



NATO Parliamentary Assembly

SUMMARY

of the meeting of the Political Committee

*Narikala, Hotels & Preferences Hualing Tbilisi
Tbilisi, Georgia*

Sunday 28 May 2017

ATTENDANCE LIST

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|---|------------------------------------|
| Committee Chairperson | Ojars Eriks KALNINS (Latvia) |
| General Rapporteur | Rasa JUKNEVICIENE (Lithuania) |
| Rapporteur, Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships | Julio MIRANDA CALHA (Portugal) |
| Rapporteur, Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations | Gerald E. CONNOLLY (United States) |
| President of the NATO PA | Paolo ALLI (Italy) |
| Secretary General of the NATO PA | David HOBBS |
| Member delegations | |
| Belgium | Brigitte GROUWELS |
| | Olga ZRIHEN |
| Canada | Leona ALLESLEV |
| | Raynell ANDREYCHUK |
| | Joseph A. DAY |
| Croatia | Miroslav TUDJMAN |
| Czech Republic | Josef NEKL |
| Denmark | Peter Juel JENSEN |
| Estonia | Marko MIHKELSON |
| France | Guy-Michel CHAUVEAU |
| | Gilbert ROGER |
| Germany | Karin EVERS-MEYER |
| | Karl A. LAMERS |
| Greece | Spyridon DANELLIS |
| | Christos KARAGIANNIDIS |
| Iceland | Aslaug Arna SIGURBJÖRNSDÓTTIR |
| Italy | Lorenzo BATTISTA |
| | Domenico SCILIPOTI ISGRO |
| Luxembourg | Alexander KRIEPS |
| Netherlands | Raymond de ROON |
| Norway | Oeyvind HALLERAKER |
| | Liv Signe NAVARSETE |
| Poland | Waldemar ANDZEL |
| | Stanislaw PIETA |
| | Pawel SZRAMKA |
| Portugal | Carlos COSTA NEVES |
| | Julio MIRANDA CALHA |
| Romania | Ben-Oni ARDELEAN |
| | Vergil CHITAC |
| Slovakia | Juraj DROBA |
| Spain | Miguel Angel GUTIERREZ |
| | Luis RODRIGUEZ-COMENDADOR |
| | Ricardo TARNO |
| Turkey | Osman Askin BAK |
| | Metin Lutfi BAYDAR |
| | Ahmet Berat CONKAR |
| | Ziya PIR |

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| United Kingdom | Baroness ADAMS OF CRAIGIELEA Lord CAMPBELL of PITTENWEEM Lord HAMILTON OF EPSOM Baroness RAMSAY OF CARTVALE |
| United States | Rob BISHOP Bill JOHNSON Mike KELLY Rick LARSEN James SENSENBRENNER Michael R. TURNER |

Associate delegations

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| Armenia | Edmon MARUKYAN Mikayel MELKUMYAN Koryun NAHAPETYAN |
| Austria | Hubert FUCHS Reinhold LOPATKA Harald TROCH Hannes WENINGER |
| Azerbaijan | Gudrat HASANGULIYEV Malahat IBRAHIMGIZI |
| Georgia | Irakli BERAIA Giorgi KANDELAKI Sofio KATSARAVA Irakli SESIASHVILI |
| Republic of Moldova | Dumitru DIACOV Artur RESETNICOV |
| Montenegro | Obrad Miso STANISIC Tarzan MILOSEVIC |
| Serbia | Dragan SORMAZ |
| Sweden | Asa LINDESTAM Mattias OTTOSSON Björn von SYDOW |
| Switzerland | Hans WALLMARK Corina EICHENBERGER |
| Ukraine | Iryna FRIZ Oleksii SKRYPNYK Oksana YURYNETS |

**Regional Partner and Mediterranean
Associate Member Delegations**

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| Algeria | Moustafa DJERDALI Abdelkader KEMOUNE |
| Morocco | Mohammed AZRI Youssef GHARBI |

European Parliament

Jonas FERNANDEZ
Zdzislaw KRASNODEBSKI

Parliamentary Observers

Egypt

Mohamed ABDELREHIM

Mahmoud AWAD

Kazakhstan

Talgatbek ABAIDILDIN

Abay TASBULATOV

Palestinian National Council

Jamal ABUALROB

Walid ASSAF

Republic of Korea

Ju-Hong HWANG

Jong-Kul LEE

Parliamentary Guests

Afghanistan

Khalid A. PASHTOON

Parliamentary Assembly

Francesco Maria AMORUSO

of the Mediterranean

Speakers

Mikheil JANELIDZE, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

Markus KAIM, Senior Fellow, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)

Soli ÖZEL, Professor of International Relations at Kadir Has University, Istanbul, and Richard von Weizsacker fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin, Germany

International Secretariat

Steffen SACHS, Committee Director

Karen WALKER-LOVE, Committee Coordinator

Constance HUBERT, Research Assistant

Maciej LEMPKE, Research Assistant

I. Opening remarks by the Chairman of the Committee

1. Chairman **Ojars Eriks Kalnins** (LV) welcomed all members and associate members of the Political Committee as well as all speakers and observers. Mr. Kalnins also thanked the Georgian delegation for hosting the 2017 Spring Session and highlighted the excellent organisation of the meetings.

II. Adoption of the draft Agenda [075 PC 17 E]

2. **The draft agenda [075 PC 17 E] was adopted.**

III. Adoption of the Summary of the Meeting of the Political Committee held in Istanbul, Turkey, on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 November 2016 [228 PC 16 E]

3. **The Summary of the Meeting of the Political Committee held in Istanbul, Turkey, on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 November 2016 [228 PC 16 E] was adopted.**

IV. Consideration of the *Comments of the Secretary General of NATO, Chairman of the North Atlantic Council on the Policy Recommendations adopted in 2016 by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly* [049 SESP 17 E]

4. The Chairman recognised the *Comments of the Secretary General of NATO and Chairman of the North Atlantic Council, on the Policy Recommendations adopted in 2016 by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly* [049 SESP 17 E].

V. Presentation by H.E. Mr Mikheil JANELIDZE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia on “Georgia’s Foreign and Security Priorities”

5. **H.E. Mikheil Janelidze** began his presentation by welcoming all delegations to Georgia and expressing his gratitude for choosing Tbilisi as the venue for the NATO PA 2017 Session. Mr Janelidze also stressed the fact that the decision to host the NATO PA Spring Session in Tbilisi sends a powerful message of support from the Alliance to Georgia.

6. Georgia’s aspiration to join the Euro-Atlantic community reflects the political will of the Georgian government and of an overwhelming majority of Georgians, the Minister stressed. The fundamental reforms that Georgia has been implementing has transformed the country into a modern European state with a strong rule of law, open media and favourable conditions for investment. As Mr Janelidze noted, these reforms are part of Georgia’s broader policy of integration within the EU and NATO. Georgia has moved up in all rankings, focusing on liberalisation and democratisation of the political, social and economic spheres. Georgia’s reforms are strongly supported by its close allies, including France and the United States, which have been committing financial and technical resources to support Georgia’s path towards modernisation and further development.

7. With regard to Georgia’s special relationship with NATO, the speaker noted that Georgia is creating a visible footprint as a reliable NATO partner, thanks to the NATO-Georgia Commission as well as the Substantial NATO-Georgia package. Georgia is an active contributor to NATO and EU-led crisis management operations, including those in Mali and Ukraine. Georgia also contributes its armed forces to *Resolute Support*, the NATO mission in Afghanistan. Georgia has all practical tools to become a NATO member, the Minister emphasised. He added that Georgia is committed to completing all necessary steps required for membership and will pursue further NATO integration with diligence and perseverance, he said.

8. Mr Janelidze also stressed the role of the EU as an important guarantor of Georgia's development as a modern democracy. He added that the benefits of cooperation between Georgia and the EU are clearly visible. Since the entering into force of the free trade agreement two years ago, the EU has become the number one trading partner with Georgia, and the EU decision to introduce a visa liberalisation plan will bring Georgia even closer to the EU as it will facilitate professional contacts between business representatives, scholars and students. Georgia plans to enhance cooperation with the EU further, particularly in the security and defence sectors, and to deepen Georgia's integration with the EU. Mr Janelidze also stressed that Georgia has become one of the leading regional countries in terms of implementing EU guidelines concerning political, social and economic development.

9. The Minister reminded Committee members that 20% of Georgia's territory is under Russian occupation. Russia has heavily militarised Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali regions and conducts large scale military exercises. Moreover, Moscow is integrating occupied territories into its political, social and economic systems by signing treaties with political representatives in the occupied territories. Russian occupation also results in discrimination and abuse of the Georgian population. While Russia denies international monitoring organisations access to the occupied territories, these organisations have been doing a remarkable job at reporting on human rights violations.

10. Mr Janelidze stressed that despite Russia's aggressive policies and provocations, the Georgian government pursues a peaceful path towards conflict resolution. Georgia's government is committed to the policy of reconciliation and confidence building. This policy is a strong signal to the Alliance and the EU that Georgia is fully committed to international rules and norms.

11. Mr Janelidze also discussed Georgia's role in the region and the importance of expanding transnational links to strengthen stability and security. To that end, Georgia has been pursuing a number of far-reaching economic and diplomatic projects, including with the EU, Turkey, China, and India.

12. The Minister stressed that Georgia faces the same complex security environment as NATO and the EU. He called upon the EU and NATO to remain united in order to meet the challenges posed by Russia's aggressive behaviour and the persistent threat of international terrorism. The speaker concluded his presentation by stressing that Georgia's membership in the Alliance would strengthen stability in the region and send a signal of hope for future enlargement.

13. In the ensuing discussion, Committee members asked the Minister to elaborate about domestic support for Georgia's application to the Alliance and the state of its relationship with Russia. Other questions focused on the current status of the Geneva talks concerning Russia's occupation of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region, and whether Georgia and Armenia could implement joint projects in the defence and security sector.

14. In responding to the questions Mr. Janelidze emphasised the important progress Georgia has achieved in building a truly democratic state over the recent years. Georgia has managed to transform society, political life, strengthen the judiciary and liberalise the media environment. The current government is committed to ensuring dialogue between all political parties and maintaining the independence of the media. The new constitution, which is currently discussed, will establish additional checks and balances on the government, he said. The Georgian government will take on board all recommendations of the Venice Commission.

15. A member of the opposition party in Georgia provided a slightly different perspective on the domestic political developments in the country. He, too, expressed the view that, in terms of democratic standards, Georgia is far ahead of other countries in the eastern partnership. He warned, however, of some negative tendencies in Georgia, including indications of slackening public support for NATO and EU membership. However, the opposition member was mainly concerned about the independence of the media (commenting that "only one media outlet is outside the control of the government") and of the judiciary. Other issues of concern are corruption and violence, as well as weak parliamentary oversight mechanism. These suggestions were not shared by Minister Janelidze. He noted that the Georgian

government is clear in its communication over membership in the Alliance and in the EU. With respect to the media, he replied that the freedom of the media and the independence of the judiciary are guaranteed by the government. Georgia implemented all necessary reforms to its judiciary to ensure a professional and independent judiciary in the country.

16. As to the Geneva talks, the 40th round of negotiations are currently taking place, the Minister informed the audience. Other than establishing a mechanism allowing detection and prevention of incidents on the ground, there is very little, if any, progress on the most important points of the Geneva talks. This is due to Russia's destructive approach, the speaker underlined. Security and humanitarian issues need to be addressed properly before a political settlement can be reached. Georgia hopes that with international support, Russia will agree on a peaceful solution to this conflict. Georgia conducts an informal dialogue with Russia in addition to the negotiations that are taking place in the Geneva framework. This informal dialogue is conducted by special deputy foreign ministers on both sides and is mainly related to trade, transport relations and people to people contacts. The informal dialogue has had some positive results, including the resumption of trade.

17. In response to the question if Georgia's accession to NATO would provoke Russia, the Minister emphasised that NATO membership is not against Russia but about Georgia's security and its sovereign decision to be a part of the world which shares its values. He added that NATO partnership is also about creating stability and security in Georgia and across the region. Georgia needs NATO membership to ensure security and sustainable development of the country. According to a poll conducted in April 2017, 83% of Georgians support NATO integration and as much as 92% support EU integration.

18. Georgia has excellent relations with Armenia, Minister Janelidze noted, adding that there are areas where cooperation could be deepened. With regard to a possible implementation of joint projects in the defence and security sector, the Minister of Defence could provide a more detailed response, the speaker said.

VI. Consideration of the Draft General Report *Russia: From Partner to Competitor* [076 PC 17 E] by Rasa JUKNEVICIENE (Lithuania), General Rapporteur

19. In her presentation of the Draft General Report, **Rasa Juknevičienė** (LT), presented the current state and prospects for relations between NATO and Russia. She focused on Russia's aggressive and dangerous behaviour towards the Alliance. More particularly, she discussed Russia's actions at NATO's eastern borders and in the Middle East, as well as Moscow's efforts to influence domestic affairs of NATO member and partner countries. The Rapporteur also focused on NATO's response to Russia's actions, discussing decisions made at NATO summits in Wales and Warsaw. Finally, the Rapporteur underlined the need for NATO to adapt to the changing security environment and remain committed to a strong deterrence posture vis-à-vis Russia, which should include clearly stated "red lines".

20. In the discussion that followed, several members noted that permanent deployment of NATO troops on the Alliance's eastern flank would be a major step for NATO and for the host countries, and that the rapporteur may want to consider redrafting this part of the report. Further comments included the issue of Russian disinformation and cyber campaigns, as well as Moscow's pressure in the energy sector. It was suggested that the report should further discuss Russia's efforts to extend its influence through energy projects. Several members emphasised the need for NATO to develop capabilities to counter Russia's actions in the spheres of cyber and hybrid warfare. The discussion also focused on the sources of Russia's military potential as well as the increasing militarisation of Russia's western regions and Crimea.

VII. Presentation by Markus KAIM, Senior Fellow, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), on *The Role of NATO Partnership in a Changing Security Environment*, followed by a discussion

21. **Markus Kaim** began his presentation by reminding participants of the importance and genesis of NATO's partnership programmes. He suggested that the original key driver for developing partnership programmes was to deal with the post-Cold War environment, which required a profound transformation of the political and security sectors, particularly in the countries of the former Warsaw Pact. Mr Kaim identified four waves of NATO partnership. The first wave emphasised transformation and democratisation after the Cold War and led to the creation of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. The second wave highlighted reforms and intraregional cooperation, via such initiatives as the Mediterranean dialogue. The third wave put a premium on improving interoperability for crisis management, generating the category of "Partners across the Globe". The fourth wave includes fostering interoperability for collective defence and includes "everything that has been implemented since Wales and since Warsaw". Thus, partnership programmes are NATO's response to new crises that evolved over time. As a result, a complex pattern of different partnerships with partly overlapping formats has evolved. For example, several countries participate in different partnership formats and some, like Georgia, have an additional special bilateral partnership with the Alliance. It is therefore time to take stock and check the existing partnerships for effectiveness and suitability, Mr Kaim suggested.

22. The speaker emphasised that the need for partnerships is likely to increase, among others because the new U.S. administration seems to focus more on American interests. Moreover, the European Allies and the European Union appear for now not be able to fill a void of American leadership as the European Union is grappling with Brexit and other crises and faces instability to its South at the same time. Mr Kaim outlined a number of recommendations and suggestions with respect to NATO partnerships. First, Mr Kaim highlighted that NATO should prioritise NATO partnerships more than in the past. They should have more political priority.

23. Furthermore, Mr Kaim noted that currently people think that NATO's main purpose is collective defence. However, there are many potential scenarios, including crisis management situations, in which the role of NATO would be indispensable. In those circumstances, partnerships would be very useful. At the same time, Mr Kaim stressed that partnerships cannot solve everything and that the Alliance must be realistic about what it can accomplish.

24. In his final remarks, Mr Kaim indicated that NATO partnership works on the basis of prioritising partners. Some of those partners are not as important as others. In this respect, we have to be realistic when it comes to bringing countries together and delivering common results.

25. The exchange with Committee members focused on concrete measures to strengthen existing and creating new partnerships, the joint planning and implementation of operations with partner countries, NATO's ability to tackle terrorist organisations, and NATO's future relationship with Sweden and Finland.

26. As to concrete proposals for the future development of NATO partnerships, Mr Kaim suggested to give priority to generating interoperability among member and partner nations and to focus more on the South which, he suggested, has been neglected to some degree. With respect to joint crisis management operations by NATO member states and partner countries, the ideal situation would be that in which this partnership could be facilitated by an operational platform with NATO at its core, mandated by the United Nations. To develop partnerships further, NATO could also support the development of defence capabilities of non-member partner countries at its periphery.

27. As far as NATO's possible contributions to combating the threat of internationally active terrorist organisations, Mr Kaim noted that there are political constraints apart from the questions of whether it is helpful to conceptualise terrorism as a domestic security issue or as an issue for a military alliance. Some countries define terrorism as an issue for domestic services, which explains why it took so long

for NATO to reach consensus on the decision to join the anti-Daesh coalition. At this point, cooperation between NATO and the European Union seems to be the most promising in the fight against terrorism. The issue will come up again once Daesh is reduced to a terrorist organisation without the territorial component, the speaker said. He did not see a major role for NATO in the counterterrorism domain.

28. With regard to NATO's future partnership with Sweden and Finland, Mr Kaim noted that both are appreciated partners of the Alliance because of their capabilities, democratic systems and the rule of law. Both have already a very close cooperation with the Alliance.

VIII. Statement by Jong-Kul LEE, Head of the delegation of the Republic of South Korea, on the North Korea's ballistic missile programme

29. In his statement, **Jong-Kul Lee** (KR) informed the Committee that the Republic of Korea is concerned about North Korea's nuclear programme more than ever. The representative of the Parliament of the Republic of Korea stressed that North Korea's aspirations pose a threat to peace and prosperity across the world. Last year alone, the regime in Pyongyang conducted nuclear-related tests on 16 different occasions. Mr. Lee expressed his appreciation for NATO's support of the international community's efforts to halt North Korea's nuclear weapons programme. Furthermore, Mr. Lee stressed that North Korea's missile programme is progressing fast, which should be a concern for the entire international community. The speaker suggested that the international community needs to continue implementing punitive measures against North Korea and engage with the regime at the same time to remove the possibility of a military confrontation. In this context, the Republic of Korea will continue working closely with the international community to deal with the North Korean issue. The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea is one of the most important bodies upholding a dialogue with North Korea.

30. Following this presentation, **Karl A. Lamers** (DE), Chairman of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships, and **Oyvind Halleraker** (NO), Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations, informed the audience about the activities of their respective sub-Committees in 2017.

IX. Consideration of the Draft General Report of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnership *Tackling the Challenges from the South* [077 PCNP 17 E] by Julio MIRANDA CALHA (Portugal), Rapporteur

31. In his presentation, **Julio Miranda Calha** (PT) discussed the key challenges NATO is facing in its southern neighbourhood. Mr Miranda Calha focused on the current developments in the Middle-East and North Africa, presenting the situation in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Mali and Tunisia. He also discussed the sources of current instability in the MENA region. In this respect, he noted that the future stability of the MENA region depends on the peaceful and sustained development of the societies in the region. This development should be a part of political solutions that are supported by all shareholders.

32. The debate on the draft report revealed general agreement among Committee members that Russia's involvement in the Middle East contributes to the further deterioration of the security environment in the region, and therefore presents a great challenge to the Alliance. He also noted that the draft report is a timely document, which demonstrates that over the past years NATO hasn't sufficiently paid attention to the Mediterranean region. A member of the Ukrainian delegation noted that the situation in Eastern Ukraine and the Syrian crisis are closely linked. Russia's intervention in Eastern Ukraine and Syria are aimed at dividing Europeans and undermining the security and stability in Europe.

33. Parliamentarians also discussed the issue of terrorism financing and the challenges related to activities aimed at disrupting funding of terrorist groups. Moreover, the UK delegation stressed the

problem of future planning with respect to the fight against Daesh. One member noted that there are no signs that the Iraqi government has taken any steps to come up with measures that would allow filling the vacuum left after the fall of Daesh. Another member raised the issue of defining “the South” and how far NATO should go in terms of its operations. This sparked a discussion on whether NATO should assume a role of a global or regional organisation.

X. Presentation by Soli ÖZEL, Professor of International Relations at Kadir Has University in Istanbul, and Richard VON WEIZSÄCKER, Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin, on *Transatlantic Relations in Transition*, followed by a discussion

34. **Soli Özel** began his presentation with a tribute to the late Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor to US President Jimmy Carter, who, in his latest books, had focused on the shifting global balance of power and the need of the Transatlantic Alliance to adapt to the new security environment. Mr. Brzezinski had depicted the state of the world in one of his latest tweets by stating that ‘sophisticated US leadership is needed to provide for a stable world order. However, we lack the former while the latter is getting worse’. Mr. Özel continued by raising the question of how the Western Alliance will be able to maintain its relevance, given the fact that the centre of gravity around the world is shifting decisively towards a demographically vibrant Asia. This question seems even more relevant now as the new US administration appears to be less internationalist in its approach than any of its predecessors since the end of the Second World War, the speaker said.

35. The speaker reminded participants that disagreements among Allies were a constant feature of the Transatlantic Alliance from the very beginning. As examples, he mentioned the decision of France to leave NATO’s military integration, disagreement over the response to the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the ever-present issue of burdensharing. Mr. Özel also pointed out that the US threatened to leave the Alliance on multiple occasions, including in the 1970s - the Mansfield amendment - and in the 1990s. He also said that the search for EU security architecture in the 1990s was, in his view, at least partly an attempt of European states to free themselves from US dominance. This had suited the Clinton administration, but the Europeans “could not pull it off” among others because of the EU’s focus on enlargement, and the US presence in Europe is still very much needed, the speaker said. However, a unifying factor that held the Alliance together, the threat posed by the Soviet Union, is no longer there. As this no longer exists, the fundamental tenets of the Transatlantic relationship should be reconsidered and reconfigured.

36. Although there are questions whether the United States, as the leader of the free world, will continue its international outlook, there is more continuity in the new US administration’s foreign and security policy than perceived in public. The Russian incursion into Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea has strengthened Alliance cohesion, which now had to be expanded into other fields, Mr. Özel stressed. In this context, he also mentioned the need to defend the integrity of the political processes in member countries as Russia is interfering with political processes everywhere. The issue of burdensharing has gained prominence in the US domestic political debate. The speaker reminded the Committee that the US government’s decision to actively engage in the world after the end of the Second World War was based on the promise that the American public would benefit materially. This bargain held until the end of the Cold War, but developments in recent years, particularly the adverse effects of globalisation on the US working and middle classes, has eroded support among the US public for US international engagement. While existing ties and “the resilience of the security bureaucracy” can still carry the Alliance in the future, the absence of political determination might render the Alliance rudderless. In a rapidly changing world, this would be hazardous to the Alliance and to global security and stability, the speaker concluded.

37. In the debate that followed, exchanges covered the beginning of the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s, the issue of burdensharing, the US position on Ukraine, and the initial steps of the new US administration towards the Gulf.

38. With regard to burden sharing, the speaker said that European Allies are spending quite a lot on security-related issues. In this context, he mentioned that Ukraine receives around 11 billion EUR from the EU. However, the US does not count these expenditures as part of the defence expenditures Allies agreed to meet. NATO Allies need to address this issue and come to a better understanding of which expenses are related to security, Mr Özel suggested.

39. One member commented that while the policy of the new US administration towards Ukraine may possibly not be as supportive as that of its predecessor, Congress' support for Ukraine remains steadfast as ever. This was confirmed by a member of the United States Congress who assured participants that there will be no retreat on the part of Congress with respect to Ukraine. Congress will make sure that pressure on Russia stays, he added. In his reply, Mr Özel agreed but also mentioned that Congress does not have the same powers as the White House in terms of foreign policymaking. On possible ways to support Ukraine, the speaker suggested that the number of tools are limited and that sanctions imposed on Russia appear to be the best instruments to tackle this challenge.

40. With regard to the Trump administration's approach to the Gulf region, Mr Özel said that during his recent visit to the region, President Trump explicitly rejected the approach of the Obama administration, particularly with regard to Iran. The important role of Canada for the Alliance and for conducting peacekeeping operations throughout the world was also discussed.

41. One member inquired if NATO would disintegrate if the US no longer took on the role of leader. In his response, Mr. Özel said that he did not anticipate that NATO as an organisation would disintegrate. He iterated that as long as Russian aggression was contained, the risk of major military conflict in Europe appeared remote at the moment. The Balkans could be a possible exception, he acknowledged. As the main security challenges are emanating from Asia, the US will likely focus on this region more than on Europe. The question is how Europe will react to this new US focus. In these circumstances, it is important for the Alliance to reconfigure itself and adapt to the new strategic environment in which security challenges come from Asia.

42. A member from Ukraine noted that her country allocates 5% of its GDP to the armed forces. However, today's security challenges are much broader and include information warfare and economic instability. She reminded participants that countries need to be prepared to tackle these security challenges as well. Mr Özel noted that Russia tried to cut off Ukraine as an energy transit country. It is known that Turkey is very much interested in doing business with Russia.

XI. Consideration of the draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations *NATO and Security in the Arctic* [078 PTCR 17 E] by Gerald E. CONNOLLY (United States), Rapporteur

43. In his presentation, **Gerald E. Connolly** (US) discussed the consequences of progressing climate change on the future security environment in the Arctic. The rapporteur reminded Committee members that the Arctic region ranked top of the security agenda during the Cold War due to its strategic importance. Its significance was largely reduced with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries. However, due to the warming climate in the High North, the region is once again of profound importance to NATO security. While existing relationships among Arctic littoral states are by-and-large defined by cooperation, the situation could change very quickly, he noted. Climate change is occurring more rapidly than previously anticipated, and Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine and other NATO partners like Georgia could well have a negative impact on stability and security in the High North.

44. As Arctic ice continues to melt and other non-NATO states, including the People's Republic of China, re-evaluate their Arctic posture, it would be prudent for NATO to engage in an effort coordinated among member states to improve situational awareness in the High North. The Rapporteur argued that the decision of NATO Allies at the Warsaw Summit in this direction was a necessary step in the right

direction. Mr Connolly concluded by proposing additional measures NATO Allies should consider, including, among others, initiation of a dialogue and information exchange among NATO Allies in the North Atlantic Council, that includes outside expertise, to provide Allies with the latest assessments of the impact of climate change on the Arctic and creation of an “Arctic task force” at NATO Headquarters to identify the security implications of climate change on the Arctic and Arctic littoral states.

45. In the ensuing discussion, a British delegation member paid homage to the late Senator and long-term Assembly Treasurer Pierre-Claude Nolin, who had, in his position as Rapporteur of the Science and Technology Committee, authored several reports on the issue. The UK member noted that the observations of the report are very much aligned with the United Kingdom’s views.

46. Norwegian delegates expressed appreciation that the Rapporteur decided to draft a report on the Arctic adding that the recent Assembly Seminar in Svalbard had provided a good overview of the challenges and opportunities in the Arctic. They emphasised that the Arctic is a very diverse region with various climactic conditions where some areas are already ice-free or gradually becoming ice-free, while others are likely to remain under a large ice cover. Moreover, the Norwegian representatives stressed that the Arctic is already governed by international law and that the legal framework necessary for a peaceful development of the region is in place. A member of the Norwegian delegation also questioned whether NATO needed to develop a consensus on an Arctic Strategy as proposed in the report. At the very least, a NATO Strategy for the Arctic should not supplant the Arctic Council nor impinge upon its responsibilities. The delegates also noted that Norway has good cooperation with Russia on northern issues, including in particular on Search and Rescue (SAR) operations – which is a national responsibility, not one of NATO. For Norway, it is very important to continue the excellent cooperation with Russia in the area of SAR. Another delegate from Norway emphasised the investments Norway is making in terms of new military hardware to ensure the security of the Alliance in the High North. Thus, Norway is making its fair contribution to NATO. Mr Connolly replied that the role of the Arctic Council must in no way be reduced and that NATO Allies should obviously strive to have very good cooperation with Russia in the region, particularly with regard to SAR. However, the Alliance needed to improve its situational awareness to avoid being surprised by rapid changes in the regional environment.

47. Whether there is a risk that Russia could sidestep the sanctions by instigating Western companies to invest into the exploration of Arctic resources was also discussed. In response, Mr Connolly dismissed the risk of Russia being able to sidestep existing sanctions, at least for the present. The growing risk of accidents stemming from the increasing number of cruise ships travelling to Arctic waters and the strain that this development puts on SAR was also discussed. A Canadian delegate highlighted the importance of having SAR capabilities and inquired how the discussion about Arctic security could be advanced and if there is a role for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Another question raised the issue of climate change, the approach of the new US administration and whether US Congress has a role to play in the formulation of US policy in this field.

XII. Any other business

48. No other business was raised.

XIII. Closing remarks

49. Mr. Kalnins concluded the meeting by thanking the guests, speakers and Georgian delegates. Special words of thanks went to the interpreters.

50. The president informed the delegates that full committee will next convene in Bucharest on 6-7 October 2017.