



**2016 Halifax International Security Forum  
Plenary 5 Transcript  
NATO: Necessary**

SPEAKERS:

Rose Gottemoeller, Deputy Secretary General, North Atlantic Treaty Organization

President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of Croatia

The Hon. Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Government of Ukraine

Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Senator from New Hampshire, United States Senate

MODERATOR:

Robin Shepherd, Senior Advisor, Halifax International Security Forum

**Robin Shepherd:** I'm afraid it's me again. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your patience. Please sit down. I'd first of all like to introduce our very distinguished panel. To my immediate right Ms. Rose Gottemoeller, Deputy Secretary General of NATO, Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration and as those of you who were at the gala dinner last night will know Senator Jeanne Shaheen delivering such an eloquent address last night, the Democrat Senator from New Hampshire. Thank you very much for being with us today.

I think we should just go straight in with this. Yesterday Ms. Gottemoeller you said that the Secretary General of NATO has spoken to President elect Trump. I wonder whether you could elaborate a little on how that conversation went and whether the Secretary General has a message to convey to an audience here and also around the world, this is going out all over the world. As you know there is a tremendous amount of nervousness is not too strong a word about the relationship between the President elect and NATO.

**Rose Gottemoeller:** Very good Robin, thank you. First of all I'd like to thank and congratulate the Halifax International Security Forum for this all girl band.

(Applause)

Also I wanted to say thank you for the quality and skill with which these videos have been put together. Sputnik News is undoubtedly always very entertaining but to see it all put together in that way is quite remarkable. Thank you Halifax for that as well. I've gone back to Sec. Gen. to hear more about his discussions yesterday with the President elect Donald Trump and there were two clear messages that came out of it.

The two men agreed, and I want to stress the two men agreed about the enduring importance of the NATO alliance and the enduring importance of increased defence spending. Those are the two core messages that came out of their conversation yesterday.

I want for you to juxtapose it with the visit of President Obama to Europe this week when he spoke again and again about his conversations with President elect Trump as well and the theme there again about the enduring importance of the NATO alliance. To start us off this afternoon I wanted to hit those two messages really hard, defence spending and the alliance. They are both of enduring importance.

**Robin Shepherd:** The Secretary General as far as you could understand, you spoke with him yesterday and today about this conversation. In so far as he doesn't have a crystal ball, was he surprised by the reception he had from Mr. Trump given some of the rhetoric that was used during the campaign, pleasantly surprised?

**Rose Gottemoeller:** I think quite honestly we have seen a kind of evolution in the President elect's comments on NATO even during the campaign. For example he took NATO to task for not paying enough attention to the necessity of a strong intelligence organization within the alliance, not being able to support the counterterrorism fight in a timely way.

Then when we a short time ago appointed an assistant secretary general for intelligence, by the way something that had been in the works for quite some time but nevertheless the then campaigner Mr. Trump said he thought this was a good step, that NATO was taking the counterterrorism fight seriously.

I think that too is an important message but it was one that I think we'd all heard about in NATO beforehand so we knew that the President elect's views on NATO itself were evolving.

**Robin Shepherd:** Madam President, when you hear this is this something that reassures you?

**President Grabar-Kitarovic:** Certainly yes and to begin with I'd like to say that in today's world we need more NATO rather than less NATO. I was running for

president myself and I can sort of look at Mr. Trump's position. When you're running for an election, especially he had not been in the government before, your campaign is very much shaped by your personal views.

But ultimately I believe that Mr. Trump wants to do good, that he wants to leave a positive legacy. When he is inaugurated into office I believe his views -- he will continue to have his beliefs but his views will be shaped by what he will be briefed about, by international commitments that the United States has made to NATO, to the North Atlantic Alliance and by the simple fact that the situation in the world requires cooperation between Europe and the United States.

It requires trans-Atlantic unity, solidarity and continued cooperation especially in terms of intelligence sharing and many other aspects where we need to bring our Euro Atlantic space out of the box that we've been living in. I come from Croatia which experienced war and aggression back in the 90's. That most of Europe lived in peace and security for decades has been taken for granted.

The outside world has been changing so the Euro Atlantic community needs to look at those changes, embrace those changes and look at ways how NATO can adjust to the current situation looking not just at the traditional or conventional threats that remain but also at other aspects such as hybrid warfare, cyber-defence, etc.

I think that in the future in the time ahead of us we will find a common language but I do agree with the fact that we all need to keep our obligations beginning with my country Croatia. I was at the last summit in Warsaw when unfortunately Croatia was one of the few countries that has not increased the defence spending budget. For me defence spending is not spending.

It's an investment and it's about keeping our international commitments, the principle of solidarity, the fact that as a country we have made commitments to do so. But first and foremost it's about ensuring for our own defence and security, investing into not just our armed forces but the whole security apparatus in order to be able to deal with the new threats that are coming closer to Europe.

With the crises that are affecting the European Union and the trans-Atlantic community from hybrid warfare, from the arc of instability in the (inaudible) region in the east and the migration waves which unfortunately have been penetrated and used as sort of a hybrid warfare against Europe and the European Union.

**Robin Shepherd:** This is part of the question which I wish to expand upon a little later. You mentioned and volunteered that Croatia itself must raise its game and spending. Do you think that the comments of President elect Trump

during the campaign have dropped a firework in people's pants and people are starting to think, hold on?

It was alright with the previous administration and the one before that making all these rhetorical commitments. Now we're actually going to have to do it. Otherwise there's going to be trouble.

**President Grabar-Kitarovic:** I don't think we should be pushed by arguments like that. It's our own responsibility. It's about your own country's image, your own credibility, your solidarity. If you want others to keep their promises to yourself you have to keep your promises to others. The world is becoming increasingly interconnected so even countries like Croatia, which is not big in size or numbers of population or GDP, we can still make our own contributions.

We have been making those contributions in accordance with our capabilities and resources considering as I said that we recently experienced war and aggression. But I think that also these not just the rhetorical messages but the messages that you do with deeds and not just words are very important, that you belong to a certain family that you consider a family and that you're determined to stand shoulder by shoulder with everyone who's in the alliance.

Now of course the decrease of the defence budget was unfortunately the result that Croatia experienced a very long recession of more than six and a half years but I'm happy to see the commitment of the new government is taking this very seriously, the international obligations but also the homeland security system and the new concept.

I am encouraged they will continue to move not just in increasing the defence spending but increasing it in the areas where we really need it and that is technological development, innovation and harmonization of our equipment with the west and with the NATO standards.

**Robin Shepherd:** Deputy Prime Minister, there is a theory out there that the people, the countries that are already in NATO ultimately don't have an awful lot to worry about from President elect Trump. The worry might be those countries which are partner countries, countries in the so-called grey zone which have a relationship with NATO but for whom it would require enormous political push, probably from the United States, to get them in. Are you worried in Ukraine that this is pretty much the end of the road for the accession process to NATO?

**Deputy Klympush-Tsintsadze:** Thank you very much for the question and thank you for this opportunity to address this distinguished group of professionals of highest league. First and foremost I think it's very important to remember that NATO is an organization where the decisions are being taken by everybody by consensus and I think that's something that should be ensuring

and should be guaranteeing the discussion when Ukraine places for example its application for membership.

I do want to return back to earlier days of 2008 when I think that was not a very useful compromise so that NATO has made with coming up with the decision of not granting (inaudible) to Ukraine and Georgia at that point but promising that one day these countries will become NATO members as such because the open door policy is there. We hope that it is really there and it's up to NATO to decide at some point.

We also have to understand that such nations as Ukraine, our nation, has made a very clear choice done by people. We will not be trading our territorial integrity for any sort of neutrality. We are standing between basically two rocks. We are standing between NATO and the eastern bloc. That has to be understood.

We cannot remain neutral. We cannot pretend that we can be like Switzerland for example because we will see unfortunately that if the shoulder to shoulder stance, this unity will not happen, that President Grabar-Kitarovic was referring to, then it means we will be allowing the aggressor to go further and to be even more aggressive.

We are hoping that this will not happen because the other countries who have already understood very well where do they stand and what they are up against, they will take the message also to the US new presidency.

I also was talking to Senators, that we Ukrainians have enjoyed bipartisan support of the Congress over this two and a half years and I think that's something we are expecting that the policy with regard to this national security threat and international commitments will be built upon as well, that it will have a reflection in the sense of the administration. Thus we hope that there is less need to be worried for us.

**Robin Shepherd:** Nonetheless there is obviously a question around the relationship that President elect Trump wants to have with Russia. It isn't very difficult to imagine a deal being struck by the United States with Russia. We'll give you Crimea. We'll forget about it. You get out of eastern Ukraine. We'll sort something out in Syria and we'll leave Ukraine as a neutral country.

What I'm suggesting to you is not that I don't have sympathy with your position and I'm sure that 99% of the people in this room have sympathy with the position of Ukraine but if that happens, what are your options?

**Deputy Klympush-Tsintsadze:** What are your options if that happens? How are you going to ensure that any other nation would trust you? I really believe that the whole issue of non-proliferation after Ukraine has been basically

betrayed by the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 is really at stake for the whole world. I think that everybody else has to really worry about that because what are you going to promise those nations that would like to acquire nuclear weapons because Ukraine didn't really feel the assurances and guarantees that have promised in that document that was called the Budapest Memorandum of 1994.

I think that it's not only about us. The war right now which is going on and illegal annexation and occupation of the eastern part, this is not war against Ukraine. It is war against Canada. It is war against the US. It is war against Croatia. Unfortunately but we have to realize that and we have to be actually able to respond to ourselves very sincerely, what are we standing up against. What exactly for NATO states what would be the article five trigger? Little green men coming into let's say, I don't know – I don't want to call them to some country so one of the NATO countries without an insignia.

Is it a trigger for everybody else to actually engage in protecting this country or attack on the internet that we've seen already in the US? Is it already an attack that calls for employing of article five? I think there is a lot – there are a lot of issues that right now NATO as an institution has to answer itself to. Nations have to answer themselves and I think we are just part of the solution even though we seem to be at this time part of the problem. We are contributors already to what should become a new platform for security and stability in the world, I really believe so.

**Robin Shepherd:** Senator Shaheen, one of the points among several very interesting points raised by the Deputy Prime Minister seems to me that what this is about is getting the new administration and every administration when it's new has to start rethinking the world and what it wants to do, to understand that the moving parts actually move together. It's like a clock where one thing moves and something else moves.

You can't take something in isolation. The kind of theoretical deal that I put out for purposes of discussion, do you believe even though you come obviously from the other Party, not from the Republican Party, do you believe that President elect Trump is going to be persuadable, that you've got to have a global vision in which NATO is a central part, not something where you rhetorically say yes, we support NATO. I love NATO today and who knows about tomorrow. Do you have some confidence, leaving aside the political part of the equation, that that is a possibility that may transpire?

**Senator Shaheen:** First of all let me support the Deputy Minister when she says there is strong bipartisan support in the Congress for Ukraine. There is no doubt about that. One of the things that as we speculate about what President Trump might do I think it's important to remind people as you've heard from

some of my colleagues on previous panels is that we have three branches of government in the United States.

We have the executive, the President, and we have Congress, the legislative branch. The Congress even if we're of the same Party don't always agree with the executive branch. I think we will see Congress continue to take many of the same positions that we have in the past. I think there's a great deal of concern about Russia and Russia's aggressive policies. At the same time there is strong support for NATO.

I don't see that changing under President Trump. I think that will hopefully have some impact on what the administration policies are. I do think we will continue to see support for NATO. We will continue to see concern also about the level of defence spending because that's something that is not just an issue for the President elect.

It's been an issue for Congress and it's a reflection not just as the President said so well of the commitments that countries have made but it's also a reflection of the increasingly dangerous world that we're living in and the increasing threats that we're facing.

As you pointed out, ten years ago when it looked like there were not any external threats to Europe, it was less important that everybody keep to their commitment of the 2% of GDP for defence spending for NATO. Now as we face cyber threats, as we face increased Russian aggression, as we face the threat of terrorism from the Islamic State, it's clear that we need to look at the level of spending and make sure that it is there to address the threats that NATO is facing.

**Robin Shepherd:** That is a perfect segue into the question I wanted to – a broader question and I partly referred to it earlier. There's a sense that I have here that Vladimir Putin had better be careful what he wished for because if Donald Trump achieves the aim of getting every NATO member to raise its game to 2% of GDP, we are talking tens and tens of billions of extra dollars' worth of military capacity for NATO.

A lot of the questions I started out with looked on the negative side and the nervousness side but is there a scenario here where if President Trump does get his way NATO emerges as a vastly stronger organization than it is today?

**Senator Shaheen:** Look Robin, it's already headed down that road I would say. It's very clear to me after only five weeks on the job entering in my sixth week this weekend, that NATO left the Warsaw Summit with a strong sense of purpose. Part of it is about an increasingly aggressive Russia, there's no

question about it and the tasks were laid out by the NATO alliance to pursue deterrence and defence as strong necessities for the alliance.

That is very clear and I see the way in concrete terms those have developed in the last just five months since the Summit with the enhanced forward presence, by the way Canada playing a strong role working together with Latvia but US, Germany and the UK are also involved with the other Baltic States and Poland. There are concrete and very powerful steps afoot in terms of building up defence capacity and the ability to defend and deter in eastern and central Europe.

That's the first thing but also the other core task coming out of Warsaw was projecting stability. I saw that for myself just on my first trip a couple of weeks ago. I went down to Montenegro and had an opportunity to participate in the exercise going on there on emergency response. People scratch their heads and say does NATO do emergency response. Well, yes, NATO had gathered together countries from across the western Balkans.

The Montenegrins were leading the effort and had helped to organize it and it was proving that NATO could bring not only security to that part of the world but also benefits for the countries who are often skeptical about NATO membership. In this case they were spending a lot of time on that exercise pulling people out of the water, exercising response to flooding which has scourged the western Balkans in recent years because of heavy rains.

NATO is doing a lot in that kind of projecting of stability to also make the case for NATO as a strong alliance that serves security but also helps those countries through bad patches, through difficult times that they have to deal with just in the order of things. By the way, I thought it was fascinating that very week looking at the Sputnik News film up here to begin with, that very week you may recollect that Russia and Serbia were exercising next door and there were a lot of Sputnik news stories about NATO's aggressive action in Montenegro and exercising with the Montenegrins and others.

The funniest thing about it, here we were and we were able to send out a lot of pictures of these rescue operations and how well everybody was exercising together on emergency response but the other thing we were able to do is welcome the Serbian team to Montenegro. Serbia was exactly doing the balancing act it has been doing to work with Russia at times and also in this case simultaneously to work with the NATO alliance on emergency response.

That was an important message we haven't yet talked about today. We talked about the open door policy but the other core principle for NATO is that countries have the right to choose their own security relationships, their own security partners. If they choose to have two security partners at once, so be

it. That's their necessity, their choice, perhaps some political drive there. I also wanted to get that out on the table. That has to be one of the basic principles as we move forward.

**Robin Shepherd:** Sure. Madam President.

**President Grabar-Kitarovic:** I wanted to comment on that as well. I'm glad we mentioned the open door policy as well. Let us be realistic. Billions of dollars are not going to scare Russia. I think what is also very important here is our solidarity, our resolve, being quick and nimble in reacting to Russia's actions. I believe the mistake we made with Crimea, with Ukraine was being too slow in our response, being too divisive, being too hesitant which by Russia was interpreted as weakness.

In terms it was weakness because we were not able to assess the situation quickly and see what Russia was testing how far they can go. We're forgetting another area. When we talk about Russia's role we concentrate on Ukraine and Eastern Europe but what about southeast Europe or some people call it the western Balkans? I don't like the term because it signifies ghettoization of a number of countries who for a number of years have been trying to become members of NATO and we've found all sorts of reasons why they haven't so far.

I think it's crucial to speed up the open door policy. Montenegro will be there in a few months but what about Macedonia? To quibble about the name, can that be more important than the security situation? I think that needs to be resolved through the good offices of all of us at NATO to get Macedonia into NATO because we've seen Russia's influence in the region.

You mentioned the exercises that were actually very close to the Croatian border. Russia, Byelorussia and Serbia, what message do we take out of that? Just two decades ago there was a war between the then Serbian regime and Croatia. Do we think that a war cannot break out again in that neighbourhood? Unfortunately it can. Please do not take me as somebody who is predicting a doomsday over there but there have been so many problems from Russia's influence, political, security, economic, intelligence and through political forces through some political parties and individuals in Belgrade and Serbia.

I'd be very cautious about that balancing role. It's easy for some of the politicians to say they're trying to balance both sides but we also need to be realistic at looking at Serbia wants to do. I'll be the first person to welcome Serbia into NATO as a matter of fact when they decide to do so and I believe they will in the future. But look at Bosnia Herzegovina, Republic of (inaudible), more or less an open influence from Russia with the recent referendum.

What we fear is the country breaking apart. From Croatia's point of view we strongly support territorial integrity and sovereignty and political emancipation of that country. I don't think there is enough focus by the international community, by the European Union, by NATO on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the potential centrifugal forces that can break the country apart. I speak very openly of what needs to be done and sometimes unfortunately the west looks at me with some sort of hesitance or even suspicion that I want a third entity for Croats etc.

No. We want a stable Bosnia Herzegovina with whom we share a very long border. We want finally for Bosnia Herzegovina to be able to decide on their own future and to shape the political processes in their own country. What about Kosovo? Albania is a member of NATO but not of the European Union.

Russia is working more or less openly to delay these processes and to take these countries away, claiming the Slavic brotherhood, the connections that actually never existed before and looking at a renewed self-determined spheres of influence concept where their projection of stability is not a series of democratic countries but a series of countries that can be controlled and manipulated from within.

This is what we have to fight. At the same time we cannot look at Russia as an enemy and NATO is not an enemy or an adversary and NATO enlargement is not aimed against Russia. There is the clash of the mindsets that I explained in terms of perceiving security. We need to continue working with Russia, engaging with Russia because if we do treat them like an adversary they will soon become one. It's a very fragile balancing act but it can be done, a different balancing act.

We need to stand firmly. There is no compromise about the postulates of international law: state sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and the right of every country to decide on their political future including Ukraine, Georgia and the countries in our neighbourhood. But we also need to work with them in creating at least an atmosphere of cooperation combatting threats that we will be facing together from international terrorism, ISIL to migration waves and many others.

**Deputy Klympush-Tsintsadze:** We've been balancing for quite a while. We've been seen and we've been presented and are still presented in Russia as part of one nation basically, Russia and Ukraine. We are not. This did not preclude Russia to come in to Ukraine without any invitation at the point when we were at our weakest, weakest point of our statehood because the President (inaudible) fled the country after Euro Maidan. There was no understanding of the chain of command.

That's exactly when we had to welcome this little green impolite people to our territory and then all of our partners said please don't shoot. Please don't shoot back, don't protect yourselves. Don't even try to protect yourselves and we listened because we probably were hoping that we'll get it fixed.

Thank you very much for actually admitting that initially the reaction took longer time than it should have been and was not as robust as we in the 21st century would expect it to be to an act of illegal indexation of one country against another country in the middle of Europe.

This balancing is also pretty tricky stuff. It does not mean that if you are balancing that you would not invite Russia to come and to take your territory or to come and bring tanks and multiple rocket launchers to your territory and artillery systems and regular army to your world. I also wanted to say that I think that deterrence and defence that you Rose were referring to, I think that's a very good foundation for the future dialogue.

I think that's exactly what Russia understands. When you are capable of protecting yourselves and that's what Ukrainians are doing right now, we are building our armed forces and that is not in order to become a more militarized nation. But to actually seek a political and diplomatic solution to the aggression that we are finding ourselves under we need to also be very capable in terms of our army and be capable of protecting ourselves.

With regard to spending, we are spending 5% of our GDP right now for security and defence. It's not something that we would like to do in such numbers but that also has to be understood that the country in such a dire situation economically is also paying a huge price for trying to become more efficient in protecting itself. Back in early 90's, in early 2000's all the nations that have been aspiring to become NATO members they wanted that membership because they didn't want to be an easy target anymore.

They wanted to be protected by some sort of collective security. I think it's just natural that they are taking this further to those nations that are in the neighbourhood in the southeastern of Europe and to those nations that are aspiring in the east of Europe as well.

**Senator Shaheen:** I wanted to agree on the fact that there are I think areas we can cooperate with Russia on but I think we need to be clear that when Russia acts aggressively as it did in Ukraine, as we saw the interference to try and prevent an agreement between Kosovo and Serbia, when they engage in elections as they just did in the United States trying to create confusion about our election, then we need to respond accordingly.

I think we really need to be clear about that as we talk about an open door policy for NATO. I think it's in our interest. It's in the NATO countries' interest to look at how we can encourage Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, other countries who are interested in looking to the west and looking at NATO and being part of that organization and our western bloc and adopting these democratic values, to do everything we can to encourage them and help them do the reforms they need to in order to be full participants.

**Robin Shepherd:** Senator Shaheen, just before I bring the audience in for questions, referring to the election campaign it seems pretty clear that Russia did try to influence the campaign. Senator McCain said in the previous session that he didn't think it actually made a difference. The fact is they tried. Some people would say that's an act of war or at least an act of very serious aggression. Do you not believe the United States should respond with some kind of sanctions against Russia for that if it can be proved?

**Senator Shaheen:** I am hopeful we are going to see some hearings in Congress to take a look at exactly what role Russia played in our election. What we've heard to date from officials within Homeland Security and our intelligence community is that Russia's effort was to create confusion about the election and certainly I think it helped to do that.

But I do think we need to look – we need to have a full examination of what took place, how it happened and then come up with how we should respond because, yes, I think it was an act of aggression and just as going into Ukraine was a different kind of aggression. We put in place economic sanctions which I hope we are going to roll over again and make sure they continue until Russia behaves differently. I think we ought to look at what we might do in response to their action in the United States elections.

**Robin Shepherd:** As with anything else one just doesn't jump into a response but once the process is gone through if Russia is found guilty of doing this there are going to be – in your opinion there should be very serious repercussions for this.

**Senator Shaheen:** I believe we should take a look at what happened and come up with a range of potential responses to address it.

**Robin Shepherd:** But no response is not an option?

**Senator Shaheen:** Again, I think we need to have full blown hearings. I think we need to look at what happened and I think we need to come up with a range of responses so we can make it clear that kind of behaviour is not acceptable.

**Robin Shepherd:** Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, the first person I saw literally was right there, the gentleman from Georgia and then over here Andrew Sannikov from Byelorussia.

Question: Thank you Robin and thank you for an excellent panel. My question and a comment together is not more about the responses to Russian actions but more about a proactive strategy which is much more important. Russia by its actions is not only trying to destruct Euro Atlantic community from having proactive Euro Atlantic agenda. One of main points is to build Europe at peace and NATO is essential component for it, is foundation for it.

For last few years we saw if this agenda was not put aside but at least was really slowed down on implementation of this agenda, especially I mean the NATO expansion. How do you see new momentum with the new US administration? Is it possible to us to expect new momentum toward Europe at peace or it's just going to be management of responses to the Russian actions in future?

Question: Andrew Sannikov, European (unintelligible). I would like to raise the issue that was already addressed here yesterday from David Kramer about the possibility of a deal of the new US administration with Russia. I think it causes a lot of fear, a lot of concern because I don't understand the Baltic States are reassured because they're in NATO.

What about those who are outside NATO? Ukraine is also different case. What about Byelorusse. We are not in NATO. We live in a dictatorship. We don't have any wish to continue to live in a dictatorship. We don't have any wish to live under Kremlin domination. How we can be protected because Budapest Memorandum was mentioned several times here.

I was negotiating Budapest Memorandum from Byelorussian side. It was not easy. I would say it was very difficult to get it signed. Now it's gone and it's ruined not because Russia attacked Ukraine. It's ruined because the west didn't react to it, because the west didn't take the steps that were stipulated in the Budapest Memorandum. What if Byelorusse occupied? Options for Russia? A lot of options, Crimean scenario, (unintelligible) scenario.

We don't hear any mention of (unintelligible) these days so it's like basket case already. Nobody – everybody is afraid to touch these issues. What can we expect? We need reassurances because like we are not different from Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians. We will not live under a dictatorship.

We will fight for our freedom but we need reassurances instead of Budapest Memorandum, not only statements but legislative, maybe executive reassurances because our independence is not fake independence of a

dictator. That's the issue and I would like to ask you do you share our concerns and what could be done to prevent these terrible events? Thank you.

**Robin Shepherd:** Thank you. We'll take one more over here and then we'll take one more here and then come back to the panel.

Question: Raphael Rahizinski (ph), SECDEV Group Canada and IISS UK. I'm going to ask a bit of a contrarian question. Given the video we saw on the general timbre of this conversation it's clear that NATO's resolve has really come around deterring Russian aggression.

But does NATO really exist only to deter Russian aggression? Is there a more collective security agenda at play? I ask that partially because in the last session we discussed Syria which sits adjacent to Europe and which probably represents a much more existential threat to Europe through migration and destability of a large region than does currently Ukraine.

We also have previous NATO commitments in a country called Afghanistan which seems to be generally absent from this security forum. If NATO actually has a mission other than deterring Russian aggression, what is it? Is it as unifying? Thank you.

Question: Shlomo Avineri, Israel. There seems to be a consensus here especially European and central eastern European consensus but I wonder because there are other voices within NATO today especially in central and eastern Europe. You have skepticism coming from the Prime Minister of Hungary. You've got some sort of skepticism in Slovakia. You've got President Zeman in Czech Republic.

How are you going to address those issues if it comes to a necessity to have not only a united policy vis-à-vis together with the United States but also with some of the members of NATO in central and eastern Europe?

**Robin Shepherd:** Thank you very much. I'll very quickly run through. There were four questions, one from Georgia about having a proactive strategy, that Russia aims to subvert a proactive strategy. Is it possible for new momentum to be built or is that dissipated now.

Andre Sannikov from Byelorusse raised this question again which shows how many people are nervous about the possibility of a deal with Russia in which the people of Byelorusse for example who've been fighting for freedom and some may know that Andre fought the presidential elections and if they had been fair and freely counted would now be the president of a free Byelorusse. Instead he was sent to a KGB prison.

He knows what he's talking about. Number three, does NATO exist only to deal with Russian aggression? Syria is surely far more important an issue in terms of our direct security, Afghanistan also. Is that something we need to consider? Is that a false dichotomy? Can we do both of those things at once?

Finally Shlomo Avineri from Israel suggested the problem is also in Europe. There's skepticism about NATO in Europe. We're all big about Donald Trump and his commitment to NATO and our commitment to deterring Russian aggression but there are a number of countries in Europe itself that seem to be, to use a Margaret Thatcher phrase, going wobbly about NATO and its commitment to defending itself.

**Rose Gottemoeller:** Shall I start? There's a lot of very meaty skepticism here in all these questions but I'd like to make a few comments just to begin. First of all, I want to start with Shlomo's question about central Europe because as I mentioned yesterday to this audience I'm the newbie. I just started this job a month and a week ago but I will say one of my first trips was to Bucharest where I took part in the meeting of B9, so-called Bucharest Nine which are the Ministers.

In this case it was a ministerial meeting of those countries across central and eastern Europe. I was disposed to be concerned because obviously of a lot of ups and downs in the political environments in those countries but what impressed me about this meeting and don't take my word for it. There was a very good statement that came out of that meeting a week ago of strong commitment to defence and deterrence and cooperation inside the NATO alliance.

I do think there are certain political factors afoot. I referred to it earlier. There's no question about it. There are stresses and strains that flow from a number of different directions, some of which have to do with some of the same forces at work in the United States at this moment and as we saw in our last election, nationalism, populism and so forth.

However, I have been impressed as I've begun this job the degree to which countries gather around the current goals and priorities of the NATO alliance despite the fact that they do have political differences going on in capitals. I wanted to underscore this is my early impression. We'll see Shlomo if over time my view changes on this but I certainly was impressed by the B9 meeting in Bucharest ten days ago.

I'd like to group the questions from Georgia and Byelorusse together because I wanted to talk about my sense again coming in of the new attention to the power of partnerships inside NATO and juxtapose this clearly against what we were talking about earlier, the reality of the open door policy. The door is open.

Countries have the opportunity to choose their own security relationships, those two core principles we've been talking about this afternoon.

What I've also seen is a new interest in strengthened and enhanced partnerships, joint training, joint work. In fact we just finished an interesting series of exercises in Georgia and the NAC, the North Atlantic Commission, was in Georgia just last month as a group. This is a good sign I think of the way that NATO is thinking about increasingly sophisticated and developed partnerships.

I think we have to – I'm a pragmatist in many ways. I'd like to put our emphasis where we can really make some near term progress. This is where I see it on enhancing the partnership relationships. Finally, on the question about is NATO all about deterrence and defence of Russia, I mentioned there are two main strands of activity coming out of Warsaw.

One is deterrence and defence but the other is projecting stability and here is that notion of NATO as a 360 security organization. It addresses challenges in different parts of the world. Afghanistan has long been a coherent NATO mission. Now the challenges come in dealing with the situation in the Middle East.

One of the most I think important decisions that came out of the recent defence ministerial was to expand NATO's cooperation in training for Iraq, not only training in Jordan for Iraq but taking NATO trainers into Iraq. That may seem like a small step at first but it is actually a powerful symbol of the way that NATO is addressing its priorities not only to deterrence and defence in eastern and central Europe but also the requirements of security to our south.

**President Grabar-Kitarovic:** Reducing NATO's mission as being just deterrence against Russia would be contrary to the concept of NATO, the fact that NATO is not in any way against Russia. NATO is so much more about security, about defence but also about values. It's not just a security defence alliance. It's also a political alliance.

Sometimes we do not put enough emphasis on the values of solidarity and all the other values that we want to protect in the alliance. It would be wrong to reduce it to a relationship with Russia and I think that the challenges will be appearing all around the NATO space that will require as I said a certain degree of cooperation with Russia in order to be able to deal with them.

Please don't take me wrong but as I said protecting the principles of international law, not compromising about them in any way, being very firm in our messages, in our action but also being very realistic about the security environment.

We need to avoid divisions in Europe and NATO is precisely the integration process that erased the divisions between the right and the wrong side of the Iron Curtain that we had in the Cold War and embracing the countries who wanted to be democracies and part of ultimately the western world in nourishing the same principles of democracy and the protection of our countries.

In looking at how some of the central European countries like you've mentioned basically the three, four countries. Their position is not against NATO in any way. At least I have not noted in my personal contacts with the Presidents or Prime Ministers of Hungary, Slovakia or the Czech Republic any desire to get away from NATO, on the contrary to work together with NATO.

There may be nuances in terms of cooperation with Russia but certainly I believe that all the V4 countries will stand together in solidarity with NATO in our defence and deterrence posture, especially in eastern Europe.

With Byelorusse it's difficult to send reassurances from NATO when Byelorusse is not one of the aspiring countries to become members of NATO. NATO obviously cannot be a world policeman.

There are other institutions and organizations from the OECD to the United Nations to the European Union ultimately who should be protecting the rights of the people in the country in order to choose their future, their political future in line with (unintelligible) and in line with the other principles and postures of the organizations and the alliances that I have mentioned.

With Afghanistan and Syria we are there in Afghanistan. We are I believe doing very good work. It's a difficult situation and I think that we need to pursue, we need to carry on. We need to stay in Afghanistan because if we leave prematurely we will then have another threat of not just international terrorism. We will have a threat of migrations in millions of people going towards the European Union and putting pressure where certain areas of Europe will be destabilized by huge numbers of refugees and migrants.

Syria is a different issue. We do not have agreement within the UN Security Council that would produce a resolution of some kind of international legal basis for NATO to be able to act but certainly we individually as NATO member countries need to do a lot more in order to stop the war there.

There's been too much bloodshed and we need to start solving all of these issues from migrations to terrorism to Syria, ISIL and others at their roots where they become issues that can certainly and will certainly reflect back upon our own security.

**Robin Shepherd:** Did either of you want to add to that?

**Senator Shaheen:** This has sort of been covered but in terms of is NATO just there to address Russia. We've seen the new mission in the Aegean to help address the migrant crisis in Europe, something that is very critical. I think the whole new intelligence effort at NATO to look at how we address terrorist activities, I mean one of the best ways for us to address potential terrorist threats is through intelligence sharing.

The exercise that Rose talked about earlier in Montenegro where countries were getting together to do emergency exercises to see how to respond to emergencies, all of those are great examples of what NATO is doing now, the development of a policy around cyber threats to address the whole gamut of threats that we face in the world.

And so I think to assume that NATO is just there to respond to Russian aggression, which I think is very important but that's certainly not the only mission. In fact as we look at other potential threats they may be even broader at this point.

**Robin Shepherd:** Can I add in a question? I remember when I was at the conference, invited kindly by the McCain Institute in Georgia it was about NATO. The Secretary General was there and I had a look before my panel at the communique from the Warsaw Summit. As I remember, NATO – Russia was mentioned 57 times in that communique emphasizing that clearly Russia is on everybody's mind. There's no question about it.

How one handles it is another matter. In the interim period bringing it back to what has just happened in the United States with the election of Donald Trump, in the interim period between now and I believe January 20th when Donald Trump becomes the president of the United States, do you foresee any dangers where there's a vacuum here that might be filled?

May I put it first of all to Deputy Secretary General? Is NATO on a sort of amber alert, not literally but a mental amber alert that this is a potentially dangerous time when there's a vacuum going on?

**Rose Gottemoeller:** As I mentioned in my opening remarks, the Warsaw Summit I think really brought into sharp focus the challenges and brought into sharp focus also NATO's resolve to deal with the challenges emanating from the aggressive Russia we're seeing today. That is a reality of our day to day existence now.

That said, my sense is at NATO at the moment I'm still in my old Soviet logical hat, reading the Russian press quite closely and so forth. I do think at the moment there's a bit of a wait and see in the Kremlin.

I for one have trouble seeing with the notion out there that perhaps there'll be a new relationship with the White House, between the Kremlin and the White House, what the rationale would be for the Russians to push a new crisis at this point.

That said it is always good to be cautious because if we've learned anything in the last years since the 2014 incursion into Ukraine and even before that of course 2008 and what happened with Georgia (unintelligible) I think it's absolutely important to stay on your guard.

**Robin Shepherd:** Madam Prime Minister, in Ukraine again in this interim period and feel free to expand into other aspects of this, in this interim period is there a heightened sense of danger that Putin might try something?

**Deputy Klympush-Tsintsadze:** We are on the alert anyhow. We have to be on alert. We understand that we are dealing with creativity of that country every single day on our territory both militarily and also with different subversive activities with also help from quite a few of the populace in our country and I'm sure you also see this same happening with the support of Russian Federation of different right to left, far right and far left political parties in different countries of the European Union.

Therefore I do not think that our alert could be higher. What is it? Red? There we are and unfortunately we cannot relax. But I wanted to resonate a bit with the comment of the gentleman from Georgia. My feeling during initial stages after invasion of Russia, Russian invasion to Ukraine, with regard to different institutions including NATO was that it's all the time about reaction, in the UN, in the EU, reaction to what Russia is doing.

I think the Warsaw NATO Summit has actually provided already a bit of this proactiveness right now. This is something that I see that NATO has got its script together and got its act together and is seeing already the cold horizon of all the threats and challenges that are coming from different parts of the world or different types of threats and is already ready to suggest something proactive. But it took some time and that time, that's what created additional anxiety in our part of the world as such.

**President Grabar-Kitarovic:** About the vacuum of the transition as such, let's not think about it just in terms of Russia's influence but other forces using the vacuum such as the religious extremists, especially the (unintelligible) movement that we feel in southeast Europe has started to stir a commotion in some of our neighbouring countries.

**Robin Shepherd:** In other words, quick clarity is very important from your point of view for those reasons.

**President Grabar-Kitarovic:** Exactly. We need to be very firm on that. Two months is a very long period of time for us. It's not just the returning fighters from ISIL. There are estimates that there thousands of fighters coming back to our neighbouring countries. It's the influence, the interference that we see with the political processes and with everyday life and changing the face of Islam for instance of our neighbourhood.

Then compounded with the migration threat of what Turkey will do, there is a lot of – I won't say fear but uncomfortable feelings of what will the transition period mean for our region of Europe and of the world before the new administration comes in.

**Robin Shepherd:** What about MH17 in Russia?

**Deputy Klympush-Tsintsadze:** It's the same thing. Russia is denying. You tell that there is all the evidence that Russian regular troops are on the territory of Donbass and Russia says no, there is none. Back in early 2014 President Putin actually said we have no attachment to these little green men that were there in Crimea. A year later he publicly proudly stated that it's exactly the Russian special forces that have been guaranteeing the "peaceful referendum" in Crimea to join Russia.

I hope that everybody understands that I'm saying it ironically. The same thing with MH17. We see the actions that Russia is right now pulling out from the ICC, that they do not want to see any international criminal court ruling being applied towards Russian Federation. I think that's all part of – these are all parts of the same chain so to say, how they are attracting to twist reality and not accept the result of the JIT, the Joint International Team, the investigative team that is working on MH17.

I think already the evidence that has been presented everybody is trying to shy off from that evidence somehow because it has been presented that that Buk came from the territory of Russian Federation and then left to the territory of the Russian Federation. I'm assuming that those were not Latvians or Estonians who came from the Russian Federation, right, and obviously not Ukrainians.

But Russia will deny it even until the very fact when all the last names of 100 people that are on the list that might be connected to that which is not yet proved with specific particular people, they will be denying it when it will be printed and black and white stated that it has happened. We will still see some variation of what has happened in Russian interpretation of it.

**Robin Shepherd:** We have to finish exactly on time on this occasion because Deputy Secretary General has to get a flight. We have four minutes left and

therefore I wanted to give each of the panelists one minute to either answer my question or make any comment they like in one minute.

I wanted to start – to end where we started but with a more potentially optimistic slant to the question. In six months' time when the dust has settled, that's optimistic in itself, I mean when the dust has settled in the United States of America. You probably meant the same.

When the dust has settled after the election and the United States president has taken office, do you believe all of you that NATO will be in good shape, that some of the rhetoric we heard in the campaign will have been long forgotten and we can resume the business that was started in Cardiff at the Wales Summit and pushed forward at the summit in Warsaw and NATO will continue to go from strength to strength.

**Senator Shaheen:** I do believe that. I think we see every day with every meeting that happens, the reinforcement as to the importance of NATO and why it needs to continue. But I wanted to make another point because the discussion has been as we look at the United States sort of throwing up – some people have suggested we throw up our hands.

We don't know what's going to happen in the interim and this new president is taking over. I would just point out that we have a president who's going to stay in office until January 20th. People are not walking off their jobs tomorrow. We're still going to have our mission to NATO that's going to continue. We're going to have our ambassador at the United Nations that's going to continue.

There will be an orderly transition of power on January 20th and we may not like – I may not like as a Democrat all of the policies of the new administration but I am committed like the rest of my colleagues to working with this new president, to healing divisions within the United States and to continuing American engagement in the world. I think you will find that will be the case with the new administration.

**Deputy Klympush-Tsintsadze:** I think we should expect your optimistic development of events just making sure at the same time that during this period of six months or two months or the next couple of months, whichever time frame you want to put, we all are very much mobilized and actively engaged and actively working and making sure that the facts are laid very clearly, that the arguments are made absolutely clearly and in line with the rules, laws, values that we are all placing our countries, the fate of our countries upon. We are all engaged and if we are making sure that we are being heard I think this optimistic scenario is right there to see.

**President Grabar-Kitarovic:** I do believe that in six months' time NATO will be where it is today. I'd just like for NATO to be more nimble and to continue to reform in terms of what I mentioned earlier that we start looking out of the box of security that we've been in for decades, look at the new challenges and start responding to them by building new capabilities and by looking at ways how we can continue to reform more quickly.

**Rose Gottemoeller:** Thank you and you would all expect me to be optimistic but I really do want to join the President in saying that it's going to be absolutely necessary for NATO to do some heavy lifting in the coming months. The reform of command and control for example so we can be more nimble about how we handle command and control with all of these new arrangements coming in to the alliance with EFP, with the high readiness task force, with the follow on forces.

These are important and layered defences that are going to require sophistication of command and control. NATO has heavy lifting to do, there's no question about it. I am optimistic for the reasons I cited at the outset but we cannot sit on our hands and just accept that we're doing great and that's all there is to it. There is a lot of hard work to do and we'll have to join hands with many of those around this room in order to make it happen.

**Robin Shepherd:** Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking this fantastic panel.

(Applause)