this was a betrayal of promises. It's a plot to surround Russia to put troops on and military systems on Russia's border. Obviously, there's a view from many NATO member countries that this is actually -- it's vital to bring these countries and bring more countries into NATO and to offer them the kind of security guarantees that involves.

But there is also a view that perhaps the open door policy has also created a bit of instability in some countries that often having talks about bringing in countries to NATO perhaps and whether it was Ukraine, Georgia, the possibility has created an incentive in turn for Russia to try and destabilize those countries, to try and act, to try and do things to push aggressively. Do you think -- I mean, Arndt, I think you've just been in Ukraine, haven't you, and had talks with them about this. They're starting to make these noises about, you know, roadmaps towards membership. I think we all can imagine how Russia might react to that possibility. Where do you think this policy of expansion lies?

MR. LORINGHOVEN: Yeah. I think enlargement is a very complicated policy at the moment, and it basically pertains to two regions: the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. And I think the reasons are very different. And let me remind you that we have just taken up a new member. So clearly enlargement is not at its end. It's Montenegro and there was an attempted push just eight months ago.

MR. CORERA: Yeah. The Russians tried to--

MR. LORINGHOVEN: So obviously they don't like that at all and we expect, yeah, a lot of resistance and meddling of the Russians in the Western Balkans. There are a number of countries which are potential members and we will work with them. And their difficulties are of very different natures. For instance, Macedonia, there's the name issue, there's a lot of internal problems. Serbia, Bosnia links with Russia are very strong and so on. Ukraine, indeed the NATO Council just visited Kiev, which is something they rarely. Do it's quite a big trip.

So this was meant to be as a sign of solidarity and of concrete cooperation. For instance, we helped them a defending against cyber-attacks by giving them advice and also technical means and so on. Yes, President Poroshenko I think is pushing the issue of NATO membership more than before. It didn't get a clear response from the Council, and clearly this is due to the situation in Eastern Ukraine.

MR. CORERA: Views on expansion?

MR. WITTIG: I think Arndt has said it right. We have to deal with that on a case-by-case basis. Every candidate, so to speak, or every country who wants to join is different. And I think in general, if we take Article 5 seriously, I mean there are at least two preconditions for new members: first, that the population of that country endorses that membership wholeheartedly. In other words that there is a sound majority of people supporting it in that country; and secondly that they don't bring the baggage of unresolved territorial conflicts into NATO that then might drag NATO into a conflict that we don't want to have. And I think it is prudent to look at each country on its merits.

MR. CORERA: Although arguably the second condition some people fear has created an incentive for Russia to create unresolved conflicts and frozen conflicts over various regions in order to prevent membership. So it's again that point of the, you know, Russia is clearly pretty active in trying to prevent that expansion.

We'll come to questions from the floor in just one moment. Let me just ask one more quick question to our -- to our panel. How worried are each of you about the possibility of some kind of conflict emerging with Russia, whether it's a Russian some kind of hybrid undercover, perhaps semi-undercover incursion into the Baltics or whether it's -- we've had all these kind of jets flying very close to each other and some kind of escalation to something like that leading to

confrontation? I mean, you know, should we be worried? How worried are each of you?

MR. WILCZEK: I think we should be worried because, first of all, because of military exercises. We remember that military exercises or drills preceded invasion in Georgia and later in Ukraine, and now in 2017 in September we are expecting a huge military drill in Belarus, Zapad-2017. And because of lack of transparency, we don't know very much about that. And this is a danger, you know, first of all, for Ukraine, like from both sides, but also for other countries. So it's a potential danger. I'm not saying that anything will happen, especially any attack or provocation against a NATO country, but still there is this atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, you know, obviously associated with Zapad.

MR. LORINGHOVEN: Yeah. I completely agree. I think -- I don't know a NATO nation which expects in the short term a military aggression by Russia on a NATO country, but there is a risk of an accident as you were saying of miscalculation, of course, and there's the hybrid and cyber spectrum where we don't -- yeah, attacks like that happen all the time. They are under the threshold of a response so far. So I think, as I said before, this is a very important area to kind of develop a policy of responsiveness of NATO also as an element of deterrence.

MR. CORERA: Peter.

MR. WITTIG: I agree we must be vigilant. We are not back to the Cold War luckily, but we face some threats and dangers. All the more important it is to keep the channels with Russia open to have fora in which the military speaks to each other. We have forawhere NATO members speak to Russia like the NATO-Russian Council. The leaders should speak to each other. And we should not deteriorate into a situation where there's speechlessness. So we are a big promoters of that, sort of, double-track approach, deterrence, and dialog.

MR. CORERA: Great. Thank you, all. I've got questions. So I'm going to go in this order across here. If you could wait for the microphone, identify your name, and any affiliation, and brief question. Thank you.

MR. SCHROT: Thank you. Jacob Schrot. I work for the Intelligence Committee of the German Parliament. First of all, on Ambassador Wittig's notion that endorsing NATO is a precondition for joining NATO. If that's the case, I'm a bit worried about my own country's NATO membership. The second point I'd like to come back to Article 5 and hybrid threats again. We make a very big deal of the four battalions that are stationed on our Eastern flank. I wonder whether that is a good reason to say that we have invested a lot in deterrence.

If Russia conducts a hybrid operation against one of the Eastern states and it is not Article 5 and we determine it's not Article 5 or we can't agree on it, if little green man capture a town hall and the NATO Council can unanimously agree that the four battalions will have any kind of use, they have to be in their bases, then NATO is not doing anything.

On the other hand, if there's a serious conventional threats, four battalions will be of no use, well, perhaps for a couple of hours until they are overrun. So for my perspective the only reason why we have stationed four battalions is to make sure that if there is a serious aggression from Russia, enough people die from other NATO member states so that we have no chance but invoke Article 5 and perhaps the ambassador of Poland would like to correct me that that was my perception why Poland only accepted America (inaudible) to Poland because that's the only country that Poland accepts as, you know, a credible source of if enough Americans die that there will be a defense to Poland. Perhaps it's a but cynical, but my question is whether, you know, you would share that comment, which of course you will not officially, but perhaps you can talk a little bit.

And second of all, again, what is NATO specifically doing if we have a hybrid threat scenario? Again a Baltic States country like an Ukraine, we cannot anonymously agree on Article 5. What are we specifically doing to help a small country like Lithuania, like Latvia to protect its territory integrity. Thank you.

MR. CORERA: Who wants to go first?

MR. WILCZEK: Yeah. So I will start just with this question about America or NATO. There is no alternative, the United States or NATO. It's -- as you know the deployment is both U.S. and NATO and, of course, the United States is our most important military ally, but at the same time, NATO is even more important because it's larger than the United States. So I don't see any problem here or just any reason to make difference between NATO deployment and the U.S. deployment.

MR. LORINGHOVEN: Yeah. What are we specifically doing? First of all, it's absolutely crucial to improve our situational awareness or understanding of what goes on. So we have developed extremely close ties with the framework nations, the participating nations, and all the host nations. There's really a very well operating network of exchange of information there.

Now if something happens, it would be a political decision to be taken at the NATO Council, and that would depend very much on exactly what would happen, but really the linchpin is to understand the situation well and to be able to attribute it.

MR. WITTIG: Well, I would just add, why are we there with a battalion in each of those countries, because we have skin -- we need to show we have skin in the game. That's the whole point. We don't think a battalion can prevent an incursion of Russia, but it is a sign that whole NATO has skin in this game.

And another point, we were mindful not to discard the NATO-Russian Act of 1997, and we didn't want

to overshoot and give a pretext to Russia then to arm in an outstanding way or amass in an outstanding way forces at the border there. So it was a calibrated measure, but I think it was a pretty strong message and it means a lot. I think for the posture and the fact that we have our soldiers there, American, Canadian, British, German soldiers in those countries means it sends out a strong signal of solidarity.

MR. LORINGHOVEN: Maybe one addition, if I may. And we do a lot to strengthen resilience of NATO members and also partners. And that's absolutely crucial for hybrid and cyber-attacks. That's a big part of our engagement.

MR. CORERA: Oka. I had a question here in the middle.

MR. DORNSTADTER: Good afternoon. Andrew Dornstadter, I'm a Foreign Area Officer in the army and I'm a Aspen Scholar. Gordon, you brought up the example of the British exit from the European Union and that's a credible example of a longstanding membership being challenged by a fracture. Are you concerned about any members of NATO pursuing some similar separation? And if so, where do you think it's realistic and what do you want to do about it?

MR. LORINGHOVEN: Absolutely not concerned, a very simple answer. Nobody seems to be thinking of that. Thankfully that's not a scenario that I deem in any way realistic.

MR. CORERA: I suppose the interesting question is Turkey is a NATO member and Turkey is heading in a different direction to one that it was in the past. I think most people could accept that. I think I saw recently that it's in talks about buying a Russian air defense system, S-400, which is kind of interesting for a NATO country to be purchasing. Can you imagine a scenario in which I mean it's difficult for you all to talk about membership, but it's -- you know that could become an

issue in the future I suppose is my question. I'm not sure if anyone wants to comment on that. That would be my observation.

MR. WILCZEK: For the future, I mean the only thing I would like to mention here is that the Turkey is, from our perspective, a very important NATO member and there is actually a very useful format, you know, Poland has with Romania and Turkey. And we have meetings on various levels quite often like members of this big -- members of this eastern flank of NATO and it's mostly about NATO and about defense. The situation of Turkey is extremely difficult. You know, it's a NATO member but also, you know, their situation in the region is very, very challenging. So it's, you know, very difficult just to evaluate, you know, what they do because they are in the middle of the -- of the crisis I would say nowadays.

MR. WITTIG: I agree. I'll just add. Extremely important, extremely important for this challenge from the South.

MR. WILCZEK: Yeah.

MR. WITTIG: An important contributor to the capabilities of NATO. They're going through a very difficult phase of their domestic development. We have a complicated bilateral relationship as other countries have, but no desire to push turkey out of NATO.

MR. CORERA: Question over here.

MR. SWAN: Yes. My name is Guy Swan. I'm a Vice President at the Association of the US Army. As a retired Army officer, I spent a lot of time in Europe as a NATO officer, largely during the Cold War days, and it struck me that the Alliance has doubled in size since I was serving there. And the modern half, the new members are all virtually from the East, largely speaking. And this -- my point is about burden sharing from Ambassador Wittig. When I speak to American commanders, some of -- some of whom you've talked about, units that are over in

the Eastern part of the Alliance, they seem to think that the 2% military spending, GDP military spending should be measured differently perhaps in terms of perhaps infrastructure. I hear this a lot because of the Soviet period in the East, perhaps not as advanced infrastructure as you have in Western Europe that may be that that burden-sharing could be recalibrated in terms of ports, railroads, things that have a military usage, dual usage with civilian infrastructure but not necessarily direct military spending. What are your thoughts on that?

MR. WITTIG: Well, that's an interesting thought. I know there have been discussions to broaden sort of the character of the contributions, include for instance financial contributions to stabilization measures, or to even include measures to fight migration or things like that. That's a controversial discussion, but in general I would welcome as the challenge of NATO becomes more broad-based and includes even non-military measures, you might also want to think about whatever the number then is, whether it's a 2% or maybe higher, that you include in that ratio also other elements. I think that's an interesting thought.

MR. CORERA: Okay. More questions, one here.

MR. SHAPIRO: Thank you very much. Steve Shapiro Director with BENS and also with the Atlantic Council, and just a few weeks ago I had the privilege of being in Warsaw for the combined global forum that the Atlantic Council puts on with the Polish Institute of International Affairs and General Ben Hodges, Commander U.S. Army, Europe, made a similar point Guy to yours, which was a terrific point. And related to that is a question that he raised and so essentially on his behalf I would raise it to you. Given that the NATO forces, particularly on the Eastern flank, are so few and literally far between. They're dispersed throughout many different countries. He says he's got a terribly difficult time moving around and getting his forces together, whereas Russia has pretty well free hand given Belarus and its own -- and its own large territory. And

as a result, he's calling for something called a -- what she refers to as a military Schengen zone. He finds it quite difficult to move his knight in response to the other guys, knight or rook, given the actual bureaucratic problems that he faces within Europe. Road weight limits for tanks, nighttime force moving restrictions for his forces, noise restrictions, prior advanced notice requirements which are in some cases weeks for him to move his forces around.

So particularly being concerned about the effects that a Zapad exercise might end up in the speed and rapidity and speed and rapidness with which the Russians can move their forces. He says he's completely unable to get there. He can't demonstrate resolve even on a on a show basis given these, what he calls bureaucratic restrictions. And I wonder if some thought is given to a system-wide, NATO-wide provision that provides some discretion to a commander to move about a bit more freely so that NATO can exercise their muscle a little better. Thank you.

MR. LORINGHOVEN: Interesting thought. I'm not aware that this is being discussed in the military circles could be, but I would like to mention that one of the big decisions in 2014 already was not only the enhanced forward presence and tailored forward presence, but also the NATO Response Force. And that was then beefed up at the Warsaw summit to comprise 40,000 troops. And the idea of that is to compliment these forward, these relatively small forward presences, which are essentially a tripwire, you might call them, and make sure that substantial troops can be moved to come to their help in a matter of a few days. And there's one element, which is the VJTF, the Very High Readiness Response Force, which can be redeployed within a matter of a few days. So these are some models that have already been developed and could potentially be expanded.

MR. CORERA: Great. I think there's another question over here.

MR. ZACKEROFF: Yes, thank you. My name is Michael Zakroff. I'm with Sphere Strategies. Where did the 2% of GDP number come from and is it remotely adequate? Thank you.

MR. LORINGHOVEN: Thank you. Well, I'm not quite sure where it came from at the time. I think it preceded the Wales Summit. It was a figure already developed at an earlier stage, but there was a feeling in Wales in 2014 that this should carry more meaning. We need a greater commitment to that. The whole discussion today is about what does that really mean in terms of capabilities. And this was already echoed by some of you, and there's an appreciation that was also formalized at the special meeting of heads of state and government on the 25th of May in Brussels with President Trump, which speaks not only about 2% spending but also about the necessity of capabilities and contributions, i.e., operations.

So that part is not controversial, but I think there are many questions were attached to it, one of them being that every country measures a defense spending in a different way. So it's actually quite difficult to compare these spending contributions.

MR. CORERA: We are nearly out of time. Do we have -- I have one more question here.

MR. LOEB: My name is John Loeb. I was the Ambassador to Denmark in 1981 to 1983. The issue of getting Denmark to put up 2% was an endless conversation. Of course, with them it was an endless conversation also about nuclear weapons, but this is -- and I congratulate the Ambassador from Poland that you were at 2%. I'm not clear again why Germany who is by far the most powerful and richest country and whose relations with our President and Angela Merkel are very delicate it seems, why to make everybody happy? Wouldn't Germany go to 2%? I noticed in a list somewhere that it's not nearly 2%. It's under --

MR. WITTIG: Yeah.

MR. LOEB: -- what is the actual percentage that Germany --

MR. WITTIG: Yeah. Couple of thoughts on this. First of all, I explained that we are moving to 2% in a decade. Second thought, we come from a period where we thought we have to reap our peace dividend. After the fall of the Wall, our army was drawn down from 500,000 to I think now 270,000. That was the spirit of the age. Russia is a partner and the threat -- the territorial threat from the East is no longer there. That changed in 2014, and in so far this was a game-changing moment. One more thought, our -- because of our past, we have an army many people in the '50s, many Germans thought we would never, ever have an army again after the Nazis, but NATO came, invited us, and that was part and parcel of our security to join NATO.

We have an army that is constitutionally a parliamentary army. We cannot deploy a single soldier outside NATO without a mandate from Parliament. That is a total difference from a Presidential system like in the U.S. And we need a budget and we need for every euro that we want to increase our budget, the parliamentary approval. So you have to bring the population along and the parliamentarians, if you want to increase that budget.

Now it is a leadership issue sort of the Chancellor, the Foreign Minister, the Defense Minister have to make their case that the Parliament raises the budget, but this is not self-evident. This is not self-evident that people go along. So that's a domestic restriction and I -- we have a harder time to elicit support from this kind of measure than the President who can just do like this. So you know every country has its own history where we come from. We have a post-Second World War pacifist tradition, a very strong pacifist streak in our population. I think the one who understands that best is General Mattis. He has a lot of experience with NATO allies. He knows the NATO allies where they come from, what is possible and feasible for them, and we

have a friend in him who understands the difficulties that we are challenged with for this goal.

MR. CORERA: Mr. Wittig, thank you very much. I think that is all we have time for today. Thank you to the three Ambassadors in our panel. Thank you.

(Applause)

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