



Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the

**61st Annual Session of the NATO
Parliamentary Assembly,
Stavanger**

10-12 October 2015

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Canberra

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Membership of the Delegation

- Leader** Mr Luke Simpkins MP (Liberal Party of Australia)
Member for Cowan (Western Australia)
- Deputy Leader** Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy (Australian Labor Party)
Senator for Victoria
- Secretary** Mr Richard Selth
Table Office, House of Representatives

Introduction

- 1.1 This report gives an account of the attendance of a delegation from the Parliament of Australia at the 61st Annual Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Stavanger, Norway from 10 to 12 October 2015.
- 1.2 Chapter 2 reports on the proceedings of the Assembly. In 2009 Australia sent a delegation to the Assembly for the first time since 1990, and following the success of that visit the Delegation recommended that a delegation attend subsequent Assemblies every second year.
- 1.3 The membership of the 2015 Delegation is listed at p. iv of this report and the Delegation's program is included as Appendix A. Membership of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and resolutions and addresses are included in Appendices B and C.

Aims and objectives of the Delegation

- 1.4 The Delegation's objectives for its visit were:
 - To observe the 61st NATO Parliamentary Assembly Session;
 - To gain an understanding of the role and responsibilities and priorities of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and renew and strengthen ties with the Assembly; and
 - To exchange views with NATO Parliamentary Assembly colleagues and to gain fresh perspectives on matters related to foreign affairs, defence and security, including the situation in Iraq and Syria.
- 1.5 These objectives were met. In a very condensed program Delegation members had the opportunity to inform themselves about matters relating

to recent developments in relation to the changing role of NATO and issues facing the alliance in a range of areas.

- 1.6 The delegation was pleased to represent the Australian Parliament at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. The visit was interesting and informative, providing members with the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of issues with which Australia has a significant involvement and to exchange views with parliamentary colleagues from a range of NATO member countries.

Acknowledgments

- 1.7 The Delegation wishes to express its appreciation of the efforts of all those who contributed to the success of its visit. In particular, the Delegation wishes to acknowledge the following contributions:

Canberra

- 1.8 The Delegation received oral and written briefings from officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade prior to its departure. The Delegation wishes to record its thanks to all staff who contributed to these briefings and assisted with administrative arrangements for the visit.
- 1.9 The Delegation wishes to thank the staff of the Parliament's International and Parliamentary Relations Office, in particular Mr Paul Jeanroy, for their administrative assistance prior to departure.

Norway

- 1.10 The Delegation wishes to thank HE Damien Miller, Ambassador to Norway, and Second Secretary Ms Rebecca Marshall for their assistance in preparation for, and during its participation in, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Background

- 2.1 The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is an alliance of 28 countries from North America and Europe committed to protecting the security of member countries. It also provides a forum for members to consult on security issues of common concern and to consider joint actions in addressing them. Twenty-two European Union (EU) member states are also members of NATO. The six non-EU NATO members are: the United States, Canada, Norway, Turkey, Iceland and Albania. NATO-led forces are currently contributing to efforts to bring stability to Afghanistan and Kosovo and to counter the threat of piracy off the Horn of Africa. NATO also contributes to peace-keeping efforts in Africa

Australia's relationship with NATO

- 2.2 Since 2006 Australia has been a 'contact country' of NATO and is one of the 'partners across the globe', along with Afghanistan, Iraq, Japan, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand and Mongolia. The levels of engagement between these countries and NATO are different from the formal engagements NATO has established through various initiatives with partners such as the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Partnership for Peace, the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. Partners across the globe develop cooperation with NATO in areas of mutual interest, including emerging security challenges, and some contribute actively to NATO operations.
- 2.3 Australia's relations with NATO have expanded considerably in recent years. Since 2002 Australia and NATO have conducted a strategic dialogue at senior officials level. In 2005 Australia appointed a Defence

Adviser in Brussels to provide more direct dialogue with NATO, and in 2012 Australia's first Ambassador to NATO was appointed. In 2013 the NATO-Australia Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program was established, enabling Australia to participate in additional NATO activities and events with partner countries. In 2014 Australia was designated an 'enhanced partner' as part of NATO's initiative to maintain interoperability with partner countries.

- 2.4 The deployment of Australian forces in Afghanistan under the NATO-led ISAF mission in 2006 was a significant step in the development of relations with NATO. This was the first time that Australian forces had deployed to a NATO-led operation. Australia continues to contribute to the NATO-led effort in Afghanistan and also to NATO's counter-piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia.

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly

- 2.5 The NATO Parliamentary Assembly serves as the consultative inter-parliamentary organisation for the North Atlantic Alliance. It brings together legislators from NATO member countries to consider security-related issues of common interest and concern.
- 2.6 Following the creation of NATO in 1949, an annual conference of NATO parliamentarians was established in 1955. The Assembly provides an essential link between NATO and the parliaments of its member nations. The Secretary General of NATO provides a response to all Assembly recommendations and resolutions adopted in plenary sessions.
- 2.7 The Assembly provides a forum for international parliamentary dialogue on a range of security, political and economic matters. Its principal objective is to foster mutual understanding among Alliance parliamentarians of the key security challenges facing the transatlantic partnership.
- 2.8 Since its creation in 1955 the Assembly has provided a forum for members of parliament from across the Atlantic Alliance to discuss and influence decisions on Alliance security. Through its work the Assembly facilitates parliamentary awareness and understanding of the key issues affecting the security of the Euro-Atlantic area, and supports national parliamentary oversight of defence and security. Crucially, it helps to strengthen the transatlantic relationship and the values which underpin the Alliance. The Assembly is institutionally separate from NATO, but serves as an essential link between NATO and the parliaments of the NATO nations. It provides greater transparency of NATO policies, and

fosters better understanding of the Alliance's objectives and missions among legislators and citizens of the Alliance.¹

- 2.9 Since the end of the Cold War, the Assembly has assumed a new role by integrating into its work parliamentarians from countries seeking a closer association with NATO. Through this form of parliamentary diplomacy, the Assembly contributes to mutual understanding and to the strengthening of parliamentary democracy throughout the Euro-Atlantic region and beyond, thereby complementing and reinforcing NATO's own program of partnership and co-operation.
- 2.10 The Assembly consists of 257 delegates from the 28 NATO member countries. Each delegation is based on the country's size and reflects the political composition of the parliament, therefore representing a broad spectrum of political opinion.
- 2.11 Delegates from thirteen associate member countries, four Mediterranean associate countries, as well as parliamentary observer delegations from eight other countries – including Australia – and three inter-parliamentary assemblies, also take part in its activities, bringing the total number of delegates to approximately 360. A list of members is included as Appendix B to this report.
- 2.12 The Assembly's governing body is the Standing Committee, which is composed of the head of each member delegation, the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer and the Secretary General.
- 2.13 There are two plenary sessions each year: a Spring Session, usually towards the end of May, and an Annual Session in October or November. The sessions are held in member or associate member countries.
- 2.14 The Assembly's five committees meet during plenary sessions, and occasionally at other times. They are charged with examining major contemporary issues in their fields. The committees are:
- Civil Dimension of Security;
 - Defence and Security;
 - Economics and Security;
 - Political; and
 - Science and Technology.
- 2.15 The committees and sub-committees produce reports, which are discussed in draft form at the Assembly's Spring Session. The reports are then revised and up-dated for discussion, amendment and adoption at the Assembly's Annual Session.

¹ NATO Parliamentary Assembly website, 14 December 2015, <http://www.nato-pa.int/>

- 2.16 At the Annual Session, the committees produce policy recommendations which are voted on by the full Assembly and forwarded to the North Atlantic Council. As well as meetings during Sessions, the committees and sub-committees meet several times a year in member and associate nations where they receive briefings from leading government and parliamentary representatives, as well as senior academics and experts.
- 2.17 Other Assembly bodies include the Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group to enhance parliamentary dialogue and understanding with countries of the Middle East and the North African region, the Ukraine-NATO Inter-parliamentary Council, and the Georgia-NATO Inter-Parliamentary Council. The NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee was discontinued in April 2014.
- 2.18 The headquarters of the Assembly's International Secretariat is located in central Brussels. The International Secretariat is responsible for all administration and the bulk of research and analysis that supports the Assembly's committees, sub-committees and other groups. The Assembly is directly funded by member parliaments and governments, and is financially and administratively separate from NATO itself.

The Delegation's Program

- 2.19 The Delegation arrived in Stavanger on 9 October and was briefed by HE Damien Miller, Australian Ambassador to Denmark, Norway and Iceland. On 10-12 October Delegation members participated in the 2011 Annual Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. On 11 October the Delegation met with members of the United Kingdom delegation to discuss a range of matters of mutual interest and on 12 October the Delegation met with members of the Dutch delegation, principally to discuss matters associated with the loss of Malaysia Airlines MH17 and the impending release of the report of the Dutch Safety Board.
- 2.20 Approximately 250 delegates from more than 50 countries attended the 2015 Annual Session in Stavanger. Delegates discussed a range of issues including terrorism, the conflict in Iraq and Syria, the refugee crisis in Europe and the situation in Ukraine. A recurring theme in different meetings was the threat posed by Russia's increasingly aggressive foreign policy.
- 2.21 On the morning of the Assembly's first day, 10 October, news was received of the bombing of the Ankara railway station in Turkey, in which 102 people were killed and more than 400 injured. This shocking event featured in many of the discussions.

- 2.22 On 10-11 October Delegation members attended meetings of the Assembly's committees, welcoming the opportunity to hear from specialists in a range of fields and to participate in discussions. With five committees meeting concurrently over two days it was not possible for Delegation members to attend all sessions but summaries of key sessions attended by members are presented below. A list of resolutions and reports adopted by the committees and by the plenary session of the Assembly is included in Appendix C to this report.
- 2.23 On 12 December Delegation members attended the plenary sitting of the Assembly. The addresses by the President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Prime Minister of Norway and the Secretary-General of NATO are included in Appendix C to this report.

NATO Parliamentary Assembly Committee Meetings

Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security

- 2.24 The Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security heard presentations on terrorism and extremism from Dr Peter Nesser, Senior Researcher at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, and Professor Tore Bjørgo from the Norwegian Police University College.
- 2.25 Dr Nesser began by stating that the number of terrorism plots in Europe has risen over the last two decades and that the distinction between 'home-grown' and 'foreign' terrorism was losing relevance as the nature of the threat has become trans-national, often with both domestic and external elements. He also noted the move to decentralised forms of terrorism, with groups or individuals operating independently of any central command structure.
- 2.26 Professor Bjørgo spoke on possible approaches to preventing terrorism and advocated a holistic approach involving short-term deterrents and long-term measures to protect vulnerable targets, delegitimise terrorism and address the root causes and motivations for involvement in terrorism. He stated that the main challenge is to make the short-term and long-term strategies support rather than undermine each other.
- 2.27 Delegation members participated in the discussion and question and answer session that followed the two presentations. One of the issues raised was the increasingly early age at which individuals are being radicalised. The Delegation cited the shooting of a civilian police worker in Parramatta by a fifteen year-old boy only ten days earlier as a disturbing example of this trend.
- 2.28 Another issue is the difficulty of establishing consistent counter-terrorism measures across countries with different legal systems and attitudes to

matters such as censorship of the internet, surveillance and freedom of speech.

- 2.29 The presentations from Dr Nesser and Professor Bjørge confirmed trends which the Australian Delegation had noted during discussions at the 2011 Assembly: that terrorist activity was becoming increasingly decentralised and that small groups or single individuals were able to fund terrorist activity with relatively small amounts.
- 2.30 The meeting then discussed the Committee's draft report *Challenges In Addressing Home-grown Terrorism*, including consideration of the return of foreign fighters, the use of social media in recruitment, the development of de-radicalisation programs and the need for increasing co-operation between authorities in different countries. The report was adopted unanimously.
- 2.31 At another session Delegation members heard a presentation from the Committee's Special Rapporteur Ulla Schmidt on the draft report *Transition in Afghanistan: Implications for Central Asia*. Ms Schmidt noted that the country had undergone a critical year of political and security transition, with the end of the NATO-led ISAF mission and the assumption by Afghan authorities of full responsibility for security.
- 2.32 The first democratically elected government remains functional and its security forces have control over most of the country, although it remains one of the most insecure places in the world. Anti-government forces have the capacity to carry out deadly attacks on a large scale and it has been confirmed that groups affiliated with ISIS are operating in the country and becoming an increasingly significant part of the insurgency.
- 2.33 Ms Schmidt emphasised the crucial importance of Afghanistan's improving relationship with Pakistan and noted the latter's role in facilitating the first direct meeting between the Afghan government and representatives of the Taliban. She stated that no long-term solution for Afghanistan was possible without the support of Pakistan.
- 2.34 In the second half of her presentation Ms Schmidt gave an overview of the situation in the Central Asian republics and the extent to which they are affected by the instability in Afghanistan. She noted their common concern about the effect of the developments in Afghanistan and the potential spillover of problems such as extremism, increased drug trafficking and the flow of refugees. Competition for water resources is also an increasingly significant issue. Ms Schmidt concluded by emphasising the need for the international community to provide countries in the region with political, economic and technological support.
- 2.35 Delegation members took part in an in-depth discussion following the presentation, which included consideration of electoral reform, gender

- equality, governance and other issues. The report was adopted unanimously.
- 2.36 At another session of the Committee Delegation members heard a presentation from Akaash Maharaj, CEO of the Global Organisation for Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), on Corruption and Security from Central Asia to Eastern Europe.
- 2.37 Mr Maharaj noted that the developing world loses \$10 through corruption for every \$1 received in aid. He stated that corruption has a direct impact on security by delegitimising the state, fomenting public grievance and unrest, supporting radicalism and damaging the state's ability to detect or respond to threats.
- 2.38 Mr Maharaj suggested that Afghanistan was a notable example of how corruption can affect a mission's success. He noted that the country was 172nd of 175 nations on the Corruption Perception Index, that one third of households have to pay bribes, totalling \$1 billion annually, for public services and that 26 per cent of Afghans feel that corruption is the greatest challenge facing the country, while only 7 per cent hold that view of the Taliban.
- 2.39 The evidence suggests that the best antidote to corruption is strong democratic institutions. Democratic societies always do better in the medium- and long-term than corrupt states. The aim in any intervention should always be not just to defeat an enemy but to leave behind a less corrupt and more democratic society. Mr Maharaj argued that losing the battle against corruption inevitably means losing the battle in the field, and suggested that corruption as a tactic to co-opt local power brokers will always rebound.
- 2.40 His conclusions were that anti-corruption must be an intrinsic part of the objectives of an engagement, that aid must be measured by outcomes not by spending, that governments and international institutions should only enter an engagement if there is the political will to enforce meaningful oversight, and that national policy should have anti-corruption tools as part of foreign policy and defence apparatuses.
- 2.41 Delegation members found Mr Maharaj's view that state building should be a priority from the outset of any engagement and that participants should enter a conflict with a realistic and precise vision of the departure conditions particularly persuasive. They participated in the lively discussion which followed the presentation.
- 2.42 In other sessions the Committee discussed Russian propaganda and disinformation, the situation in Ukraine and other issues. A report was adopted on *The battle for the hearts and minds: countering propaganda attacks against the Euro- Atlantic community*.

Defence and Security Committee

- 2.43 The Defence and Security Committee heard a presentation from Peter Roberts, Senior Research Fellow for Sea Power and Maritime Studies at the Royal United Services Institute, on *Seaborne Migrations – Global Experiences and Lessons Learned*.
- 2.44 Mr Roberts expressed the view that migration is a symptom, not the problem itself, and that the only solution to the migration crisis is improving conditions in the migrants' home countries, which is a long-term problem. In discussion following the presentation it was noted that only 40 per cent of the humanitarian needs of the 16 million people displaced by the conflict in Syria are being met in the immediate region, thus encouraging large-scale migration.
- 2.45 Mr Roberts questioned the approach of European authorities to the problem of seaborne migration, suggesting that a military response and looking to anti-piracy lessons was inappropriate. He suggested that it was a constabulary task for which militaries are not well suited.
- 2.46 The committee also discussed post-ISAF Afghanistan, NATO and Russia, the challenge posed by ISIS, strategic issues affecting the Arctic region and hybrid warfare. Reports were adopted on Afghanistan and hybrid warfare.

Political Committee

- 2.47 The committee discussed a range of matters, including Russia's foreign and security policy, recent developments in the Middle East and NATO partnerships.
- 2.48 In discussion of the committee's draft report on *NATO's partners across the Globe*, reference was made to Australia's very significant contribution to the NATO mission in Afghanistan and also to the wider perspective on the region that Australia can offer.

Science and Technology Committee

- 2.49 The committee discussed climate change and international security, social media and terrorist propaganda, challenges and opportunities in the high north, Russian military modernisation and other issues.

Economics and Security Committee

- 2.50 The committee discussed energy markets, the Ukrainian economy, terrorism financing and other issues.

Meeting with the Delegation of the United Kingdom

- 2.51 On 11 October the Delegation took the opportunity to meet members of the delegation from the United Kingdom. Discussion ensued on a number

of subjects, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iraq and Syria and a range of parliamentary issues.

Meeting with the Delegation of the Netherlands

- 2.52 On 12 October the Delegation took the opportunity to meet members of the delegation from the Netherlands. Members of the two delegations discussed the loss of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, attempts to recover the bodies of those killed and the investigation of the circumstances of the crash. Members of the Dutch delegation expressed their great appreciation of the efforts of Foreign Minister Bishop and all Australian officials involved in the process.
- 2.53 The impending release of the report of the Dutch Safety Board was noted, and its possible impact on the families of those killed. (The report was released the following day and concluded that MH17 was brought down by a Buk-system surface-to-air missile fired from eastern Ukraine.)

Plenary Sitting

- 2.54 Delegation members attended the plenary sitting of the Assembly on 12 October. The sitting was addressed by the President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Hon Michael Turner; the Prime Minister of Norway, Erna Solberg; and the Secretary General of NATO and Chairman of the North Atlantic Council, Jens Stoltenberg. These addresses are included in Appendix C to this report.
- 2.55 There were common themes in the remarks of the three speakers. Security concerns relating to Russia were noted as a significant challenge. These include a growing Russian military presence in the high north, Russia's actions in Ukraine and Russian 'borderisation' in other areas, Russia's role in Syria and a more aggressive and less predictable Russian foreign policy in general. The Syrian conflict, ISIS and the growing instability across the Middle East were also raised.
- 2.56 Speakers referred to the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales and the very significant reinforcement of NATO's collective defence capabilities agreed at that meeting. They also referred to the need to integrate more effectively NATO's air, sea and land capabilities in the face of a wide and complex range of threats. The need for improved cyber-defences was also raised.
- 2.57 The Secretary of the Norwegian Refugee Council, Jan Egeland, gave a presentation on the refugee crisis. He noted that there are currently 60 million people displaced around the world as a result of conflict, the greatest number since the Second World War. Of these, 16 million are displaced as a result of the conflict in Syria.

- 2.58 Mr Egeland outlined the problems facing his organisation and other relief agencies in providing assistance, and the wider challenges posed by the refugee crisis. Delegation members found the presentation a very interesting perspective on some of the consequences of matters discussed in the various committee meetings.
- 2.59 The Assembly adopted a number of resolutions (see Appendix C).

Conclusions

- 2.60 Delegation members found attendance at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly to be a valuable opportunity to inform themselves on a wide range of issues, to hear from civilian and military experts in various fields and to exchange views with fellow parliamentarians from NATO member countries and other observer delegations.
- 2.61 As noted by previous delegations to the Assembly, there is value in Members and Senators participating in such events and gaining an understanding of relevant issues which they can communicate to colleagues and constituents.
- 2.62 While the views of the Australian Delegation did not always align with the views of those presenting, the same can be said regarding government perspectives and parliamentary perspectives not always being the same. It therefore remains important for engagement to continue and for the exchange of ideas to be developed through inter-parliamentary dialogue of the kind in which members participated during the Assembly.

Luke Simpkins MP
Delegation Leader



Appendix A – Delegation Program 9-13 October 2015

Friday 9 October – Stavanger

- 1530 Arrive Stavanger Airport
1630 NATO Parliamentary Assembly Registration
1830 Dinner hosted by HE Damien Miller, Australian Ambassador to Denmark, Norway and Iceland

Saturday 10 October – Stavanger

- 0930-1800 NATO Parliamentary Assembly, committee meetings

Sunday 11 October – Stavanger

- 0830-1600 NATO Parliamentary Assembly, committee meetings
1230-1330 Meeting with the delegation of the United Kingdom
2000 Reception hosted by Mr Olemic Thommessen, President of the Norwegian Storting

Monday 12 October – Stavanger

- 0900-1600 NATO Parliamentary Assembly, plenary session
1000-1030 Meeting with the delegation of the Netherlands

Tuesday 13 October – Stavanger

- 1110 Depart Stavanger



Appendix B – Members of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Albania	Belgium
Bulgaria	Canada
Croatia	Czech Republic
Denmark	Estonia
France	Germany
Greece	Hungary
Iceland	Italy
Latvia	Lithuania
Luxembourg	Netherlands
Norway	Poland
Portugal	Romania
Slovenia	Slovakia
Spain	Turkey
United Kingdom	United States

Associate Delegations

Ukraine
Austria
Azerbaijan
Serbia
Sweden
Switzerland
Finland
Georgia
Armenia
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Moldova
Montenegro
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The European Parliament**Regional Partner and Mediterranean Associate Member Delegations**

Algeria
Morocco
Israel
Jordan

Parliamentary Observer Delegations

Assembly of Kosovo
Australia
Egypt
Japan
Kazakhstan
Palestinian National Council
Republic of Korea
Tunisia

Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Delegations

OSCE PA
PACE



Appendix C – Addresses, resolutions and reports

Address by Hon Michael R Turner, President, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, delivered at the plenary sitting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly on 12 October 2015

Mr President, Prime Minister, Colleagues, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

NATO took a leap forward just over one year ago at the Summit of Allied Heads of State and Government in Wales. Faced with Russia's renewed aggressiveness and growing instability across the Middle East and North Africa, the Alliance put in place new measures and made new commitments to ensure that it can deter and defend against external threats, and meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

This ensured that the Alliance remains the cornerstone of security for all its members and that it will not leave any of its members to face today's challenges alone. In other words, the Wales Summit reaffirmed the central feature of our Alliance: collective defence. A threat to one is a threat to all.

Less than one year from now, Alliance leaders will meet again, this time in Warsaw. That will be an opportunity to review the implementation of decisions taken in Wales. But, also to ask what more needs to be done.

Are we on track with our efforts to reverse the overall decline in defence budgets, and are the Wales commitments sufficient?

There is no doubt that a lot of important work has already been done. NATO has strengthened its presence in Eastern Allies, created a new rapid response force, and adopted an intensive exercise schedule. All this will enhance both our deterrence and preparedness.

However, the world has moved on, and we must adapt our response accordingly.

First, in Ukraine: Weapons have been temporarily silenced and some are being withdrawn, and that is certainly a welcome development. However, we have not been able to address the fundamental challenge that Russia has posed. As we speak, Russia continues to illegally occupy Crimea, and it continues to support so-called separatists in Eastern Ukraine, both politically and militarily. This is an

attack not just on Ukraine's territorial integrity but on international norms and principles – the norms and principles that all of us uphold.

Meanwhile, Russia has intensified its pressure on its other neighbours. It continues to illegally occupy Georgia's provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and through the so-called "borderization", it is actively seeking to expand its reach deeper into Georgian-administered territory. Moldova, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Central Asia are all targets of Moscow's efforts to re-establish control over its neighbourhood.

Second, with its reckless military activism in Syria, Moscow is playing a very dangerous game. The violation of Turkish airspace by Russian planes earlier this week is unacceptable and irresponsible.

Instead of assisting international efforts to combat ISIS, Russia is propping up the murderous regime that created this crisis in the first place, and whose actions have forced millions of people out of their homes. Worse, Russia's support for Bashar Assad has been giving ISIS breathing space and allowed it to seize new ground. In other words, by supporting Bashar, Russia is in fact also supporting the terrorists of ISIS.

Third, in the North, Russia is expanding its claims and military presence. Its investment in Arctic capabilities already surpasses some of ours. As we heard during this session, this is a direct concern for Norway. But it should be a concern for all of us.

Meanwhile, Russia is modernizing its nuclear arsenal, and developing a more aggressive and forward posture. Moscow has already violated its commitments under the INF Treaty, and is talking about deploying nuclear weapons in Crimea.

On this issue as on others, we should take Russia's threats seriously. And respond appropriately. Part of the reason we have failed to prevent Russia's renewed aggressiveness is that we have for too long been looking at Russia's actions as separate and unrelated developments. We must put together the pieces of the puzzle and look at the whole picture.

And this picture tells me that Russia is implementing a global strategy that is destabilizing and dangerous.

In this context, any talk of lifting or relaxing sanctions would be not only premature but also dangerous. We must step up – not step down – the pressure on Russia and President Putin.

And we must intensify our own efforts too.

Defence budgets are a particular concern for me. In my own country, our electorate is acutely aware that the United States continues to pay a disproportionately high share into NATO. Sadly, this is not a question of perception, but a reflection of the reality: we must have a more equitable division of labour and effort within our Alliance to ensure its long-term health and to ensure that we have the necessary public and political support on both sides of the

Atlantic. I am a staunch supporter of NATO and have done my utmost to make the case for continued US engagement and for recognizing the many aspects of Europe's contribution to NATO. But the issue will not die unless we can continue to point at concrete achievements.

This discussion on burden-sharing is an excellent example of what our Assembly's role can be. Though this organization, I and my colleagues on the US delegation are able to share our concerns with all of you. Conversely, several of you have joined me on Capitol Hill to explain NATO's ongoing relevance and Europe's contribution to the Alliance to more sceptical members of Congress. This type of parliamentary diplomacy is fundamental.

The bottom line is that in the face of the serious challenges we face today in the East, in the North and in the South, we must be guided not by what divides us - fear or national egoism -, but by what unites us: our commitment to common values, to the collective defence of the transatlantic region, and to global peace and security. And we should embrace those who share this vision.

It is good to say our door is open. But what use is that to aspirants if we jam the corridor with obstacles? The time has come to clear those obstacles and let Montenegro actually pass through that door.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords. It is remarkable how far the region has come in those past 20 years. And Montenegro's membership in NATO will be another milestone in that impressive transformation. It will also show others in the region and beyond that we are serious about the open door, that it is a real prospect, and that it is within the reach of those who apply themselves to it. So I hope that later today, we can adopt an unambiguous call for NATO governments to invite Montenegro to join without further delay.

It was NATO's intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina that made the Dayton Peace Accords possible. It was because Europeans and North Americans joined forces in the face of genocide that we could put an end to the deadly war in the former Yugoslavia and open the way for peace and reconciliation in the region.

The same is true in Afghanistan. Our forces - US, Canadian and European forces - stood side by side to defeat Al Qaeda and help the Afghan people lay the bases for their new state. I would like to pay tribute to all the men and women of our armed forces for their service and sacrifice.

NATO's combat mission ended in December last year. However, we continue to support Afghanistan both militarily and economically. Just before we left for Stavanger, the Commander of NATO and US forces in Afghanistan, General John Campbell, briefed Congress on his assessment of the situation. I strongly agree with General Campbell that we should base our decisions on the level and form of our support on a realistic assessment of developments in Afghanistan and the region. In fact, the United States government is expected to make its assessment in the coming month.

There are important lessons to be learnt from our experiences in the Western Balkans and in Afghanistan: Europe and North America are strongest when they act together; and with NATO, we have a unique instrument which can support peace through credible strength and solidarity. Our transatlantic link, our great Alliance, are precious assets. We should cherish them and give ourselves the means that will enable us to continue to be a force for good, a force for peace and security for our own citizens, but also for the world.

Address by Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway, delivered at the plenary sitting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly on 12 October 2015

It is a great honour to welcome you to Norway and to the city of Stavanger.

I had the privilege of serving as a NATO parliamentarian for several years. And I am pleased to see familiar faces among the distinguished representatives present here today.

We meet in what is widely known as the oil capital of Norway. But Stavanger also has a proud tradition of hosting NATO. In fact, the Joint Warfare Centre – NATO's training focal point – is the third NATO body to have its headquarters at Jåttå.

Sixty-six years after it was established, NATO remains the bedrock of Norway's security. When we joined NATO, we joined a political and military alliance based on shared values. A community founded on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. A community that could safeguard our freedom and security – by political as well as military means.

The rationale for our membership is as relevant today as then. The solidarity of our allies is the foundation of our collective defence. It is our key to peace and stability.

Last time I attended a NATO Parliamentary Assembly, in May 2013, I was head of the Norwegian delegation.

Since then much of the discussion has shifted to security concerns in our own neighbourhood. We are witnessing major divisions in terms of ideology, interests, values and world views. On a scale not seen since the end of the Cold War. These divisions are becoming increasingly evident in many areas.

I would like to point towards two fundamental strategic challenges for NATO:

First, a less predictable Russia. Russia's aggression and violations of international law in Ukraine is unacceptable. It has brought armed conflict back to the European continent. Russia is increasing its military capabilities. And it has shown that it is willing to achieve strategic goals by military means. We are concerned about Russia's intentions in Syria, and the broader implications of its actions.

Although the threat against NATO remains low, we are witnessing increased military activity along NATO's borders – and particularly in the Baltic Sea area.

Allied and non-allied countries are experiencing border violations. This has raised legitimate concerns in several European capitals. The Russian concept of 'spheres of influence' – which we cannot accept – is especially worrying for some allies. There is a lack of trust. The potential for escalation is obvious.

Second, the security challenges posed by war and instability to the south of Europe. These challenges are very different from those to the east. Radicalisation and terror are growing and spreading. ISIL's brutal onslaught in Syria and Iraq has forced millions to leave their homes. In Syria alone, 12 million people have fled from the ravages of war. The flow of refugees to Europe raises serious challenges. The security situation is complex. The humanitarian crisis is increasing day by day. The 'belt of insecurity' that stretches from the Sahel through the Middle East is of profound concern.

Today's security landscape is unique. Not just because new threats have appeared, or because old ones have returned. But because there is such a wide array of security challenges – old and new, local and global, military and political – and because they are interrelated.

Many of these challenges cannot be solved by military means alone. A holistic approach is needed.

NATO must play its role, and be prepared to meet the challenges that arise. This means that NATO must continue to adapt to the changing situation. Norway will play an active part in this important work.

Turning to the High North.

Norway's maritime areas span from the Skagerrak to the Arctic Ocean.

Norway has jurisdiction over maritime areas covering more than 2 million square kilometres. That is almost seven times the area of our mainland, and just slightly less than the area of the Mediterranean. More than 80 % of our sea areas are north of the Arctic Circle. Norway and Russia have agreed on a maritime delimitation line and our shared border is 196 kilometres long.

It is an absolute Norwegian priority to maintain the High North as an area of stability, transparency and international cooperation. Many aspects of this cooperation have been successful. The Arctic Council is a key arena for wide-ranging cooperation. Furthermore, the five coastal states bordering the Arctic Ocean have committed to uphold the Law of the Sea in the area.

Although the High North remains a region of low tension, we see that the Russian armed forces are undergoing a significant modernisation. We are also seeing that Russian flights and naval operations in the area are being carried out with greater complexity. On land, we are seeing much greater capability for strategic mobility.

We do not consider Russia to be a direct threat to Norway or Norwegian interests. But the strategic changes in the security environment in our part of the world force us to think differently.

Our history of cooperation with Russia in the north goes back decades. Our aim is to maintain cooperation on coast and border guard activities, security matters, search and rescue preparedness, as well as in the areas of fisheries, environmental protection and nuclear safety.

We are also continuing our engagement with Russia within the frameworks of the Arctic Council and the Barents cooperation.

Norway and Russia have gradually expanded our contacts and cooperation based on mutual interests and international law. Tensions have been reduced and trust has been built. However, Russia's actions in and around Ukraine are undermining all this.

We have to be realistic. The current crisis in Ukraine is not a temporary one, and there is no quick fix.

It is up to Russia to rebuild relations to NATO and EU. Norway supports measures in NATO that can bring relations with Russia onto a more constructive course without compromising our principles. In times like these, it is of particular importance to pursue opportunities to build trust and find ways to mitigate the risk of accidents and unintended incidents.

Military activity is a natural part of any nation's efforts to ensure security and stability. This also applies in the High North. Norway takes its responsibility in this region seriously. It is important that NATO follows developments closely and maintains situational awareness.

NATO needs to focus more on its maritime domain, including in the High North. This is of strategic importance. Sea denial will seriously hamper NATO's ability to protect its members. It is vital therefore, that NATO continues to develop its maritime capability. We must make sure that we conduct relevant training and exercises. The maritime domain should be an important part of NATO's adaptation.

Norway will host NATO's high visibility exercise in 2018. This will be an opportunity to raise the alliance's awareness of the High North and the importance of NATO's maritime flanks.

At the Summit in Wales, we agreed on the biggest reinforcement of NATO's collective defence capabilities since the end of the Cold War. This includes our rapid response capability.

In Warsaw, we will be able to show that most of the decisions from Wales have been implemented. This is important. But – given the current security environment – there is a need for continuous adaptation.

In Warsaw, we will therefore need to look ahead, and seek to ensure sustainable long-term adaptation. We need to prepare NATO for security challenges that could arise in the south, east, north or west. We must make sure that NATO can continue to provide security and stability through credible deterrence and collective defence.

Our ability to do so will determine the future relevance of NATO.

Now that we are mid-way between the summit in Wales and the upcoming summit in Warsaw, I would like to share with you some further thoughts about the future direction of NATO:

First, we need to invest in our own security. We cannot take our transatlantic relations for granted. All allies – Norway included – need to share the burden. We need to ensure that we have the capabilities we need to meet the broad range of current and future security challenges. We must take part in exercises and continue to build capacity and interoperability, including with other partners. We will also continue to increase our defence budget in the years to come. For example, we are planning to increase next year's defence budget by 9.8 %. And we will invest smartly, to ensure the best possible results. Next year, Norway is planning to spend more than 26 % on major acquisitions.

The Norwegian Government will present a Long Term Plan for the Defence Sector to the Parliament in 2016 that will set the basis for the future development of the defence sector.

Second, the unity and solidarity of NATO allies has been clearly demonstrated in the response to the crisis in Ukraine. Reassurance measures were quickly put in place to ensure the security of our eastern allies. This is what NATO is all about. And this is what we shall continue to foster.

Political solidarity and cohesion are essential for effective decision-making and for NATO's ability to respond in a timely manner. There is nothing new in this.

Third, instability in our immediate neighbourhood poses a direct threat to our security and stability. This means that it is more important than ever to work with our partners. Building partner capabilities and promoting security sector reform are important roles for NATO, and a direct investment in our own security. We need to give priority to areas where NATO can add value, such as security sector reform and military training.

Fourth, integration into Euro-Atlantic structures has been a strong driver of democratic reforms in Europe over the past 20 years. It has led to unprecedented levels of wealth, liberty and stability in our region. NATO must not compromise on its open-door policy. We must continue to work with partners – and be ready to welcome all European democracies that can meet the standards and requirements of membership.

Fifth, the alliance will benefit from closer cooperation with other organisations. This is obvious, even more so in the current security situation. NATO-EU cooperation is of strategic importance and must be high on the agenda as we prepare for the Warsaw summit. Enhanced cooperation within areas like hybrid warfare, maritime security and capacity building could be further explored.

This autumn, the Norwegian frigate Fridtjof Nansen is taking part in NATO's standing naval forces. The vessel is named after Fridtjof Nansen, the Norwegian

explorer, diplomat and humanitarian, who once said: 'The greatest thing in human life is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving.'

These words apply to NATO today. We need to look ahead. We need to adapt to a changing security environment. In political terms. And in military terms. We need to adapt as an organisation. And most importantly, we need to move together, as a united alliance. This is where our strength lies.

Address by Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary-General, delivered at the plenary sitting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly on 12 October 2015

Prime Minister, President of the Assembly, Parliamentarians, Ladies and gentlemen,

Det er godt å være her i Stavanger i dag. Hello, it's good to be here in Stavanger.

It's good to be here today with you, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. As a former parliamentarian, I know how important your role is. Representing your constituents, holding your governments, and organisations like NATO, to account for the money they spend and for the actions they take.

It is also a pleasure to address you here in Stavanger, the host city of the NATO Joint Warfare Centre. Hosting this Centre is yet another example of how Norway has always been a committed NATO Ally. Another example is the contributions Norway are making in the High North. This is important for Norway and it is important for NATO. The high north is still characterised by low tensions and cooperation. But there are growing concerns. We have witnessed increased Russian military presence. And the region is not immune from developments elsewhere. This underlines the importance of Norway's contribution to security in this region, to situational awareness and a predictable military presence. This is important for the security of Norway and NATO as a whole. But despite this commitment, after the Cold War, and in reaction to more peaceful times, Norway and many other countries cut defence spending. I remember this well, as I was Minister of Finance in the 1990s.

But now our world has changed once again. And in recent years, Norway and an growing number of Allies, have been increasing their defence spending.

Once there was a time to collect the peace dividend. But now is the time to invest in our defence. And I would like to commend the Norwegian government for increasing defence spending in the proposed budget for 2016.

For over the last couple of years we have seen dramatic changes. From the annexation of Crimea to the collapse of the Arab Spring. Our world has become less predictable and more dangerous. With new developments almost every day. As demonstrated by the tragic attack this weekend in Ankara. I offer my sincere condolences to those affected.

We are also concerned about Russia's current actions in Ukraine and most recently in the Middle East. About its unacceptable violation of Turkish and NATO airspace. And about Russia's substantial military build-up, its air strikes and its cruise missile attacks.

Many countries from the region and every NATO Ally is taking part in the US-led mission against ISIL. Russia should play a constructive role in the fight against ISIL. To support the Assad regime is not constructive. It is only prolonging the war.

A political solution is needed more than ever. We fully support and encourage all efforts by the UN and others to find a negotiated settlement to the conflict in Syria. We also need a peaceful and negotiated solution in Ukraine. I am encouraged that the ceasefire is holding in the eastern Ukraine. That heavy weapons are being removed, and that the announced elections outside the framework of Ukrainian law have been postponed.

But the situation remains fragile. Russia has a special responsibility as it continues to support the separatists in Eastern Ukraine.

The crises in Syria and Ukraine underline the importance of what NATO is doing. Increasing our ability to protect our Allies, to reinforce and to deploy.

During the last year, we have:

Doubled the size of the NATO Response Force, making it more ready and more capable, Established a high readiness Joint Task Force, able to move within a matter of days,

We have increased our presence in the east, with more planes in the air, more ships at sea and more boots on the ground. We have established six new headquarters in our eastern Allies, with two more on the way, And we will soon deploy new advanced surveillance drones in Sicily. We have improved our decision making. And increased our exercises three-fold. Including exercise 'Trident Juncture' that is happening right now across Portugal, Spain and Italy, our largest exercise for more than a decade.

This is the greatest increase in our collective defence since the Cold War. And we are just as able to protect Turkey as we are to protect our eastern Allies. NATO's deterrence is significant and it is real. If Turkey needs NATO's help, NATO will be there.

This instability which surrounds us is our new strategic reality, and it will be with us for the long-term. So our Alliance must also adapt to the long-term.

I see three core issues as part of this, which I will briefly outline now. And afterwards, I can go into more detail during questions.

First, we must modernise our deterrence.

'Deterrence' is often seen as some kind of old-fashioned, Cold War concept. But being strong enough to stop others from attacking you is not old fashioned. Being strong enough so that your people can go about their business without the fear of

war is not old fashioned. We have strong forces not because we want to fight a war, but because we want to prevent war.

We face a wide and complex range of threats. Traditional and asymmetric. From the east and from the south. Even from cyber space.

If we are to respond to all of these, then we must modernise our deterrence. With better intelligence and early warning. A better integration of our land, sea and air forces. And significantly better cyber defences.

A strong defence is also key to addressing the second challenge Our relationship with Russia.

There is no contradiction between being strong and being engaged. On the contrary, I believe that a strong defence forms the basis for a constructive relationship with Russia.

But there must be no doubt. Engagement is not the same as accepting a new status quo, or giving Russia a free hand. As we approach our Warsaw Summit, we will assess the long-term implications of the current crisis on our relations with Russia

Then, the third important issue: the South.

We face turmoil, violence and instability from Afghanistan, through the Middle East and across North Africa. This is a huge and complex challenge. A challenge that demands a comprehensive response, from the entire international community.

Primarily, from the countries in the region, the ones on the front line of the fight against the extremists. But also from international bodies like the UN and the EU, From regional organisations like the Africa Union, And by Allies, who have much to contribute. Together, we need to address the security situation, the humanitarian and refugee crises and the economic challenges.

This is a huge task. And NATO has a role to play.

NATO must be ready and able to deploy forces when needed. But we also have to get better at projecting stability without necessarily deploying large combat forces.

Call it Resolute Support, Defence Capacity Building or Partnership What matters is that from Afghanistan to Morocco, and many places in between, NATO is helping other countries to defend themselves. And to stabilise their own neighbourhoods. For if they are more stable, we are more secure.

By building up the capacity of countries like Tunisia, Jordan or Mauritania. Helping others, like Iraq and – at some point – Libya, to strengthen their security.

Our world is changing. NATO is changing. But what we have achieved so far is not enough. We need to do more.

Our Warsaw Summit next year will demonstrate that NATO is ready to deal with the challenges of our modern world. With a common understanding. A common position. And a common way forward.

Resolutions adopted by the plenary sitting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly on 12 October 2015

Addressing the evolving threat of terrorism

Countering Russia's propaganda and disinformation campaigns

Solidarity with Ukraine

Maintaining support for the Wales summit initiatives

Economic sanctions against Russia

An urgent comprehensive and unified response to crises in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

Strengthening Security and Stability through NATO's Open Door and Partnership Policies

Climate Change and International Security

**Reports adopted by committees of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly,
10-11 October 2015**

Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security;

Challenges in addressing home-grown terrorism

The battle for the hearts and minds: countering propaganda attacks against the Euro-Atlantic community

Transition in Afghanistan: Implications for Central Asia

Defence and Security Committee

Hybrid Warfare: NATO's New Strategic Challenge?

NATO's Readiness Action Plan: Assurance and Deterrence for the Post-2014 Security Environment

Realizing the Goals of the Wales Summit: Strengthening the Transatlantic Link

Afghanistan – Post-ISAF

Economics and Security Committee

Sanctioning the Russian Economy: Costs and Impacts

Terrorism Financing

The State of the Ukrainian Economy and Prospects for its Future Development "

Political Committee

Russia and Euro-Atlantic Security

NATO's Partners across the Globe

Instability in the Levant: Challenges to NATO's Security

Science and Technology Committee

Russian Military Modernization

The High North: Emerging Challenges and Opportunities

Climate Change, International Security and the Way to Paris 2015