

**Commission on Security & Cooperation in Europe:
U.S. Helsinki Commission**

“NATO’s Warsaw Summit and the Future of European Security”

Committee Staff Present:

**Alex Tiersky, Policy Advisor;
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Participants:

**Rear Admiral Peter Gumataotao, Deputy Chief of Staff, Strategic Plans &
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Organization;**

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to the United States of America;**

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House Office Building, Washington, D.C., Alex Tiersky, Policy Advisor for the
Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding**

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TIERSKY: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome. On behalf of the Helsinki Commission Chairman Chris Smith, welcome to our briefing on the upcoming NATO summit in Warsaw. If you're here for something different, you're in the wrong room.

My name is Alex Tiersky. I cover political, military and security issues for the Helsinki Commission, which formally is known as the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Folks, we all know that NATO in general, and this summit in particular, is of special interest to the Hill for obvious reasons that I – we'll talk about throughout this briefing. I think your presence here demonstrates that, despite the fact that I think this is the third event that's NATO-related on the Hill today, I'm thrilled to see you all here. Thank you for coming. I think that speaks to our illustrious guests.

We are fortunate to have three extremely distinguished panelists to go through the subject with us and enlighten us. Our first speaker will be Mr. Pisarski, the deputy chief of mission from the Polish Embassy in Washington; Dr. Hans Binnendijk from the Center for Transatlantic Relations; and finally, Rear Admiral Gumataotao from NATO Allied Command Transformation.

Before I give them the floor, I'd like to frame the discussion with a few comments of my own, if I could. To start with, a few words about the Helsinki Commission. We are a U.S. government agency that promotes human rights, military security and economic cooperation in 57 countries in Europe, Eurasia and North America. We like to say it's from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Nine commissioners are members of the Senate, nine are from the House of Representatives, and three seats are reserved for executive branch officials. The Commission just celebrated its 40th birthday on the 3rd of June, just one year after the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act.

Now, the Commission – those of you who know the Commission well are probably quite familiar with its work on human rights issues. I'd just like to emphasize that the Commission also actively monitors security issues. We've done hearings and briefings on issues as diverse as Russian noncompliance with the various commitments and arms control agreements that it's undertaken. We've had hearings and briefings on combating terrorism and illegal arms transfers, and issues as specific as OSCE police training.

But, of course, part of our remit also has to do with issues beyond the OSCE space, including the NATO agenda. And in particular, our members have taken a particular interest over the years in NATO enlargement. Again, we've had briefings and hearings on the subject of NATO enlargement. Our committee – excuse me, our Commission chairmen have given speeches on the floor of the House and Senate in support of various NATO aspirant countries. And through the Commission, our commissioners have the opportunity to meet with the leaders of some of the aspirant countries.

So all of these reasons are why our chairman, Chris Smith, asked me to organize this briefing here today. And again, I'm thrilled to see you.

Ladies and gentlemen, the next NATO summit will take place on the 8th and 9th of July in Warsaw, Poland. This is an absolutely key moment in the region, as anyone who follows European security even passingly will tell you. Russian actions, including but not limited to their illegal occupation of Crimea and the ongoing intervention in eastern Ukraine, have severely undermined the European security order and made the Warsaw meeting exceptionally important. Indeed, the security challenges posed by Russian aggression are a threat to all of its neighbors, as well – and in particular of concern to the summit’s Polish hosts along with other allies, of course. Moreover, many of these challenges in this new European security context are somewhat new to NATO, ranging from cyberattacks to disinformation campaigns and other aspects of what Russia refers to as hybrid warfare.

At the same time, NATO allies are facing challenges emanating from the south, with a key manifestation obviously the migration crisis; and from the southeast, the ongoing conflict in Syria. And hanging over all of these challenges, of course, is the specter of international terrorism and the challenge of the so-called Islamic State.

We see the Warsaw summit as an opportunity to make sure that the alliance remains as vital, relevant and unified as ever. The agenda for the summit that has been publicly discussed is very wide-ranging, as our experts will tell you. But from my perspective, it essentially boils down to one question: Will the 28 heads of state and government be able to reconcile their competing interests and make decisions in Warsaw that go some way to meeting the security needs of allies – of all allies in these turbulent times?

So, again, let me pass the floor over to our distinguished panelists and give them a brief introduction. I certainly won’t spend time detailing all of their impressive accomplishments.

Our first speaker comes to us from the Polish Embassy. Mr. Pisarski, as I’ve said, is the deputy chief of mission there. He’s served in that capacity since August of 2010. And, sir, we are thrilled to have you here presenting the perspective of the host country, and I should mention, one of the few allies that is meeting the NATO target of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense. Thank you for being here.

Our second speaker will be Dr. Hans Binnendijk. Dr. Binnendijk is a senior fellow at the SAIS Center for Transatlantic Relations, who has served with distinction in a number of governmental positions. But as he and I were discussing before the panel, something we like to bring up here is he was a legislative director for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. So he’s a – he’s a Hill guy, as far as we’re concerned. (Laughter.)

BINNENDIJK: That was 40 years ago. (Laughs.)

TIERSKY: Known internationally as a leading expert on NATO and security more broadly, I think you’ll all be interested to hear that he was one of the lead co-authors for a study by five different Washington think tanks together called “Alliance Revitalized.” And there are copies of this on the table out front if you missed it.

And last, but certainly not least, we are honored to have a senior leader from NATO's Allied Command Transformation, Rear Admiral Peter Gumataotao. Admiral Gumataotao is a career surface warfare officer with deployments all over the world. He's been awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, and other personal, unit and campaign awards. He was also the recipient of the first Admiral Zumwalt Award for Visionary Leadership in 2001. Sir, thank you for being here to present the NATO perspective.

Now, I also need to present someone else on our panel here: my colleague at the Commission, Jonas Wechsler. He is the senior State Department advisor and resident Russia expert for us. He's a career Foreign Service officer with an extremely distinguished series of postings. He comes to us directly from Moscow.

Mr. Pisarski, if you could, please start by providing us your perspective. Thank you.

PISARSKI: Thank you very much, Alex. And thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for coming for this meeting. I am very honored and pleased to be in a panel with distinguished experts on security issues who know about those issues much more than I do. But I thought it would be, for me, very important to present some thoughts, some outlines of the event that is going to take place in capital of my country, in Warsaw.

I have prepared remarks, and they are – the copies are available. I won't read them, it would probably exceed the 10 minutes that I have been allocated for my presentation. So I encourage you to refer to those remarks after the meeting.

We in Poland are both very thrilled and happy with hosting the gathering of the NATO countries and representatives of NATO alliance, and at the same time very worried and concerned about the security environment in which the summit takes place. And, Alex, you have really described those challenges, so I won't go into that.

We would like that the summit underlines, really, the unity, solidarity, values and freedom that the NATO stands for. And it should strengthen the security of all NATO members – not only one group of members, but indeed all members. So that means the NATO summit should tackle not only those threats and challenges coming from the east or the north or the south, but it should deal with them in their entirety.

The starting point for the decisions that are going to be taken, and we hope they are going to be taken, is reflecting on the previous summit in Newport that set out very important reassurance measures in the face of the – Russia's aggressive behavior. Let me just briefly remind the most important aspects of those. Those measures provided for an increase of NATO Response Force and the creation of a brigade-sized high-readiness spearheaded force at its core; setting up additional small headquarters in the eastern part of our alliance, including in Poland; enhancing Multinational Corps Northeast, and establishing in Poland one of those commanding posts; and basically boosting exercises by providing the continuous presence. Everything that has been decided in Newport as part of the so-called Readiness Action Plan has been gradually implemented, and that plan – the Action Plan also provided for the Very High Readiness Joint

Task Force, which has been a very valuable instrument to strengthen the security for the east and for the south. And that, the so-called Newport package, is a starting point. And we believe that Warsaw the alliance should take some steps further in terms of providing for a greater defense and deterrence.

Our approach to the decisions that hopefully will be taken in Warsaw, they rest on the concept of forward military presence. That presence should be militarily meaningful, should be multinational, and should be really adequate to the challenges – should provide for a continuous presence and has deterrence for our alliance. When it comes to the so-called eastern flank, we are hoping for four battalions being deployed in each of the Baltic States and one in Poland. The exact modalities of those are being still discussed, but the goal of it is to deter and provide additional capabilities for defense of our countries, especially in the early stages of a possible aggression.

In addition to the NATO-discussed measures, I think it's very important to mention the U.S. contribution. That would be the quadrupling resources for European Reassurance Initiative, and then there's been some talk about deploying an Army Brigade Combat Team – and needless to say that Poland would be happy to host that brigade and its headquarters. And that brigade should also come with the newest combat equipment. And also, there was a discussion about deploying the Army pre-positioned stock, and Poland would be also very much interesting in hosting at least part of it.

The bottom line here is that those troops who are going to be deployed on the eastern flank should be combat ready, should be fighting troops. Of course, they should continue doing what has been done – I mean, exercising and training, increasing our defense capability, but there should be a kind of detectable and significant shift from the reassurance measures that was the kind of highlight of the Newport summit into the more deterrence that should be, in our opinion, a highlight of the Warsaw summit.

There are important developments regarding missile defense. Only a few weeks ago, there was a groundbreaking ceremony to construct the third phase of the European Phased Adaptive Approach that is building U.S. Aegis Ashore base in Poland, in Redzikowo. And that came after the opening of the – of the Aegis Ashore base in Romania.

So we would like to see even greater progress with regard to NATO missile defense, which has been decided by NATO as its core mission related to the – to the collective defense. Hopefully, that progress will have a form of declaring initial operational capability. But I think that this program is, I think, a good indicator how NATO is trying to keep up with the changing nature of the challenges for our security, and definitely the proliferation of missile technology has been one of those challenges.

As I said, we should tackle all the threats and challenges for all neighbors, and the southern direction will be also a very important part of our discussions in Warsaw. NATO has been providing support for Turkey, and also has been active in providing support for trying to put out more effective efforts related to the immigration crisis.

In Warsaw, we would look forward to enhancing our cooperation with the European Union. And of course – I mean, it sounds like a no-brainer – I mean, EU and NATO memberships are overlapping to a large extent – not perfectly, but to a large extent. Both organizations share the same core values and they have their unique capabilities. And when we think about issues like hybrid threats, cyber and others, I think that the co-cooperation with the European Union and NATO should provide for an important boost to our collective defense capabilities, as I said, especially in the fields of those new threats, which are called hybrid, and also in the sphere of maritime situation awareness, basically providing for better training and development of mutually supportive capabilities.

Very briefly, about NATO and Russia. This issue has been one of the highlights in the recent time, and then no one will deny that Russia was, and is, and will be a very important factor in our thinking about security. And we all would prefer that Russia would have a sincere partnership with NATO. But as we said before, through its conduct and behavior, Russia has demonstrated that it's really not prepared for such a deep and genuine partnership. Nevertheless, a dialogue with Russia is important, but it should not be the end in itself. Dialogue should be a mean to achieve a greater predictability, to avoid potential incidents with using some military equipment in quite a reckless fashion. And that dialogue should also demonstrate NATO's unity and resolve to stick to its principles and values, but definitely should not substitute for things that we should do in fields of deterrence and developing our defense capabilities. So deterrence and dialogue, not deterrence through dialogue, if I might put it that way.

Very briefly, we will be also talking about how to beef up our cooperation with the partners. And we have multiple partners, and the cooperation with them depends really very much on their particular security interest. That would be different interest for countries like Sweden or Finland, with whom we share the Baltic region, and all those things that are taking place on those partners like Georgia, and Ukraine and Moldova should also receive a very important signal from the alliance to continue it and develop the cooperation. And of course, our partners in the Gulf and Middle East are very important to tackle those challenges stemming from that region.

We look forward to Montenegro's membership in NATO, and I believe we can talk about this more during our conversation. The bottom line here is that this move really validates and reconfirms the validity of the open-door policy, and that's very profound.

One minute about Poland's contribution. Poland has been a NATO member since 1999. And from that moment on, we have participated in numerous NATO operations – or maybe not NATO operations, but coalitions of the willing. We have been very active in providing for the air policing for the Baltic States, and also for Romania and Bulgaria. Poland also volunteered as one of the framework countries for the VJTF forces, this Very High Readiness Joint Task Force. We have been very engaged in exercises, not only in Poland but also outside. We have just hosted one of the biggest exercises recently, 32,000 troops participating, so-called Anakonda exercises. Poland is spending more than 2 percent of its GDP on defense and 20 percent on technical modernization, and soon will be joining other members of the global coalition against ISIL with four F-16 planes, which would conduct a surveillance and intelligence gathering mission. We will also send a group of 60 trainers for the Iraqi forces.

And I will stop here. Thank you.

TIERSKY: Thank you, Mr. Pisarski. That was a very wide-ranging description of what your expectations for Warsaw, but I think you gave us some of your bottom lines up front, as we say here. I heard very clearly when you say what you're seeking is unity, solidarity, and a values-based alliance. I also heard you say, the main goal is to strengthen the security of all NATO members. And I took those two as key points.

Before I pass the floor to Dr. Binnendijk, I did just want to recognize Ambassador Archil Gegeshidze of Georgia, who has joined us. Thank you very much for being here, sir.

Dr. Binnendijk, if you would? Thank you.

BINNENDIJK: Thank you, Alex.

You mentioned in the introduction that many years ago I worked at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And I was reflecting that I joined the Committee in 1977, almost 40 years ago. And at that point, way on the side of the dais, on the Democratic side, was very young senator named Joe Biden; and way on the other side was very young Republican senator named Dick Lugar. And between Lugar and Biden, they cared very deeply about the alliance. There was a consensus, in those days, about the alliance. I don't think anybody at that point would have said the alliance is obsolete, but now we're hearing that. The alliance is not obsolete today. It's anything but obsolete. It's needed, in my view, more today than at any time since the end of the Cold War.

The alliance has problems. Europe has problems. There's the rise of nationalism, of populism. We'll find out by the end of today what kind of state the EU is in after the Brexit vote. But the leadership of the alliance is trying to manage these changes. The alliance has a history of adapting to strategic change, and they're doing it again. We saw that at the Wales summit, where very clear statements were made about the nature of the Russian threat and steps – preliminary steps were taken to deal with it. There remains a fairly large gap between the pace of change in these challenges and the institutional changes that are made to deal with it. Some of that gap was closed at Wales, and I think at the Warsaw summit we have an opportunity to close the gap even further.

What I'd like to do is to sketch out seven areas where I think the alliance can make progress at the Warsaw summit. I'll just touch on them with a couple of comments for each, and then maybe we can leave the rest open for the discussion.

The first – and this really echoes Maciej's comments – the most important is to maintain unity within the alliance. There are centrifugal forces playing within the alliance. You go to Italy and you talk about the Russian threat, and they just don't really – that's not what they're focused on. So this is a job for American leadership. We have to focus on maintaining unity in the alliance. Part of this is rhetoric. Part of it is living up to pledges that we've made. But it is probably the single most important thing, in my view, to do at the summit.

The second – and you also mentioned this – is moving from what we call reassurance of allies to deterrence. What we saw at the Wales summit was reassurance. And what that really meant, as you suggested, was dealing with rapid reaction forces. They have now been built. It's pretty much implemented. But in the couple of years since Wales, it's also become pretty clear that that's inadequate for deterrence; that a second and I would argue a third step needs to be taken to really maximize deterrence and move from reassurance to deterrence.

The second step, which I do think we're going to make serious progress on at Warsaw, is forward deployment. We will have a decision at the summit to forward deploy four – in fact, it's already been announced – four multinational NATO battalions: one in each of the three Baltic States, and one in Poland. This will be a German lead for one, a British lead for a second, an American lead for the third, and hopefully a Canadian lead for the fourth. This really enhances deterrence.

In addition to that, the United States, under the European Reassurance Initiative, has just quadrupled its budget for this. We used to have four brigade combat teams in Europe. We went down to two, and now we're working our way back up to four again. We have a third that will be there, heel-to-toe rotations, and a fourth -- we're going to be pre-positioning their equipment. One can argue about where they're going to be deployed and whether they should be more forward, but this is happening, and this is a good thing. So all of this is part of a move from reassurance to deterrence.

The last thing we need to do – and I think we need to find a hook for this at the Warsaw summit – the real weakness here is the inadequate ability for Europe to deploy follow-on forces. This is especially ground forces. It is really inadequate, and we need to push on this. And we can use the Warsaw summit to do that. I see that as a deliverable in the summit after Warsaw. So that's number two.

Number three has to do with assuring credible nuclear deterrence and continuing with the good progress we've made on missile defense. You mentioned the latter.

First, on nuclear deterrence, the real problem here is Russia, frankly. They have roughly 10 times the number of non-strategic nuclear weapons than does the alliance. And it's difficult for the alliance in today's political atmosphere to talk about nuclear issues, but we need to do it. We need to do it, because not only is Russia modernizing dramatically and moving its forces around, but they have a very dangerous nuclear doctrine right now. We need to come to grips with that.

I think already there is some good news here that I think will come out of Warsaw. Our own deterrent is heavily reliant on dual-capable aircraft. They're getting older. The readiness is not all that good. And there will be a major effort to increase readiness and reliability of those so-called DCA, dual-capable aircraft. So that'll be good news I hope coming out of Warsaw.

And then the other element of this is missile defense. This is very much on track. We're going to have initial operating capability for a major chunk of this announced at Warsaw. This is

basically to deal with the Iranian missile threat. Even though there is a nuclear deal with Iran, which I fully support, they're still going forward with their missile programs. And this is what that's about, it's to counter that. This is on track, and we need to keep it on track. So that's number three.

Number four is we need to create a new – what I would call a new southern strategy for the alliance. And this is kind of difficult for a number of reasons. The alliance has been engaged, as we all know, in a number of areas in the south: Afghanistan, training for Iraq, and certainly the operation in Libya.

But the problem is that many of those operations haven't gone so well. There is reluctance, both in the United States and in Europe, to engage fully with ground forces in these areas. So you have that reluctance. You have growing threat.

And then you have on the part of many nations a desire actually not to have NATO take the lead in these operations. You see that with French operations in North Africa. You see it with the Italians in Libya. And you see it with the United States in the counter-ISIL operations. It's not a NATO operation.

So the question is, what role does NATO play in all of this? And that needs to be decided. We need to have a better concept. The alliance leaders now talk about projecting stability. That's a great concept, but we have to actually figure out what it means.

Now, there will be some things that we'll find in Warsaw that will be helpful. We're going to maintain four NATO bases in Afghanistan, which will be able to support larger forces. We will see NATO training of Iraqi forces moving from Jordan to Iraq. We will see NATO AWACS flying operations against ISIS, which is a big deal. I have a feeling we're going to see a coalition operation run by the Italians in Libya. Where does that go? What's the NATO role? We have to pursue that. There are a couple of maritime things. The United States is going to be participating more actively in the Aegean. And NATO is going to be operating in the middle of the Med with Operation Sophia, the EU-run operation.

So you can see here that there are elements of a southern strategy. But it hasn't been put together. And that's what we need to do I think next.

Number five. We have to maximize societal and defense resilience. This is about Article 3 of the Washington Treaty, which talks about self-help and individual capacity. So resilience may be the key word or one of the key words coming out of this summit. There will be commitments to enhance resilience on the parts of nations, so they're going to take a larger role. But one of the things that we have been pushing for the last year, year and a half, is the notion of having NATO take a more active role in resilience. I mean, this is anything from crisis management to border guards to cybersecurity to create what we have been calling resilience support teams that can deploy to the Baltic states, for example, if they need support. And as I understand it, the summit is likely to agree to create something like that.

There will be a move with regard to cyber resilience at the summit. And I believe that

cyber will be considered now as a separate military domain, which could have some very interesting long-term consequences for the alliance. It could mean eventually a cyber headquarters in the alliance, and it could mean more aggressive cyber operations, both of which are good things in my view.

Number six – you mentioned this – we need to maintain the open door. Montenegro will be invited in at – formally – at the summit. We still have four other aspirants that are waiting, including – we have the ambassador from one of those countries with us. We need to make sure that that open door stays open. This may take a while. There are complications in the case of all four of these aspirants. But we have to maintain the principle that the door is open.

We also have to work with partners as part of this broader focus on not only new membership but enhancing partnerships. Key here is the NATO-EU relationship, and I see growing opportunity for this in the maritime area – we've seen this already – and in the area of resilience. So those are two examples of where NATO and the EU can work much more closely together.

We have to figure out how to bring Sweden and Finland even more closely into the alliance. So how do we do that? At the last summit they were named as equal opportunity partners. Well, that's good, but it hasn't meant much. We have to make that mean something. They should be invited, frankly, into all of NATO's meetings and exercises, as far as I'm concerned. There are moves in both countries to think about membership, but it's not going to happen for a while, so we have to make them virtual members.

And then a final point about partnerships: I think we have to think strategically here. Japan and South Korea have really no ties with the alliance. We ought to make them equal opportunity partners. We need to start thinking about bringing our Asian security structure and the European structure a bit closer together. This is something we can do very easily at Warsaw.

And then finally, we need to increase European defense spending. This is a long discussion about burden sharing. It has clearly emerged from a backwater issue to a front-burner issue in the presidential campaign. It's a serious issue. It is not an issue that should result in the demise of the alliance.

Some positive steps have taken place, including the 2 percent pledge at Wales. For 2016, 20 of the 28 members of the alliance will be increasing their defense budgets. It doesn't sound like much, but given where we were and the slide that we were in, it's a good thing. We need to figure out how to maintain that, and we need to do some things at Warsaw to continue that positive trend.

And we need to encourage more efficient – we need to encourage more efficient use of the capabilities that we have. The framework nation approach, which I can talk about if you'd like in detail later, is a very useful way – sort of smart defense on steroids. And we need to think about how you can use that to make European defenses much more coherent and efficient.

Then finally, I would say this is not the time to think, as I said in my opening comments,

to think about the alliance as being obsolete. It will continue to adapt. It's slow. It is the perennial battleship or aircraft carrier that turns slowly. But it's turning. And we need to double down on NATO now. Hopefully, that's what we'll do in the summer. Thank you.

TIERSKY: Dr. Binnendijk, thank you very much. I couldn't presume to summarize your extraordinarily rich remarks, but I certainly take from them the multiplicity of challenges and opportunities on NATO's plate. And I also heard loud and clear your call that United States leadership is absolutely crucial in meeting any of those challenges and taking advantage of the opportunities before us.

Admiral, please.

GUMATAOTAO: Thank you, Alex. And also, once again, thank you on behalf of General Mercier, the Supreme Allied Commander – Transformation. Thank you for inviting us up here to have this dialogue.

And it should be a dialogue, so I'm really anxious to get to the Q-and-A, so I will try to keep my remarks short.

But before I do, let me just say what Hans has laid out is really remarkable in terms of the value of the perspective we get from this end of the Atlantic. And I say that because this Alliance Revitalized study – they folded Allied Command Transformation into the discussion. So none of these things came out of a vacuum. There was really robust discussion.

And to Mr. Pisarski, I would like to commend Poland for their commitment to the defense investment pledge because you are one of the countries (Secretary-General Stoltenberg did highlight that in his last visit to Poland, as you know, sir) in terms of the 2 percent of your GDP for spending on defense as well as the 20 percent for R&D.

Well, let me make it real quick for you all. If I asked for all of you to raise your hands if you know where Supreme Allied Command Transformation is at. All right. It's in Norfolk, Virginia. And my aide and I drove up here, 3 ½ hours or so. It is in the good U.S. of A. And it is one of NATO strategic allied command headquarters. And as I mentioned, General Mercier is our commander. That is not a subtle point. It's a huge point.

And so I wanted to take maybe a minute or so to talk about the role of Allied Command Transformation because to be honest, all of these four-stars do provide military advice to NATO leadership, and you need to know where ACT is coming from.

There is another strategic allied command headquarters, and that's in Mons. It's Allied Command Operations. And they really work on the current issues, the contingencies and things that make our head hurt today. And that's run by General Scaparrotti, a U.S. flag officer, four star.

If you think about ACT, think about transformation. If you think about relevance and adaptation, I have this quote that I talk to my folks about – you know, the future belongs to the

one who prepares today. If you think about it, if you just worry about today and you don't think and talk about these many issues, we will not be ready, and we will be continuously seeing this thing called strategic shock and surprise.

So ACT tries to bridge the gap always between what we're currently doing in our ongoing initiatives, being very cognizant of the security environment that you've heard articulated this afternoon, with future thinking and investments – investments, I underline that for you. And our core missions of NATO strategic anticipation, training and exercises and capability development try to drive towards those investments.

And finally, before I actually talk about the context of why we're here, this trans-Atlantic bond is not just symbolic. And it has been there since 1949. And I ask you, why is it so real? It's real because the common bond between Europe and United States and Canada are these values. It's been talked about: the values of democracy, the values of human rights, individual liberties, the rule of law and the respect for international order. Bottom line. And it has persisted, and it will endure.

And I'm very, very excited at the fact that ACT is here in Norfolk because we do these kind of exchanges and dialogues -- minus a six-hour time difference if you had to have somebody up on VTC -- but it's just very difficult. So this is extremely important that we're here.

In the context of the Warsaw summit, we brought some documents up, and I think they are available outside. Those two documents that were produced by ACT is the Strategic Foresight Analysis – SFA we refer to – and the Framework for Future Alliance Operations. The second document is a Bi-SC document.

The first one you will read talks about trends. Secretary-General Stoltenberg said, and everybody can agree, you cannot predict the future, but you better pay attention to trends. You better pay attention to where the population boom's coming from. So in about 30 years, where is the next 2 billion going to come from? It's not going to come from the United States. It's going to come from areas like North Africa or in places where the countries are not as developed. It's population booms coupled with megacities, et cetera. That's all talked about in the SFA.

The FFAO ties more to the military capacity of NATO and what we talk about in collective defense. And it talks about potential instability scenarios, and it talks about military implications. And I say that because you have to understand that that drives us to think to the future.

But what we do know is that it is very ambiguous. It's very volatile. It's very dynamic, this future security environment. And if you don't believe me, just look at where we were as an alliance 10 years ago. The people that say, hey, is NATO relevant today? And Hans, you came right in and said, you know, the alliance is value. And this thinking about being obsolete, people do not understand that in the journey that we've had for over six decades, the alliance has adapted. And if you think about when there was no perceived threat, the alliance persisted and assisted abroad. And that's why they had that shift, and some people describe it as a phase, in

NATO where they became expeditionary. Well, the alliance is adapting. The alliance understands the threat today, but the alliance wants to ensure that we boldly step forward as a group that is committed to the defense of all these people. And that's what you're going to hear I believe at the Warsaw summit.

The three core tasks of NATO are very valid today: collective defense, crisis management and cooperative security. Those are so real today.

The difference that I think is that today, with the dynamic and ambiguous environment, it is causing us to look at how do we have intertwining and/or interlapping lines with all three missions before one dominates the others, right? I mean, in fact, cooperative security did not come into core tasks until recently. The core has always been collective defense. But in this ambiguous environment that we have, where military is not necessarily going to be the first thing you're going to see, you have to have a very comprehensive approach.

And so to the Warsaw summit, I would say that given these security changes, consider the Warsaw summit as the next phase of the alliance's adaptation. This is not just we all woke up and said we got to do all these things. You know, Mr. Pisarski started to line out all the things that we've done in the RAP, and you took my thunder away from that. And then – and then I don't know if Hans was listening to his own notes. He says, we need to hear more about projecting stability, where you started the list the things that we need to start to do and are already being talked about. It was interesting. If you really want to answer your question, you listen to your own answer, you know. He came out with the answer.

But I think, as you look at the summit, there are going to be two key pillars that we're going to be looking at in the summit. And one is protecting our citizens, the 1 billion citizens under this alliance, protecting by looking at how to modernize. And it goes down to deterrence and defense. And then the other one is about projecting stability. Those are going to be the two pillars that we're going to work on.

And the final thing I'll say before we open it up for questions, Alex, is that, you know, we can easily talk about where the threat angle is coming from. The threat axis right now – if I can ask any of you, you guys would get a hundred percent – the threat axis right now in Europe is coming from the east, and it's coming from the south, right? Somebody think is the Arctic, maybe? No, it's not a threat. Not, it's the east and the south.

But I offer you this. That's thinking today. Where is the threat going to be at 10, 15 years from now, 20 years from now?

And so I think NATO Warsaw summit is going to look at how do we prepare the alliance for collective defense from a 360-degree perspective. In fact, the fact that cyber domain is about to be declared in the summit – cyber has no, you know, axis from the south, west, north, east; it's everywhere, right? And so that's what I would leave with you: protecting our citizens, projecting stability and looking at the threat and adapting to it from a 360 perspective. Thank you very much. I look forward to your questions.

TIERSKY: Thank you, Admiral. An excellent presentation. You summed it up yourself with your closing points, but the key phrases I heard were think to the future, facing a volatile and dynamic environment, and what we need from the summit are both deterrence and defense and projection of stability. Thank you very much for that message.

Before we get to audience question and answers, which we'll do in just a couple of minutes, we're going to take the prerogative of being Helsinki Commission staffers and grill you ourselves a little bit. (Laughter.) And I'll just give one round myself and then turn the floor over to my colleague Jonas Wechsler.

I want to ask two questions to start with. Enlargement, first of all, is, as I said in my introductory note, it's something that our commission leadership has paid close attention to over the years, and I don't think – obviously, Montenegro's accession is significant, but of course, this isn't known as an enlargement summit. This is no one's idea of an enlargement summit. Can we talk a little bit more about the – about the consequences of enlargement in Montenegro, the messaging that that's sending to various parties? And then of course, we haven't spoken much about Georgia and Ukraine in this respect. I'd love your thoughts on that. And perhaps we could start with Mr. Pisarski.

Let me put my second question on the table right away as well. Admiral Gumataotao, I think I'm going to put you on the spot on something that Dr. Binnendijk raised, which is we are hearing in Washington – it is – it is no longer a kind of a fringe view that the idea that NATO allies are quote-unquote not paying their fair share, that they're quote-unquote ripping off the United States, and that there may be consequences for the alliance as a whole in Hans' words – or not his words, but quoting others – that the alliance may be obsolete as a result. I would love your comments. I think you all agree that progress is being made. You've both said that, and I'd like to hear a little bit more about that. But if progress is being made, is that message being sufficiently heard in Washington in particular? Is it making a difference in the political discourse?

So two questions to the three panelists. Maybe we'll start with Mr. Pisarski on enlargement.

PISARSKI: Thank you very much.

Before I tackle this exact question, I'd like to encourage you to play a game. Just imagine that the enlargement in 1999 and 2004 had not happened, that NATO stayed in its kind of Cold War borders, how the situation today would look like. What would be the nature and scope of the challenge and threat given Russia's action in the east? How would have the countries bordering Russia reacted? What would be the political cost and military cost of reassuring those countries that major conflict would not have ensued? And if you try to imagine that, you would see the validity, the utility of NATO enlargement and why it was a good move, why it has been such a successful policy, and why it should stay in our cards.

And then we are very happy to continue this process, and then inviting Montenegro to be our next member of the NATO alliance because that really means that NATO still possess the

transformative power. I mean, countries who want to get into need to reform themselves, need to reform their military structures, need to think more wisely about their security. But also, they need to reform their domestic institutions. They need to weed out lots of, you know, corruptive processes and phenomena and all those things.

So yes, I mean, we understand and we are very happy that this very successful NATO policy, as I said, transformative policy will be validated. And then we know that there are some – as we will invite a new member, it will be also a signal, an encouragement for, you know, for the other prospective aspirants or members. You know, we're talking about Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia –

Dr. Binnendijk: Ukraine.

PISARSKI: Ukraine, yes. And then that really will signify that NATO is still in the business not only reacting to emerging threats and challenges but also projecting this stability and basically NATO enlargement as an investment in stability and security.

In addition to welcoming Montenegro, we will have also important meetings with Ukraine and Georgia and partners also have been mentioned. You know, Georgia has been a fantastic partner of NATO, very well-advanced, very well-prepared to cooperate with NATO. Indeed, it was – Georgia was given a privileged status among partners, together with such countries like Sweden, Finland, Jordan, Australia – I'm talking about Newport. So it's really very good, very good company. And, you know, we very much count on making this cooperation even more successful, even more practical, even more concentrated on interoperability. NATO has been training in Georgia, with Georgian troops many times. So I think there should be a strong political signal on this.

Ukraine, I mean, we cannot leave Ukraine in such circumstances. I think that there should be a strong political signal for support of Ukraine's sovereignty on political level, but on the practical level, to help Ukraine to restructure, to really create a modern armed forces. And we have been doing this together with our allies from United States, U.K., Canada, Lithuania – you know, helping to Ukrainian soldiers, providing all sorts of support and assistance. And there is a Polish-Lithuanian-Ukrainian brigade – this is also an important asset for us – to implement this practical co-operation with Ukraine.

TIERSKY: Anyone else on enlargement, or should we go to burden sharing?

BINNENDIJK: I can say something – go ahead, and then I'll make a comment.

TIERSKY: Great. Admiral, please.

GUMATAOTAO: So before I talk about burden sharing, let me just add to Mr. Pisarski's comment on enlargement – when you think of NATO enlargement, it should be right in the same phrase as partnership as well because when you think about enlargement – and I want to say Montenegro is on track; Montenegro is on track to become the 29th member of the alliance. And this process will continue beyond the summit.

But we also know in the alliance that we do not go into places in any part of the region – I mean, the world is globalized, it's networked. And so what happens in the Pacific has domino effects with Europe and with us. And so we have learned that partnership is critical. Partnership is critical, and we leverage those– we have great partnership with Jordan. Sweden, Finland, of course. Georgia, of course – the substantial NATO-Georgia package. So I am saying is just, don't look at it from a sense of myopically saying, OK, so you have to be a member to be of value. The partners, the over 40 partners that we have has been very instrumental and valuable – to include, by the way, Australia and Japan, who have already started to participate in a lot of our partnership discussions. So that's already happened.

To the issue of burden sharing: Sometimes, when you're asked a question, if you stand at a point in your life, then that question is only germane to the point in where you're standing. To really understand the full context of the response, you need to see the entire journey of where we've been.

And I say that because the Secretary-General himself, in his first speeches, has acknowledged the fact that we've had a long period of decline in defense spending. But you have to ask the question, why? And it was because where was the threat? And so the issue was, we were trying to build Europe, and, you know, the EU was a very good example of that. Peace fosters economic prosperity. And so instead of spending a lot on defense, they were spending a lot for economic prosperity. And that makes sense with any country.

But with the global security environment that we have just painted and the changes that have happened over the five years, it's been a wake-up call. And so go with what has happened. And I like the analogy of a battleship and the rudder turning over. So if any of you ever driven a hundred-thousand-ton ship, you will know that when you put the rudder over, the bow will not come immediately, but the rudder has shifted. It has shifted in a positive way starting in 2015, and the trends of spending to increase to get to the defense investment pledge of two and 20 is coming around with over 20 countries, and it's going to get better. And so if you equate the current initial bump of spending, that equation is about 1.5 percent increase, that equates to about 3 billion (dollars).

Now, the Secretary-General said this. We are doing a lot. We have turned – we have turned over and we are making improvements. Every country is taking a hard look at this. But we have a lot more to do. And I'm pretty confident that this is going to be one of the continuing conversations. Remember, it's the next phase of adaption. The secretary-general is going to talk to the leadership of the alliance during the Warsaw summit to recommit again, to reaffirm their commitment to this defense investment pledge.

TIERSKY: If I could – Dr. Binnendijk, I hesitate – I'm very loath to ask our experts to be brief because every word that has come from them has been absolute gold. But I would like to get to audience Q&A, so if we could shorten up our responses a little bit so I can get to Jonas and then our audience. Thank you.

BINNENDIJK: Sure. Just on enlargement: I think I wrote the first article supporting

enlargement back in 1991, before it was popular, and then I worked on it at the State Department when I was policy planning staff. So I'm a strong believer in the whole enlargement process. I think the answer to your hypothetical question is if – I think if the Baltic states were not in NATO now, they would probably have Russian troops on their soil. I think they would probably – at least Estonia probably would have – they would be a frozen conflict.

The last four aspirants that we have – you mentioned their names – for different reasons, it's going to be hard. It's going to be hard. Georgia has Russian troops on their soil. Ukraine has Russian troops on their soil. That makes it hard. You got – we probably have to change the criteria to bring them in eventually. And Bosnia has internal problems relating to ownership of military installations. And the Macedonia name issue hasn't been settled. So this is going to take a while. But we need to maintain the process.

On burden sharing, we just need to keep the pressure on without doing damage to the alliance. As you know, when you turn that rudder, you also have to keep the steam – you have to keep moving forward in the – in the ship to have the thing turn. So that's what we've got to do.

And so I would suggest one way to do that is what I would call a staircase approach. We need to lay out a plan for – I mean, we're talking here primarily about Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and a few others. Germany is 1.3 percent, the Netherlands, 1.1 percent; Italy is just under 1.1 percent of GDP spent on defense. Especially Germany and Italy make a difference. We have to work out a plan for how they're going to get to the 2 percent figure in the decade or so that they've been given and try to accelerate it if we can. So we've got to keep steaming forward to make that ship turn.

TIERSKY: Jonas Wechsler from the Helsinki Commission.

WECHSLER: Thank you. So Alex said – request that I ask only one question, one little question. And my topic is Russia. So I'm going to take a page out of our chairman's book, which is to ask a compound question. And it'll have a few parts. And it's not directed towards any of our speakers. Please cut off whichever chunk you think most appropriate is and have at it.

So the topic, Russia. Other experts, many experts have suggested that in – with regard to Russia, the summit leaders are going to have to seek a dual approach, demonstrating real strength intended to reassure our NATO allies, to deter further aggression; at the same time remaining open to political dialogue with Russia, which many of our European allies think is extremely important.

So first part of the question would be, how do we balance these two objectives, especially given Russia's worldview; isn't demonstrating strength really one of the prerequisites to get Russia to the negotiating table?

Second part of the question comes out of the flip side of the rubric of knowing your adversary: Does NATO appreciate or understand Russia's own perspective and set of grievances towards NATO – whether or not they're legitimate? And what I'm speaking to, then, is issues such as missile defense, ongoing exercises, and, of course, the whole expansion issue. As a

matter of fact, Putin back in January said several times since then – it's become Russian argument – that one of the reasons, for instance, that it inserted itself into Ukraine is its fear of NATO troops next to Sevastopol. Did we, for that matter, ever promise Russia – this is another thing we've heard Putin saying – that there would be no NATO expansion way back in 1991? It's raised many times with Russians. So I realize that's a large package, but look forward to your answers.

GUMATAOTAO: So Jonas, I'll try to keep it quick. This piece about this dual approach that we're talking about, I think there is no contradiction between a strong defense and a political dialogue. And in fact, I believe both those efforts complement each other. But what is important to say is that actually, you must have a strong defense first to leverage that as a foundation before you can have this dialogue. I think it needs to be very visible to Russia that we are committed and resolved in a collective defense way, not in an antagonistic way, which goes to your second question.

I think Russia has done some interesting work in strategic communications – in fact, you can get a doctorate in that via Russia – because they're very good in shaping the message, and then how they say where that it is Europe, it is NATO that's a threat, is that this – you just talked about it. And how they control that message versus one of our values of democracy and free speech. They can singularize that message where people all of a sudden, because you suddenly express it continuously, people say, oh, maybe they're right. And as you would know, Jonas, they are very good in shaping the truth so we look back at certain incidents that have occurred. It causes ambiguity and doubt whether or not the facts are the facts. So in the 21st century, it's real. And I think Russia has done very good job in saying that NATO is a threat.

What I say to you is that through the 60-plus years that we have as an alliance, our resolve with the common values that I talk about, which is extremely important, we are there and committed to protect each other and our values that we hold. And that's where we come in, strong defense and then political dialogue so that we don't have any surprises or miscalculations.

BINNENDIJK: As you all know, there is a long history to this dual-track approach. You can take it back to the mid-1960s, when the alliance was divided. There was a report called the Harmel Report trying to pull together various strands of alliance unity. And they came up with this dual-track approach, deterrence and defense on the one hand, détente on the other. It actually worked. You had a second opportunity, when we were trying to deploy missiles in Europe, the dual-track approach. One track was deployment. The other track was arms control. The INF treaty was the result. So here are two historic cases where this has worked.

I'm not a great fan of Putin at all, but I worry that he will miscalculate. And the way to deal with that is to keep a dialogue going with him on critical issues. This is not business as usual, which I don't favor, but I think it's business as necessary. And there are several areas where I think we need to engage.

One of them has to do with military transparency and incidents. Not a day goes by where we don't have a close call somewhere in Europe with Russian aircraft that's not flying its – not – doesn't have its transponders turned on. So we need to – we need to have a discussion about

incident avoidance and incident management should there be a problem.

We need to have a discussion with Russia about nuclear doctrine. They're on the edge of a very dangerous nuclear doctrine, which is basically escalate to de-escalate, first use of nuclear weapons. It's a very dangerous doctrine in today's world, much more so than in the Cold war, incidentally. So we have to have a discussion on nuclear doctrine with Russia.

And I think we might have a productive discussion with Russia on the question of involvement in the internal affairs of other countries.

So these are three areas right there where I think we could have a discussion with the Russians, primarily to avoid miscalculation on Putin's part. I finished a book for the RAND Corporation last year called "Blunders, Blunders, and Wars." And we looked at eight historic cases of massive strategic blunder. Like, why did Napoleon march to Moscow? Why did the Japanese decide to attack Pearl Harbor? These were blunders, but they did it. One of the things that came out – one of the lessons that I learned from doing that book was that Putin has many of the characteristics of a blunderer, and we have to avoid that.

PISARSKI: Very, very quickly: I agree with what my colleagues have said, and definitely, you know, in keeping the channels of communication with Russia open in terms of the immediate security issues.

Now, a little bit to this perception and whether, you know, Russia was promised NATO would not have been expanded, things like that. I think – I mean, it's easy to say, you know, oh, NATO has promised Russia not to expand, and then count on that nobody will, you know, actually go back to those issues and not study them and, you know, accept it. Well, I'm not aware about such – about such promises.

And then if you think about, Russia's complaint about exercises and how destabilizing they have been, I would just encourage to employ a very simple method of chronology and see what happens first. First was Crimea, then was Donbass, then came exercises. So I think it's not by accident that this sequence has been like that. There is I think a causal chain of events underlined by some sort of causality. And if Russia wants to – I understand Russia doesn't like NATO exercises. But those exercises have been as a response to Russia's actions. So it seems that the keys are to unlock those doors, the solutions to those issues are really in Moscow.

TIERSKY: Thank you very much. As our audience members gather their thoughts for their questions, I want to just pull two strands together that I just heard: The keys are kind of in – or the reasons are more in Moscow than on our side; and then what Dr. Binnendijk said about military transparency and incident prevention. Those discussions, our discussions with the Russians, are actually happening continuously in the OSCE context on transparency, on Vienna Document inspections, all of these things. And my sense is the problem there, really, is we just don't have a willing partner on the other side at this point. But it's – not to disagree.

Do we have audience members who would like to ask a question? Maybe what we'll do is we'll take a couple at once. And I saw these two. There's a microphone, I believe. There is a

microphone. Now just stand up and – oh. Well, why don't you start by standing up and introducing yourself? And speak loudly, please.

Q: Hi. Matthew Glowiak (ph) from the University of Dayton.

So I just wanted to ask a question based off of something that Dr. Binnendijk and Admiral Gumataotao said. So in regards to possibly bringing in Finland and Sweden and the concerns with that, what are your recommendations or what is your take on the things that are happening in the Arctic right now? Most recently, within the last few years, Russia has been redeveloping their Cold War bases in the Arctic, namely Alakurtti, which is pretty much right on the Finnish border. I just wanted to know how that plays into your decision to possibly try to incorporate Finland and Sweden, who have seen increased militaristic activity from the Russians in the Arctic. Thank you.

TIERSKY: Thank you. And a second question right behind you.

Q: Hi. I'm Harrison Grad (ph).

This could really be for anybody, but I'm curious, from your impressions, what are some NATO – European NATO members' reactions to what some have described as the failure of the United States to uphold its end of the Budapest Memorandum, which essentially, from my understanding, was that United States would uphold Ukraine's sovereignty in exchange for giving up its nuclear weapons? And if there are some hesitations about United States' commitment to collective defense; what are some ways that we could help reassume them in the future?

TIERSKY: Great. Thank you very much.

Would anyone like to start with the Arctic?

BINNENDIJK: Yeah.

TIERSKY: Sure. Thank you.

BINNENDIJK: NATO – we're talking about NATO here – NATO does not pay an awful lot of attention to the Arctic. There's the Arctic Council. Actually, Russia sort of behaves in the Arctic Council in terms of what they do in that council. But you're also right – I think I counted at one point some 20 bases up on their northern coast that they are either building anew or refurbishing from the old Soviet days. So they very clearly have a strategic plan that they're carrying out having a lot to do with opening of the ice flows and that transit.

So I think there have been a few key nations who are part of the Arctic Council – Canada one of them – really have been reluctant to having NATO engaged in the Arctic. That's changing, I think, because of what they're seeing now with Russia. So I – my guess is that increasingly over the next four, five years, we're going to see the Arctic as a point of interest within the alliance.

I think with regard to Finland and Sweden, I mean, they could be in the alliance tomorrow morning in terms of consensus within the alliance if they so chose themselves. They both have long histories of neutrality – for different reasons, but they’re there. And I don’t see a move in the next year or so in either country towards membership. The idea now, I think, is to bring them as close to membership as we can. It may well be that if we push too hard, it would be counterproductive politically within those two countries.

The Budapest Memorandum – you know, I personally believe we ought to be providing more weapons to Ukraine to provide for their own defense. They actually are pretty – they produce a lot of their own weapons too. What I think we’re going to see at the Warsaw summit – that’s what we’re talking about – with regard to Ukraine is a real push to support defense reform in Ukraine. I was in Kiev late last year, and the keyword in Kiev is reform – government reform, reform in defense. And that’s now what I think the alliance is going to be focusing on at Warsaw.

GUMATAOTAO: And if I can talk about Sweden and Finland because it’s very important to understand that – very capable countries, as you know, lots of interest up there in the north. And I would say, when you think about relationships, think of the world – it’s globalized. It’s no longer, I mean, what happens is just from our boundaries and our geographic boundaries. And so Sweden and Finland has relationships, and it should not surprise you at all that there’s a lot of interconnectedness with European countries to many other countries outside of Europe and the EU – to include Russia. And so as Hans said, it’s – it is their choice on whether or not they want to apply for membership.

But please do not leave here thinking that there is no robust relationship between Sweden and Finland with NATO, the alliance. Tremendous amount of partnership initiatives. And if you think about the Baltic, if you look even in the maritime perspective, the BALTOPS, how integrated and how complicated a lot of those exercises are up there in the Baltic, that it is very robust in our communication, in our dialogue, in our cooperation because NATO knows that in – what we do, especially up to the north, we do need Sweden and Finland.

And to the point about Ukraine – and that’s an interesting point that you mention because you have to look at what’s happening today – I mean, I don’t know if you know this, but our focus with NATO is to support Ukraine in its territorial and sovereign integrity. That I think is extremely important in what we do as a collective defense as well within our own members – but with – for us to reach out and say our commitment to Ukraine is in that order. NATO has opened the summit to have the president of Ukraine come and sit in on the summit. And then there is also a follow-on commission that they’re going to be having with the leadership for further on discussions on how we can partner with them down the future. And that’s not even in the context of whether Ukraine should be a member. We are already actively involved in Ukraine for their sovereignty and their territory integrity.

PISARSKI: To the Budapest Memorandum, I would like not to talk directly to this, but I would like to make a little bit broader statement of a more universal nature. The story of Budapest Memorandum and many, many others, you know, declarations that sounded, you

know, very credible is a tale of what makes the guarantees credible and what makes the guarantees, especially the security guarantees, a very significant factor in crafting the decisions regarding the security issues.

You know, I come from the country – and there are many countries in our region that had been given in the past all sorts of guarantees and assurances. Poland went to war in 1939 having the guarantees of Western countries which were not kept. And, you know, we have – but it's not only Poland. Czechoslovakia– this is the story throughout whole region. Indeed, it explains a lot about our attitudes and behaviors. And some people think, oh, maybe we over-react, maybe we are oversensitive. Yes, maybe we over-react, maybe we are oversensitive, but this all has some reasons.

And I would like to juxtapose those guarantees that have not been kept with the Article 5 guarantees. And this is how we make a difference. And this is how we understand what the credible guarantees should look like. And I think that not only we know – we know that the Article 5 is credible, is working, is solid, but I think also that our opponents know that.

TIERSKY: Thank you very much.

We are nearing the end of our time. I will reserve, actually, again, the right of the commission to ask one last lightning round of question to our questioners. But before I do that, I'd like to offer the floor to Ambassador Gegeshidze of Georgia. If you'd like to make a comment, sir, you'd be welcome to. Thank you.

GEGESHIDZE: Thank you.

First of all, I would like to thank the panel and the organizers of this very interesting discussion. It's very timely and very much needed, especially as we're nearing – as we're getting closer to the Warsaw NATO summit. I would like to comment and with this being a little bit of Georgian perspective in some of the points which were discussed by the distinguished panelists.

Transformative power of NATO integration was mentioned. In Georgia's case, transformative power of getting closer to NATO has really brought tangible results, together with the transformative power of EU integration, which Georgia is also part of while being part of the Eastern Partnership program and being with the EU in association agreement.

This transformative power has really changed my country in terms of improving its institutions and all sorts of standards, which as a requirement are set for the potential members of the alliances, both NATO and European Union. And on all accounts, Georgia has – is already meeting technically the requirements for the NATO membership. And this has been already testified by all sorts of inspection teams and validation processes which Georgia has gone through. So what remains is a political decision on the part of all allied members, which due to understandable reasons, it's difficult to achieve in Georgia's case.

But the time may not be on the side of sustaining this transformative power in case of

Georgia because if one assumes – and we all agree that Georgia has graduated from the stage when it has already transformed to a degree when it can be – can be invited to the alliance. But this is not happening. Then this may discredit the very notion of NATO integration process having transformative power, because there had been some polls in Georgia lately which would show that disillusionment in the population with the lack of the reciprocity on the part of NATO and sometimes EU is leading to some sort of hesitation to support in those big numbers NATO integration process. Because in Georgia, since '90s, getting closer to NATO has always enjoyed very high popular support. This time too, but as we are nearing our own elections this October, then the preliminary polls show that, well, in case of the lack of the reciprocity on the part of the – NATO or EU – because on the EU part we are also waiting for the visa liberalization, which is, again, in the pipeline but maybe lagging behind the pre-agreed timetable – so this might be reflected in the outcomes of the elections.

My personal opinion would be that there will not be, really, some really very serious setback in Georgia's population support of the pro-Western policies. But again, everything has limits. And also in Georgia's case, transformative power may also have its limits if, in due course, the real progress or the next step towards membership will not be offered to Georgia.

And the second point is the very interesting point which Dr. Binnendijk mentioned regarding the changing of the criteria of inviting some of the countries where Russia was able and successful in putting its very heavy hand by means of deploying military troops there. So the NATO study of 1995, which says that any aspirant country first has to settle the territorial dispute with the neighboring countries in order to be eligible for the membership, this was put to good use by Russia. And by wounding Georgia by means of occupying its territories and now Ukraine, then according to this very principle of NATO study, these countries are forever ineligible for the membership. And if one really does not change this criterion, then it means that we are giving Russia a veto power on NATO enlargement towards our part of the world.

I think that the overall security environment has greatly changed since all those well-known treaties, CFE or Vienna Document or INF was mentioned and others, who are mostly defunct these days – and this NATO study also almost obsolete in many, many sense. This keeps Georgia hostage. This keep Georgia hostage and not eligible for making the step forward. So I think the discussions on changing this criteria I think would be really timely to begin and to get to the point when not only NATO institutionally but also academically, the policy community has to adapt to the new security environment, which we see to be really lagging behind. Thank you.

TIERSKY: Ambassador, thank you very much for your very important comments. I can assure you that the members of the Helsinki Commission will remain seized of the need to support Georgia in its aspirations.

Ladies and gentlemen, the meeting is about to end, but I do want to give our panelists one chance to answer a lightning round of questions, really lightning round.

Help me do my job. The members of the commission will come to me surely and say, Tiersky, what NATO decided in Warsaw, is any of that working? They're going to come to me

in six months, I guarantee it, maybe sooner than that. Can anyone think of any good metrics, maybe two metrics each, that I can say, yes, this shows that the decisions made in Warsaw at the summit really have made a difference in this particular instance? What should I look for?
Thanks.

BINNENDIJK: I'll give you two: defense spending – I think we'll want to be able to demonstrate that the decline in European defense spending has turned around and that indeed, the plans that are currently in place for 20-some nations to increase defense spending, that that's going forward – that's one; and two, that the – we have forward-deployed some multinational forces in the Baltic states and in Poland to help enhance deterrence.

TIERSKY: Thank you. Anyone else?

GUMATAOTAO: Yeah. Two things. See how much has changed beyond rhetoric between this NATO-EU cooperation – you know, hold us accountable to that because both have excellent tools, but they're complementary. And then number two, we've talked a lot about the four rotational multinational battalions. We talk about looking at a strategy and how we can tailor presence down to the southeast flank. And we talked about increasing our understanding of resilience. Those things I think may be discussed and probably will be discussed – and the protection and improving deterrence and defense. And so you should look six months down to how much more details are involved in that. Thank you.

PISARSKI: I mean, these are all very excellent. I could only accord them. I mean, if we are able to make this, you know, visible significant shift from, as we said, you know, reassurance towards deterrence in the form of the tangible forward-deployed troops and also tackle – and we have some meaningful, effective discussion about how to engage in the south, yeah.

TIERSKY: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking our excellent panelists for what has been a tremendously interesting discussion. (Applause.) A transcript of this discussion should be available on the Helsinki website, perhaps as early as Monday, perhaps as early as sometime late tomorrow. We'll see how other responsibilities get in the way. Thank you all for being here, and we look forward to seeing you at the next Helsinki Commission briefing. Visit our new website; it's very nice.

[Whereupon, at 4:31 p.m., the briefing ended.]