

The Wales Declaration on the Transatlantic Bond

1. The North Atlantic Alliance binds North America and Europe in the defence of our common security, prosperity and values. It guarantees the security of its members through collective defence. It strengthens security in Europe, and projects stability further afield through crisis management and cooperative security with its unique set of partnerships. Our commitment to defend freedom, individual liberty, human rights, democracy and the rule of law makes our community unique.
2. Our predecessors met in London in 1990 to adapt the North Atlantic Alliance to a changed environment. We meet now in Wales at a time when our vision of a Europe whole, free and at peace faces multiple challenges. We face serious crises which affect security and stability to NATO's east and south. These include Russia's illegal self-declared "annexation" of Crimea and Russia's continued aggressive acts in other parts of Ukraine and the spread of violence and extremism in North Africa and the Middle East.
3. So today, we have taken the necessary decisions to prepare our Alliance for the future. With this aim, we have agreed a 'Readiness Action Plan', enhancing NATO's preparedness and responsiveness, including its posture. The Alliance poses no threat to any country. But should the security of any Ally be threatened we will act together and decisively, as set out in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.
4. We will therefore strengthen the military capabilities the Alliance needs. After two decades of intensive operations, Allies now have the most experienced, capable and interoperable forces in NATO's history. We will continue to invest in modern and deployable armed forces that can operate effectively together and at a high level of readiness to fulfil NATO's tasks, in full accordance with the principles of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.
5. We recognise that these steps will take the necessary effort and funding. In light of this, we agree to reverse the trend of declining defence budgets and aim to increase defence expenditure in real terms as GDP grows; we will direct our defence budgets as efficiently and effectively as possible; we will aim to move towards the existing NATO guideline of spending 2% of GDP on defence within a decade, with a view to fulfilling NATO capability priorities. We will display the political will to provide required capabilities and deploy forces when they are needed.
6. These decisions will further strengthen the Transatlantic Bond, enhance the security of all Allies and ensure a more fair and balanced sharing of costs and responsibilities. We welcome efforts both by NATO Allies and EU members to enhance their defence capabilities and, in this respect, we support continuing close cooperation and complementarity between the two organizations. A stronger European Defence will contribute to a stronger NATO.
7. We are mindful that our security and our prosperity are interlinked. Our economies and prosperity require security. And our common security requires investment, based on strong economies. As we emerge from the recession, we do so with renewed dedication to promoting free trade, competitiveness, and growth across the transatlantic community, including greater defence industrial cooperation in Europe and across the Atlantic.
8. Our wide network of partnerships is of utmost importance to our shared stability and security and how we promote our values. We agree to further strengthen cooperation with our partners and to keep the door of the Alliance open.
9. Today, we reaffirm our continuing and unwavering commitment to defend the populations, territory, sovereignty, and shared values of all Allies in North America and Europe and to meet challenges and threats from wherever they may emanate. With our decisions here in Wales the North Atlantic Alliance will remain the bedrock of our collective defence.

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