Generals,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Long time ago, Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu said: “To fight and conquer in all our battles is not supreme excellence. Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.” Ladies and Gentlemen, we excelled. We defeated, not the armies of our adversary, but even better so, his will to attack us. This happened during the Cold War. We achieved this by deterring him. And we secured our nations for a period of more than 70 years of peace, the longest period of peace in Western Europe, in all two thousand years of written history! This is quite a record for this continent. Today, the model Sun Tzu advanced is still as relevant as ever.

I will not waste your time describing the contemporary geostrategic environment. I will not insult your experience and expertise by listing or analysing the threats and challenges we are up against. We now have multiple threats in Europe, both to the East and to the South and we do not have the luxury to choose, prioritise, or downplay any of them.

The unpleasant truth is that the rhetoric heard on a daily basis vis-à-vis our Eastern neighbor and the behavior displayed by him, they all relate to the Cold War. From Finland and Sweden, all the way to Ukraine and the Black Sea, Russia unfolds its revisionist agenda, challenging and testing our commitment and resolve. To counter this adventurism we have to dig out from the back of our
drawers and dust our old, tested, trustful textbooks. **Deterrence** worked in the past and will work again. But we need a new type of deterrence, not the one we used to know but rather a modern version of it. One that will take into account the developments that took place in the meantime, technological, financial and conceptual developments. A re-designed one that will be relevant and effective in countering the threat. I do not want to be misunderstood: the basic equation for deterrence remains the same. Deterrence is the **sum** of capabilities and posture. Capabilities we have, so, let us discuss about posture.

Allow me to speak a little bit about NATO. The posture adopted after the Wales Summit and the measures taken in Warsaw have pivoted the Alliance to a position of **dynamic deterrence** in the East. Dynamic deterrence can be described as a clear demonstration of will and strong defense capabilities through timely and tailored military operations. It is a critical element for ensuring credible deterrence and for contributing to stability. It should be compared to static deterrence which is just maintaining a certain level of defense force. This position clearly and unmistakably demonstrates our resolve to stand up to the commitments that have been collectively agreed upon. This is complemented with a calculated dose of **static deterrence**, which means the prepositioned U.S. hardware in Europe, allowing for a swift response to a crisis. All these steps mark a **decisive shift** in our strategic approach to threats, moving from **assurance to deterrence**. We should not be mistaken again. Our biggest deterrence factors are our readiness and our determination, or according to NATO, our responsiveness.

All these are of course pointing to the right direction and will uplift the sense of security, especially when supported and widely communicated by an outward reaching and aggressive **communication strategy**. The powerful image of our soldiers training in realistic situations and demanding scenarios will send the right messages both to the internal and the external audiences. But we should not forget that the contemporary battlefield is not limited to three dimensions. Apart from the "**physical deterrence**", we have to be equally effective in displaying "**digital deterrence**" as well. And by this I refer to **cyber**. This particular domain as well as **hybrid warfare** have been identified in the **Joint, Warsaw EU-NATO Declaration** as priority areas where the **European Union** and **NATO** need to work closely together and double-down their efforts in order to achieve a reinforced partnership. This is the role and the mission of NATO, under the leadership of the US.
I will now turn to my own institution, the European Union. Let me make myself clear. European Union, especially in its recent Global Security Strategy, has not questioned the role of defending Europe. The EU Global Strategy is about protecting Europe, not defending it. In NATO collective defence, deterrence is one of the strategic effects towards mainly state-actors in the East. In the South, we need to have containment. People who confuse these two terms, protection and defence and the distinctive missions that derive from them, they are hampering the two organisations' coming closer and better organizing the military capabilities of the western world as a whole.

To this end, it is important for both organisations to share the same situational awareness picture both in times of tranquility and in times of crisis. Sharing our analyses and lessons identified will work in this way. Building mutual awareness of each other's respective crisis management procedures to ensure swift and effective reactions is equally important. Close collaboration in strategic communication has to be established. Fully inclusive joint exercises both at the political and technical levels will enhance the effectiveness of the two organisations' respective decision-making capacity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Effective deterrence is not a matter of numbers; the accumulative strength of the European armies is in the range of 1.4 million troops, largely outnumbering the potential adversary. The same applies to naval and air power. Our numbers, combined with our technological superiority and hardened by our psychological supremacy, as a result of our common values and our democratic political systems, they will bring us victory, if we ever slide into an armed confrontation. For this I have no doubt. The point is that we do not want to fight any "cold" or "hot" war. What we do want is progress, happiness and prosperity for our societies, at each side of the borders. So the other side, the potential adversary, needs to understand that they should not go down this slippery road because they will lose. Our exchange of views in the EU or in NATO should not be regarded as a deep rift. Because, it is not. Russia is a declining power and it is Russia's strategic miscalculation that we have to prevent. We should avoid being the architects of such a terrible miscalculation. We should not be afraid of Russia's strength but rather of Russia's weakness that may lead to this miscalculation.
To pass this message to the other side in a clear and unmistakable way, it is not enough to display only numbers in a spreadsheet and talk generally about our high morale. They are, of course, important. But they will prove to be largely insufficient if coordination and compatibility are not the main focus of our efforts. What is thus needed is to transform the numbers that display the Alliance military strength, reinforced by the non-NATO EU Member States, into a single, coherent and robust fighting machine. With 22 EU member-states being also members of the Alliance and under the undisputed leadership of the US, expanded EU-NATO coordination in all sectors and especially on military education and training, exercising and, why not, planning will strengthen NATO's capabilities and especially NATO's European pillar. The NATO element that is present and stationed close to the European Eastern borders.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In times of instability, coupled with extreme budgetary restraints, working individually is a luxury that we simply do not have. This applies to countries but also to organisations. We must be open-minded, flexible and creative. We need to find practical ways to work together, to get fast at the level we need to be. And time is something we do not have either. So, we need to hurry up and organize better our system. Having said that I have to assure you that I remain confident that once more our deterrence will be successful. And it will.

Thank you.