Beat: Politics

HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT ISSUED 1ST COMMUNIQUE OF NATO SUMMIT VILINUS

PART II

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USPA NEWS - We publish the the full text part II of the first communique, issued by the leaders of NATO, as it was delivered, on July 11th, Vilnius Summit.

50. Arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation have made and should continue to make an essential contribution to achieving the Alliance's security objectives and for ensuring strategic stability and our collective security. NATO has a long track record of doing its part on disarmament and non-proliferation. After the end of the Cold War, NATO dramatically reduced the number of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe and its reliance on nuclear weapons in NATO strategy. Allies remain collectively determined to uphold and support existing disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation agreements and commitments. We will further strengthen arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation, as a key element of Euro-Atlantic security, taking into account the prevailing security environment and the security of all Allies

51. Russia's violations and selective implementation of its arms control obligations and commitments have contributed to the deterioration of the broader security landscape. We condemn Russia's purported suspension of the New START treaty and failure to comply with its legally-binding obligations under the Treaty. We call on Russia to return to full implementation of the Treaty as well as to act responsibly and engage constructively to reduce strategic and nuclear risks. We also condemn Russia's decision to withdraw from the landmark Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which further demonstrates Russia's continued disregard for arms control, and is the latest in a series of actions to undermine Euro-Atlantic security. Allies urge Russia to implement its commitments and obligations, and to use the remaining time before its withdrawal to reconsider its decision. Allies will continue to consult on the implications of Russia's withdrawal from the CFE Treaty and its impact on the security of the Alliance.

52. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the essential bulwark against the spread of nuclear weapons. It is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and disarmament architecture, the only credible path to nuclear disarmament, and the framework for international cooperation in sharing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology. Allies remain strongly committed to the full implementation of the NPT across its three pillars, including Article VI. Russia blocking consensus at the Tenth NPT Review Conference was irresponsible. We call on all NPT States Parties to work together to implement and strengthen the NPT in the current NPT Review Cycle. We underline the urgent need to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force.

We call for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices in accordance with Conference on Disarmament report CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. We call on all states that have not yet done so to declare and maintain voluntary moratoria on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

53. NATO Allies support the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons, in full accordance with all provisions of the NPT, achieved in an effective and verifiable way that promotes international stability and which is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. NATO's nuclear burden-sharing arrangements have always been fully consistent with the NPT.

54. We reiterate that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) stands in opposition to and is inconsistent and incompatible with the Alliance's nuclear deterrence policy, is at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, risks undermining the NPT, and does not take into account the current security environment. The TPNW does not change the legal obligations on our countries with respect to nuclear weapons. We do not accept any argument that the TPNW reflects or in any way

contributes to the development of customary international law.? We call on our partners and all other countries to reflect realistically on the ban treaty's impact on international peace and security, including on the NPT, and join us in working to improve collective security through tangible and verifiable measures that can reduce strategic risks and enable lasting progress on nuclear disarmament.

55. The PRC is rapidly expanding and diversifying its nuclear arsenal with more warheads and a larger number of sophisticated delivery systems to establish a nuclear triad, while failing to engage in meaningful transparency or good faith efforts to achieve nuclear arms control or risk reduction. We oppose any attempt to produce or support the production of plutonium for military programmes under the guise of civilian programmes, which undermines the objectives of the NPT. We urge the PRC to engage in strategic risk reduction discussions and to promote stability through greater transparency with regard to its nuclear weapon policies, plans and capabilities.

56. We reiterate our clear determination that Iran must never develop a nuclear weapon. We remain deeply concerned about Iran's escalation of its nuclear programme. We call on Iran to fulfil its legal obligations under its Non-Proliferation Treaty-required safeguards agreement and political commitments regarding nuclear non-proliferation without further delay. The fulfilment by Iran of these obligations and commitments is crucial to allow the IAEA to provide credible assurances of the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. We also call on Iran to stop all ballistic missile activities inconsistent with UNSCR 2231.

57. We condemn in the strongest terms the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) WMD and ballistic missile programmes which violate multiple UN Security Council Resolutions. We reiterate that the DPRK must abandon its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, and any other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We urge the DPRK to return to, and fully comply with, the NPT and IAEA safeguards. We call on the DPRK to accept the repeated offers of dialogue put forward by all parties concerned, including Japan, the United States, and the Republic of Korea.

58. The potential use of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) materials or weapons against NATO by hostile state and non-state actors remains a central and evolving threat to our security. We are implementing NATO's new CBRN defence policy, as agreed at the Madrid Summit, and are investing in the military capabilities required to effectively operate, fight and prevail in any environment, and to ensure our national and collective resilience against CBRN risks and threats.

59. NATO safeguards the freedom and security of all its members using both political and military means. The evolving security environment increasingly requires that NATO will take a structured and tailored approach that uses non-military and military tools in a deliberate, coherent, and sustained manner, throughout the full spectrum of peace, crisis and conflict. NATO uses a variety of non-military tools which support the Alliance's three core tasks. It also continues to serve as a platform for enhancing the coherent use of these tools by Allies, under their own authority and control, and alongside other international actors. We will continue to strengthen effective, clear, and convincing strategic communication.

60. As the war in Europe has fundamentally shifted the nature of the Euro-Atlantic security environment, the emphasis on intelligence has become even more prominent and essential to Alliance decision-making and strategic planning. The value of the NATO intelligence enterprise comes first and foremost from the Allied intelligence and security services working closely together to share intelligence and continue to ensure that the Alliance has a comprehensive understanding of the global strategic picture. To that end, Allies' intelligence capabilities will contribute to improving NATO's understanding of the threats, risks and challenges, and to optimising our significant and diverse analysis capabilities. We will strengthen our intelligence cooperation within the Alliance and with partners as appropriate. NATO and Allies will enhance their security and counter-intelligence measures to respond effectively to hostile intelligence activity.

61. National and collective resilience are an essential basis for credible deterrence and defence and the effective fulfilment of the Alliance's core tasks, and vital in our efforts to safeguard our societies, our populations and our shared values. Resilience is a national responsibility and a collective commitment rooted in Article 3 of the Washington Treaty. Today we have agreed the 2023 Alliance Resilience Objectives. We build on the 2021 Strengthened Resilience Commitment. The Resilience Objectives will strengthen NATO and Allied preparedness against strategic shocks and disruptions. They will boost our national and collective ability to ensure

continuity of government and of essential services to our populations, and enable civil support to military operations, in peace, crisis and conflict. Allies will use these objectives to guide the development of their national goals and implementation plans, consistent with their respective national risk profile.

We will also work towards identifying and mitigating strategic vulnerabilities and dependencies, including with respect to our critical infrastructure, supply chains and health systems. Allies should also promote societal resilience. As we strengthen our efforts to build resilience, we will continue to work with our partners engaged in similar efforts, in particular the European Union, in order to make the Euro-Atlantic area and our broader neighbourhood more secure. The actions, commitments and legal obligations of individual Allies in other international bodies also contribute to enhancing our resilience.

62. The Alliance's ability to fulfil its core tasks increasingly relies on the adoption of digital technologies. Recognising the urgency of a digitally-transformed Alliance, we have endorsed a Digital Transformation Implementation Strategy to underpin our ability to conduct Multi-Domain Operations, drive interoperability across all domains, enhance situational awareness, political consultation, and employ data-driven decision-making.

63. Emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs) bring both opportunities and risks. They are altering the character of conflict, acquiring greater strategic importance and becoming key arenas of global competition. The operational importance of EDTs as well as of access to and adaptation of commercial technologies in current operations have been highlighted in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. NATO's strategic competitors and potential adversaries are investing heavily in technologies that can be highly effective, particularly in malign hybrid activities, and decisive in conflict. We are accelerating our own efforts to ensure that the Alliance maintains its technological edge in emerging and disruptive technologies to retain our interoperability and military edge, including through dual-use solutions. We are working together to adopt and integrate new technologies, cooperate with the private sector, protect our innovation ecosystems, shape standards, and commit to principles of responsible use that reflect our democratic values and human rights.

We will ensure that we act in accordance with international law and seek to build public trust. NATO's Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) has now launched its first challenges to start-ups in NATO countries. To further develop our transatlantic innovation ecosystem, the NATO Innovation Fund, the world's first multi-sovereign venture capital fund, will begin to invest in deep-tech in the coming months. Complementing the recently agreed strategies on Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy, NATO will develop further strategies for key emerging and disruptive technologies, including on Quantum Technologies and on Biotechnology and Human Enhancement to address the opportunities and risks they present.

64. We continue to face growing hybrid threats and challenges from state and non-state actors, who use hybrid activities, including through interference and the harmful use of technologies, to target our political institutions, our critical infrastructure, our societies, our democratic systems, our economies, and the security of our citizens. We remain united in defending our open and democratic societies against these malign activities. We reiterate that hybrid operations against Allies could reach the level of an armed attack and could lead the Council to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. We will continue to prepare for, deter, defend against and counter hybrid threats, including by potentially deploying Counter Hybrid Support Teams. We continue to develop comprehensive preventive and response options and stand ready to apply them to enhance resilience and deter malign actors from engaging in hybrid operations. Individual Allies may consider, when appropriate, attributing hybrid activities and responding in a coordinated manner, recognising attribution is a sovereign national prerogative.

We will continue to address disinformation and misinformation, including through positive and effective strategic communications. We will also continue to support our partners as they strengthen their resilience in the face of hybrid challenges.

5. The threat to critical undersea infrastructure is real and it is developing. We are committed to identifying and mitigating strategic vulnerabilities and dependencies with respect to our critical infrastructure, and to prepare for, deter and defend against the coercive use of energy and other hybrid tactics by state and non-state actors. Any deliberate attack against Allies' critical infrastructure will be met with a united and determined response; this applies also to critical undersea infrastructure. The protection of critical undersea infrastructure on Allies' territory remains a national responsibility, as well as a collective commitment. NATO stands ready to support Allies if and when requested. We have agreed to establish NATO's Maritime Centre for the Security of Critical Undersea Infrastructure within NATO's Maritime Command (MARCOM). We also agreed to set up a network that brings together

NATO, Allies, private sector, and other relevant actors to improve information sharing and exchange best practice.

66. Cyberspace is contested at all times as threat actors increasingly seek to destabilise the Alliance by employing malicious cyber activities and campaigns. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has highlighted the extent to which cyber is a feature of modern conflict. We are countering the substantial, continuous, and increasing cyber threats, including to our democratic systems and our critical infrastructure, as well as where they are part of hybrid campaigns. We are determined to employ the full range of capabilities in order to deter, defend against and counter the full spectrum of cyber threats, including by considering collective responses. A single or cumulative set of malicious cyber activities could reach the level of armed attack and could lead the North Atlantic Council to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, on a case-by-case basis. We remain committed to act in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law as applicable.

We continue to promote a free, open, peaceful, and secure cyberspace, and further pursue efforts to enhance stability and reduce the risk of conflict, by ensuring that international law is respected and by supporting voluntary norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace. Today, we endorse a new concept to enhance the contribution of cyber defence to our overall deterrence and defence posture. It will further integrate NATO's three cyber defence levels - political, military, and technical - ensuring civil-military cooperation at all times through peacetime, crisis, and conflict, as well as engagement with the private sector, as appropriate. Doing so will enhance our shared situational awareness. Strengthening our cyber resilience is key to making our Alliance more secure and better able to mitigate the potential for significant harm from cyber threats.

Today we restate and enhance our Cyber Defence Pledge and have committed to ambitious new national goals to further strengthen our national cyber defences as a matter of priority, including critical infrastructures. We have launched NATO's new Virtual Cyber Incident Support Capability (VCISC) to support national mitigation efforts in response to significant malicious cyber activities. This provides Allies with an additional tool for assistance. We will further seek to develop mutually beneficial and effective partnerships as appropriate, including with partner countries, international organisations, industry, and academia, furthering our efforts to enhance international stability in cyberspace. Complementing our existing exchanges, we will hold the first comprehensive NATO Cyber Defence Conference in Berlin this November, bringing together decision-makers across the political, military, and technical levels.

67. Space plays a critical role for the security and prosperity of our nations. Space is also an increasingly contested domain, marked by irresponsible behaviour, malicious activities, and the growth of counterspace capabilities by NATO's potential adversaries and strategic competitors. Maintaining secure use and unfettered access to space is key to effective deterrence and defence. As part of our work on space as an operational domain, we are accelerating the integration of space into planning, exercising and executing joint and multi-domain operations in peacetime, crisis, and conflict in order to ensure space effects are coordinated across all domains. We have committed to enhancing the sharing of our space data, products and services within NATO in support of the Alliance's requirements and defence plans.

We welcome the ongoing efforts on the Alliance Persistent Surveillance from Space (APSS) multinational programme, which will improve NATO's intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capacity. We welcome the establishment of the NATO Space Centre of Excellence in France. Allies are committed to upholding international law and we will continue to support international efforts to reduce space threats by promoting norms, rules, and principles of responsible space behaviours. We reaffirm that hostile operations to, from, or within space could reach the level of armed attack and could lead the North Atlantic Council to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

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68. Energy security plays an important role in our common security. The energy crisis intentionally exacerbated by Russia has underlined the importance of a stable and reliable energy supply and the diversification of routes, suppliers, and sources. We will continue to develop NATO's capacity to support national authorities in protecting critical energy infrastructure. We are committed to

ensuring secure, resilient, and sustainable energy supplies to our military forces. As we adapt our Alliance to the ongoing energy transition, we will ensure military capability, effectiveness and interoperability. Allies are seeking and will continue to seek diversification of their energy supplies, in line with their needs and conditions.

69. Climate change is a defining challenge with a profound impact on Allied security facing present and future generations. It remains a threat multiplier. NATO is committed to becoming the leading international organisation when it comes to understanding and adapting to the impact of climate change on security. We will continue to address the impact of climate change on defence and security, including through the development of innovative strategic analysis tools. We will integrate climate change considerations into all of NATO's core tasks, adapt our infrastructure, military capabilities and technologies ensuring resilience to future operating environments. To contribute to the mitigation of climate change, we are committed to significantly cutting greenhouse gas emissions by the NATO political and military structures and facilities; we will also contribute to combatting climate change by improving energy efficiency, transitioning to clean energy sources, and leveraging innovative next-generation clean technologies, while ensuring military effectiveness and a credible deterrence and defence posture.

We will continue to strengthen our exchanges with partner countries, the scientific community, as well as other international and regional organisations that are active on climate change and security. We welcome the establishment of a NATO Centre of Excellence for Climate Change and Security in Montreal.

70. We are committed to integrating the Human Security and the Women, Peace and Security agendas across all our core tasks. We will continue to work towards fully operationalising this objective, through robust policies and clear operational guidelines, in order to enhance our operational effectiveness and ensure synergies between the civilian and military structures. In doing so, we are working with partners, international organisations, and civil society. We reaffirm our commitment to an ambitious human security agenda. Our Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles allows us to develop a more comprehensive view of the human environment, contributing to lasting peace and security. Today, we endorse a NATO Policy on Children and Armed Conflict, and an updated Policy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings. Our ongoing work on human security also includes cultural property protection

71. We recognise the critical importance of women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and stability, noting the disproportionate impact that conflict has on women and girls, including through conflict-related sexual violence. We will consistently continue to implement our Policy on Women, Peace and Security, and, in this context, we will advance gender equality and integrate gender perspectives and foster the principles of the Women, Peace and Security agenda set out by the UN Security Council in all that we do, including in NATO operations, missions, activities, and our work on emerging challenges. We will assess and update NATO's Policy on Women, Peace and Security.

72. NATO's partnerships are, and will continue to be, essential to the way NATO works. They play an important role in supporting NATO's three core tasks and our 360-degree security approach. We are grateful to our partners for their significant contributions to NATO's situational awareness, operations, missions, and activities, including Trust Fund projects. The current security environment highlights the significance of partnerships. They are crucial to protect the global commons and enhance our resilience. We will strengthen our ties with partners that share the Alliance's values and interest in upholding the rules-based international order. We will continue to strengthen political dialogue and practical cooperation with partners, based on mutual respect, benefit and interest of both Allies and partners. This contributes to stability beyond our borders and enhances our security at home. We will increase outreach to countries in our broader neighbourhood and across the globe and remain open to engagement with any country or organisation, when doing so could bolster our mutual security.

We remain committed to the principles underpinning our relations with our partners, and have taken steps to make our partnerships more strategic, more coherent and more effective. We will discuss common approaches to global security challenges where NATO's interests are affected, share perspectives through deeper political engagement, and seek concrete areas for cooperation to address shared security concerns. In line with our Comprehensive Approach Action Plan, we will continue to pursue coherence within NATO's own tools and strands of work, concerted approaches with partner nations and organisations such as the UN, the EU, and the OSCE, as well as further dialogue with non-governmental organisations.

73. The European Union remains a unique and essential partner for NATO. Our strategic partnership is essential for the security and prosperity of our nations and of the Euro-Atlantic area. It is built on our shared values, our determination to tackle common

challenges and our unequivocal commitment to promote and safeguard peace, freedom and prosperity. NATO recognises the value of a stronger and more capable European defence that contributes positively to transatlantic and global security and is complementary to, and interoperable with NATO. The development of coherent, complementary and interoperable defence capabilities, avoiding unnecessary duplication, is key in our joint efforts to make the Euro-Atlantic area safer. Such efforts, including recent developments, will lead to a stronger NATO, help enhance our common security, contribute to transatlantic burden sharing, help deliver needed capabilities, and support an overall increase in defence spending.

Non-EU Allies continue to make significant contributions to the EU's efforts to strengthen its capacities to address common security challenges. For the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU, non-EU Allies' fullest involvement in EU defence efforts is essential. We look forward to mutual steps, representing tangible progress, in this area to support a strengthened strategic partnership. We reaffirm in their entirety all the decisions, principles, and commitments with regard to NATO and EU cooperation. We will continue to further strengthen this partnership in a spirit of full mutual openness, transparency, complementarity, and respect for the organisations' different mandates, decision-making autonomy and institutional integrity, and as agreed by the two organisations.

74. In the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, NATO-EU cooperation has become more significant. We have unequivocally demonstrated unity of purpose and common resolve in leveraging our complementary, coherent and mutually reinforcing roles. NATO and EU will continue to support Ukraine. In this respect, we welcome the establishment of the dedicated NATO-EU Staff Coordination on Ukraine. We have also achieved tangible results in strategic communications, including the fight against disinformation, countering hybrid and cyber threats, exercises, operational cooperation, defence capabilities, defence industry and research, counter-terrorism, and defence and security capacity building. We are further expanding our cooperation on resilience, protection of critical infrastructure, emerging and disruptive technologies, space, security implications of climate change, and geostrategic competition.

We will also continue to address the systemic challenges posed by the PRC to Euro-Atlantic security. Political dialogue between NATO and the EU remains essential to advance NATO-EU cooperation.

75. The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance for NATO as highlighted by our long history of cooperation and operations. We remain strongly committed to the security and stability of the Western Balkans by supporting reforms that advance the respective NATO and EU aspirations of the countries in the region. We will continue to enhance our political dialogue and practical cooperation in order to support reforms, regional peace and security, and counter malign influence, including disinformation, hybrid, and cyber threats, posed by both state and non-state actors. The region requires continued attention and commitment from the Alliance and the international community to counter these challenges. Democratic values, the rule of law, domestic reforms, and good neighbourly relations are vital for regional cooperation and Euro-Atlantic integration, and we look to continued progress in this regard.

76. NATO strongly supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a stable and secure Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other relevant international agreements. We encourage domestic reconciliation, and urge political leaders to refrain from divisive and secessionist rhetoric and actions. We remain committed to the country's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. We continue to support reform efforts, including through the newly agreed Defence Capacity Building package, NATO HQ Sarajevo, and wide-ranging cooperative security and partnership tools, and through the country's Reform Programme with NATO. We encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to take advantage of NATO's support and intensify efforts to make progress on reforms in key areas, including the much-needed political, electoral, rule of law, economic, and defence reforms, without prejudice to a final decision on NATO membership.

77. Strengthening NATO-Serbia relations would be of benefit to the Alliance, to Serbia, and to the whole region. We look to Serbia to engage with NATO and its neighbours in a constructive manner, including in its public communications on the mutual benefits of NATO-Serbia cooperation. We support the EU-facilitated Dialogue and other efforts aimed at the normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina, and urge the sides to seize the moment and engage in good faith towards reaching a lasting political solution. We call on both sides to immediately de-escalate, return to dialogue, and engage constructively in implementing the agreement on the path to normalisation between Belgrade and Pristina reached recently in Brussels and Ohrid.

78. We remain committed to NATO's continued engagement in Kosovo, including through the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR).

KFOR will continue to provide a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement in Kosovo in line with UNSC Resolution 1244. The recent escalatory actions are unacceptable and we condemn the violence in northern Kosovo as well as the unprovoked attacks that caused serious injuries to NATO soldiers. We have increased KFOR's troop presence to respond to the recurrent tensions. Any changes to our force posture in KFOR will remain conditions-based and not calendar driven.

79. The Black Sea region is of strategic importance for the Alliance. This is further highlighted by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. We underline our continued support to Allied regional efforts aimed at upholding security, safety, stability and freedom of navigation in the Black Sea region including, as appropriate, through the 1936 Montreux Convention. We will further monitor and assess developments in the region and enhance our situational awareness, with a particular focus on the threats to our security and potential opportunities for closer cooperation with our partners in the region, as appropriate.

80. We reiterate our support to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders. We stand firm in our support for Georgia's right to decide its own future and foreign policy course free from outside interference. We call on Russia to withdraw the forces it has stationed in Georgia without its consent. We further call on Russia to reverse its recognition of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia; to end the militarisation of these regions and continued attempts to forcibly separate them from the rest of Georgia through the construction of border-like obstacles; and to cease the human rights violations and abuses, including arbitrary detentions, and harassments of Georgian citizens. We highly appreciate Georgia's substantial contributions to NATO operations, which demonstrate its commitment and capability to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security. We remain committed to making full use of the NATO-Georgia Commission and the Annual National Programme (ANP) in deepening political dialogue and practical cooperation with Georgia.

We reiterate the decision made at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Georgia will become a member of the Alliance with the Membership Action Plan (MAP) as an integral part of the process; we reaffirm all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions. We welcome the progress made in implementing the enhanced Substantial NATO-Georgia Package, including Crisis Management, Cyber Security, Military Engineering, and Secure Communications, as well as new initiatives in the areas of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence and Training Facilities. To advance its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, Georgia must make progress on reforms, including key democratic reforms, and make best use of the ANP.

81. We reiterate our support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognised borders and call on Russia to withdraw all of its forces stationed in the Transnistrian region without Moldova's consent. We stand firm in our support for Moldova's right to decide its own future and foreign policy course free from outside interference, and fully respect Moldova's constitutional neutrality. NATO is stepping up political and practical support to strengthen its resilience and uphold its political independence in light of the deteriorating security environment. Allies welcome Moldova's efforts to promote democratic reforms and are committed to supporting Moldova as it advances its European integration. NATO will continue to provide practical assistance through the enhanced Defence Capacity Building Package, as Moldova works to strengthen its security and defence capabilities and modernise its Armed Forces.

82. The Middle East and Africa are regions of strategic interest. We will deepen our political engagements and public diplomacy outreach to our long-standing partners in the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. We will also increase our outreach to relevant regional organisations, including the African Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council. We are implementing the Defence Capacity Building packages for Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, and Tunisia. We will also explore with the Jordanian authorities the possibility of establishing a NATO Liaison Office in Amman.

83. NATO and Allies remain committed in our support to Iraq and its ability to stabilise the country. We recognise the continued efforts and progress of the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces to combat ISIS/Da'esh. We encourage further progress in Iraq's fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Our NATO Mission Iraq continues to deliver non-combat advisory and capacity building support to the Iraqi security institutions in the greater Baghdad area, and has deepened collaboration with Iraq's Ministry of Defence. Based on the request from the Iraqi government, we are considering broadening NATO Mission Iraq, by evolving it to provide advice to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior on its Federal Police. NATO Mission Iraq will continue to be demand-driven, and will be carried out with the full consent of the Iraqi authorities, in full respect of Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and in close coordination with relevant partners and international actors.

84. Iran's support to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has an impact on Euro-Atlantic security. We call upon Iran to cease its military support to Russia, in particular its transfer of Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) which have been used to attack

critical infrastructure, causing widespread civilian casualties. We express our serious concern over Iran's malicious activities within Allied territory. We also call upon Iran to refrain from destabilising actions, including seizures of maritime vessels, and to play a constructive role in fostering regional stability and peace.

85. The Indo-Pacific is important for NATO, given that developments in that region can directly affect Euro-Atlantic security. We welcome the contribution of our partners in the Asia-Pacific region – Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea – to security in the Euro-Atlantic, including their commitment to supporting Ukraine. We will further strengthen our dialogue and cooperation to tackle our shared security challenges, including on cyber defence, technology and hybrid, underpinned by our shared commitment to upholding international law and the rules-based international order.

86. NATO's engagement with other international and regional organisations, including the United Nations, the OSCE, and the African Union, contributes to international security. We will strengthen these interactions to advance our shared interests. We are exploring the possibility of establishing a Liaison Office in Geneva to further strengthen our engagement with the United Nations and other relevant international organisations.

87. We will ensure that our political decisions are adequately resourced. We will build on the progress made to ensure that increased national defence expenditures and NATO common funding will be commensurate with the challenges of a more contested security order.

88. We pay tribute to all women and men who work tirelessly for our collective security, honour all those who have paid the ultimate price or have been wounded to keep us safe, and their families.

89. NATO remains the strongest Alliance in history. As in the past, we will stand the test of time in safeguarding the freedom and security of our Allies and contributing to peace and security.

90. We express our appreciation for the generous hospitality extended to us by the Republic of Lithuania. We look forward to meeting again for the Alliance's 75th anniversary in Washington, D.C. in 2024, followed by a meeting in the Netherlands in 2025.../ Source : NATO

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:
United Press Association, Inc.

3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com