

Speaker 1: [00:00:27](#) [inaudible].

Nick Burns: [00:02:36](#) Good afternoon. Good afternoon everybody. Good afternoon everybody. What a pleasure to see this great group here on the first day of our 10th annual aspirins security forum. Uh, it's a great pleasure to welcome all of you here on behalf of [inaudible]

Nick Burns: [00:02:54](#) with our co-chairs. Professor Joan. I have Harvard who's arriving later and professor, former secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice of Stanford University. We have so many VIP who's in the audience, but I have to thank the president of the Aspen Institute. Dan Porterfield has done such a fabulous job for us. Please join me in welcoming Dan

Speaker 1: [00:03:16](#) [inaudible]

Nick Burns: [00:03:16](#) and I have to salute my former boss from whom I have learned so much about how to be a public servant and a great American Secretary of State, Madeline Albright.

Speaker 1: [00:03:36](#) [inaudible].

Nick Burns: [00:03:36](#) My name is Nick Burns. I'm the executive director of the Aspen Strategy Group and the very, very proud new owner of the Aspen Strategy Group of the Aspen Security Forum. I think many of you know about the Aspen Strategy Group. We have been here for 35 years, or we have been meeting on a nonpartisan political basis. I know it's a radical idea in the United States these days that Democrats and Republicans and Liberals and conservatives and moderates from the ranks of government and business and journalism and academia can actually come together on a nonpartisan basis. But that is our ethos and we subscribe to it. And it's a very important part of what the Aspen Institute does as well. We've been here for over three decades, off the record in the first weekend in August, but we thought it important, especially at a time of some discord, let's face it, and open divisions in America that we in the Aspen Strategy Group support this security forum, a public discussion, public debates about what we need to do together to build a stronger America and to do so with respect for each other and our differences with tolerance, with a sense of openness and to, if there was ever a time when we needed that kind of spirit that we're all Americans, we're all patriotic.

Nick Burns: [00:05:04](#) We don't judge each other. Um, on the basis of party now as that time, and we're meeting this week and this is our first

session at a time of some global import of a major change in the global balance of power. We're witnessing it right now. I just spent two weeks in China and saw the incredible power play that the Chinese are making in East Asia for the first time since the close of the Second World War. Other people beyond the United States are beginning to question whether or not the United States is willing and able to remain the global leader that we have been for 70 years. The Aspen Security Forum was founded 10 years ago by it's now chairman Ameritas Clark urban. I want to salute Clark for having had the vision to have this public debate every summer here in Aspen. He deserves our applause. And Arthur,

Nick Burns:

[00:06:03](#)

when Clark started this forum, terrorism was the existential problem that gripped the United States. Al Qaeda was still trying to blow up American civilian airliners. The United States was deeply and mashed, as we all remember in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. 10 years later. The Trump administration, quite rightly in my view now says that to authoritarian powers, China and Russia are the most significant threats to our national security. We're going to focus on both of those countries this week. If you've looked at our agenda, Russia's continued assault on our electoral system in 2016 and 2018 and you can bet in 2020 it's assault on our media platforms. It's open aggression in Ukraine have to concern all Americans, Republicans and Democrats. China's outright theft of American intellectual property. It's power play in the south China Sea. It's cracked down on the Weger population of western China as it cast a wary, menacing eye on the incredible events in Hong Kong.

Nick Burns:

[00:07:16](#)

It's been striking to see, I think for all of us who've been involved in American foreign policy for a long time, that nearly our entire political leadership from Liberal Democrats to conservative Republicans now are uniting around a banner of outright competition with China. Gone is the careful balance of the last four decades between engaging China when we can and opposing China when we must. That was the position of every administration. We now have both political parties swinging towards outright competition. Here's a question for all of us at Aspen this week. Is that the right balance? Of course we have to compete with the Chinese when they crossed American interests, but if we want to do anything on global climate change or stabilizing the global economy or addressing a thousand other transnational national issues, it's the other power with capacity and we're going to have a big debate at the Aspen Strategy Group and a couple of weeks about whether we are in balance or out of balance with China.

Nick Burns: [00:08:25](#) We're also going to discuss of course the threat of a nuclear armed North Korea and that of Iran, a nuclear weapons wannabe and a dangerous destabilizing force in the Middle East and there are many other vital issues on the agenda. This is one that I'm sure the secretary general and court Courtney QB are going to discuss. Should the United States stay in Afghanistan the longest war, 18 years now in American history or should we look for a peaceful way out? How can we combat, continue to extremism? In the Muslim world. How do we face the reality of cyber crime and cyber espionage and cyber terrorism? And very importantly, as we think about China, how do we maintain America's qualitative military edge as our arrivals, China and Russia and Iran develop a new technology generation of military technology propelled by artificial intelligence and quantum computing and biotechnology and machine learning. And what is our future in space?

Nick Burns: [00:09:33](#) We mark this week one of the very greatest achievements in all of the history of the United States. Apollo eleven's landing on the moon 50 years ago this week and as President Kennedy four saw his safe return to earth. In addition, there is of course the elephant in the room, President Donald Trump and his American first agenda, his advisors and supporters who will be here this week. We'll be right to point out what his accomplishments are in foreign policy, strong economic growth, substantial concessions by some of our trade partners and unapologetic defense of Israel. And our relationship with Israel and the Gulf states continued strong ties to India, a strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific. And the fact that war with not with North Korea is not mercifully on the agenda of the Aspen Security Forum this week. His detractors and I have to be open with you and transparent. I am one of his detractors will charge that he's weakening our alliances, that he's actually dismantling the global trade order, that he's slashing refugee admittance to the United States during the greatest refugee crisis worldwide since 1945 and that while he cuddles Kim Junge on, he never misses an opportunity to cast to gate our great friends, our democratic friends, Angela Merkel and Theresa May, President Trump's policies will be center stage at Aspen this week.

Nick Burns: [00:11:10](#) And when you think about it, he wouldn't have it any other way. So we're going to discuss all of this in a spirit of bipartisanship, non-partisanship of openness of tolerance for each other and for our differences as Americans. Thank you to our sponsors. Thank you to our major underwriters, Lockheed Martin, Symantec, and Deloitte. Deloitte. It's got a base camp and the temp, uh, in the meadows that a lot of you will visit. Thank you to our returning partner, Microsoft. Please visit it's secure

election, a exhibit here at Aspen Meadows. We're very pleased to welcome our new partners, Accenture, McKinsey and company Oracle United Launch Alliance. You will not miss the eight foot rocket at door hosier lobby. We remain very grateful to American Airlines for getting many of you here and to Cap Gemini for his support for our scholars program. Finally, last but not least, NBC and MSNBC has been an indispensable partner to the Aspen security forum.

Nick Burns: [00:12:15](#) It's brought us worldwide exposure. It's brought the voices of all of our speakers, like the secretary general to a global audience. So it's now time for our first speaker. Uh, were honored by the participation of the secretary general of NATO Yen Stoltenberg. He is a great friend of the United States. He was as prime minister of Norway and he is now as our leader in the western alliance in NATO. I think he's also, without any doubt, he will never say this as a modest person. He is one of the most important and effective secretary generals we've had in the 70 year history of the NATO alliance. Under his leadership, NATO continues to keep the peace in Europe and North America. 70 years after we were founded, NATO is helping to effect liberate the 100 million plus east Europeans who now live in free societies and are part of NATO and the European Union after having been unwilling occupants of the Warsaw Pact.

Nick Burns: [00:13:18](#) I saw this firsthand on nine 11 when I was a very new American ambassador in Nate tornado when we were hit very hard that day. It was NATO and Tom Core logo. So remember this Ambassador Corps logos NATO came forward, invoked article five our mutual defense clause went into Afghanistan with us is still with us today in 2019 in our NATO allies and partners have suffered over a thousand combat deaths. Mr Secretary General, we Americans are grateful to have such allies in the world. Thank you for being here and now let me introduce Sheila Jordan now the Symantec, the secretary general of NATO Yen Stoltenberg and Courtney Cubi of NBC News. Thank you very much.

Speaker 1: [00:14:12](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 4: [00:14:13](#) I get the great honor of doing a little bit of a further introduction over the next of the next session. First, I'd like to introduce Courtney Kroo Bay who was with NBC News and the Pentagon correspondent and she will actually be facilitating this interview. It is my great honor to also introduce Mr Yen's Stoltenberg, an economist by education. Mrs Stoltenberg is currently the secretary general general of NATO. Before assuming that role, he was twice the prime minister of Norway

in the leader of the Norwegian Labor Party. He has indeed had a long illustrious career in Norwegian politics including a number of ministry posts between 1990 and 1997 cumulatively was a member of the Norwegian parliament from 1991 through 2014 as prime minister Mrs Stoltenberg. Mrs Stoltenberg was a strong supporter of the transatlantic relationship. He was instrumental in transforming the Norwegian armed forces in increasing defense spending during his tenure as prime minister, Mrs Stoltenberg had to deal with a variety of national security issues including the threat of terrorism, terrorism, and with the Maria emergence of Russia. Mr Stoltenberg has also pioneered the work of NATO der on cyber. Under his leadership, NATO has made cyber defense a core part of collective defense and has recognized cybersecurity or cyberspace, cyberspace as a domain of military operations. Thanks to Mrs Stoltenberg leadership. NATO has also partnered closely with the cyber security industry. Speaking on behalf of Symantec, I can say that the partnership with NATO has been one of the most successful in all encompassing with governments around the world. Please join me in a warm welcome for Mrs Stoltenberg

Speaker 5: [00:15:58](#)

[inaudible].

Courtney Kube: [00:15:59](#)

Thank you very much. I have to say, I am so honored and humbled to be part of the opening panel for Aspen 2019. Um, and I want to get right into it because we have so many issues that we want to cover with the secretary general here in the news this week. Uh, we're less than two weeks or just about two weeks away from the inf treaty potentially falling apart. Of course, most of you know, this is the intermediate range missile treaty that the U S and Russia entered into in the 19 eight late 1980s, the u s announced they were going to withdraw from it and the deadline for Russia to come into compliance with that is August 2nd a u s delegation traveled to Geneva, met with the Russians to talk about arms control today. Is there any indication that Russia might be moving towards compliance or there might be some hope for the treaty? [inaudible]

Jens S: [00:16:44](#)

no, there is no indication that the

Jens S: [00:16:51](#)

thank you though.

Jens S: [00:16:54](#)

No, no indications on our side is moving back into compliance with the inf treaty, but we continue to call them then knowing that it's only three weeks left until we meet the deadline the 2nd of August. And after that, the inf treaty will not exist anymore. Uh, but the reason why we continue to call them, they'll come back into compliance at this street is extremely

important. It is cornerstone for arms control in Europe. Um, and I am part of a European generation of politicians who were actually shaped by the deployment of the Russian s s [inaudible] sites in the seventies and eighties, and the NATO, Pershing and Cruz, the signs as a respond to the Russian missiles. And we allowed to be honest with you, I've been out demonstrating it against those besides, uh, we have a lot of, uh, friends with long hair and a white radical, uh, attitudes. Uh, uh, but then we were so pleased, uh, when, uh, uh, Ronald Reagan, President Reagan and Gorbachev signed the Inf Treaty in 1987 not reducing the number of these missiles were banning all of them.

Jens S:

[00:18:02](#)

Zero. Uh, and now Russia started to deploy these missiles again. Now the name is SSC eight. They are different, but, uh, the same, uh, Jose, uh, threat, they are mobile. How to detect it can reach all European cities within minutes and, uh, reducing the warning time and therefore reducing the, the, the trash of any potential use of nuclear weapons in the armed conflict. Therefore, this extremely senior. So the Russia is violet in the treaty. Uh, and, uh, actually do bomb administration started to, uh, to raise this issue with, uh, Russia. Um, uh, they denied of course, but all allies, uh, and many of them independently has come to the same conclusion that Russia is in violation. That the, our deployment is, uh, these new missiles and therefore all NATO allies also supported the United States. When United States decided in the beginning of February that they will start the withdrawal process.

Jens S:

[00:19:00](#)

That process takes six months at the end of that process, which ends on the 2nd of August. Uh, this year they will know more inf treaty in a, in a, in the world. So, uh, we are also preparing for a world without the treaty and with more Russian missiles. I can say something what we are going to prepare for, but, uh, I will answer the quite long. So, uh, I, my advisor told me one thing, not belong in your office. So, uh, what I could ask the nation a rule. Okay. So then the question is what will we do? Uh, if they don't come back into compliance? Uh, we have stated and we have decided that we will respond. Uh, what we will do will be measured. It will be coordinated as a NATO family known bilateral and your insurance with Nate as the lines 29 allies. Um, we will not mirror what Russia is doing, meaning that we will not, uh, deploy, uh, missile defense.

Jens S:

[00:19:56](#)

Uh, we, uh, have increased redness or forces. Uh, we will also, uh, support the new initiatives of [inaudible] because we have to make sure that also in a world without the inf treaty and with more Russian measles, we need to be able to continue to deliver credible, uh, the turns on the fence, uh, from NATO

because that's the best guarantee to preserve a piece, uh, in, uh, in Europe. So Nate is going to, is going to employ or deploy some sort of a missile defense system that's geared in Europe, geared specifically towards Russia. We already have an integrated air and missile defense in Europe. Uh, but of course one option is to strengthen that. Uh, I'm a bit careful to be too specific, partly because we are still, uh, calling Russia to come back into compliance. And we don't want to give them any excuse for not coming back into compliance a, a second, uh, because I think it is important that we launch or they denounced the concrete measures when we see also [inaudible] off to the 2nd of August.

Jens S:

[00:20:59](#)

And some of the, uh, measures will, uh, take some time to implement, some others will be possible to implement more quickly. Uh, and, and uh, and, uh, and we also have to understand that the new Russia missiles is, are actually part of a broader pattern. It was a, Russia has modernized the nuclear weapons over a long time and they have, uh, invested in you, uh, modern military capabilities over a long time. And therefore, NATO in many ways have already started to respond, not by deploying new nuclear weapons in Europe, but by increasing our, uh, uh, military strength in Europe for the first time in the history of our reliance, we have combat ready troops in the eastern part of the lines in the three Baltic countries. Uh, and in Poland, one of them led by United States, uh, and these combat battalions or combat groups are not very big, better are multinational NATO troops, meaning that made those all the there. So if any of those countries are intact, there is no doubt that it will trigger the response from the full, uh, alliance. And we are also increased the ability, the redness of forces to reinforce quickly if needed. So in many ways, NATO has all of this started to respond in a, measured the fence away, uh, to a Morris or to Russia. And the new nuclear missiles are extremely important and [inaudible], but they are part of a broader picture. We have seen developing over some time

Courtney Kube:

[00:22:30](#)

what that enhanced, I mean, that really began after the invasion of Crimea, right? NATO enhancing the [inaudible] against an aggressive project. So do you know how many of these inf violating missiles Russia has? [inaudible] I can't tell you. Uh, so, uh, so in 1988 no, that we know. Yeah. So in 1987, it took from mid 1988, I guess until about 1991 for all the 2,700 or so missiles to be destroyed, which as you mentioned though, the treaty bands, these missiles and their launchers, which means to be in compliance, you have to destroy them. Is it even logistically possible at this point for Russia to become, to come into compliance and destroy their [inaudible]?

Jens S: [00:23:10](#) As I mentioned last time in 1987, they were able to, uh, destroy as, uh, almost 2000 missiles in, in, in a matter of weeks. So, so, uh, uh, it is possible to start to destroy me sides if they want it. So if we really saw a real willingness from Russia to start to destroy these missiles, I'm certain that we have been able to find a way to say the treaty, but we are NATO and United States has raised this issue with Russia for years. In the beginning, they denied the existence of the missile, then they had to accept that the exists. But they say that a missile doesn't violet on air for treaty. That's wrong. Uh, as I said, the u s but also other allies have independently, uh, also assessed, uh, determined that these mesons are violating the treaty. And that's the reason why we also have said that there has to be a limit because if we accept that Russia, while it's this street with impunity, then we are not only undermining the inf treaty, but we are weakening the credibility of all arms control treaties. If Rochelle thinks that they can just violate the treaty without consequence, then uh, what kind of credibility with all the other treaties we have have if we accept that.

Courtney Kube: [00:24:29](#) But with all due respect, they've been in violation of the treaty for years. As you mentioned, President Obama brought it up with Vladimir Putin years ago. So w what kind of deterrent can you employ after the treaty? Assumes it, it, it falls apart in a couple of weeks. What kind of deterrent can you possibly employ? Could you, you mentioned you don't want any ground launch cruise missiles or ground launch missiles, but what about air launched or sea launched or, I mean, could you, could you have a nuclear deterrent that is not ground-based? Is that a rolling some doctor in the moment but, but, but fundamentally

Jens S: [00:24:56](#) the most important deterrent NATO, uh, provides is one for all and all for one. And as long as that's credible, that if you attack one small ally or a big ally, the whole alliance will respond. Then we are by far the strongest alliance in the world. We are 50% of the roles, uh, else we will termites. So we are strong and stronger than any other potential adversary as long as we are together. So, so of course it is important what we do. Uh, but the most important thing is to resolve the political will, the unit or the lines. As long as that's in place, then we are safe. All of us. Uh, um, uh, so that's my first answer. Um, and, and your rounds, that's uh, I'm, I, I'm from Norway and uh, Norway's a beautiful country. We have beautiful mountains, but I have to meet that you have mountains into, uh, so am I. Should consider coming back

Courtney Kube: [00:25:52](#) to do some hiking and there's some down in school [inaudible] the told Max or they don't only do downhill skiing, but also

cross country skiing. That's even better. Yeah, it's good for, it's good cardio. So are you talking about, to avoid my question on air launch cruise [inaudible] I'll talk about seeing too. No, but,

Jens S: [00:26:11](#) but we, as, first of all, we have a, um, uh, air launched a nuclear weapons that's part of, uh, NATO's nuclear deterrent in Europe. And that's not, no, no secret. Uh, we have, uh, we call it the zone. It's something we do together. It's the, the, the, the weapons are owned by the United States, but the planes are owned by different European allies. And then, uh, the different support, uh, and, uh, capabilities and so on are owned by and operated by other allies. So, so, so those, the air launched nuclear components of our, uh, as a nuclear deterrent. Uh, it's really a joint effort by, uh, many allies. Uh, so that's of course part of, uh, our deterrent and [inaudible] will be also part of the, the turns we have, uh, after the potential demise of the, the inf treaty. Uh, yeah,

Courtney Kube: [00:27:06](#) there was a disclosure just this week actually, of a report that, that acknowledged that in fact there were 130 nuclear bombs across five NATO nations that were belonged to NATO essentially. Um, and, and as you mentioned, this is, it's, it's been widely known, but this is sort of an official way of acknowledging where those those weapons are and that they actually exist in. And it also included some talk of the u s nuclear components that's overseas as well. Did that concern you, that disclosure and particularly the acknowledgement that there's actually your, there are nuclear weapons at Insur like just miles from the Syrian border?

Jens S: [00:27:41](#) Cause I don't comment on the details, uh, of, uh, our nuclear, uh, uh, deterrent, uh, where we have, uh, deployed, uh, uh, weapons. Uh, but, uh, it is official. It's public that we have, uh, air launched systems, uh, and that, uh, different allies, uh, uh, so deliver this, uh, uh, together. Uh, this paper is not actually made to paper. It's, uh, it's a, it's a draw from the NATO parliamentary assembly, uh, some parliamentarian. So it's on not a paper from [inaudible] and from, from the NATO, uh, structures. But, uh, uh, I can sort of, I can not confirm what this there, but of course, if we have nuclear weapons in Europe, we have them somewhere in Europe. So I cannot deny that. But actually for both, the reason why I mentioned Norway do that was because of the mountains, but it was because of the Terrence, I mean, Norway, 5 million people.

Jens S: [00:28:34](#) And I remember when I was, uh, doing my conscription, I was a soldier back in the late seventies, at the height of the Cold War, and we were boarding Russia. Uh, but I, I, but I felt safe because

I knew that if Norway was attacked, the whole of NATO, including not states will be there. And as long as the Terrence is credible and the terms is in the mind of your potential adversary, as long as your potential adversary knows that we will be together, then he will not attack. So credible deterrence is the best way not to provoke a conflict, but to prevent the conflict.

Courtney Kube: [00:29:12](#)

But I just have to push back on the deterrence a little bit because you know, it's, while this is, it seems that the NATO alliance has been able to deter an actual attack on the NATO allies from Russia, NATO, Russia continues to push the line. So the deployment of these potentially nuclear ground launch cruise missiles, uh, you know, right on, on NATO's doorstep. At what point is it not deterring Russian behavior considered not effective deterrence? It's diff, it's deterring an actual attack, but Russia is walking right up to the door armed and ready for an attack.

Jens S: [00:29:45](#)

But I think for the terms to be credible, it has to be very clear what we are deterring. We are deterring an aunt attack on a NATO ally. Of course we would like to see Russia change their behavior. But we have seen before that Russia is behaving in a way we don't like, uh, or, or, or the Soviet Union. That was very much the case during the Cold War then that Russia had many more nuclear weapons and many more combat to the troops just at our water. Uh, and then, uh, we really needed deterrence as a saying that if you cross that border, then the whole alliance will, uh, respond. So the turns is working. That doesn't mean that the Russia behaves exactly as we want, but it means that since we established NATO, no NATO ally has suffered a military attack. Uh, and, and, and we are the most successful, uh, alliance in history because we have been able to deliver that.

Jens S: [00:30:37](#)

The challenge now is that we are faced with new threats, which is not what I say their classical military attack as an army is crossing borders or missiles crossing borders. But cyber, uh, meddling in, in, in democratic processes, elections, processes. Uh, we had the skip ball case in, in, in UK where a nerve and the chemical agent was used, uh, on the toto Vinay to ally. Uh, these, these, what we call a hybrid, uh, attacks or hybrid warfare, they blurred the line between peace and war. Before it was very easy to say [inaudible] was peace and war. Again. I'm from Europe and in the Second World War in Europe started for my, as in my country, the 9th of April and it ended the eight domain and it was no, no question where it took place. Women are faced with cyber attacks. It's hard to say

when you're attacked, where we're attacking who we are, uh, who is uh, uh, attacking you, uh, or the fight against the [inaudible]. It's hard to say when it started, where to place and when it's going to going to end. So we are faced with a much more difficult kind of threats, uh, these blurred lines or hybrid threats, which is blurring the line between peace on the, on the, on the wall.

Courtney Kube: [00:31:54](#)

Another NATO ally that's been in the news a lot lately is Turkey with their acceptance of some of the components for s 400 radar. Uh, the White House put out a statement about it today saying that accepting the s 400 undermines the commitment all NATO allies made to each other to move away from Russian systems. The U s military also is saying that the s 400 and dangerous military intelligence that the radars allow Russia to be able to read intelligence on this joint strike right, of this new advanced aircraft that Turkey was supposed to take possession of and they are no longer will. One critical part of the NATO alliance is this integrated interoperability, integrated air defense systems. A Russian made air defense system like the s 400 cannot be integrated with NATO. So what does that going forward now that Turkey has taken possession of it, are there technical changes that NATO members now have to make to exclude Turkey from having access to their systems? And are there physical air defense infrastructure that has to be altered?

Jens S: [00:32:55](#)

The s four, under the Russian air defense system, uh, uh, it's not possible to integrate into the integrated NATO air and message system, which is about, you know, sharing radar picture, which is about a joint April leasing, which about the, uh, shared, uh, capabilities. Uh, and Turkey hasn't asked for that. So, so the s is 400 will not be integrated into a NATO's air and missile defense system. Um, um, but Turkey can still be part as with other capabilities, uh, Turkey will and, uh, and it's still part of NATO's integrated air and missile defense. Uh, they have, uh, planes to have radars to have other, uh, capabilities which are important for our, uh, air and missile defense. Um, it is up to each and every nation to decide what kind of systems they acquired, uh, but what matters, what, what, what matters for NATO is interoperability.

Jens S: [00:33:51](#)

And the s 400 system will not be other one within Washington with president Trump and, and, and, uh, and other officials. And, and, and of course we tried to avoid to end in the situation where we are now, where, uh, two allies, so filament disagree and where, uh, Turkey of, I'm concerned about the consequences of the Turkish decision because it means that Turkey will not be part of the F, uh, 35 program any more. I

actually visited Lockheed Martin at the Fort Worth, uh, thinking a year ago or something and I saw the production lines and I saw the different flags or the different, uh, allies, uh, a producing as, um, um, having planes coming out, uh, from, from that production line. And they're also Turkish pains there. Uh, but now they will not be part of that. That's, that's not good. Uh, it's bad for all of us, but the consequence of that decision and, uh, and therefore what I welcome is the direct, uh, ongoing dialogue contract between two, uh, NATO allies, Turkey and United States on issue.

Jens S: [00:34:55](#) I know that they're talking about, uh, Turkey acquiring a Patriot systems. Uh, Turkey is also talking with two other NATO allies, Italy and France, about acquiring Sam t, uh, Italian French system. Also a defense system. And we have to remember that NATO is augmenting Turkish air defenses. Today we have deployed a Patriot battery, a Spanish petered battery in Turkey, and we are deployed Italian, uh, Santi battery in Turkey. So as a part of NATO assurance measures for Turkey. So, so we, we do what we can. Uh, but uh, and now we are in a difficult situation because of the consequences of this, uh, a decision.

Courtney Kube: [00:35:34](#) But it's not just, I mean there's also the of it that that Turkey, you know, they were trying to acquire the patriot. It didn't work out, but the United States under president Trump has said that the u s would figure out a way to sell them. In fact, they've even offered to help with some of the cost of it to encourage Turkey to Ford to get another Patriot battery and not to buy the US for a hundred and Turkey and symbolically turned towards Russia and bought this system knowing that it would be no f 35, no interoperability, the air defense system with, with us 400. So what does that mean? It's, it's, it's, it's this Turkey turning away from NATO and towards Russia.

Jens S: [00:36:09](#) No, uh, this is a serious issue. It's about, uh, s 400 and f 35, but natal's, uh, also Turkish Turkish contributions to NATO and Naples cooperation with a NATO ally. Turkey runs much deeper and it's much broader than, uh, f 35, even though that's important. Uh, for instance, Turkeys, a key ally in the fight against [inaudible] Isis, the fact that we have been able to their global coalition, uh, to the fetus to liberate all the territory dodge controlled in Iraq and Syria, they control the Taito as big as United Kingdom, 8 million people and are now the don't control that territory anymore. That's not least because of the contributions of Turkey. We have used the basis infrastructure. Uh, and Turkey has paid the key part in that fight. Uh, turkeys contributing to many different NATO missions and operations in the Balkans and costs of all and also in Afghanistan. So, so I'm

not underestimating, uh, the difficulty related to s 400, but I'm saying that, uh, Turkey, uh, as a NATO member is much more than s 400.

Courtney Kube: [00:37:19](#) There's some, some people who, you know, commentators are saying that Turkey deserves to be kicked out of NATO because of this, which of course there's no mechanism for doing, but does it, do, are there other members, other NATO allies who are expressing that kind of sentiment that they don't trust Turkey anymore with this decision that, that they've had in, in essence with the activation of the s 400, they're opening up a door that potentially exposes other NATO allies. W two to spying

Jens S: [00:37:48](#) [inaudible] NATO, the, sorry, Turkey is a NATO member. A Turkey is an important Antal member and no ally has a raised that issue, uh, at all because they, they, we all see that we are dependent on each other. Then we [inaudible] then there are the, then there's a disagreement on the issue of s 400. That's correct. And I think that my responsibility is partly to try to help to solve the issue, but as long as that issue is not solved, we need to minimize the negative consequences. And also highlight as the White House does in this statement today that Eh, the partnership that the, the, the, the alliance, uh, other than the role of Turkey in, in NATO is much broader than, uh, uh, f 34 or as 400

Courtney Kube: [00:38:34](#) ambassador Burns talked about

Jens S: [00:38:36](#) the importance of Afghanistan. There's talks right now the potential peace talks, NATO forces are there in committed until 2020, but it's a condition, space based mission. If ambassador caleel's Adamo Khalilzad if he's successful and negotiates a peace deal, it could have an impact on NATO forces deployed to Afghanistan. You've said numerous times that he briefs you frequently. He keeps the NATO allies and in touch with what he's doing, but if in fact he comes to a peace deal that leads to the full withdrawal of all NATO troops, resolute support mission troops, will NATO have a veto over that? Will you have, will need to have any kind of a part in the p in the negotiations for what that would look like. So we are very much involved in that now. Uh, we consult with Ambassador College frequently. I speak with him. He hasn't been in the NATO North Atlantic Council many times.

Jens S: [00:39:34](#) Uh, we have our NATO representative in Kabul so closely linked up to the negotiation. So of course this is a US envoy, but, but all NATO allies are involved because we went into Afghanistan together. We are going to make decisions of future pastors

together and when the time is right to also leave together, because we have to remember that as nick pern said, the first and only time NATO invoke the collective defense clause. Article Five was often tack on the United States. I think anyone expected that, the, that, that article firewalls for, you know, a Soviet Union attacking a small NATO ally. No, that never happened because, uh, the Terrans worked, uh, but then suddenly had an attack on the United States nine 11. And, and, and, and, and all allies stood behind United States, uh, hundreds of thousands of, uh, European soldiers. Canadian soldiers have served in Afghanistan and more than thousand and pay the ultimate price.

Jens S: [00:40:37](#) And we had, at the peak, we had more than 140,000 troops there in a combat operation, roughly one third, a at some stage, even more than, uh, of those soldiers were non u s olders. So this has been a big operation, not only for the United States, but for many a NATO allies and a and partners. Therefore, we will decide on the future precedence in Afghanistan. Together we strongly support the efforts, uh, by about sexual assault, uh, to reach an agreement with the Taliban. We want to stay in Afghanistan longer than needed. We have been able to go from 140,000 to now, roughly 16,000, uh, to go from a combat operation with the casualties and, and, and, and, and to train assistant advisor advice, mission with very much few casualties. And, uh, and of course we, we hope that call is out. We'll uh, succeed. Uh, this is not eh I leave, uh, deal we are seeking but the peace deal meaning that it has to, uh, secure that Afghanistan doesn't, once again, the condensate fame for international terrorists.

Jens S: [00:41:44](#) It has to secure, uh, entire African dialogue on how to maintain, uh, also the, the gains we have made there. We hadn't invested heavily blood and treasure in Afghanistan for many years. Uh, um, uh, and of course it will affect the presence of international forces NATO forces use forces in, in Afghanistan, in walkways. It's a bit early to say because that's now negotiated our hope. We will see a result. And as a secretary, Pompeo said, I think it was a NATO meeting recently, uh, hopefully, uh, something, uh, as a, within a weeks or months. So, so, so, so we hope, but nothing is agreed before. Everything is agreed and therefore it's a bit early to try to speculate about the different element.

Courtney Kube: [00:42:29](#) Snip the Taliban have been pretty open about the fact that they want all foreign troops out, not just American troops out. So if you, if in fact there was a, a negotiated peace settlement that involved withdrawal of all NATO troops, NATO would be on board with that. If that's [inaudible]

- Jens S: [00:42:43](#) we will see if there is a negative piece, they all then we will support that deal and we are, that's the reason why we are so closely involved in the process. And that's also reasons why we brief and involve, uh, allies in the process. Uh, but it remains to be seen what kind of deal we will get. Uh, and the, and of course, uh, knit the natal support Afghanistan. Now, as I said, this is not combat. What we do now is to train, assist and help the Afghan forces. And we have to realize that the African forces are now doing what we did for them with 140 combat troops. So there are many problems in Afghanistan and many reasons to be concerned, but at least this great achievement that instead of having a 140,000 u s European NATO troops in Afghanistan, we have 16,000 troops which are enabling the Afghans to fight terrorism themselves.
- Jens S: [00:43:37](#) And I think that one of the lessons we haven't learned from Afghanistan, from Iraq, from Libya and elsewhere, is that in the long run, it's much better to train local forces than to, uh, deploy large number, our own forces in big combat operations. I remember I must have dog glute when you also also in NATO here, he said, Eh, prevention is better than intervention. And I totally agree. So, so, so we train local forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, uh, to, to, to help them stabilize their own country so we can reduce, uh, uh, our persons. Uh, and our, uh, what'd I say? Combat, uh, operation in this county.
- Courtney Kube: [00:44:13](#) Do you feel confident, like if you know, there's talk of a negotiated peace settlement pretty soon, potentially in a matter of months, if NATO troops were suppose were to withdrawal and abandoned this, this training mission as part of the negotiated settlement that the Afghan forces could stand on their own. I mean, they continue to have a difficult time. They were, there was a district overrun in Paktika over the weekend and Afghan forces fled. Do you feel confident that they could actually hold back? Not to not only the Taliban, but also no isis
- Jens S: [00:44:41](#) but, but as I said, we are looking for a piece, still not the leading. Uh, so we need the elements in place, uh, to ensure that we can preserve the gains we have made, uh, that we can, uh, reduce, uh, and eventually leave in the orderly way. Uh, but again, uh, how and when and how fast? I think it's a bit early to speculate. NATO will support a negotiated solution because, uh, we are close involved in that process. Uh, and we are prepared that a negotiated solution
- Courtney Kube: [00:45:14](#) will also impact our precedence. But how and in what way and how fast that remains to be seen. And of course we can

continue to support enough can Goldman if, if enough Goldman soul wants, uh, I think for instance, we will have to continue to provide financial support because what we do is not only to train the Afghan forces, we also fund them. Uh, the United States and all the NATO allies provide significant financial support to the Afghan forces. And I touched a little bit on, on burden sharing, which has been a big topic obviously with, with president Trump. His national security advisor, John Bolton said that NATO allies are now spending 100 billion more on defense since president Trump was elected in 2016. Is that true? Yes. Since 2016,

Jens S: [00:46:01](#) it can be very presentist. Uh, if you, if you, if you add what the increase in 20 is six 20, sorry, it's 2017, 18, uh, 19 and what they, what we estimate for 20, uh, so this is over in the four year period. Uh, we actually expect it will be a bit more than a hundred billion US dollars. Uh, and that's based on what they have. All the did done also for 17, 18, and the budget [inaudible] on the, on whatever the also the spending for this year and then, and then, uh, all allies have submitted, uh, plans for defense spending. And if we also include the estimates for 2020, uh, that adds up to more than a hundred billion. So, so, uh, as president Trump has been very clear on the importance of increased defense spending. And I have said, and I, and I, I can repeat here that that very clear message is having an impact.

Jens S: [00:47:00](#) Um, uh, the good news is that in often years of cutting defense budgets, all our allies are now increasing defense spending. Uh, more allies meet the 2% target. Uh, and the majority of NATO allies have put forward plans, uh, on how to reach 2% within a decade. We have to remember that when we met, made the defense investment pension 2014, uh, we didn't promise to reach 2% next year. We promise, promised a, uh, we did a decade. Uh, and the, and the, and the, we still have a long way to go. Many allies is still have a, a as a far away from 2%. Uh, but, uh, we are really moving in the right direction and the, and the, on the, I think that's important partly because the investments provides us with capabilities we need, but also because investments in defenses as an investment in the transatlantic bond,

Courtney Kube: [00:47:55](#) it hasn't the diff, you mentioned that the defense and investment pledge in 2014, that's really when the spending started to increase the amount among members and allies. I uh, ambassador Burns, I believe. And, and Ambassador Doug Lou too, I don't know if he's here both to former US ambassador to NATO worked on a study out of Harvard that said that in fact the spending increased starting in 2014 and part of that was the

invasion of Crimea. And part of it was this investment pledge. So [inaudible] president Trump and in this case, Ambassador Bolton, taking credit for something that was already in the works two years before president Trump is even elected.

Jens S: [00:48:28](#) Well, what I have said is that the clear message from president Trump is having an impact. Uh, we have seen that since 2016, there has been a significant increase. Uh, but you're right, that we have seen always increase before that. Uh, with this, the increase started, I think it was in 15, uh, that was the first year where we saw increased across Europe and the, and Canada. Uh, and we made the pledge in 2014 to be honest, I am, for me it is important not to be too much involved in a domestic political debate in the United States. Uh, what matters for me is that European allies and Canada are paying more, uh, and they are paying, uh, and that's good. Uh, and, and I also tell them, and they agree that we should not only pay more or invest more in defense to please the United States, Huh.

Jens S: [00:49:16](#) We should pay and invest more in defense because it isn't our own security interest. Uh, and the, and therefore all and all hours agree, all hours have been, have, have, uh, committed to increase defense spending. Uh, because when we reduce tensions, no, sorry, when we did use defense spending, when tensions on going down, we have to be able to increase defense spending when attention is on going up. So NATO allies, also not on 90 states reduce defense spending off to the end of the Cold War because the intentions went down. And I'm a politician, I know that all politicians prefer at is most of them prefer to, uh, to spend money on something else down the fence. They like to spend money on education, health infrastructure. And I told the audience like this before the, I was minister of finance back in know when the 1990s and that was really good at cutting defense spending.

Jens S: [00:50:08](#) Uh, but, but then tensions went, went down. So I'm actually, I'm, I'm old, I'm not ashamed of that because then we really thought that we were able to develop a new relationship with Russia. We had a significant build on the Russian forces in the, in, in Europe, uh, and, and, and, and then it was enough that we reduced the fence spending all across the alliance. But then when tensions are going up, when we see the Drosha investing more, when we see that the global balance of power is shifting, then we need to invest more. And the good news is that that's exactly what NATO allies are doing. So I'm one quite optimistic and two bonus. I'm quite impressed because, because for many allies, they're not able to borrow. They're not able to again say so much about the United States, but, but, but you know, for

many hours it is impossible to borrow money because they have very strict budget rules in the European Union and or because they are faced with extremely high interest rates if they borrow too much and there've been through financial crisis, which makes it, uh, as, uh, impossible to borrow. So if they spend \$1 or one euro extra on the fence, they have to spend one euro less on health education or something else or increased taxes. That's not this, but this, despite that, they're actually allocating more money for defense a and, and that shows that they are committed to this lines.

Courtney Kube:

[00:51:39](#)

Sorry, we're going to get to questions in just a couple of minutes, but, but one more, um, not quite yet, but you'll get the first one if you want it. Um, uh, you know, you've mentioned unity a bunch of times and the commitment NATO ally commitment. Are you confident at this stage that if in fact the a NATO ally was attacked by Russia that the other 28 members of the alliance would respond? That?

Jens S:

[00:52:01](#)

Yes, and there are several reasons. What are the partly because that's the core. Uh, so treat the obligation to have in, in, in, in the Washington [inaudible] article five at one for all, all for one. If one ally, ally is attack, we will regard as a tackle and the whole the line. So that's article vibe. Um, but second, uh, because they have all stated it again and again. And thirdly, and that's perhaps the most important thing is that NATO is pressed the door. You as troops in the eastern part of the lines, the action. I also use troops in Norway. We didn't see that other than not we've been for, for, for the first time in our history. Um, and the, and, and there are German troops and, and, and French troops and, uh, and, and under the, and, and our troops from all NATO allies are older.

Jens S:

[00:52:52](#)

The in also deployed combat ready be ready in the eastern part of the lines. So, so, so an attack on [inaudible] and for me there is no stronger way to demonstrate NATO solidarity than deploy your own forces, Eh, in the most was exposed part of the lines. And that's exactly what the United States and old [inaudible] allies are doing. And the lost, the reason why I'm absolutely certain that the whole alliance will respond is that it is in our interests to stand together. I mean, NATO is good for Europe, but it's also extremely good for not the states. It's extremely good to have friends eyes. You are, you are. I mean, you are privileged to have 20, 28 friends and allies who are together with you every time. Not only triggering article five after nine 11. Uh, but if you compare with China or Russia or any other great power, they don't have that kinds of friends and allies as you have, that makes you stronger.

Jens S: [00:53:53](#) And when I travel around the United States, I meet people who are concerned about the size or of, of, of China. If your economic militarily and so on. If you're concerned about the size of China, then you should stay in Naples because as long as you need to, you are terribly big. Because, uh, if you add all the other allies, we are 50% of world GDP and 50% of the world's mean tomatoes. I said so, so, so NATO has been important, but NATO is actually even more important now because we see this shift of a power balance and that makes the importance of strong international institutions alliance as a NATO even more important.

Courtney Kube: [00:54:33](#) I want to get your questions, but you know, it is also important to point out that there are some people who say that NATO was slow to respond to China's growing influence around the world. But it seems as if now it's a recognition by NATO that,

Jens S: [00:54:44](#) no, but I that to be honest, to say that Nate has not been focused on China for before, we have been focused on the Soviet Union and then the fight against the terrorism, uh, uh, also,

Courtney Kube: [00:54:55](#) but the growing influence of China, even in an African South American moving into Europe now, right?

Jens S: [00:54:59](#) NATO, NATO is, it's a regional organization. So, so it's a, we have, don't we don't have any plans of moving into the south China Sea or do we do that part over all of the world? But, uh, despite that, we need now to assess, uh, the consequences at the security consequences for our allies of the rise of China because China is calming closer Dos and China in the Arctic, in Africa, in Europe, uh, in cyberspace. Uh, so there's no way we can not, uh, assess and respond, uh, to, uh, the rise of China. Uh, and the challenge is to find the right balance between, between seeing the challenges, but also the opportunities. Uh, and therefore we announced thought of for the first time in our history, a systematic work among allies, uh, to try to create some kind of consensus, uh, on the challenges on, on the opportunities, how to respond. Uh, and uh, and that, that just shows that NATO is able to adapt when the world is changing. And one reason why I need to is as success is that we have been able to change and adapt when the world is changing.

Courtney Kube: [00:56:11](#) So we have time for about 15 minutes for questions. Um, I'm hoping we can do two at a time. So if you could keep your question kind of short. And so we are, we're generous and don't make the secretary general remember too much at once. So here and

Speaker 4: [00:56:24](#) Ma'am over there.

Speaker 8: [00:56:27](#) Thank you Mr Secretary General for being here. Stephen Shapiro with Benz and the Atlantic Council. I'd like to ask you a question about the defense of frontline states in NATO and um, with a little bit of explanation and I'll try to be brief. The PR, the way NATO structures frontline, uh, its defense system now is that the frontline states essentially serve as bumpers like car bumpers to crumble in a classic Russian, uh, armed attack. And then they're there to hold out for six, seven weeks until the United States can mobilize, get across the Atlantic, join up with the Brits and fight its way, fight their way back in and kick the bad guys out. There is some currency now of, uh, of a, of a, of a concept called the porcupine defense where the frontline states might be somewhat hardened to make them less, um, and in coachable, uh, with respect to the Russians such as things such as super sensor arrays under c, uh, inexpensive drone swarms, uh, significant cyber defenses, things which might make the Russian taste for, uh, for coming across the border, uh, less, uh, less attractive. I wonder if you have discussed the porcupine defense concept and if you, even if you haven't, what can you say about it? Thank you.

Speaker 4: [00:57:45](#) Hi, Dr Vanessa Norman. I am, um, interim been a sworn president one way, those, a diplomatic representative in the UK and I've been to this forum several times before my civilian capacity. Um, simple question. Colombia is now sort of an observer nations sort of exceeding two NATO. What does that mean in practical terms? We, Latin Americans and Venice would like to know,

Jens S: [00:58:18](#) um, first, uh, on the protection of, uh, as I, I, I don't use the phrase frontline states, but those states who are bordering, uh, Russia, um, again, I think that you have, we have to understand that what NATO does is that we, we, we deterred any attempt, uh, to attack any ally. Uh, and, and the, and, and we do that by saying that if one allies attack the whole, the lines will respond. We don't need to, during the Cold War, we had a lot of forces combat the forces on the border between East and West Germany. Uh, but we were, but for instance, in my country, Norway, there were no made to troops c or NATO troops. And if you go to northern Norway, there is actually as a, there is a lot of land. Uh, not so many people. Uh, but we felt safe knowing that of course in theory the Russian, the Soviet Union invade northern Norway and we were not able to stop them also, at least not for the first many kilometers down before able to stop them.

Jens S: [00:59:30](#) But we were safe because we, we trusted the Terrence. We were able to, to, to protect West Berlin, which was an a middle odor. Oh, east Germany. Not because we had forced to stellar do able to fight an attack by the Soviet Union, but because the Soviet Union knew that if they attacked Westphalian all or northern Norway, then it would trigger the whole response. I say this because the whole idea that bumpers and other, I didn't get the other thing, but it doesn't matter. That's not the concept. The concept is to just tell them that if you touch an innate ally, the whole lines would be there. And we are the strongest allies in the world and we are modernizing our forces, increasing their illness, and to make sure that no one misunderstands. We deploys on NATO forces in what you call the front plan sites. So there's no doubt it's not possible because native will be involved from day one and as long as they know that they were not, not attacked, then of course we are investing in new technologies and in drones and, and so on, which will help to, to make that deterrence credible.

Jens S: [01:00:43](#) Also as, uh, our potential adversaries are investing in new technologies. To try to be short, I have to add it to end with one import message. We don't see any imminent threat against and in Atlanta and in NATO ally. Uh, so, so we are not going around and thinking that we will be attack tomorrow except for what I said terrorist attacks can happen tomorrow in NNA to allied country. And of course cyber. This hybrid thanks are actually happening every day. But on the attack, uh, no imminent threat in on Columbia. Oh, sorry. Columbia. Now Columbia is a partner. Uh, and the first part you have in Latin American. So that's a Cardigan kind of great achievement. I met the President of Columbia, he came to NATO. It was great to have a, a partner nation from, from Latin America. Um, but the partner nation is the partner is not the ally.

Jens S: [01:01:37](#) Uh, so article five and zone does the apply for partners. We have roughly 40 partners around the world. And of course we cannot say that Article Five, uh, applies for all of them. Uh, but it means that we will work together. We will train together, we will, uh, help each other, different partners, participants in different ways. Uh, and, and we discussed different ways where we could, for instance, work on how to, um, uh, engage in peace processes because there've been through a peace process in Colombia, uh, and, uh, and also to fight terrorism and zones. So, so we can work on practical issues. Uh, but it's not about article five or, or, or, or the, a full member of the lines tomorrow in the back over. And

Speaker 9: [01:02:20](#) ma'am, right here

Speaker 5: [01:02:21](#) we're going to do.

Audience Member: [01:02:23](#) And my activism was EDF. Jovan television. Thank you. It was the starting Barrick for sharing your thoughts with us. Uh, I was wondering, NATO was founded on the core values of democracy, human rights, and also the rule of law. Are you in any way concerned about the erosion of those core values? When you look at countries like Turkey, Poland, Hungary, Italy, just in recent years, and some members of Congress probably would argue, even the u s

Audience Member: [01:02:53](#) Suzanne Spalding for the Center for Strategic and International Studies. A secretary general, thank you for being here. I wanted to pick up on your comments about, um, hybrid threats or what we might call gray zone threats. Uh, I spoke about a year ago with a former member of the NATO parliament, NATO parliamentarian, uh, who was speaking with some East European intelligence officers in 2010 who said Putin them had three top goals, weaken NATO, weaken the NATO alliance, weaken the bonds between the EU and the u s and undermine the credibility of justice systems and the media as arbiters of truth. Russia is using information operations to con to achieve these goals. And how does NATO think about those information operations? And how to counter them.

Jens S: [01:03:49](#) Oh, the first one, the core values. NATO is founded on some core values, democracy, the rule of law and a and individual liberty. And, uh, and I stress and the highlight or underline that many times in my conversations in different, uh, NATO capitals because these values are of great importance for alliance. And for me, um, because I just believe in those values. I better than the democracy is better than, uh, uh, authoritarian regimes. A freedom is better than the oppression and a, and the, and the, and I think we have proven that these values are very strong. Then of course, there are some concerns expressed from different NATO allies about, uh, to what extent, uh, all allies able to live up to these standards. I think that one of the important things that NATO provides is a platform for an open and free discussion about that.

Jens S: [01:04:44](#) So those are the, then the, then we meet, we discuss, we maybe we made a agreement, we may disagree, but at least NATO should be a platform for also raising these concerns. Uh, and then hopefully that will enable us all to, uh, to, to, to deliver even better on, uh, uh, these core, uh, values. Now, one very brief thing is that we are 29 allies from both sides of the Atlantic's. We are different and sometimes we disagree, but despite those disagreements or differences, we have always

been able to, Eh, uh, unite around a quarter to protect them, defending each other. And that's important. We continue to do. Then on hybrid, um, we, we do a lot to counter information campaigns. So this information, uh, Ponti we increase awareness because I think this is about, about very much of being aware of how vulnerable we are, uh, when someone tried to interfere in our domestic processes.

Jens S: [01:05:45](#) So to share best practices to the, to, to learn from each other, uh, to inform each other about, uh, different, uh, attempts in, in, interfering in our democratic institutions or, or, or undermine our democratic institutions is extremely important. We have strengthened our cyber defenses, but the NATO cyber defense, but also help to strengthen the cyber defenses over NATO allied countries. We conduct big exercises. Uh, you know, sometimes it's about very simple things about what they call cyber hygiene, just to behave responsible when you have a computer or anything like that. Um, uh, and, and of course we provide facts when we see that there is some this information out there and we have a web our online those on what do what w website where you can have lots of facts related to some of the disinformation that, uh, we see, uh, presented by Russia and uh, and uh, others.

Jens S: [01:06:42](#) Uh, but I think that the most important thing is that we need, need a critical and independent press. I, and I'm a politician, I'm in quite irritated and many journalists many times, but I'm in favor of them, uh, as a meaning, meaning that they have to ask the difficult questions, they have to check their sources and that's the best guarantee against this information. Uh, so, so our core value is about creating a society which is resilient against attempts to try to, uh, to interfere. Um, then the last thing I would say that it's very easy to be concerned. That's in a way the easiest thing in the world. Uh, but, but we should not be, we should also be a bit optimistic because despite all these attempts to weaken NATO, NATO is not weak. And actually if you look at the opinion polls, there is great support record, high support for NATO. So we, I was complaining for NATO, they will not be in a big mixture all already. So those are trying to undermine the public support for NATO had not succeeded even in, not even, but also United States. There is record high support for NATO. So, uh, so, uh, yes we should be aware attempts, uh, to, to weaken NATO. Uh, but so far they're not succeeded. Actually there is a strongest report when I told and has been for many years to come from. One more very quick question if one has a quick way.

Jens S: [01:08:15](#) Okay.

Audience Member: [01:08:16](#) Charlie Dunlap from Duke Law School. Mr Secretary, we're seeing the conscription is being looked at by a of European countries. Do you think that that trend will continue, especially if you get the high tech and cyber talent that modern militaries need?

Speaker 5: [01:08:32](#) [inaudible]

Jens S: [01:08:34](#) well, we'll just do the one. Yeah. Okay. To be honest, I, I don't know. Uh, um, uh, I think that, um, I, as I'm on my own country, I'm sorry to use Norman, but I know is the best. Um, we have conscription, actually I can skip from, from men and women. It was introduced when I was prime minister. Uh, and again, uh, I was very skeptical in the beginning, but I ended up campaigning for a female or women the conscription. Uh, because then I understood because if you have not half of the population but 100% of the population, you get really as an even better people. Uh, I'm the,

Speaker 5: [01:09:17](#) okay.

Jens S: [01:09:17](#) And the, and the, and the, and the advantage of having conscription is that you can, you recruit really the best. The problem is, to be honest, is that I think in most countries, you don't know to very few constable afford to have so many people in the armed forces. So again, to use my own country, we have conscription. But the reality is that I think it's 50% or something of the cohort, is that what they call it? A also do mentors service because we can't afford to have a bigger army. Um, so therefore I'm a bit reluctant or careful to have a clear advice to other allies. But the important thing is that we need the best and the brightest and we need more and more skilled people because we are now in the midst of a big transformation or armed forces, uh, artificial intelligence, uh, autonomous weapon systems, big data, all that will change the nature of warfare more fundamentally than, uh, the industrial revolution did. So therefore, we need really the best people in our armed forces to maintain the technological edge, which has always been so important for Nate. But again, I'm a strong optimistic. Also, we have proven again, again, that we are able to change when the world is changing.

Courtney Kube: [01:10:37](#) I'll take a point of personal privilege as the moderator and ask you one more. You already have disclosed to us your days of protesting. Did you have long hair as well, or was it just your friends? No, no,

Jens S: [01:10:46](#) you can, you can Google me on new, you'll see a long here. The installed

Courtney Kube: [01:10:50](#) we, we all will be, it'll be, it'll be posted on the aspen website by the end of the evening. Um, we, uh, I also understand that as a younger man you looked at you wanted to be a professor, economics and statistics.

Jens S: [01:11:01](#) Yes. I was active in student politics, uh, as a young man. Then I decided that that was not for me. I was going to do something really serious. Uh, so I finished my exams, um, in economics or equity metrics, which is mathematics and statistics. And I started to work in the central bureau statistics to do something serious. And then I was asked to become a deputy minister for environment back in 1990 and I promised my wife on it to stay for one year. I'll stay there and I've been in politics for 30 years or something. Uh, as you sit here and Aspen answering questions about a potential nuclear arms race with Russia, do you wonder whether you'd made the right choice? There are no, I don't regret, but to be honest, every time when I'm back, I'm back, uh, back in Norway. I, I have a kind of longing for that academic life. Uh, but I think it's a bit too late for me. So I will, uh, and this is also a good life, to be honest. Yeah. So, Mr Secretary General, thank you so much for your time.

Speaker 1: [01:12:05](#) [inaudible].