

**Sir Stuart Peach
Air Chief Marshal
Chairman, NATO Military Committee**

Defense Writers Group

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DWG: We're very grateful to you for making time to join us this morning, sir. The Defense Writers Group was started 40 years ago, and some of your predecessors have joined us at different times in the years since then including your immediate predecessor.

Sir Stuart, there's a lot going on today. [Laughter]. You just might be drowned out by the impeachment hearings in terms of coverage. And we've got a visitor coming and so forth so there's quite a lot going on.

I'd like to start on Ukraine, if I may. First of all, I'd love to hear, I think we'd all like to hear your assessment of the military situation there in Eastern Ukraine. How do you think things are going? And could you also tell us about the contributions that NATO members are making to Ukraine's military picture? We all read and write about the American contribution, but I presume there are others. So could you tell us a little bit about what NATO is doing to help Ukraine prevent aggression or hold it off to the extent possible?

Sir Peach: First of all, thank you very much for the opportunity to join you, and thank you for enabling it.

My name is Stuart Peach. I'm the Chairman of the Military Committee of the NATO Alliance. And I think you know that I'm the only elected military official in the world. So I'm elected by 29 Chiefs of Defense Staff -- Chiefs of Defense from around the NATO Alliance. I was formerly the Chief of Defense of the United Kingdom.

I was in the Ukraine two weeks ago with the North Atlantic Council which has been reported. And we visited Odessa and then moved to Kiev and visited the new government including the new ministers, and I had the opportunity, of course, as you might expect because Ukraine is a partner of the Alliance, to meet the new Chief of Defense of Ukraine. Which I imagine it wouldn't be a surprise to you that I was doing that.

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So we saw the NATO presence in the Black Sea at the invitation of our partners, Ukraine, in this case it was the Standing Naval Mine Countermeasures Group. And we went to visit the Ukrainian Naval Academy which for circumstance I shouldn't need to explain, has been moved from Crimea. And actually we had a very uplifting conversation with the Ukrainian Marine Cadets.

My comment, in answer to your question, is that actually the partnership with the Ukraine by the Alliance is a very serious partnership. We encourage Ukrainian defense reform, and when I invite the Ukrainian Chief of Defense to the NATO Military Committee which I chair, the subject is defense reform.

You specifically asked for information on bilateral training activity. There is a body, an informal group called the Defense Reform Assistance Board which is a voluntary grouping of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, that try and do exactly what your question suggested which is coordinate bilateral efforts at reform.

As for the tactical situation in the Eastern Ukraine, that is a matter for those who study tactical situations. NATO has no role in that situation. And of course during the visit to Ukraine we continued to encourage the process of defense reform including defense [human] reform and including of course, hence the visit to Odessa, a focus on the peaceful development of Ukrainian Marine contributions. By Marine I mean, of course, Navy and Coast Guard.

And of course in the meetings with the North Atlantic Council they are exactly as they were reported, and that was a matter of record.

In addition, and I think this is important actually, the Secretary General spoke to the Rada, the Ukrainian Parliament. It was a very well received, balanced presentation about the need for peace, the need to find resolution to conflict, and of course the importance of the partnership that the United States established at the request of the Ukrainian government which continues. And there's nothing hidden about NATO's engagement with Ukraine.

DWG: There was a delay of several months in the U.S. military supplies to, or contribution to Ukraine. I'm going to give it a

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shot, just to ask you whether you can say anything about any impact that might have had. And could I again ask you for a bit of specifics about any military materiel or training, specific training efforts that NATO countries are making? What does Britain do, for example?

Sir Peach: I need to be very clear about something. Those are bilateral efforts between the United States and Ukraine. Britain and Ukraine. Canada and Ukraine. The coordination is undertaken by an informal group and not [for NATO]. The engagement of the Alliance with our partner Ukraine is about defense reform. And of course we are grateful for the contribution Ukraine makes to NATO operations along with many other partners that make a contribution to Operation Resolute Support in Afghanistan

DWG: And the delay in American military assistance?

Sir Peach: That's a matter for the U.S. authorities.

DWG: Right.

Aaron?

DWG: Defense News. Thanks for doing this.

The U.S. government is reportedly considering whether to stay in the Open Skies Treaty or not. I was wondering if from a military perspective based on either where you sit now or your experience in the UK, if you can explain kind of the military benefit of Open Skies. What do the NATO members actually get who are part of the treaty? Receive for being part of this organization and having it keep going?

Sir Peach: Open Skies is not an activity undertaken by NATO.

DWG: Right, but many NATO members.

Sir Peach: Many allies are members of the treaty and the terms and conditions of the treaty are well known which is a part of the transparency regime which followed the Cold War. But it's strictly not a matter for NATO.

DWG: From where you sat in your previous role, do you see a military benefit from the information gained from the Open Skies

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Treaty?

Sir Peach: It's a mutual benefit. Open Skies, it does what it says on the title. Those members of the treaty go to fly over Russia and Russia flies over other members of the treaty. It's simple. It's not complicated. And it's not a matter for NATO.

DWG: NATO members, again there's been some discussion in the U.S. about potentially formally banned by INF weapons, whether they might end up in Europe at some point. Has there been a discussion from NATO with the U.S. about those weapons?

Sir Peach: The INF was, is gone because of Russia's failure to comply with the treaty. The INF Treaty is a bilateral treaty between the United States and Russia. During the process, through the leadership of the Secretary General, NATO demonstrated unity and solidarity on the issue. We continue to monitor the situation.

DWG: Have there been discussions between NATO and the U.S. about potentially whether we can see those weapons from the U.S. in Europe in the future? Ground based cruise missiles, ground based ballistic missiles.

Sir Peach: Those discussions continue around a number of issues, not specifically an individual type of weapon, and that's a matter for our work on intelligence and cooperation that NATO encourages for all allies.

DWG: Otto?

Sir Peach: Otto Kreisher, Sea Power Magazine.

On the naval side, could you talk about what, an increased presence you're seeing of Russian surface and submarines in the NATO area, the Baltic and off the Atlantic coast? Are you seeing more activity? What is NATO's response to that?

Sir Peach: We see the consequence of the modernization of Russian naval forces. We see increased activity. NATO in conjunction with its allies takes maritime responsibility seriously. The way we put that to light, make that real is through a series of patrols, multinational groups of ships, expanding naval groups which include in accordance, strictly in accordance with the Montreux Convention activity in the Black

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Sea, in the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, as you suggest, where there is increased Russian naval activity. The Baltic Sea and of course the surrounding, adjoining seas such as the English Channel, North Sea, and so on. Therefore we have to take a balanced approach to our presence and to reassure our allies. And the way we conduct our naval operations is, of course, to coordinate with partners and allies and take advantage of national exercises just as I think in your magazine you observed just about a year ago we did on Trident Junction, which was a very impressive grouping of capabilities including maritime, in this case through a fictional scenario which is not aimed at Russia, off the coast and on the coast of Norway.

We continue to cooperate both with partners in all those seas and allies.

DWG: Here in the United States there was some concern about if we ever had to do, face a major conflict in Europe, going back to a World War II type battle of the Atlantic, the effort to reinforce and supply Europe from the United States against increased Soviet submarine activity. Is NATO taking any action in that regard? Looking at a possibility of having to fight another submarine barrier across the Atlantic?

Sir Peach: Well our role is to deter. Those naval operations I've just described are part of our deterrence posture. Of course the Atlantic Ocean is vital to the economic health and well being of the whole of Europe as well as North America. Therefore we continue to take everything that lies behind the question very seriously.

The exact response is to create a new headquarters called Joint Forces Command Norfolk which is based south of here in Norfolk, Virginia, which is a collocated headquarters with the reformed United States Navy Headquarters called the 2nd Fleet commanded by a Vice Admiral from the U.S. Navy. That is forming, forming, active as a NATO headquarters as we speak.

I visited that headquarters with the Military Committee in March this year, and we were very impressed with the progress.

So that's the exact answer is that yes, we do observe the increased activity. WE are responding to increased activity with a small additional headquarters which the primary focus of which will be, should it be necessary, to provide the ability to

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reinforce across the Atlantic Ocean.

DWG: Thank you, sir.

DWG: Dimitry, TASS.

DWG: Good morning sir. Thank you for doing this.

I wanted to ask you to talk a little about how you see further relations between NATO and Russia developing. What trajectory this engagement is on. IS it going back towards Cold War type of relationship? Or you see a potential actually in the future where the two sides can start some, find some common ground and then start rebuilding this trust and everything else?

Sir Peach: Thank you for the question.

Of course deterrence requires a credible act, it requires credibility of the military force posture. But the second part and the direct answer to your question is, we will continue dialogue with Russia.

The format it takes in Brussels is called the NATO-Russia Council, which is undertaken, chaired by the NATO Secretary General. And that NATO-Russia Council involves the Russian Ambassador.

The dialogue that goes beyond the NATO-Russia Council is between the Russian military and senior leaders of the Alliance including me, and the dialogue takes place with General Gerasimov, who I think you know what he does.

So that dialogue is a matter of record. It is important and it is structured. It is not business as usual because NATO does not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea. But it is a reassurance in that dialogue between senior military leaders such as myself and General Gerasimov, continues.

DWG: May I ask a follow-up to Aaron's question about the INF Treaty. Perhaps I misunderstood you. Has there been at least a preliminary discussion between the U.S. and NATO about potentially deploying U.S. missiles to Europe?

Sir Peach: That's the same question, just rephrased. There is no discussion on that subject. As the Secretary General has

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made clear on a number of occasions, including in a speech in Washington, D.C. last night.

DWG: Shawn Naylor.

DWG: With the [inaudible] Washington today, I thought I'd ask you with the increasing authoritarianism that the Turkish government and this administration in particular are adopting, the cozying up to Russia in the purchase of the S400 and so forth. At what point, what does NATO still get militarily from Turkey and at what point does it no longer make sense to have them in the Alliance?

Sir Peach: NATO is course, an organization, an Alliance, that has evolved since the Washington Treaty in 1949. And we've commemorated our 70th anniversary this year.

Turkey has been an important ally of that alliance since the mid 1950s. That situation has not changed. The geostrategic reasons for Turkey's membership have not changed. The size and strength of the Turkish armed forces is a matter of record. And Turkey is, therefore, an important NATO ally and plays a role in the NATO command structure.

The capabilities that Turkey brings to the Alliance are important to the Alliance. Turkey has legitimate security concerns. So Turkey remains an important Alliance member. Military to military relations with Turkey remain extremely strong and they are very important, and I continue to enjoy a strong relationship with the Turkish Chief of Defense and with Turkish Military Authorities, and we continue to welcome and thank Turkey for their continued support for many NATO missions, activities and operations.

DWG: Patrick.

DWG: Patrick Tucker, Defense [inaudible].

A quick follow-up to that. Increasing reports coming out that Turkey may have committed war crimes in North Syria. Is that something that NATO would be able to monitor or collect intelligence on, to either confirm or deny reports like that? OR if it were to receive information suggesting that war crimes had occurred from a NATO member, is there an internal process to debate or deliberate? What should happen next?

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Sir Peach: Well, I'm not aware of specific reports. If you want to talk about specifics, you'll have to take that up with the Turkish military authorities.

AS for NATO's activity, can I just be clear that the NATO operations I was referring to with regard to Turkey were in Afghanistan and the training mission in Iraq. Of course Turkey's also an important contributor to the NATO support of the United Nations Mission known as KFOR in Kosovo. NATO is not involved in operations in and around the Syrian border. So it would be improper of me to speculate on reports that I've not even seen.

DWG: All right. More broadly, is there any sort of internal deliberative process or mechanism that occurs inside of NATO when one member is credibly accused of committing war crimes?

Sir Peach: When we are in operations which are NATO operations, we have processes in place to ensure those operations are conducted in accordance with NATO-agreed rules of engagement. What you're talking about is not an agreed NATO operation. So in other words, if you were talking about reports which are credible from a NATO operation, then that would be different and we do have processes. But it's not a NATO operation.

DWG: Okay, thank you.

DWG: Christopher Woody, Business Insider.

DWG: About a year ago, in May 2018, you said you saw the top two threats to NATO as Russia and international terrorism. I'd ask now, with recent events in Syria, do you still see those as the top two threats? And the nature of them, has that changed at all?

Sir Peach: The nature of terrorism continues to evolve and every nation in the world, whatever grouping and alignment should be concerned about it because it's a threat to everyone's way of life. So it's therefore important for an Alliance such as NATO to understand the nature of the threat posed by international terrorism because it continues to develop. And we do that.

With regard to the deterrence role of the Alliance, is a very

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important role. I have not actually described Russia as a threat publicly, and I did not say that this morning.

So we continue to undertake all of the operations I've described to several questions, undertaken to provide a posture of deterrence in order to keep the peace. That's what NATO does as a defensive alliance. And of course NATO has, in terms of its capabilities, and you wouldn't expect me in a setting like this to discuss an alleged intelligence picture.

DWG: A follow-up on Turkey. Having Turkey in the Alliance in its geographical position, how does that facilitate NATO operations in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea? And is the prospect of Turkey operating Russian weapons or border relations with Turkey and the Alliance, does that create any issues for NATO's operations in that region?

Sir Peach: NATO continues to operate as a sea power. NATO continues to operate in all the seas where allies wish to undertake deterrence operations. That includes the Black Sea.

We strictly abide by the terms and conditions set by the Montreux Convention, as I've already stated, but that includes activities by mine countermeasure vessels, and naval maritime patrols in the Black Sea and include sport visits to friend ports and partner nations including Ukraine and Georgia.

In terms of the Eastern Mediterranean, then of course NATO would also continue to patrol in the Eastern Mediterranean in exactly the same manner. I think there's no doubt that the Eastern Mediterranean is now more, there are more tensions. NATO continues to operate strictly in accordance with international norms and procedures. And those norms and procedures are important and they are not just, freedom of navigation is not just a subject for Asia. It's also a subject for the Mediterranean Sea.

In terms of how we view each region, then of course we continue to conduct surveillance operations which are a matter of record through our fleet of AWACS aircraft which include bases, forward bases in Turkey and other allied nations. Those missions are surveillance missions. They're not in any way aggressive.

DWG: Justin Doubleday, Inside Defense.

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DWG: Thank you. I wanted to ask about fifth generation wireless networks. The NATO Secretary General recently said all NATO allies will be required to have a reliable telecom system and peacetime crisis in conflict. The U.S. position, of course, is that Chinese companies cannot be relied upon for secure reliable 5G because of their relationship with the Chinese government. How will you enforce those requirements for telecommunication systems that the NATO Secretary General talked about recently? And will they take any opposition, any restrictions on Chinese-made equipment?

Sir Peach: That's a very active topic of discussion and it has not reached a conclusion.

What is true, you would expect NATO's defensive military alliance to have secure networks, and therefore you'd expect us to continue to modernize those networks to make sure they are sufficient for our needs in terms of security and bandwidth and the ability to operate at range across the area I've described already.

Then of course you would expect NATO as an Alliance to have the ability to defend those networks, which is not just using the word cyber, it's as you would expect in a defense Alliance, we need to protect our security.

So in that topic as the technology matures, and I'm here today for the NATO Industrial Forum and the topic you've just raised is a perfect topic to be discussed at the NATO Industrial Forum should you wish to join us. It starts this afternoon. Because I'm being serious. We have not yet reached a conclusion. It's a very active topic. There are different views. My view as the Chairman of the Military Committee is to protect those networks which are owned by NATO. Owned by NATO. Which we need to develop, modernize and sustain.

DWG: To what extent are NATO-owned networks reliant on civilian infrastructure?

Sir Peach: Again, a good question. I mean the extent to which they ultimately rely on civilian infrastructure, but then we have to make sure that they have the appropriate security and built in resilience that we need for military grade networks. Again, that's a topic we'll be discussing in our Industry Forum later today.

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DWG: What's the timeline just kind of for this conversation to move forward and come to some sort of --

Sir Peach: Again, in 24 hours' time at the end of the NATO Industrial Forum I'll be able to give you a better answer than I would today because we'll be discussing it later.

DWG: Thank you.

DWG: Kimberly Doshier, CNN.

DWG: Thank you.

Sir, from your time deploying in the Balkans until now, as the Senior Military Advisor to the NATO Secretary General, how have you seen the threat picture change? And the nature of war.

Sir Peach: And the nature of?

DWG: The nature of war. The threat picture. How have you seen it evolve? Like what is the thing that you wake up each day saying we have got to watch X.

Sir Peach: That's an excellent topic for discussion and I can't really do it justice in a couple of minutes. But specifically in the Balkans where NATO responded in support of the United Nation, we saw the emergence of really quite terrible violence in a civil war setting, and NATO's role was very much to keep the peace where we could establish the peace. Ever since we have seen a steady erosion of the rules of war, and I think I don't need to bring out to the professionals in this group the really quite terrible and violent behavior committed by Daesh, ISIS, however they're termed in recent years. And I think if you wish to have this discussion, which is a very interesting topic, then it is that failure to abide by international norms, by international, the Law of Armed Conflict, the failure of terrorist groups to take any notice of those well thought through principles where of course we as an Alliance continue to abide by those principles.

SO I think that's my principle answer, and of course it takes many forms. Whether it's violence aimed to shock. Because the second part of the discussion, which again would be a much broader and longer discussion is the way in which, and I know

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where I'm sitting, the media have become party to graphic displays of violent activity. I think that is a second area which is shocking, and of course is a development which is perhaps not new in history, but the new form of the way in which the media can be moved at net speed by the internet with graphic shocking images is perhaps new.

And then a third factor of recent years is the what I would term the quest for truth on the battlefield becomes ever more elusive. Because the very nature of the spread of the information and the way it's being spread by various platforms, and many of you are probably more knowledgeable than me about the way digital media works. It has to be a cause for genuine international concern.

Therefore, within the Alliance we continue through our training and education, which is a subject which I'm rarely asked about which is a very important role of NATO, we continue to provide the right framework for military operations in accordance with international norms. We continue to work closely with the United Nations and the European Union, and I had a very, I've had several discussions this year with the Military Advisor of the United Nations so we can operate in mutual cooperation with our friends in the United Nations.

So it's a very interesting topic. Of course if I was in a sort of debating mood, and I think you don't have the time for that, but it would be also about asking you as a group professionally, how we understand and verify claims, and this goes a little bit back to your question, claims that emerge, pop up, from new digital media platforms. That is a really important subject.

I felt this strongly as the United Kingdom Chief of Staff, Chief of Defence Staff, particularly when we, tragically when we have our own casualties operations. Maintaining the integrity of our own command chain to inform families is absolutely vital ground.

I'm not here to run an appeal on behalf of the Alliance, but it is I think true that it's increasingly difficult to understand exactly what has happened in a speed that is relevant to claims that often come from some of you, perhaps, as something that needs to be done about it.

So verification, in one word, is something I think we need to continue to discuss with professionals such as yourselves.

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DWG: And I think all of us at this table work hard before we put a piece of media out there. But one of the problems is the people sitting at the table aren't really your problem. It's the other venues of social media that will pop something out there unverified.

Sir Peach: We absolutely agree.

And I've already made on plea which is that NATO's a very important way in which 29 nations plus partners, another 28 nations. That's a lot of countries, can train and educate the next generation in our military. It may not be news, but it's an important topic ranging from training on basic weapon systems through to high-end training for general officers at the NATO Defense College in Rome.

The second area of often neglected NATO activity, of the 25 -- and I have my list with me -- 25 Centers of Excellence of NATO. Which again, are genuinely trying to understand some of these trends. The one that is very relevant to this discussion is the NATO Center of Excellence for Media Operations in Riga, in Latvia. I don't know whether any of you have worked with them. There's also the Center of Excellence which is European Union owned in Helsinki which we work closely with, to have these discussions.

And I know that many of our Centers of Excellence are media friendly and maybe that's something we should take away from this discussion as to whether we're doing enough to make the strategic communications Center of Excellence in Latvia available to professionals such as yourselves, and whether we need to do more together.

So very interesting.

DWG: A quick follow-up. You mentioned training. In Iraq there's been a lot of NATO training missions for a long time. Are you teaching them non-violent ways of controlling crowds? That has been lacking in their demonstrations over the past month.

Sir Peach: Again, I don't want to discuss specific tactical issues which I haven't seen the detail. But the NATO mission in Iraq is important to us. It is at the request of the Iraqi

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government. It is a non-combat training mission. I have visited it, as has the Secretary General.

Actually, one thing I'd just correct. It's not a very longstanding mission. We've only just recently reached full operational capability as we call it. And it is very much not limited to individual training at unit level. It is very much about specialist training and logistic support training and equipment training. It's very much what the Iraqis have asked for.

But all missions evolve. Our relationship with the Iraqi government continues to evolve.

The other thing to say, it is actually a small-scale mission. It's a few hundreds of people, it's not a large-scale mission. So it is important to us. We continue to work with the Iraqi government including the military leadership, and the most important aspect to the NATO mission in Iraq is that it's a training mission which is non-combat. So there's no suggestion that NATO is engaged on the ground in Iraq.

DWG: New York Times, Julian Barnes.

DWG: Sorry for my lateness here. I hope you haven't gone over my question in the beginning. I don't think you have.

A while back NATO approved something that then Secretary Mattis had championed, the Four 30s Initiative. And when it was originally discussed a couple of years ago in its planning stages, it was about getting smaller allies to be able to actually mobilize their forces and deploy them should a crisis occur or should they be needed for something.

I haven't looked at this for a while. My initial understanding was that the progress was pretty good, but that was in large part because larger allies like the UK had stepped up and fulfilled, had battalions and other equipment ready to provide for this initiative.

Where are you with the smaller allies, the Greeks which have quite a bit military and which NATO wanted to be able to mobilize. Places like Belgium. Are they able to participate in this? Are they going to be able to muster forces for this in 30 days in a time of crisis?

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Sir Peach: It is a good question. We continue to put a lot of effort into the initiative which as you correctly identified was launched by the U.S. Secretary of Defense Mattis, and that will be a continuing discussion. It is a continuing discussion for the Military Committee. And all of these initiatives are for all allies, and therefore we have worked hard with our operational headquarters in Mons and in Shape with the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, SACEUR, to do exactly what you suggest, which is to make it clear how all allies can fit into this initiative which is for 30 battalions at readiness of 30 days or less, 30 squadrons and 30 ships of various types. You would expect not just a single type. And we continue to make that part of our readiness initiative.

So I think if Secretary Mattis was here today I would be very positive about this development. We've worked really hard on it. And I would say we're now delivering a culture of readiness in the Alliance which is needed because of the way the world has evolved. Therefore Secretary Mattis was wise in offering his foresight, and therefore we've worked very hard to deliver it.

It fits into a number of initiatives that we're running to support the defensive nature of our Alliance, but it's a very important one.

DWG: A quick follow-up which is on sort of what NATO, the four 30s is what the Alliance was asking of allies. And one thing that the Military Committee in the past has dealt with is individual allies asking more of NATO in terms of building up resilience and what not.

I'm specifically interested in things we touch on here, you know, cyber defenses and consultation when a country is sort of under information attack from Russia. What sort of requests are you hearing within the Military Committee of what, NATO's doing a number of things in this area, but what more do allies want from the Alliance within this sort of space of resilience against Russian interference in a broader than just pure military?

Sir Peach: I think all nations, regardless of membership in the Alliance, really need to think about resilience very carefully in the modern world. Whether it's resilience of domestic networks or whether it's resilience of vital services. So

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resilience is a big topic, of course.

Within the Alliance, therefore, we focus on our own need for resilience. We can't resolve everything. And our resilience is, as I've answered earlier, is also about making sure our networks are resilient, making sure our logistics support is, we can sustain it, and I think we demonstrated that during Trident Juncture last year off the coast of Norway, and we'll continue to work on that with our new Joint Forces Command down in Norfolk, which I did discuss earlier.

The second new command is also important in this context which is the Joint Support Enabling Command generously hosted by Germany in Ulm which is near, in south Germany in von Wurttemberg which is developing for precisely the reasons you outline. And of course that is also an exciting opportunity to enable us to work with the European Union on their Military Mobility Initiative.

These are not topics that many of you would probably be integrated in writing about, but they are very important if we're to sustain our operations. They're very important if we're to deliver logistic support and make that resilient. They're very important if we're to make the NATO Readiness Initiative work. So that involves interoperability through ports; that involves use of the European Railway Structure. Again, not that you're probably remotely interested in all this, but it's demonstrating that NATO is capable. The phrase again I would use is the convening authority of the Alliance to bring 29 allies together to make them more efficient.

Again, I think Secretary Mattis would approve of that. That's what we should be doing and we are doing it. And we will then continue to bring that to life through exercises.

DWG: Patrick Host, Jane's.

DWG: Why are you having lunch with Leanne Caret later?

Sir Peach: I do many things as well as the Chair of the Military Committee. I'm also Chairman of the Imperial Museum. We have a long and well-established link with Boeing.

DWG: Really? Okay. I was going to say do you meet regularly with industry chiefs?

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Sir Peach: That's why I'm here. It's the NATO Industry Forum today.

DWG: Are you going to talk just about museum stuff or are you going to talk about like hardware and --

Sir Peach: Well museum stuff, as you call it, is actually my role as the Chairman, I'm just here in a friendly capacity to engage with industry which will begin at lunch time today and will continue for the next 24 hours.

DWG: Okay. Thanks.

Sir Peach: There are a number of chief executive here to support the NATO Industrial Forum. Many. I don't have the list in front of me. I'm sure NATO will provide correspondence with the list.

DWG: Okay. Thanks.

DWG: Rebecca.

DWG: Thanks for doing this. I wanted to circle back to our Turkey discussion from earlier and follow up on something you said.

You mentioned that the military to military relationship is still strong. I was wondering if you could elaborate on exactly how that is and has there been any effect by either the S400 purchase or Turkey's decision to invade Syria contrary to what NATO allies would have liked.

Sir Peach: Okay, Turkey, I've given my answer on Turkey which is NATO -- Turkey's an important ally in NATO. Of course procurement is a sovereign choice. What NATO Has done throughout its history is made clear that we are focused on interoperability between allies. Therefore, equipment has to be interoperable. So that is what we continue to do through the Alliance, whether it's the Readiness Initiative, whether it's the ability to work with each other at sea; whether it's the ability of air forces to communicate. That is a priority for the Alliance and will always remain so. And again, we'll be discussing it later today at the Industry Forum.

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DWG: So if Turkey is going to have a system like the S400 that isn't interoperable, does that not affect the military to military relationship?

Sir Peach: That conversation, again, is topical and continues. But it's a conversation. It's not a conversation for the Alliance. It is not for the Alliance to tell nations what to buy.

DWG: Thank you.

DWG: Mike Glenn, Washington Times.

DWG: Thank you, sir.

I was a GI in Germany back during the '80s in the Cold War when NATO had a mass presence over there, and [inaudible] Rhine, we had a full field Army. It was accepted by pretty much all sides as a necessity. Today we have a French President complaining about brain dead NATO. We have an American President who has been disparaging of NATO. Is the political foundation of NATO still strong enough to do its job?

Sir Peach: Yes. Of course throughout the history of the Alliance over seven decades there have been disagreements. And that is no different today.

I think the, I've tried to demonstrate this morning perhaps not very well, that we are launching a number of initiatives. We continue to adapt. We continue to modernize. We continue to work together with all allies as answered in the question to the New York Times, to bring those capabilities together to make the Alliance stronger as a defensive Alliance, to sustain our technological edge in answer to other questions, and of course to look at innovation. Which is precisely what we'll be doing later today here in Washington. Picking the right future investment, which is a better answer for your question, thinking of right, making the right choices for future investment is precisely why we have Allied Command Transformation just south of here in Norfolk, Virginia, and we continue to work through that command on how we will develop future capability.

All that sits from the Military Committee in the political framework controlled by the North Atlantic Council. So yes, there are disagreements on issues; but no, it is not correct

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that we're failing. I think we're trying to demonstrate that we are modernizing, we're adapting, we are very sensitive to threats we face, the risks we face, and we continue to look for solutions that we can apply to those risks and threats.

DWG: Defense Daily.

DWG: Similar to the 5G question from earlier, I wanted to ask about artificial intelligence. In terms of AI, how is NATO thinking through potential technology applications to assist its decision-making, ways to bolster member nation coordination, ethical implications that have to be worked through.

Sir Peach: That's again, that's what we're here to do. Our command down in Norfolk, Virginia is running a series of workshops on innovation, running a series of workshops on how we would embrace artificial intelligence. We've had a meeting, away day meeting format on that topic recently in Belgium. We continue to work on that through those people down in Norfolk, Virginia.

I think in that work, in direct answer to our question, it's really important that this is not just seen as a spot for the large companies. This is also about working with small, medium enterprises or academic institutions or educational institutions that have got a good idea which we can work with them on.

So I think we're right on the edge now of exciting innovation, on the ability to use artificial intelligence for the right purposes. And in sustaining our technical lead. And we would welcome engagement with the defense media on that subject.

So General [inaudible], the commander down in Norfolk Virginia is very focused on this topic and we continue to look for solutions. We have to then apply what is specifically for NATO, what can allies bring to NATO which is a sort of answer to many of the questions this morning. But I think we're right on the edge of making this use of artificial intelligence for peaceful purposes in support of a defensive alliance a reality. We're quite close.

DWG: Just a quick follow-up. You mentioned the work happening down in Norfolk. Can you talk about maybe is it specifically a series of initiatives, is it an overall effort? When did it kind of start? How far along is it, some of that work?

Sir Stuart Peach - 11/13/19

Sir Peach: We've been exploring innovation for many years. Of course we've been aware of all the things that many of you write about, that big data, the internet [thing], artificial intelligence part of it. So it's a question really of turning the talk in awareness into practical projects that can help us with command and control, with resilience, with logistics support and so on. That's it. It's turning ideas into practicality. That's what we're trying to do through the command down in Norfolk.

DWG: I understand that we're out of time. Thank you very much, Sir Stuart.

On a personal note, it's a particular honor to have you here because my father served with the Royal Air Force, 1940 to '45. A busy period. He was a squadron leader flying Halifaxes and Wellingtons, supplying the French and Norwegian resistances. Dropping pallets of guns into rings of fire and that sort of thing. Pulling gliders that were full of men dressed as French priests and other exciting activities of the Royal Air Force. So --

Sir Peach: A very brave man.

DWG: He limped back in a damaged plane, wounded, from Norway and that was the end of his war, just at the beginning of '45. So it's a particular honor to be hosting you today.

I hope you might consider making this an annual event because there's a lot to talk about.

Sir Peach: There is a lot to talk about. I'm grateful for the range and the quality of the questions. And of course we continue to live in a world that continues to surprise us.

I think the importance of defense correspondents and technical correspondents that understand the issues has never been more vital, and I do therefore thank you for the opportunity and thank you for the work that you all deliver through that, making sense of what is often a very confused media landscape. Thanks for the opportunity.

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