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# **NATO: READY, ROBUST, REBALANCED**

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## **MODERATOR:**

Jan Techau, director, Carnegie Europe

## **SPEAKERS:**

Anders Fogh Ramussen, secretary general,  
North Atlantic Treaty Organization

**NATO: Ready, Robust, Rebalanced**

**JAN TECHAU:** Good morning, everybody. I think we're actually a couple of minutes early, which never happens in this town but we've accomplished this already this morning. I see people still coming in. Let me welcome you all to Concert Noble to this Carnegie Europe event with the NATO Secretary-General. It's a great honour to see you here. The early morning events, contrary to all of our instincts, always go very well here in this town. You can never miss a good number of people coming in when you do early morning things in Brussels. People like to get fed some food for thought before they hit the office so welcome to this event and thanks for showing up this morning.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen has spoken at Carnegie events before and he's always bringing messages about the future of NATO. He's the 12<sup>th</sup> NATO Secretary-General since 2009 and he's presided over what some people call the most transformative mandates that any previous NATO Secretary-Generals have brought to the job, perhaps with the exception of the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. He has, of course, presided over the question of what happens in Afghanistan and what happens after NATO leaves Afghanistan. He has launched a new strategic concept for NATO. He restructured headquarters. He presided over the Libya operation and he, of course, talked about smart defence a lot and about a number of other initiatives to increase capabilities and to increase the transatlantic linkage and bond, if you will.

So a transformative agenda indeed but the transformative agenda's not over yet because as Afghanistan winds down and the post-operation era of NATO is dawning the question is what's NATO going to look like? And we have all asked ourselves that question once or twice before so what is this alliance going to do after it's not doing anything any more? We hope to find some answers here today. We all know that this is our insurance policy but how do we make that insurance policy juicy and relevant?

And then also connected to this question – and perhaps we will hear a little bit about this as well – connected to this question is the question of Anders Fogh Rasmussen's legacy at NATO. It's another year basically for him on this job and he now makes the pushes for what will be seen as the things he left behind, apart from the things I mentioned earlier. So many questions that we have today, of course on top of the breaking news issues like Syria and some others that are on our minds constantly.

I will stop here. Let me apologise for my voice. Of course, just in time for this event I've got a nice little cold, which always happens so I try not to talk too much because clearly the main man here is the Secretary-General. Secretary-General, I'd like to invite you to give the speech and thanks again for coming this morning.

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** Thank you, Jan, for that very kind introduction and thank you to Carnegie for organising this morning's session. I've been looking forward to meeting you this morning to outline some major security policy priorities as we are approaching two important security policy events within the next year; an EU summit on defence and security in December and a NATO summit next year.

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Ladies and gentlemen, we live in a world in transition and transition often lead to turmoil and turbulence. In such times we need something strong, stable, secure and for 28 nations in Europe and North America that pillar of strength is NATO. We are seeing tragic turmoil and turbulence just beyond NATO's south-eastern border. We have also recently seen renewed efforts by the international community to stop the terrible bloodshed in Syria. I welcome the framework for the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons agreed between the United States and Russia. The next step should be an expeditious agreement of a United Nations Security Council resolution to ensure effective implementation.

The swift, secure and verifiable elimination of Syria's substantial stocks of chemical weapons is key. It is clear that what happened around Damascus on 21<sup>st</sup> August is a war crime and it is clear that the international community has a duty to hold those responsible to account.

NATO remains vigilant. We continue to keep the situation in Syria under close review and we continue to protect the alliance's south-eastern border. While the ultimate solution to the Syrian crisis can only be political, I have no doubt that the reasoned agreement could not have been reached without a credible military option and this demonstrates once again that we need strong defence capabilities to support strong diplomatic efforts and make them effective.

And this brings me to the theme of my speech, NATO's future. Of course, every crisis around the world is different and NATO cannot be the response for every crisis but I do believe that NATO is the foundation on which any ally or group of allies can build their response to any crisis. Our political consultations, our common standards and procedures, our military command and control structures and our common experiences in combat and in peacekeeping on three continents; all these make NATO unique. They mean that allied nations stand ready to act and that when they act they can be more effective.

Today in many parts of the world allies are acting under NATO's command and control, often with partner nations, to safeguard security at home and to help bring stability and safety to troubled areas of the world; in Afghanistan and Kosovo, in the Mediterranean and off the Horn of Africa, over the Baltic states and near Turkish border. This clearly demonstrates that NATO remains an essential source of stability in an unpredictable world.

Together the allies form a unique community of values, committed to individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The world will change. The threats will change but our values never will so we must always ensure that we have the military capabilities to protect those values and the political will to do so. We have a strong base on which to build. At the Lisbon summit in 2010 we approved NATO's new strategic concept. We have been successfully implementing it since and as we draw down from Afghanistan and take stock of 20 years of operations we have the most capable and most tightly-connected forces in history and the widest network of partners.

I cannot predict today what NATO's next mission will be but whatever the next challenge is, we need to remain ready to face it and to do that I see three priorities. First, to maintain robust defence and deterrent. Second, to reaffirm the bond between Europe and North America and rebalance our relationship. And third, to bolster our global perspective and remain ready to work with partners and protect our values in our region and beyond.

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Now let me take each of these priorities in turn. First, ensuring robust defence and deterrent. Collective defence and deterrent is the greatest responsibility of our alliance and it will always be a transatlantic task because the security of Europe and the security of North America are indivisible. But the nature of collective defence is not the same as it was when NATO was founded in 1949. The threats are not the same and neither are the means to address them. To be frank, some of the capabilities we have we don't need and some of the capabilities we need we don't have.

It is no longer sufficient to line up tanks along our borders to patrol and protect them. Today's threats and tomorrow's often come from the other side of the world, even from cyberspace and they come in many forms and guises. To stop terrorism hitting us at home we must be ready to address it at its source. That's why allies deployed troops to Afghanistan. Leading the largest coalition in modern history, NATO has now denied a safe haven for international terrorists there and in doing so we have improved our own security at home. I believe this is modern collective defence.

The missiles threat is another example. Over 30 countries around the world have or are developing missile technology. Some of Europe's cities are well within range and against real threats we need real defences. That's why NATO is building a missile defence system to protect European population and territory. This as well is modern collective defence.

Similarly we saw in Estonia in 2007 how cyber attacks can harm our economies and our security. We have made good progress in improving our cyber defence. For me, the next step should be to consider how we could assist allies who come under cyber attack. I believe this too is modern collective defence. Moreover, we must continue to look for ways to improve our joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, including the acquisition of observation drones and modernisation of our AWACS aircraft.

Acquiring modern capabilities is not easy when many allies face declining defence budgets and that's why we need a new spirit of solidarity and cooperation within NATO. That means developing, acquiring and maintaining military equipment together in multilateral projects and it means prioritising, specialising and helping each other. That is smart defence.

We also need to strengthen the connections between our forces through more joint exercises, education and training and to reinforce our NATO response force to defend any ally, deploy anywhere and deter against any threat. And that is the aim of our Connected Forces initiative. Taken together, these steps will ensure NATO remains robust.

Our second priority is to strengthen the transatlantic relationship and rebalance the alliance. North America and Europe remain each other's partner of choice and we can only be fully effective by working together. That's why we must all continue to invest in our alliance and why we must all shoulder a fair share of the burden, just as we all share in the benefits.

The engagement of the United States in European security remains strong and it is keeping up with the security challenges. A few years ago the last American nuclear submarines left Sardinia but shortly afterwards we saw the first American EKIS [?] ship deployed to the Mediterranean to enhance our defence against missile attacks. Earlier this year the last

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American tank left Germany but next month the first American brigade combat team will deploy to Europe as part of the NATO response force during exercise Steadfast Jazz in the Baltic region.

In May we saw the last anti-tank aircraft fly out of Germany but in June the first American vertical-lift transport aircraft deployed to the United Kingdom to enhance special operation forces. These are all signs of North America's continuing commitment to modern transatlantic security and Europeans are also making important contributions, for instance by deploying forces on operations in Afghanistan, in Kosovo, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

But I do believe that European nations can and should do more to match America's commitment because a strong NATO needs a strong Europe with strong capabilities, strong defence industries and a strong political commitment. I would like to see European allies playing their part to acquire more drones to improve surveillance, more large transport and air-to-air refuelling aircraft to enhance their ability to deploy on operations, and more upgraded radars on their ships so they can be integrated into our NATO missile defence.

And to deliver a strong Europe we also need a strong European defence industrial basis. So far the European defence industry remains too national and too fragmented. This is why I welcome the European Commission's proposals to enhance the industry's efficiency and competitiveness and to help it to fund research and develop new military technologies.

And finally, a strong Europe will require strong political will to increase defence spending when our economies start to recover, as they will, to develop long-term procurement and investment programmes and to assume more security responsibilities in Europe's neighbourhood. I was encouraged by the debate we had at the recent European Union defence ministerial in Vilnius so I expect the European Council on Security and Defence in December to demonstrate strong political commitment. It will help to strengthen Europe, it will help to strengthen the transatlantic partnership and it will help to rebalance NATO. This is an opportunity not to be missed.

Finally, our third priority is to develop a truly global perspective of security and the partnership to match that perspective. I welcome the increased attention that the United States is paying to the Asia Pacific region. This is also in Europe's interest and it is certainly not at the expense of the transatlantic relationship. On the contrary, by paying greater attention to Asia and the Pacific the United States is also contributing to Europe's security and wellbeing.

Earlier this year I visited South Korea and Japan and I was struck by how well these partners understand our interdependence. Security today can only be cooperative security. Dialogue and cooperation with partners play an integral part in helping our understanding of world events and in strengthening international stability and security. We must now deepen our relationships and widen our networks.

In particular, I believe we should explore ways to help others build their security capacity. We have been doing this successfully both in Kosovo and in Afghanistan. NATO's unique expertise and experience means we are particularly well suited to helping countries manage

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difficult political transitions, modernise their security sectors, train their forces to deal with internal challenges and assist them in operating together with their neighbours' forces to manage crises together, projecting stability without the need to project forces. That is good for our partners and it's good for our allies too.

Alongside the United Nations, the European Union and individual nations NATO is looking into a request by the Libyan Prime Minister to provide advice in the development of Libya's national security forces. I believe other countries in that region could benefit from NATO's experience and expertise.

I would also like to see NATO further develop cooperative relations with regional organisations such as the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the African Union to contribute to regional security including, if they so wish, by developing their capacities to manage future crises.

Let me stress, all these steps will not lead to NATO becoming a global policeman but they will lead to a better global understanding by NATO and that is essential for NATO to be ready to deal with the security challenges of today's globalised world.

Ladies and gentlemen, throughout many turbulent decades NATO has provided a solid foundation for our freedom and security and for the stability of the world. The political and military bonds forged in NATO between Europe and North America, our unrivalled capabilities and our extensive network of partners form an alliance that is strong, flexible and able to perform a wide range of tasks; the tasks we can foresee and those we can't yet imagine.

Our job today is to make NATO ready, robust and rebalanced for the future so that in an unpredictable world it remains an essential source of stability we can all rely on. Thank you.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much, Secretary-General, for a very broad and wide canvas and indeed for suggesting a few answers to the future of NATO. Now I would like to ask you in the audience to get your questions ready and before I take them let me ask two questions myself, one on Syria because you started with Syria, and the second one on the future of NATO.

We have just learned in the Syria case – and you mentioned it in your speech – that it's the credible threat of force that brings movement into a dramatic situation. It looks as if the mandate that we will get out of the UN Security Council will not include such a credible threat again because some members of the Security Council won't allow this to be included. What is the disarmament mandate for Syria worth without such a robust mandate, is it worth anything?

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** First of all, let us focus on the good news and the good news is that for the first time during this terrible crisis the US and Russia have reached an agreement that now forms a framework for the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria. That is a huge step forward. It remains to be seen exactly how the UN Security Council resolution will look but I think it's essential for keeping momentum in the diplomatic and political process that

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the military option is still on the table. I think, irrespective of the outcome of the deliberations in the UN Security Council, the military option will still be on the table.

**JAN TECHAU:** That's a very clear statement, thank you very much for that. Now on the future of NATO, in your speech you mentioned political will, political commitment quite a number of times, that you want more political commitment on the European side and that we need to develop and strengthen our own political will to be robust, rebalanced and ready.

Let me ask this in a very simple way; where do you see that primary source of political will in Europe, to generate the political will, where is it coming from? Europeans don't feel particularly threatened, they don't feel particularly affected by the US pivot, if there is such a thing. Where are the sources of political will that you can identify that will get us where you want to get us?

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** Again, let me start with the good news. In 2011 we saw the Europeans step up to the plate and take on responsibility in Libya. After the adoption of an historic UN Security Council resolution to protect the Libyan population against attacks from its own government the Europeans actually took the lead on the Libya operation. Having said that, we all know that it couldn't have been carried out successfully without significant support and input from the Americans but for the first time the Europeans delivered the majority of assets for such an operation.

So it's an example that despite economic austerity the Europeans are ready to take more responsibility. But having said that, I share your concerns and I think the Europeans should be aware of the strategic consequences of what we're witnessing right now. The fact is that if the current trend continues, if we see continued declining defence budgets then one day the Europeans will not be able to participate in international crisis management, as we saw it in Libya, and the vacuum Europe leaves behind will be filled by the other powers in the world, for instance the emerging powers that actually invest more and more in defence and security.

Eventually it means that Europe will lose influence on the international scene. Very often we in Europe praise ourselves for being the standard-bearer of basic, fundamental principles like individual liberty, democracy, rule of law, human rights and if we are sincere about promoting and defending those values we also need the capabilities to actually underpin the soft power with some hard power. That's my clear position. That's why I'm concerned about declining defence budgets in Europe.

**JAN TECHAU:** So ultimately it's our values that will produce the political will, because we can't just neglect our values for too long before losing ourselves. Is that what you're saying?

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** Yes, exactly and that's why I started with the positive example of Libya, because I think many people felt that fundamental principles were at stake and we had a responsibility to act once the UN Security Council had adopted that historic resolution. So when it comes to fundamental principles I think people realise we have to do something.

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**JAN TECHAU:** Excellent, thank you very much. I think we'll start with questions now from all sides of the room. This gentleman was clearly the first one and then this lady in the middle, then this lady over here and then we'll take a second round after that. Please.

**DR DAMIAN DEGEORGES:** Dr Damian Degeorges, founder of the Arctic Policy and Economic Forum. A delegation of NATO parliamentary assembly recently visited Greenland and Denmark to discuss arctic issues and the assembly subcommittee on defence will write a report on NATO's role in securing the high north. How do you perceive the evolution of NATO engagement in the region? Thank you.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much. The lady here in the middle, please.

**ALEXANDRA MAYER-HOHDAHL:** Good morning. Is this working? Yes. Alexandra Mayer-Hohdahl with the German press agency, DPA. You talked about NATO being important for defending values. I have a question for you about public perception. Are you worried at all that people may say, NATO didn't or couldn't intervene in Syria? How are you defending values if you couldn't even go into a country where chemical weapons were being deployed?

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much. Then we have the lady in red here in the middle, on the other side. There, thank you.

**THERESA FALLON:** Hello, Theresa Fallon, European Institute of Asian Studies. This is another question about fundamental values. You mentioned about Japan, for example in April when you were there to talk about the partnership agreement and signed the agreement with Japan it really skidded over regional tensions. China wasn't even mentioned and this idea of a democracy, all of these issues in the region; NATO pretty much said, we'll do everything like cyber, issues like that. And then immediately afterwards a person flew to Beijing to brief the Chinese about what happened in Japan so this leads to questions about where NATO's support really is.

I understand there are tectonic changes in the international scene but how does NATO see future relations with China? You mentioned in your speech that you want to deepen and broaden your partnerships. How do you expect to do that in Asia? Thank you very much.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much and, if you allow, I'll take another one. Yes, please. We'll go on to answers after this.

**BROOKS TIGNER:** Yes, Brooks Tigner, Jane's Defence. Two quick questions; Russian Damascus [?] say they have proof that the rebels carried out the chemical attack in August and it wouldn't be the first time that rebels in a conflict have killed their own people for propaganda purposes, as we've seen countless times in Afghanistan. How open are you to the idea that the rebels may have done this?

Second, on cyber defence, how do you expect to boost NATO's cyber defence capabilities to provide assistance to an individual ally that might come under attack when the NAC, the North Atlantic Council, is opposed to using common funding to do this? Thank you.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much. That's a wide array; NATO in the arctic, the ability or inability of NATO to do something in Syria, then the question, did the rebels actually commit, did they launch the attack that we're talking about? Cyber defence and then Japanese/China relations.

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** Yes, indeed. Thank you very much. First on the high north, clearly climate change and melting ice in the north will, of course, have strategic implications. When new sea routes are opened, when we get easier access to resources in that part of the world there will potentially, of course, also be a risk of more tensions. However, I do believe that countries in that region will do all they can to address these challenges peacefully and through negotiations. Among other bodies, they do have the Arctic Council as a framework for such peaceful resolutions of different problems, questions and challenges.

But as regards NATO, I can assure you that we have no intention to increase our presence in the high north or to militarise the high north but on the other hand, we have several allies neighbouring or even having parts of their territories situated in what we call the high north and obviously our allies would expect NATO to execute collective defence in all parts of NATO territory, including territory in the high north. So I don't see any difference between NATO territory in the high north and NATO territory elsewhere. Our collective defence covers all NATO territory.

On Syria, I made the strong point that the credible threat of using military force facilitated the diplomatic and political process that eventually led to the American/Russian agreement in Geneva on the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons but don't make any mistake; when it comes to the long-term solution to the conflict in Syria there is no military solution. We need a political settlement and that's basically also why there's no call for NATO to intervene in Syria but very often I get this question. People ask me, you conducted a very successful operation in Libya so why couldn't you do the same in Syria?

But let me remind you that Libya and Syria are two very different cases. In Libya we operated on the basis of a clear United Nations mandate. In Libya we got active support from partners in the region. None of these conditions are fulfilled when it comes to Syria but on top of that, I think any foreign military intervention in Syria could have unpredictable regional repercussions and this is the reason why we need a political solution to the conflict in Syria. But we should clearly distinguish between the long-term solution to the conflict in Syria and the specific response to the use of chemical weapons.

The use of chemical weapons is a crime. It is a violation of international law and that's why it needs a firm international response, to prevent such attacks from happening again. That's why, right from the outset, I have been in favour of a firm military response and that threat of using military force has now facilitated a political and diplomatic process that can lead to the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria and that is, of course, the desirable outcome of this.

So this is the reason why each and every case must be judged based on the specific circumstances and there is no military response to all problems in the world so that's why Libya and Syria are two different situations.

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On China and Asia, first on China; you pointed to one very specific thing, namely that NATO has a dialogue with China. Yes, we do. Occasionally we have an exchange of views and I don't think that is in contradiction with our desire to defend and protect basic democratic values. Very often you will have to engage in a dialogue with counterparts who don't necessarily share your world view and I do believe that we have an interest in a dialogue with China. Let me remind you that NATO operates on the basis of United Nations mandates in Afghanistan, Kosovo, counter-piracy; you name it. All our operations are based on United Nations mandates.

With four out of the five permanent members of the Security Council we do have special relations. Three of them are, of course, allies; the US, UK, France; and with the fourth, Russia, we have a special partnership within the NATO/Russia Council but with the fifth, China, we don't have a structured dialogue and I think we have an interest in a dialogue with China, taking into account that we adhere to the fundamental principles of the UN Charter.

That's why we have a dialogue with China but at the same time, we have developed and are developing closer ties with what I will call like-minded partners in the Asia Pacific region. We have signed an agreement with Australia. We have signed agreements with Japan. I was the very first NATO Secretary-General to visit South Korea some months ago. We have these partnerships with what we call partners across the globe because they contribute in a valuable way to our operations and because we believe that in today's world we need partnerships to accomplish our security missions.

I would like to stress, this doesn't mean that NATO will be present in Asia but we will engage with Asia, with individual nations in Asia and I wouldn't exclude that we can develop similar partnerships with other like-minded countries in the Asia Pacific region. Personally I think there would also be potential in strengthening and structuring our dialogue with India.

Finally, returning to Syria, I think it's quite clear that a variety of sources point to the Syrian regime as responsible for the horrendous chemical weapon attack on 21<sup>st</sup> August. The missiles were launched from areas controlled by the Government. It doesn't make sense for the opposition to attack their own people with chemical weapons in areas they already control and furthermore, we don't think the opposition has at its disposal means to carry out a chemical weapons attack of that scope and scale. So based on the information I have, I have no doubt that the Syrian regime is responsible for that chemical weapons attack.

And finally on cyber, we are currently considering how NATO could possibly assist allies that come under cyber attack. You asked me specifically, could we imagine NATO-owned and NATO commonly-funded assets being used to assist individual allies that come under attack? Let me remind you that it's not necessarily the only way to assist allies. When we're speaking about conventional attacks and conventional threats, we would usually deploy national assets to help an ally. Let me take the deployment of Patriot missiles to Turkey as an example. Three allies agreed to deploy Patriot missiles to Turkey to augment Turkey's air defences and they're put under NATO command and control. They're not NATO-owned or NATO commonly-funded assets, they are national assets.

Similarly you could imagine within the cyber world that national assets come to assist an ally that comes under attack, upon request.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you, Sec-Gen. What happens when you combine a super-performing 21<sup>st</sup> Century military alliance with a super-performing 21<sup>st</sup> Century think tank is that people can ask questions via Twitter. We've asked them to send in their stuff and I've selected two of these questions from the Twitter feed that we've received and they fit with issues that you have raised.

One comes from a student here in Brussels, Tomaso Cresto Dina, who is raising the EU issue which you have also raised. His question is, could proper EU defence ever exist outside NATO? That question was to you in this case, especially, of course, since the US is pivoting away. NATO relies very heavily on the US so can the EU replace NATO, can it ever exist outside NATO? What's your take on that?

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** I do believe that the two organisations should work together in a complementary way. I believe it would be a waste of resources to duplicate and have, so to speak, an independent EU defence organisation in parallel with a similar NATO defence structure. I think that would be duplication, it would be waste of resources. 22 nations are members of both organisations and they only have one set of military forces and one set of task [unclear].

So I think the way to ensure effective defence is clearly a kind of division of labour so that within the EU common defence and security policy you could initiate specific operations where EU countries, possibly assisted by partners, conduct operations as they do already in Africa, in Bosnia as another example, and NATO will conduct operations in other theatres. In some theatres we will operate alongside each other, as we do in Afghanistan. There is an EU police mission and, of course, ISAF in Kosovo where we have K4, we have EULEX. So there is a variety of cooperation patterns but personally I think it would be a waste of resources to build a parallel EU structure with headquarters and command and control systems. You mentioned...

We have that system already in NATO so I think a majority of NATO allies and also EU member states would say, let's use the systems that we already have.

**JAN TECHAU:** I think that answers that question sufficiently. Now there is something else. You mentioned the upcoming NATO summit next year and out there there are obviously people who send in their questions who have very different ideas as to what should be on the agenda there. For them threats sound very different from the threats that we usually talk about. Iveta Cherneva, who's a security and defence analyst, writes, will climate change, international finance and energy security be part of the agenda for the next NATO summit? A nice indicator as to what people out there also see as potential threats that maybe NATO should be dealing with.

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** Yes. Implicitly, it will, of course. The financial crisis has an impact on defence budgets, as I've already said, so there is a direct link between the investment in military capabilities and our financial capabilities. That is also why I have launched the concept of smart defence, that of course we can't expect a lot more money for defence in the near future so we have to make the most out of what we do have and the way

to make more efficient use of resources is to go for collective solutions to achieve synergies by helping each other specialise and prioritise, all under the headline smart defence.

I have already mentioned climate change as a factor that, of course, also has strategic implications when it comes to security and energy security is all over. So these issues will not be put on the agenda as specific items but implicitly they will, of course, have an impact on our deliberations.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much. Let me add another very quick one from myself. You mentioned the NATO response force in your speech. Most of us looking at NATO and at European defence think, of course, this is one relatively big disappointment and that it has never really functioned and worked the way we envisioned it to work. Do you think that this NRF tool that we've given ourselves can ever amount to something?

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** Indeed, it will be revitalised. It was invented some years ago and you're right; so far it hasn't played a strong role but there is one specific reason why the NATO response force hasn't been prominently placed in the eyes of the public and that is we have been so engaged in Afghanistan that our allies and our partners didn't feel a strong need for exercises because we exercised on a daily basis, real-time and real-world in Afghanistan. But my point is, as we draw down in Afghanistan we will have to step up joint exercises, training and education to maintain and further develop the ability we have developed in Afghanistan to work and operate together. That's why the NATO response force will get a more prominent role in the coming years.

**JAN TECHAU:** Excellent, thank you very much. Two more questions; this gentleman here and then to this side, Terry, please.

**TIJN SADEE:** Tin Sadee for Dutch NRC Handelsblad and NOS radio. You mentioned the need to invest more, for European members to share the burden. You probably heard that the Dutch Government decided to invest in 37 new joint strike fighters. You've heard about that? Yes; an enormous burden, €4.5 billion. Apparently the Dutch Government is willing to take on that burden. My question to you is, what kind of coordination is there in Europe to share this burden, is the Netherlands the only country investing so much, are there other countries that have a more cheap, free ride? Could you comment on that?

**JAN TECHAU:** Excellent, and on this side here – I think we'll probably add another question but Teri goes next.

**TERI SCHULTZ:** Thank you, Jan. Hello, Mr Secretary-General. You say that you believe the Syrian regime was responsible and you also say that you believe anyone who uses chemical weapons should be held accountable. Do you really think that taking away the weapons so it can't happen again is sufficient for holding the regime accountable for what you and most others believe has already happened? What should happen next in that process?

And also a question on European defence; yesterday we heard at JFC Brunssum that allies and partners are operating nearly seamlessly now and that Steadfast Jazz will simply reinforce that but if what has happened in Afghanistan and also the Libyan operation pointed out the very specific shortfalls in European spending, if these very specific exercises haven't

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convinced the Europeans they need to spend more on their capabilities, what do you expect will do it? Thanks.

**JAN TECHAU:** Excellent, and then this gentleman at the aisle there; that's the final question I'm going to take.

**NAWAB KHAN:** Nawab Khan from the Kuwait news agency, Kuna. Mr Secretary-General, do you think there should be a time limit set for the finding and destruction of the chemical weapons in Syria? I ask because Mr Bashar al-Assad said today on a TV interview that it will take one year and cost \$1 billion and this should be paid by the US.

My second question is on your proposal to boost regional cooperation with organisers like the Gulf Cooperation and the Arab League. Have you any concrete proposals on this? Thank you.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much; again a number of Syria questions but also the coordination on defence burdens, the shortfall in exercises that became obvious, and the time limit for the removal of these chemical weapons on Syria.

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** Yes. First on holding those responsible accountable, basically, of course – or eventually, I would say – it is also a question of international law and using the international legal system in that respect. There's no doubt that chemical weapons have been used. There's no doubt that the use of chemical weapons is a crime, a violation of international law and I think it should be dealt with within an international legal system – while I still do believe that the threat of taking military action has facilitated a diplomatic and political process and that option should still be on the table to maintain a momentum in that diplomatic and political process.

Now on timelines, I think we have seen quite ambitious timelines outlined in the framework agreement that was agreed between the Americans and the Russians in Geneva. I think we should stick to the timelines that have been agreed between the two parties.

Now on defence investments, first of all, let me stress that it is a national decision how and when individual allies will invest in military capabilities, including renewal of the fleet of fighter aircraft. That's the first thing. Secondly, you asked me whether there's a coordination within NATO and the answer is yes. We do have what we call a NATO defence planning process within which allies try to coordinate in such a way that overall we do have the right capabilities to address future challenges.

When it comes to the acquisition of fighter aircraft or other kinds of military equipment it would, of course, be a good idea if nations pursue joint acquisition and collective solutions. Again, it's a national decision but let me point to at least one example from the past that I know very well because my own country, Denmark, participated in that in the 70s. Four NATO allies acquired F-16 fighter aircraft in a joint project; Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium – by the way, later Portugal joined that consortium. I think, if I remember correctly, we purchased 348 F-16s and you can imagine that we achieved a lot of synergies. As in private households, you get a rebate if you buy in big quantities so obviously there are good economies in pursuing such joint acquisition of expensive military equipment

and it's not only about acquisitions because afterwards we also joined efforts when it came to maintenance, training, education and on a couple of occasions also deployment of these F-16s.

So there are a lot of synergies to achieve through joint acquisition of, say, fighter aircraft but, having said all that, it's a national decision.

Are the Europeans convinced that they should invest more in critical military capabilities? Based on the discussion I have heard among political leaders in European capitals I think there is a growing awareness that, based on the lessons learned not only from Libya but also from other operations, that we need more investment in critical military capabilities to fill the gaps. Of course, the challenge right now is that all governments in Europe are under budgetary pressure and as a politician, I know very well what the challenge is. When you're forced to cut your budget across the board, including welfare programmes, education programmes, health programmes, it's almost political suicide to suggest that the ministry of defence should be exempted from that exercise. That is the political reality we are all faced with now.

Nevertheless, I have seen positive examples recently. I have visited allies, I have spoken with their parliamentarians. That's now always an integrated part of my programmes, that I meet parliamentarians and I have discussed it with them. In a number of parliaments in allied nations we have now seen broad political agreements that they will gradually increase their defence spending, they will gradually move towards the NATO 2% benchmark. You know, we have a benchmark according to which individual allies should strive to reach a level of defence investment equivalent to 2% of GDP. Only a very few live up to that and it's not a legal obligation, it's a political goal, it's a political commitment.

But the good news is that I have now seen a number of examples that in parliament a broad coalition of parties have agreed to gradually move towards that goal. At least that is an attempt to reverse the trend and let me mention one example which is outstanding, I think. A few years ago Estonia suffered severely from the economic crisis. Nevertheless, Estonia has succeeded in achieving the 2% goal. It's a shining example. It's a question of priority. You can if you have the political will and I see that political will in a number of allied nations.

**JAN TECHAU:** Can I interrupt very briefly here because we are all burning to learn who these examples are. Can you give us names or is that impossible at this stage?

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** I could but I think it's for them to publish their intentions. I have the list, yes, but I'm also used to protecting classified information.

**JAN TECHAU:** Note to self; we have to find that list.

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** Yes, but I think some of them would be happy to publish it themselves but again, as I told you, politically it is a bit of a sensitive issue because if you, with one hand, cut in welfare programmes and, with the other hand, increase defence investment you may be faced with domestic political problems. So it's not always highlighted but I have noted it in my book. That's the good news.

Finally about partnerships, we have some ideas. My vision would be to see partners well integrated in our Smart Defence and Connected Forces initiatives. Connected Forces, for instance, to connect our forces, to make sure that they maintain and develop their ability to work and operate together. That's very important, not just for allies but also for partners.

**JAN TECHAU:** I have a question on perceptions of NATO in other parts of the planet. You mentioned NATO not being a global policeman but that NATO needs to develop its awareness of the rest of the world and China, of course, is the big strategic question of the day. We at Carnegie conduct a series of video conferences between NATO headquarters and our office in Beijing and then we bring in Chinese scholars, Europeanists, defence scholars, some of them actually with a NATO specialisation and they know a lot about NATO, they know a lot about the questions and political issues of the day. You have these wonderful discussions and then something strange happens in these discussions.

After about an hour when you think everything's wonderful and you've really made a great effort, then all of these people – and they're the cream of the crop on the Chinese side – will completely subscribe to the idea that NATO is just another building block in the idea of Western encirclement of China; we're out there to get them, it's a big conspiracy and NATO is one element in this. They believe that; you press them on this; you want to pull your hair out after that nice discussion and then you get that kind of message. What's your message for these people?

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** First of all that it demonstrates the need for dialogue and exchange of views so that misperceptions can be avoided and that's, of course, a very important part of our dialogue with the Chinese. Secondly, it is my clear view that in today's world we need to strengthen what we call cooperative security. We want a China that plays a constructive role in upholding international peace and security. We have the same goal and our only intention is to engage in that dialogue with China and ensure that we can complement each other in upholding international peace and security.

Finally, I think it's also important to tell the Chinese that in a number of areas we do have common security interests. One issue, of course, is maritime security, particularly when it comes to counter-piracy. Also the Chinese are very much dependent on global trade, free sea lanes and actually we cooperate with the Chinese when it comes to counter-piracy.

**JAN TECHAU:** Very good. I think we'll take another round of questions. I'm waiting for your hands. There's one lady here – no, it's not a lady, this is a gentleman, I'm sorry. Then there's somebody all the way in the back and then we'll have Ambassador Purini and then we'll see where with those and I might want to take another one. So it's this gentleman here first.

**Unidentified male speaker:** Thank you, good morning, Secretary-General. How do you want to stabilise a region as large as northern Africa and the Sahara region where the al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb seem to be getting stronger and find places to hide and illicit arms are spreading? Is the support of non-democratic governments like Morocco an answer for this?

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much. Then there's another question all the way in the back. Yes, please.

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**Unidentified female speaker:** Good morning. First of all, three days ago the Turkish Air Force shot down a Syrian helicopter at the border after the helicopter violated the Turkish airspace. I just wonder, how do NATO evaluate this action taken by Turkey?

**JAN TECHAU:** Okay, and another one, Ambassador Pierini all the way here in the front, another question.

**MARC PIERINI:** Yes, Secretary-General; about nine hours ago NBC released an interview of the Iranian President and he said, we never pursued or sought a nuclear weapon, we'll never do so. What's your comment on this?

**JAN TECHAU:** All right, I think this leaves us space for another question. I saw a few hands up there. I think this gentleman on the side there. Yes.

**VINCENT HUBIN:** Good morning. My name is Vincent Hubin, I'm representing the United Nations Office for the Coordination of United Affairs in Brussels. I have a question on Afghanistan. We are increasingly concerned that the security situation is deteriorating in many parts of the country, that we have more and more casualties among women and children in particular due to explosive remnants of war, unexploded ordnance.

But we're also increasingly concerned about the humanitarian access in the country and what will happen as the troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan. I would like it if you could share your views on engagement with the Afghan authorities and what the prospects are with regard to how we deliver humanitarian aid, how we reach the people affected and how we deal with unexploded ordnance and other remnants of war. Thank you.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much. That's the first reference to Afghanistan in this, I guess, which I think is an interesting development. Stabilisation of the area, Syria, Iran and then Afghanistan.

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** First on North Africa, yes, developments are a matter of concern. As I indicated in my introduction this morning, I think one possible way forward when we're speaking about NATO is to develop within NATO a capacity to help partners and individual nations to develop their own capacity to deal with security challenges. I mentioned Libya as an example and obviously the security situation in Libya is a matter of concern and the Libyan authorities have requested our assistance to develop their security sector. We have right now an expert team in Libya to explore the possibilities further. I think that's one way in which we can contribute to stabilising the situation in North Africa, that we can help individual nations in the region to develop and strengthen their own security sectors.

On the helicopter incident, the Turks have informed NATO about that incident and according to that piece of information, the helicopter had violated Turkey's airspace and that's why the Turkish authorities acted as they did. I have no reason to doubt the information we have received from Turkey.

On Iran, I have been very encouraged by recent statements and indications from the new Iranian leadership, notably, of course, the President. I hope it will open a possibility of a

political and diplomatic solution to the dispute on the Iranian nuclear programme. I think it's also in Iran's self-interest to engage constructively with the international community and if what we have seen from the new Iranian President is an indication of a desire to engage in a more positive way with the international community, I could only welcome it.

On Afghanistan, first of all, yes, we have seen a number of spectacular attacks and, of course, they are a matter of concern, in particular because the targets very often have been civilians in Afghanistan. In that respect, let me stress that numerous United Nations reports show that the Taliban and other enemies of Afghanistan are responsible for a huge majority of civilian casualties and fatalities in Afghanistan. We have really done a lot to minimise civilian casualties caused by our actions in Afghanistan.

Having said that, and realising that we have seen and will see a number of spectacular attacks in Afghanistan, I also have to add that according to our statistics we have seen a decline in the number of attacks in recent weeks compared to the same period last year. Furthermore, we are witnessing an increasing capability of the Afghan security forces to address the security challenges in Afghanistan. Of course, you asked the same question as many people would ask; what will happen when we complete our ISAF combat mission by the end of next year?

The answer is that in the meantime we have built up a very strong Afghan security force and while there's still a lot to do, we have seen a strengthened capability of the Afghan security forces and they have addressed recent incidents in a very professional manner. So I'm confident that they will be able to take full responsibility for the security by the end of next year when we complete our ISAF mission.

When it comes to excessive munitions and unexploded munitions and remnants, etc, I think that's one of the issues we should address within our future partnership framework. It's our intention, if the Afghans agree, to engage in a long-term partnership with Afghanistan similar to other partnerships we have developed during recent years. And within those partnerships we are also able to assist individual nations with demolition of excessive ammunitions, remnants, etc. So that's at least one possibility, that we can engage in a cooperation with the Afghan authorities in that respect.

**JAN TECHAU:** We all understand that you are a professional optimist on Afghanistan, obviously. Often the security community finds it a bit hard to believe that we are actually, really on the track for a self-sustaining security situation but I don't want to dwell on this too much because it's a tricky issue and it's not our main subject today. I would like to ask you a final question before we conclude here today.

You're from Denmark, obviously, but you've obviously visited, as the first NATO Secretary-General, Ireland which is a neutral country, takes pride in its neutrality but is also agonising over its neutrality. What is going to happen first, Ireland joining NATO or Denmark joining the European defence policy?

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** Yes, it's a difficult question but I think there's a fair chance that Denmark will join the EU defence policy first, based on what I have learnt in both countries. Yes, I think there is a fair chance. The fact is that there is actually a broad political agreement

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in the Danish Parliament that the Danish exception from the EU defence policy is absurd and it is damaging to Danish interests. If it hadn't been for the euro crisis I think that question would have been put to a referendum long ago.

But you also have to understand that the whole euro crisis cast such a shadow over many EU questions so it's very difficult for a government to put any EU question to a referendum right now. I think that's my analysis, that's the basic reason why it hasn't been done already, because there is a clear sense in Denmark that Denmark should participate fully. Let me remind you that Denmark has, for quite some years, pursued a very activist foreign and security policy. Denmark is a very active contributor to many international military operations and obviously it's absurd that the only kind of military operations that Denmark can't contribute to is the EU-led operations. So I'm sure one day that exception will be removed but it requires a referendum.

**JAN TECHAU:** Fantastic. Thank you very much for ending on a note of hope and optimism. Thanks again for joining us at Carnegie for the discussion about the future of NATO and European security. Good luck for the time in the run-up to the new summit and for the big projects that you've taken on as your homework and we hope to see you again at Carnegie Europe at some point in the future. Thank you very much.

**ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN:** Thank you very much.