



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

SUMMARY

OF THE MEETING OF THE

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 October 2019

Churchill, Queen Elizabeth II Centre
London, United Kingdom

207 PC 19 E | Original: English | 25 October 2019

ATTENDANCE LIST

Chairperson	Lord CAMPBELL of PITTENWEEM (United Kingdom)
General Rapporteur	Julio MIRANDA CALHA (Portugal)
Rapporteur of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations	Gerald E. CONNOLLY (United States)
Rapporteur ad interim of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships	Miro KOVAC (Croatia)
President of the NATO PA	Madeleine MOON (United Kingdom)
Secretary General of the NATO PA	David HOBBS
Member delegations	
Albania	Mimi KODHELI
	Nimet MUSAJ
Belgium	Theo FRANCKEN
	Wouter DE VRIENDT
Bulgaria	Plamen MANUSHEV
Canada	Peter BOEHM
	Stephen GREENE
Croatia	Miroslav TUDJMAN
Czech Republic	Josef HAJEK
	Jan CHVOJKA
Denmark	Marcus KNUTH
France	Philippe FOLLIOU
	Sonia KRIMI
	Gilbert ROGER
Germany	Karl A. LAMERS
	Roland HARTWIG
	Alexander Graf LAMBSDORFF
	Gerold OTTEN
	Jürgen TRITTIN
Greece	Mariori GIANNAKOU
	Marios KATSIS
Iceland	Njall Trausti FRIDBERTSSON
Italy	Luca FRUSONE
	Paolo FORMENTINI
Latvia	Ojars Eriks KALNINS
Lithuania	Gediminas KIRKILAS
Luxembourg	Eugène BERGER
	Nancy ARENDT KEMP
Montenegro	Branko CAVOR
Norway	Liv Signe NAVARSETE
Portugal	José de MATOS CORREIA
Romania	Vergil CHITAC
Slovakia	Martin KLUS

Slovenia	Monika GREGORCIC
Spain	Miguel Angel GUTIÉRREZ
	Begona NASARRE
Turkey	Osman Askin BAK
	Ahmet Berat CONKAR
	Ilhan KESICI
	Ahmet YILDIZ
United Kingdom	Richard BENYON
	Tanmanjeet DHESI
	Nigel DODDS
	James GRAY
United States	Filemon VELA

Associate delegations

Armenia	Viktor YENGIBARYAN
Azerbaijan	Gudrat HASANGULIYEV
Georgia	Irakli BERAIA
	Sofio KATSARAVA
North Macedonia	Ilija DIMOVSKI
Serbia	Dragan SORMAZ
	Natasa JOVANOVIC
Sweden	Karin ENSTRÖM
Switzerland	Werner SALZMANN
Ukraine	Yehor CHERNIEV
	Solomiia BOBROVSKA
	Petro POROSHENKO

European Parliament

Kris PEETERS
Juozas OLEKAS

Regional Partner and Mediterranean Associate Member Delegations

Algeria Hichem RAHIM

Parliamentary Observers

Australia Kim CARR
Republic of Korea Dong Yeol YEOM
Kyoung Tae CHO
Palestinian National Council Nehad ELAYAN

Speakers

Dominic RAAB MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom

Michael CLARKE, Distinguished Fellow, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)

Sanam VAKIL, Senior Research Fellow, Middle East and North African Programme, Chatham House

Charles PARTON, Senior Associate Fellow,
RUSI

International Secretariat

Steffen SACHS, Director
Karen WALKER-LOVE, Coordinator
Colin WALL, Research Assistant

I. Opening remarks by Lord CAMPBELL OF PITTENWEEM (United Kingdom), Chairperson

1. **Lord Campbell of Pittenweem** (UK) called the meeting of the Political Committee to order. He thanked his colleagues in the UK delegation for preparing the session, informed the Committee of a number of practical points, and listed the vacant positions open for election.

II. Adoption of the draft Agenda [143 PC 19 E]

2. **The draft Agenda [143 PC 19 E] was adopted.**

III. Adoption of the Summary of the Meeting of the Political Committee held in Bratislava, Slovakia, on Sunday 2 June 2019 [152 PC 19 E]

3. Lord Campbell informed the Committee that there will be a minor change in paragraphs 7 and 10 of the PC Committee summary. The summary of the meeting held in Bratislava [152 PC 19 E] was adopted.

IV. Procedures for amendments to the draft Resolutions *NATO @ 70: Celebrating 70 Years of Peace and Security Through Unity* [184 PC 19 E] and *Tackling Security Challenges from Africa* [179 PC 19 E]

4. Lord Campbell informed members about the process for submitting amendments to the draft Resolutions and then introduced the Committee's first speaker.

V. Presentation by [the Rt Hon. Dominic RAAB](#) MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom

5. In the introductory remarks of his presentation, **Secretary Raab** praised NATO's success during the Cold War and observed that today it protects nearly 1 billion people across 30 countries. He emphasised the role that the UK has played in that effort, noting that London hosted the first Alliance headquarters and that today the UK is the top defence spender in Europe. Secretary Raab then stressed that today's threats it faces—including disinformation, hybrid warfare, more capable terrorist organisations, and technological advances—have become less predictable. The speaker also criticised Russia for its disregard for the rule of law and its use of unacceptable tactics, such as: the illegal annexation of Crimea; attempts to undermine European democracies; political assassinations abroad; and repeated violations of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF).

6. In light of these challenges, it has become of paramount importance for the Allies to act as effective champions of the values and strategic interests they share, he argued. This includes working hard to avoid intra-Alliance division and aligning our foreign policy according to a clear strategic direction: upholding the rules-based international system.

7. Secretary Raab concluded his presentation by looking to the Alliance's future. He complimented NATO's adaptation so far, praising the progress made on troop readiness, by tripling the size of the NATO Response Force, and on expanding Alliance operations in the East. And yet he also argued that the Alliance needs to adapt further, citing cyber and space as two areas that require more attention and investment. He urged fellow members to live up to their commitments to spend two percent of GDP on defence. Finally, with respect to Russia,

he argued that an approach is needed that includes the possibility for rapprochement, but that this could only occur after Moscow resumes cooperation with international law.

8. The ensuing debate covered a broad range of issues. The primary focus was the diverging perspectives amongst members regarding Turkey's military operation in north-eastern Syria. A number of members expressed their concerns: deterioration of the humanitarian situation; a resurgence of Daesh; and the potential for the liberation, and subsequent return to their home countries, of European-born foreign terrorist fighters. Members from the Turkish delegation stressed that the military operation is an anti-terror operation and that Turkey feels it should be receiving more solidarity from fellow Allies. Secretary Raab emphasised that Turkey is a valued partner in NATO, but urged that it operate with maximum restraint, keep its focus on Daesh, and prevent the humanitarian situation from getting worse.

9. Another key area of focus was Russia, particularly with respect to NATO enlargement and the potential for a renewed dialogue with the Russian Federation. When asked about potential Russian opposition to the Alliance accepting new members, Secretary Raab insisted that NATO cannot give Russia a *de facto* veto over membership. Regarding a renewed dialogue, the Secretary reiterated that the UK is not opposed in principle, but that it is contingent on Russia first respecting the rules-based international system.

10. Other questions focused on the defence-related consequences of Brexit. One member inquired about the UK's post-Brexit policy towards European-level defence initiatives and another delegate expressed concern regarding the implications of Brexit on military mobility and interconnectivity between Allied armed forces. In response, Secretary Raab said that Brexit is not a withdrawal from the UK's wider relationship with Europe, and that the UK will be an even better European ally in the years to come.

11. Following the debate, **James Gray** (UK) presented two initiatives designed to strengthen the links between the Parliament of the United Kingdom and the country's armed services. One provides the opportunity for Members of Parliament to hear briefings from high-ranking military officials and the other, the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, allows MPs to accompany UK servicemembers in the field to better understand life at the tactical level. Mr Gray urged members to consider implementing equivalent initiatives and offered to provide instructions and best practices to that effect.

VI. Consideration of the draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations *NATO @ 70: Why the Alliance Remains Indispensable* [146 PCTR 19 E] by Gerald E. CONNOLLY (United States), Rapporteur

12. **Gerald E. Connolly** (US) introduced his draft Report, an evaluation of the Alliance's past achievements and a look forward to the future. He underlined that NATO's values have been as important for its success as have its military capabilities, arguing that they facilitated the cohesion necessary to deter Russian aggression during the Cold War. After this historical overview, Mr Connolly outlined the four main challenges NATO faces today: a revisionist Russian Federation; a new distribution of international power, particularly because of China's rise; instability in the South; and democratic backsliding, polarisation and nationalism within the Alliance itself.

13. The Rapporteur advanced three recommendations to help counter these challenges. The first is that NATO update its Strategic Concept in order to reflect the new international security environment, particularly regarding NATO's new perspectives on Russia and China, as well as the growing importance of cyber and hybrid conflict. The second is to increase

NATO-EU coordination and enhance efforts facilitating the mobility of military assets, including by creating a joint Centre of Excellence on Military Mobility. Finally, the report recommends that NATO create a Democratic Resiliency Coordination Centre (DRCC), an oversight body that would assist members to ensure that NATO's democratic values are respected within their countries.

14. Following Mr Connolly's presentation, members debated the draft report's proposals, particularly the suggestion to create the DRCC. One member supported the idea in principle but raised questions about the practical implementation of the concept, given likely resistance from some Allies. Other members cautioned that there are already several institutions in Europe whose core competence is to monitor and investigate human rights abuses and anti-democratic infractions. They inquired whether the DRCC was therefore necessary. They also questioned whether it was even appropriate for NATO to deal with such matters at all. Mr Connolly responded that the existence of similar agencies does not preclude the Alliance from creating one. He cited, as an example, the fact that the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) conducts election monitoring missions, even though this is not a core competence. The reason is that the oversight of different organisations confers legitimacy in different ways. Furthermore, he argued that because the democratic backsliding in question is happening within the Alliance, creating an *internal* mechanism would demonstrate NATO's commitment to its values.

15. In response to a question on how to avoid competition for scarce military resources between the EU and NATO, the Rapporteur stressed that it is a matter for the EU how it wishes to organise itself and what the military component might be. He added that his goal is that the NATO Alliance be as strong as possible.

16. Various members also returned to Turkey's operation in Syria. As before, the questions focused on the risk of a resurgence of Daesh. The Turkish delegation again stressed that the Turkish military operation in Syria is an anti-terror operation. Mr Connolly commented that military interventions can often unleash undesired consequences and emphasised that it is appropriate for Allies to ask one another to account for their actions.

17. In response to a question about the challenges from China, Mr Connolly underlined his view that China's rise is not necessarily a threat, but its increasing involvement in global affairs is at the very least a source of strategic competition. Furthermore, it is crucial to recall that this competition stems from a political system that is diametrically opposed to the values of the Alliance.

18. Mr Connolly also thanked the delegations from Georgia, Ukraine, and Turkey for various editorial changes they had proposed to the draft report. The changes were accepted.

19. [The draft Report \[146 PCTR 19 E\], as amended, was adopted unanimously.](#)

VII. Presentation by Professor [Michael CLARKE](#), Distinguished Fellow, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), on *Transatlantic Relations; the State of Play*

20. In his presentation, **Michael Clarke** outlined the key challenges for the transatlantic relationship, first by presenting the European perspective, then the US view, and then offering some concluding thoughts.

21. First, Mr Clarke identified five important challenges for Europe that may affect the transatlantic relationship. The first is the widening gap between the agendas of northern and southern European countries, which in his view is a natural result of the enlargement of

Euro-Atlantic institutions. The second challenge is that the military capabilities of European Allies have been hollowed out since the end of the Cold War. He then argued that four powers—the US, Russia, India, and China—will define the international security relations within a decade. He added that each of these powers are revisionist powers, in contrast to the European preference for the *status quo*. Fourth, Europe faces the immediate challenges of Turkish foreign policy in Syria and an impending Brexit. Finally, he observed that the “European family” is simply unhappy, which makes it difficult for its members to pressure one another to uphold liberal-democratic values.

22. On the US side of the relationship, Mr Clarke contended that US’s foreign policy focus has been inevitably shifting to the Pacific since long before President Trump. In his view, President Trump’s foreign policy is in the mould of “Jacksonian Nationalism”, which is predicated on the view that the US should pursue its global interests bilaterally. He did underline, however, that the White House perspective diverges from the military establishment, which retains its belief in the US military commitment in Europe, as evidenced by the US troop presence in Poland and the Baltics, the European Reassurance Initiative, and the re-establishment of the US Navy’s Second Fleet.

23. In his concluding thoughts, Mr Clarke warned that the debates between the US and Europe can no longer be reduced to differences of emphasis; there are now also differences of interest. He argued that disagreements on isolated issues can be, and often have been, overcome within the Alliance. But if these issues begin to proliferate—and if basic European and US worldviews diverge—that will be a much greater challenge.

24. The exchanges following the presentation focused on the foreign policy of the Trump Administration. Members expressed concern about the disparity between President Trump’s preference for national or bilateral approaches to address global issues and the European preference for multilateralism. Mr Clarke agreed these trends were concerning and cautioned that a drift away from multilateralism risks returning world politics to a strictly power-based system. He argued that Europeans must seek to prove the merits of their view that multilateral organisations are effective.

25. Several members sought Mr Clarke’s view on NATO-EU relations. One member worried that a deteriorating US-EU relationship could infect Alliance relations, and another asked whether stronger European-level defence initiatives are realistic, and if they are a threat to NATO. In response, Mr Clarke conceded that political dynamics outside of a NATO context could have an impact on how the Alliance operates—for example, this will be a likely consequence of Brexit. He also argued that European defence initiatives are likely a positive development, as the risk of duplicating command and control structures is worth the added benefit of greater military capacity.

26. Once more, the conversation returned to Turkey. One member worried that accusations that Alliance members have abandoned the Syrian Kurds—who were instrumental in defeating Daesh—would prevent NATO from gaining the trust of potential allies in the future. A member from the Turkish delegation argued Turkey has been treated unfairly by other Allies, both on the Syria matter and regarding its purchase of Russian air defence systems. Mr Clarke replied by commenting that Turkey has a legitimate argument in saying that the EU was never completely frank with Turkey but that the Alliance always was.

27. In response to a question about the increasing importance of the Arctic, Mr Clarke said that the area is critical for environmental, trade, and security reasons, and that NATO countries have been too relaxed in their approach towards the region. He warned that further neglect will allow Russia’s investment in the region to outpace our own to such an extent that their resultant advantage would let them manipulate or intimidate our future policy choices.

VIII. Summary of past and futures activities of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations

28. The Chair of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations (PCTR), **Karl A. Lamers** (DE) informed the Committee of the activities of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations in 2019, including a trip to the US, from which the Sub-Committee concluded that the bipartisan US commitment to NATO remains as strong as ever. He then informed the Committee about the Sub-Committee's plans for next year.

IX. Consideration of the draft General Report *Security and Stability in Africa – Challenges and Opportunities for NATO* [144 PC 19 E] by **Julio MIRANDA CALHA** (Portugal), General Rapporteur

29. The General Rapporteur, **Julio Miranda Calha** (PT), presented his updated draft Report, which explains how instability in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region—as well as further south—are connected, mutually reinforcing, and of interest to the Alliance. The draft report analyses the complex sources of that instability, including increasing activities of terrorist groups, socioeconomic weakness, failed governance, human and drug trafficking, and piracy, amongst others. Mr Calha warned that this instability could—as in the case of expanding terrorist activity—affect the Alliance's southern members directly. The General Rapporteur noted that NATO's role in the region is limited and focused on relations with regional and international partners—although many individual Allies are making significant national contributions to security on the continent.

30. The General Rapporteur proposed three recommendations to enhance NATO's role in Africa: to increase awareness of security developments, especially by augmenting intelligence-sharing efforts; to deepen partnerships with security actors in Africa, particularly the African Union; and to intensify NATO-EU cooperation so that it moves beyond ad-hoc coordination.

31. In the discussion following the General Rapporteur's presentation, members expressed their agreement that NATO must increase its attention to this region, and that the AU and EU can be strong partners in that regard. Members from countries who are already active in the south—including Spain, France, and Italy—explained their countries' contributions and asked their colleagues to consider whether NATO itself ought to take a more direct operational role. In response to this point, the General Rapporteur reiterated that while the report argues NATO should become more involved in the region, it does not foresee an operational role for the Alliance. Such a role may be possible in the future, but for now NATO can seek to provide value by cooperating with partners.

32. In response to an intervention from the Algerian delegation, the General Rapporteur acknowledged Algeria's success on developing counter-radicalisation initiatives and agreed that education and economic development will also be necessary to bolster regional security.

33. [The draft General Report \[144 PC 19 E\], as amended, was adopted.](#)

X. Presentation by [Dr Sanam VAKIL](#), Senior Research Fellow, Middle East and North African Programme, Chatham House, on *Regional Security Dynamics in the Gulf*

34. **Dr Vakil** began her presentation on the complex security dynamics in the Persian Gulf by describing the causes of recent escalatory tensions. Though the most immediate trigger for

these tensions was the US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the initial impulse came from the events of the Arab Spring—and the forceful reactions of regional authoritarian governments—as well as the protracted Syrian Civil War, she argued. The unwillingness of the West, and the Obama administration in particular, to take a more active role in supporting their long-time partners like General Mubarak of Egypt during the protests of the Arab Spring, raised anxieties of Arab Gulf powers which began to question the reliability of the US as a guarantor of Gulf stability. The protracted Syrian civil war further fuelled these anxieties of the Arab Gulf countries as did the signing of the JCPOA which was limited in scope and did not address wider concerns. As a result, they became increasingly active to secure their perceived interests.

35. Dr Vakil identified three main crises in the region today. Two are the result of the increased foreign policy activism of Arab Gulf countries: the war in Yemen and the Qatar Blockade. The former has led to a major humanitarian crisis and the latter has paralysed the functioning of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

36. The third—and in Dr Vakil's view, most pressing—crisis is Iran's policy towards its neighbourhood, particularly following the US withdrawal from the JCPOA. In the absence of a successful European strategy to insulate its economy from US sanctions, Iran has decided it is necessary to shift to a confrontational strategy. By acting increasingly aggressive, the Iranian leadership hopes to apply so much pressure on America's regional allies, and the international community writ large, that these actors will in turn pressure the Trump Administration to make concessions to Iran.

37. The primary diplomatic challenge is that neither side is willing to come to the table until the other makes some concession first. Looking ahead, Dr Vakil expressed her belief that the most likely outcome is a new nuclear agreement that treads largely similar ground to the JCPOA, i.e. it will not be a comprehensive agreement, a "grand bargain" that President Trump seeks to obtain. In any case, reaching an agreement will require a concerted, multilateral approach. Moreover, Iran will not come back to the negotiating table until it has received at least a face-saving concession, she argued. The speaker predicted that competition among the Gulf countries will remain high in the foreseeable future. NATO Allies, and European countries in particular, could play a role in shepherding a regional security framework. This will be a long and protected negotiation process, but it is urgently needed, she said. Managing regional tensions is not only about managing Iran, but also intra-Arab Gulf countries tensions. In this atmosphere of anxiety, China and Russia have become increasingly engaged; both will exploit the anxiety for their own gain, which could also generate blowback for European Allies, she concluded.

38. The ensuing discussion with Committee members focused on Iran. One member asked for clarification on Iran's new confrontational strategy, inquiring whether it was not more likely to backfire. Dr Vakil responded that, although it seems counterintuitive, Iran is playing a weak hand rather well. Tehran appears confident no international power will launch actual operations in the region and believes that acting as a destabilising influence—while maintaining plausible deniability—will allow it to apply pressure without triggering a military confrontation. Another member expressed concern that recent frictions in transatlantic relations might undermine international efforts to resolve the Iran crisis. In response to a question about the effectiveness of sanctions, Dr Vakil reminded the audience that the Islamic Republic has been under sanctions for 40 years. She argued that determined engagement, along with the *threat* of sanctions, would be a better strategy. She added that changing the behaviour of the regime in Tehran will take time, though. A new nuclear deal allowing Western companies to return to Iran would diversify investment. This would help to grow Iran's economy, reduce Russian influence, and strengthen the position of moderate Iranians.

39. Members also sought Dr Vakil's views on the Qatar crisis and the murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi. She explained that Qatar has been resilient because, in reaction to a previous blockade, it successfully diversified its economy and expanded its relations with other countries. On the matter of Mr Khashoggi, Dr Vakil argued that his murder was evidence of the lack of respect for human rights in the region, as well as a reminder that bargains with authoritarian governments are likely to be painful ones.

XI. Summary of past and future activities of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships

40. The Chair of the Sub-Committee on Partnerships (PCNP), **Miro Kovac** (HR) informed the Committee of the activities of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships from the past year, including a trip to the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He then informed the Committee about the Sub-Committee's planned activities for next year.

XII. Consideration of the draft Report of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships *NATO-Russia Relations – a Snapshot* [145 PCNP 19 E] by Miro KOVAC (Croatia), Rapporteur ad interim

41. In his introductory remarks, the Rapporteur ad interim Miro Kovac thanked the members of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships for their suggestions for the updated draft Report. The central message is that the Alliance must pay close attention to Russia's activities—such as its military build-up in the Arctic and Black Sea region, its military assistance to the Syrian regime, and its provocative activities on NATO's borders—and also work together to incentivise the Kremlin to change its behaviour. He praised NATO's response to Russia's destabilising actions. In this context he mentioned increasing Allied defence expenditures, the deployment of conventional assets in the east, and enhanced support to partners Georgia and Ukraine. At the same time, he urged the Alliance to consider doing more. He suggested NATO continue its dual-track approach of maintaining a strong deterrent posture and applying economic pressure via sanctions while simultaneously remaining open to dialogue. He also proposed some more creative tactics, such as revising education policies in order to bolster our societies' resilience to disinformation.

42. In concluding, Mr Kovac stressed that rapprochement between NATO and Russia, while desirable, cannot come at the expense of third countries, especially if they are NATO partners. He observed that there are areas where the Alliance's interests align with Moscow, such as counterterrorism, search and rescue in the Arctic, and anti-narcotics in Afghanistan. Russia's relationship with Western countries will likely remain transactional for the foreseeable future. At the same time, he argued that the Alliance must maintain the political cohesion to counter Russian aggression when necessary.

43. Following this presentation, a member of the Georgian delegation informed the Committee about several additions to the report which provide additional details to the parts of the report that refer to Georgia and Ukraine. Mr Kovac agreed to incorporate these additions into the final report.

44. In the subsequent debate, members discussed multiple facets of NATO-Russia relations. In response to a disagreement amongst delegates regarding Russia's annexation of Crimea, Mr Kovac underlined his view that occupying a foreign country can never be accepted. As NATO consists of countries which share the same values, one of which is the rule of law, it is necessary that the Alliance stand up for its principles. In his view, applying economic sanctions to Russia in response to its breach of international law is a reasonable, and even required, response—even if it is painful for some Allies.

45. Members also discussed NATO's enlargement policy and rejected the narrative that NATO assured Russia it would not extend towards its border after the Cold War. A member from the Ukrainian delegation reminded the Committee that seeking to joining the Alliance is a matter of legitimate, national self-determination for NATO aspirant countries. In response to a question about Ukraine, Mr Kovac reiterated that NATO raises Ukraine, and other issues, in the NATO-Russia Council meetings.

46. [The draft Report \[145 PCNP 19 E\], as amended, was adopted.](#)

XIII. Presentation by [Charles PARTON](#), Senior Associate Fellow, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), on *China's Role in the World and Implications for the Alliance*

47. **Charles Parton** began his remarks by establishing the guiding principle of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP): staying in power. In his view, all their policymaking is based on that aim. This can explain much about their actions domestically and abroad. He then outlined the "six legitimacies": the narratives the CCP uses to justify their rule. He stressed that China will be ruthless in pursuit of its interests if necessary.

48. Mr Parton urged members to remember three key points about China's foreign policy. First, that it is important to ignore Beijing's rhetoric and focus on its actions. Second, that China is a solipsistic power: it seeks no allies, shares limited values with other nations, and conducts its relations in a transactional manner. Finally, that its *modus operandi* is to pursue bilateral relations where it can, multilateral relations when it suits them, and to seek to reshape global governance if it cannot otherwise achieve its aims. It conducts its bilateral relations via a combination of inducements and threats; where countries do not cooperate, it is willing to take punitive action against them.

49. Mr Parton next outlined the key foreign policy issues that will define China's relations with the West for the coming decade, such as the debate over Huawei and 5G networks, theft of intellectual property, and China's looming food and water crises. He expressed his belief that China will likely never fight an actual war but will instead stick to hybrid tactics to achieve its goals.

50. Finally, he explained the current state of Russia-China relations. Although the countries do share some interests—such as countering American influence, challenging norms of global governance, and maintaining their trade in oil and gas—they also diverge in many key areas. For example, China's ideological emphasis on territorial integrity conflicts with Russia's willingness to redraw borders in its interest, as in Georgia and the Ukraine. Furthermore, they are culturally very different and are beginning to question one another's intentions in Central Asia. Finally, both sides are aware that China is surpassing Russia in most metrics of state power. Mr Parton concluded that this "marriage of convenience" will persist only while the two are united by pressure from the West.

51. The debate following Mr Parton's presentation focused on the complicated nexus of China, Huawei, and transatlantic relations. Several members expressed that recent transatlantic frictions, particularly on trade, have made them hesitant to trust American alternatives to Huawei in terms of telecommunications in Europe. Mr Parton stressed that, in his view, the risk of US espionage in Europe is preferable to the far greater risk of Chinese espionage via Huawei. The United States is an ally who shares basic values and interests; China is not. Furthermore, he explained that Huawei is *de facto* controlled by the CCP and that it may not even be the cheaper option, as some members had claimed.

52. Other comments focused on China's expansion in the world more broadly. Some members inquired about China's increasing role in the Arctic and in Africa. In the latter, China is pursuing bilateral economic relationships in anticipation of future challenges in food security. Other members expressed their reservations about China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In the course of this conversation, one member asked about China's often aggressive responses to countries who resist their aims. Mr Parton agreed that the Alliance should pay attention to China's expansion but argued that countries who become victims of punitive Chinese trade and investment measures do not necessarily see their economies suffer. In some cases, they may even grow. This would have significant implications for how European countries should respond to Huawei, BRI and other Chinese initiatives.

53. In concluding, Mr Parton expressed his belief that it has become necessary for the West to develop and communicate a clear, unified strategy—not only to guide our actions, but also to clarify for China what our priorities are.

XIV. Consideration of amendments and vote on the draft Resolution *Tackling Security Challenges from Africa* [179 PC 19 E] by Julio MIRANDA CALHA (Portugal), General Rapporteur

54. Following the introduction by **Julio Miranda Calha** (PT), the Committee discussed and voted on the draft Resolution *Tackling Security Challenges from Africa* [179 PC 19 E].

55. Eight amendments were presented; all were accepted: 1, 2 (Lamers), 3, 4 (Cambon and Folliot), 5 (Giannakou), 6 (Gutiérrez), 7 (Cherniev, Bobrovska, and Klochko), and 8 (Frusone).

56. [The draft Resolution \[179 PC 19 E\], as amended, was adopted.](#)

XV. Consideration of amendments and vote on the draft Resolution *NATO @ 70: Celebrating 70 Years of Peace and Security Through Unity* [184 PC 19 E] by Julio MIRANDA CALHA (Portugal), General Rapporteur

57. Following the introduction by Julio Miranda Calha, the Committee discussed and voted on the draft resolution *NATO @ 70: Celebrating 70 Years of Peace and Security Through Unity* [184 PC 19 E].

58. Nine amendments were presented. The following amendments were accepted as originally proposed: 1, 2 (Connolly), 3 (Cambon and Folliot), 4,5 (Gutiérrez). Amendments 6 (Frusone) and 8 (Frusone, Formentini) were withdrawn. Amendments 7 (Frusone, Formentini) and 9 (Formentini, Tudjman, Tybring-Gjedde) were rejected.

59. [The draft Resolution \[184 PC 19 E\] was adopted as amended by the Committee.](#)

60. After the draft resolutions were adopted, Lord Campbell intervened to congratulate Julio Miranda Calha for his enormous contributions to the work of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and wish him well for the future.

XVI. Election of Committee and Sub-Committee Officers

61. The newly elected officers of the Political Committee were as follows:

Political Committee

Vice-Chairperson [Gilbert Roger](#) (France)
General Rapporteur [Gerald E. Connolly](#) (United States)

Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships

Vice-Chairpersons [Paolo Formentini](#) (Italy)
[Martin Klus](#) (Slovakia)
Rapporteur [Sonia Krimi](#) (France)

Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations

Vice-Chairs [Filemon Vela](#) (United States)
[Ojars Eriks Kalnins](#) (Latvia)
Rapporteur [Ahmet Yildiz](#) (Turkey)

XVII. Any other business

62. No other business was raised.

XVIII. Closing remarks

63. Concluding the meeting, the Chairman thanked all members and speakers for their participation, as well as the UK delegation for the efficient organisation of the Session.

64. The Chairperson adjourned the meeting of the Political Committee.

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