

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting
its participation in the
Joint Meeting of the Defence and Security, Economics and
Security, and Political Committees**

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

**Brussels, Belgium
February 18-20, 2017**

Report

Introduction

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, Canada's delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA), has the honour to present its report on the Joint Meeting of the Defence and Security, Economics and Security, and Political Committees, held in Brussels, Belgium on 18-20 February 2017. Canada was represented by Mrs. Cheryl Gallant, M.P., Acting Head of the Canadian Delegation, Senator Raynell Andreychuk, Senator Terry Mercer, Senator Donald Plett, Ms. Leona Alleslev, M.P., Ms. Rachel Blaney, M.P., Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus, M.P., and Mr. Francesco Sorbara, M.P. The Delegation was accompanied by Ms. Melissa Radford, Association Advisor, and Mr. Jean-François Pagé, Association Secretary.

The main purpose of the annual joint committee meetings in Brussels, which also include the officers of the Committee on the Civil Dimensions of Security and the Science and Technology Committee, is to provide delegates with an update on the Alliance's activities and operations from senior bureaucrats and military officers working at NATO headquarters. Canadian delegates also met with the NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, and were briefed by Canada's Permanent Representative to NATO, Ms. Kerry Buck.

The meetings in Brussels were conducted under the Chatham House rule.

Summary of Discussion

Delegates attended seven sessions where they heard from senior civilian officials and senior military personnel from NATO headquarters, senior officials from the European Union (EU), defence industry representatives as well as various Permanent Representatives to NATO.

Topics discussed at these sessions included an update on current NATO operations, NATO's implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, NATO-EU cooperation, strengthening cooperation among defence industries across the Alliance, and for the first time, delegates received a briefing from NATO's newly established intelligence division.

Furthermore, three main themes emerged over the two days of meetings: burden sharing and defence spending, counter-terrorism, and NATO-Russia relations. These themes have become key priorities for the Alliance, and will remain so, particularly at the upcoming NATO Leader's Summit.

The following sections summarize the discussions on these three themes.

Defence Spending and Burden Sharing

These NATO PA meetings took place on the heels of the NATO Defence Ministerial meetings at which U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis stated that the U.S. will "moderate" its commitment to the Alliance if the Allies fail to show support for the common defence of the transatlantic region.

Delegates had the opportunity to discuss these comments amongst themselves and with the individuals who briefed them. They were told that Allies should take U.S. concerns seriously. The U.S. carries a significant share of the Euro-Atlantic defence and security burden and this lack of equality should be questioned and rectified. They were also told that it should come as no surprise that the issue of burden-sharing was raised at the recent Defence Ministerial. Some European interlocutors agreed that the current imbalance is unhealthy for the transatlantic partnership adding that, in general, Europe needs to play a bigger role in global security. By extension, some also agreed that the EU's role in defence and security should be strengthened. They maintained that spending more on defence means investing in a safe and secure future.

Some European interlocutors were asked to explain how their governments planned to reach the target of spending 2% of GDP on defence, as agreed to at the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales. While some European countries intend to attain that goal over the next few years, some interlocutors maintained that this metric is not the only way to measure an Ally's commitment to the Alliance. As such, they took the opportunity to list the many other ways their countries contribute to the Alliance, particularly through participation in NATO operations.

Counter-Terrorism

Delegates discussed the issue of terrorism and the role NATO should play in countering it. A number of Allies have been targets of terrorist attacks, thereby bringing such threats directly onto NATO territory. Civilian government agencies, such as police forces and intelligence agencies, have primary responsibility for national security. It is also the responsibility of each nation to defeat and prevent terrorism within its own borders. That being said, delegates were told that NATO can add value without competing with these civilian agencies and encroaching on national jurisdictions. For instance, it was suggested that NATO allies could enhance intelligence sharing amongst themselves given that terrorism is a transnational threat.

NATO also adds value when it projects stability in areas of crisis and conflict. Its missions in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, for instance, are prime examples of how NATO works to counter terrorism and its root causes. One of NATO's key operations remains in Afghanistan where 1300 Allied forces continue to train Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to eventually take over responsibility for defence and security in the country. Parliamentarians were told that currently, the ANSF are able to conduct 80% of their operations without NATO support and to protect two-thirds of the Afghan population. NATO's expertise in capacity-building is also being employed in Kosovo, Iraq, Jordan, and Tunisia. In addition, the transitional government in Libya has recently requested that NATO establish a training centre in the country for the Libyan coast guard and assist the government in merging the various armed militias into a single national military.

Parliamentarians were told that the public tends to place more attention on the kinetic side of counter-terrorism, likely a legacy from NATO's combat operations in Afghanistan and Libya. In addition, NATO recently agreed to provide the U.S.-led Coalition against Daesh with AWACS support. However, once Daesh is degraded to the extent where it no longer controls territory, non-kinetic, stabilization measures will be required to

support the Iraqi government in regaining legitimacy and governance in the country. NATO may be asked for assistance with this. It was suggested that NATO should strengthen its cooperation with the UN, the EU, the Arab League and the African Union to jointly address the Alliance's ability to provide political stability where its kinetic operations are being conducted.

Although NATO already plays a role in counter-terrorism activities, many of the speakers agreed that more could be done both at the strategic and operational levels. At the latest Defence Ministerial meeting, France, Portugal, Spain and Italy requested from their fellow Allies support for a "NATO Hub for the South" to address threats emanating from the MENA region. Defence Ministers agreed to this proposal and determined that the Hub will be located at NATO Joint Forces Command (JFC) Naples. Though details are still in development, parliamentarians were told that approximately 100 personnel will be required to command operations and monitor intelligence in the region.

In terms of next steps, NATO is working towards better articulating its role and responsibilities with respect to counter-terrorism, including how it can complement and cooperate with national governments. The Alliance's experience in Afghanistan has helped evolve its counter-terrorism strategies. For instance, it had invested billions of dollars on countering improvised explosive devices from the perspective of protecting soldiers by making their equipment and protective gear more blast-proof. Now, it is also focussing on countering the criminal network of individuals who finance terrorism and buy the chemicals for bomb-making; on collecting the biometric data of the bomb-makers themselves; and, on working with the Afghan justice system to prosecute these individuals. NATO is also studying non-lethal ways of dealing with and defusing possible terrorist attacks through the use of technology.

With particular urgency, NATO is finding ways to help national governments and regional organizations address the consequences of the current refugee crisis emanating from the region as a result of conflict and instability. Delegates were reminded that 99.9% of these refugees are fleeing terrorism and not perpetrating terrorism. The speakers emphasized that if refugees are treated inhumanely and poorly integrated, they will become prime targets for terrorist recruiting.

Canadian delegates were particularly interested in the issue of countering terrorist financing and the role NATO AWACS is playing in support of the U.S.-led Coalition against Daesh.

NATO-Russia Relations

Delegates were reminded that before 2014, NATO-Russia relations were positive and productive. At that time, NATO was looking to deepen its relationship with Russia. Delegates were told that although NATO would prefer to have good relations with its neighbour, it does not accept Russia's invasion of another neighbouring sovereign nation. Until Russia respects the Minsk agreements that address the conflict in eastern Ukraine, delegates were assured that relations between NATO and Russia will not return to normal.

Moving forward, delegates were told that NATO will continue raising the issue of the conflict in Ukraine when it dialogues with Russia and will reiterate that Russia's conduct should adhere to international law. NATO, in defence of its values, will assist Allies in deterring and defending against threats to their territorial integrity and political independence. This includes through the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) mission, strengthened partnerships and countering Russian provocations in the air and at sea.

The eFP mission is a prime example of the Alliance's solidarity with its Baltic and eastern European Allies. Delegates were told that the multinational battalions comprising the eFP mission serve as a "tripwire" function. Baltic national forces are in total preparation and, with their NATO Allies, are prepared to defend their territory and slow-down any advance. If necessary, NATO's rapid reaction force, would serve as follow-on forces. Maximum authority has been delegated down to NATO commanders so that troops and equipment can be deployed rapidly if required.

There are a number of non-NATO countries that have been the target of Russian provocation and aggression. In light of this, NATO has enhanced its partnerships with some of these countries. For instance, the Alliance has deepened its relationship with Sweden and Finland. It has also enhanced its cooperation with Georgia and Moldova. Delegates were told that south-eastern European countries have also been experiencing heightened Russian interference and therefore, delegates were urged to ratify Montenegro's accession protocol to NATO in their respective parliaments.

Finally, NATO countries also agreed at the Defence Ministerial to an increased forward presence in the Black Sea. Delegates were told that Alliance cooperation with Georgia and Ukraine in this region is invaluable. NATO continues to have concerns over Russian activity in the area particularly regarding the proliferation of Russian military assets, such as missiles and submarines, in Crimea.

Canadian delegates were particularly interested in some of the remaining legislative barriers hindering the rapid movement of troops and equipment across Europe. Lastly, Head of the Latvian delegation to the NATO PA and Chair of the NATO PA Political Committee, Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš, thanked Canada for supporting the NATO Centres of Excellence based in the Baltic countries and also for Canada's leadership role in the eFP multinational battalion based in Latvia.

Conclusion

The annual joint committee meetings in Brussels offer Canada's delegates the opportunity to have in-depth discussions with senior officials at NATO and the EU and with parliamentarians from NATO member-states on current defence and economic priorities pertinent to the Alliance. Topics covered by the presentations included the Alliance's priorities following the NATO Defence Ministerial: defence spending and burden sharing, counter-terrorism and NATO-Russia relations. These will likewise be the priorities at the upcoming NATO Leaders' Summit. Delegates also received an update on ongoing NATO operations, NATO's implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, NATO-EU cooperation, strengthening cooperation among defence industries across the Alliance, and for the first time, delegates received a briefing from NATO's newly established intelligence division.

Canada continues to have significant interests in all these issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Leona Alleslev, M.P.
Chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
ACTIVITY	Joint Meeting of the Defence and Security, Economics and Security, and Political Committees
DESTINATION	Brussels, Belgium
DATES	February 18-20, 2017
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Joseph Day, Hon. Terry Mercer, Hon. Donald Plett
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Cheryl Gallant, Leona Alleslev, Rachel Blaney, Pierre Paul-Hus, Francesco Sorbara
STAFF	Jean-François Pagé, Melissa Radford
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 66,427.02
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 9,710.85
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0
PER DIEMS	\$ 5,909.35
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 807.37
TOTAL	\$ 82,854.59