

**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**

**Brussels, Belgium  
February 19 to 21, 2018**

# REPORT

## Introduction

The Canadian 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 February 19-21, 2018. Canada was represented by Leona Alleslev, M. P., Head of the Canadian Delegation, Senators Raynell Andreychuk and Joseph Day, Darren Fisher, M.P., and the Hon. Rob Nicholson, M.P., P.C. The Delegation was accompanied by Jean-François Pagé, Secretary to the Association.

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 officials and military officers working at NATO headquarters. The Canadian delegates also met with Jens Stoltenberg, NATO's Secretary General. They attended seven sessions where they heard from senior officials and military officers working at NATO Headquarters, dignitaries from the European Union (EU), representatives of the defence industry, and a number of permanent representatives to NATO.

The meetings were held under the Chatham House Rule.

The sessions primarily dealt with NATO before the Brussels Summit, the challenges and priorities for NATO and the European Union, and countering terrorism.

The following sections summarize the discussions on those three themes.

## **NATO before the Brussels Summit**

### **Sharing the load**

In 2014, all the Allies committed to stop the reductions in their defence budgets and to increase their spending, with a view to approaching 2% of GDP in the next 10 years. Since then, spending has risen for three years in a row in the European countries of the Alliance and in Canada. This represents an additional \$87 billion for defence.

The election of Donald Trump in November 2016 considerably spurred the debate on sharing the load. Statements from Washington increasingly portray the contributions from the United States to the Alliance as a commercial transaction requiring considerations in return.

The Trump administration will likely make sharing the load among the Allies one of its priorities when he comes to Brussels for the NATO Summit in July. The presenters say that we have turned a corner, but that we still have a long way to go.

The summit will therefore be an opportunity to review the progress that the Allies have made and to look to the future.

### **Relations with Russia**

All participants agreed that Russia is a destabilizing factor in the world. Where NATO once believed that there was a partnership with the country, until it annexed Crimea in 2014, NATO must now see Russia as a threat. The threat is different from the one that marked the Cold War, in the sense that the danger is not from direct military confrontation, but rather from indirect means. Russia could not win a conventional war with NATO, which represents 50% of the world's GDP and a force of 29 countries. Russia must therefore wage a hybrid war by exploiting the weak points in the openness and freedom of expression we enjoy in our democratic societies. That is how Russia is able to sow confusion and exert direct influence on the democratic debate in the countries of the Alliance.

It was also emphasized that Russia is modernizing its military and nuclear arsenal and that the Alliance must remain vigilant.

One participant also stressed the importance of clearly defining what constitutes a cyber attack before a potential genuine conflict. The original Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty did not foresee the possibility of cyber attacks; it must now be updated for today's world.

### **Collaboration between the Alliance and the European Union**

The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), established in December 2017 by 25 EU countries, allows them to develop joint defence capabilities and to invest in common projects. A European Defence Fund is planned to generate a total investment of 5 billion euros for defence capabilities after 2020.

This welcome strengthening of the European Union's military capabilities must not result in a weakening of NATO. In other words, the money invested in PESCO must not come as a detriment to, or a duplication of, the Alliance, as all participants said.

With 22 members of the European Union also members of NATO, the presenters agreed on the importance of strengthening the ties between the two. The European Union and NATO already collaborate on a number of issues: Ukraine, Georgia, Iraq and North Korea.

By increasing its military capabilities, the EU can only strengthen our Alliance. The links between the two will allow for greater efficiency and lower costs. We will be able to reinvest the resulting savings in order to reach the 2% decided at the Wales Summit in 2014.

### **Countering terrorism**

Terrorism in all its forms is a direct threat to the citizens of NATO member countries and for international stability and prosperity. In the face of this unrelenting global threat that knows no borders, no nationalities and no religions, the international community must be united. NATO's counter-terrorism activities focus on a better knowledge of the threat, on establishing preparation and response capabilities, and on increased interaction with partner countries and other international actors.

Participants agreed that NATO's major role in North Africa and the Middle East must be emphasized. Stabilizing those regions is essential for our security because of the impacts on our own countries, both in terms of the level of terrorism and of managing the flows of migrants.

For example, NATO is currently leading the non-combat Resolute Support Mission, which provides training, advice and assistance for Afghan security forces and institutions. The key functions of the Resolute Support Mission are: to support planning, programming and budgeting; to assure transparency, accountability and oversight; to support adherence to the principles of the rule of law and good governance; and to support the establishment and sustainability of processes such as force generation, and recruiting, training, managing and developing personnel.

The mission in Afghanistan is currently the Alliance's biggest operational deployment. In addition to the Resolute Support Mission and the ISAF, the countries of the Alliance and its partners have committed to helping the broader international community and to provide long-term financial support for the Afghan security forces.

### **Planning for stability and cooperation**

One of the topics raised by various presenters is the need for the Alliance to plan for stability by establishing partnerships. The objectives are strategic: to strengthen security, peace and stability, both in the European and Atlantic regions, and internationally, to promote regional security and cooperation, and to prepare interested countries that might seek to join NATO. This also provides a way to strengthen support for NATO-led operations and missions.

In this regard, although Afghanistan remains NATO's main theatre of operations, the Alliance is not neglecting its other commitments, especially in the Balkans. At the moment, about 4,500 soldiers from the Alliance are stationed in Kosovo with the Kosovo Force (KFOR).

### **Meeting of the Working Group on Education and Communication about NATO, led by the Head of the German delegation, Karl A. Lamers**

Now chaired by the Head of the German delegation, Karl A. Lamers, this group was established in April 2017 on the initiative of Paolo Alli, the President of NATO PA, to work with institutions such as NATO, the Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA), and national ministries of education and defence, in order to develop new communications tools specifically for parliaments and schools.

During its inaugural meeting in Bucharest on October 7, 2017, the Working Group agreed to launch its first project. The goal of the project was to examine how our schools are teaching their students about issues of global security and, more particularly, about NATO. The added value of this study would be to complement the work of NATO's Public Diplomacy Division, since the Division's programs are aimed at young people at university level and above.

In the light of the information gathered, the Working Group will provide an overview of education about NATO in the member countries, compare national practices, and develop plans to improve the education about NATO, as required.

At the Brussels meeting, parliamentarians exchanged views on the programs in their own countries and submitted verbal progress reports on the work done with each ministry of education. The Head of the Canadian Delegation explained Canada's problem in that education is in provincial jurisdiction. But she has written to the 13 ministers of education asking for information on their programs.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj, M.P.  
Chair, Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

## **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Joint Meeting of the Defence and Security, Economics and Security, and Political Committees
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Brussels, Belgium
<b>DATES</b>	February 19-21, 2018
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Raynell Andreychuk, Hon. Joseph Day
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Leona Alleslev, Darren Fisher, Hon. Rob Nicholson
STAFF	Jean-François Pagé
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	34,401.27\$
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	7,713.63\$
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	0\$
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	4,033.03\$
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	0\$
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	0\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46,147.93\$</b>