ДО 70-Ї РІЧНИЦІ НАТО

© **Barbora Maronkova[1]**

NATO at 70 – History, Present and Future
Suggested speech for ASG PASP address at NATO PDD public air event at the occasion of NATO's 70th anniversary celebration in Kyiv, 21 May

NATO was created in 1949 to ensure peace and stability on the European continent after two devastating World Wars. The Alliance has helped to bring an unprecedented period of peace and security for the citizens of North America and Europe.

The creation of the Alliance was part of a broad ereffort to serve three purposes: deterring Soviete xpansionism, forbidding the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong North American presence on the continent, and encouraging Europe anpolitical integration. Similarly to the Marshall Plan for the recovery of European economy, the North Atlantic Alliance was a 'Marshall Plan' for military and defence cooperation.

For forty years, NATO successfully deterred the Soviet Union from aggression against Western Europe. In the 1990s, NATO faced new security challenges in Europe, and helped to end conflicts in the Western Balkans. It launched its first out of area operation in December 1995 in Bosnia Herzegovina to implement the military aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Since then, NATO has conducted over two dozen international operations and missions including relief operations around the world.

After 9/11, NATO took a lead role in the international response in Afghanistan, where it continues to train local forces, so they can prevent the country from becoming a safe haven for international terrorism, and create the conditions for peace.

Today, NATO and its members face the most complexsecurity challengesin many years – including a more assertive Russia,cyber and hybrid threats, terrorism, and instability across the Middle East and North Africa. In response, NATO has stepped up again, responding to many challenges at the same time.

NATO has also pursued its enlargement through active Open Door Policy. After the fall of Berlin Wall, NATO's open doorpolicy and the enlargement of the European Union have helped spread freedom and democracy and human rights. NATO's door remains open to any European country in a position to undertake the commitments and obligations of membership, and contribute to security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Today, NATO has 29 members , soon will 30. Allies are in the process of ratification of the Accession Protocol for the Republic of North Macedonia.

Three other countries have declared their aspiration to join NATO – this includes Ukraine together with Georgia and Bosnia Herzegovina. NATO recognizes Ukrainian aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration and supports Ukraine in its reform path. Reforms are crucial forprosperity and peace in Ukraine and for stability across the Euro-Atlantic area. Reforms are essential, and the standards for NATO membership are high. NATO is providing support to reformefforts, including through our Comprehensive Assistance Package.

To conclude – as our world is changing, NATO is changing with it. But some things remain unchanged: NATOmembers' commitment to one another endures, giving the Alliancethe strength to overcome differences and rise to any challenge. Standing with unity and resolve in defence of its values, NATO will remain a pillar of stability in an uncertain world for the next generations.

---

[1] Director of the NATO Information and Documentation Centre in Ukraine, Slovak Republic. E-mail: b.maronkova@nato.kiev.ua.