

**NATO ENLARGEMENT: EXAMINING THE PROPOSED  
ACCESSION OF SWEDEN AND FINLAND**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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JUNE 22, 2022  
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Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



Available via <http://www.govinfo.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 2023

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**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2022**

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:52 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Kaine, Van Hollen, Risch, and Hagerty.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing will come to order.

As we sit here, Putin's forces continue to fire missiles at innocent Ukrainians, his generals continue to bombard cities, and his soldiers are committing war crimes.

Still, brave Ukrainians are fighting back, proving time and again that Putin gravely miscalculated the resolve of the Ukrainian people. He also grossly miscalculated how the rest of the world would respond to his brutal, unprovoked aggression.

The United States, the overwhelming majority of Europe, and, indeed, of the entire free world are now more united in support of not just Ukraine, but of our collective resolve to support democracies, the rule of law, and defend against brazen authoritarian aggression—indeed, the very values that drove the foundation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the first place.

Perhaps, more than ever it is crystal clear that NATO plays a vital role not only in the security of the United States, but as a bulwark protecting peace and democracy, and I feel confident when I say both the ranking member and I believe carefully considering new candidates for NATO expansion is one of the most important responsibilities this committee has.

Today, we will learn more about Finland and Sweden's candidacies for NATO membership. These are two steadfast NATO and U.S. allies with strong, durable military institutions and democratic institutions.

They have every reason to participate in collective defense against Russian aggression, and NATO has every reason to embrace and welcome them into the Alliance without delay.

In many ways, Finland and Sweden are ideal candidates for NATO membership. NATO is a defensive military alliance designed to preserve, in part, by holding members to high democratic governance and economic transparency standards.

Indeed, further to that point, democratic processes in both countries have shown that the Finnish and Swedish people themselves are strongly supportive of joining NATO.

While NATO has not yet formally prepared the accession protocols for Finland and Sweden, we expect it will very soon.

There is tremendous urgency and a strong case for inviting these countries. Expansion of NATO requires unanimous agreement by all NATO member states, of course, and with time of the essence, the 11th-hour concerns by Turkey standing in the way of this process only serve Putin's interests.

In the meantime, and as members prepare to meet next week in Madrid, it is imperative that we press ahead with our own approval process, which is why we are having this hearing today.

This may very well be one of the most important decisions this committee and this Senate makes in the decade and beyond as it relates to foreign policy.

Finland and Sweden are well positioned to integrate into NATO. Both have large, technologically advanced, and growing militaries. They have long partnered with NATO and have contributed to NATO-led operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Since Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, they have strengthened their relations with NATO even further, engaging in regular dialogue and consultations, exchanging information, and coordinating training and exercises.

In fact, given geography and history, Finland and Sweden have long equipped their militaries and prepared their societies for the prospect of Russian aggression.

Their participation in NATO would actively contribute to burden sharing with the United States and the whole military alliance.

Belonging to NATO is not just a measurement of military capability. We were established as a club of democracies that abide by a certain set of principles.

All U.S. administrations have used certain criteria for assessing candidates for NATO membership: a functioning democratic political system based on a market economy, fair treatment of minority populations, a commitment to resolve conflicts peacefully, an ability and willingness to make military contributions to NATO operations, and a commitment to democratic civil military relations.

I would like our witnesses to address how Finland and Sweden fulfill these criteria. The required information the departments have already provided give me great confidence, but I believe it is important to address them in an open setting.

We thank Sweden and Finland for their partnership and support. I look forward to welcoming you into NATO.

With that, I welcome Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Karen Donfried and Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Celeste Wallander.

Finally, it is my great pleasure to welcome Ambassadors Karin Olofsdotter from Sweden and Mikko Hautala from Finland here today for this hearing. We appreciate both ambassadors being here

with us, probably the first outside guests that we have had. I could not think of better guests to have for a better cause and a better moment.

With that, let me turn to the distinguished ranking member for his remarks.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO**

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Assistant Secretaries. We are glad to have you here to discuss this important subject, and welcome to both of you ambassadors, and I want to thank you personally for spending the time, both of you, and other officials from your countries in discussing these important issues.

The ambassador from Finland and I were early to the party, having met on this long before the invasion occurred, but with the obvious view towards this day might come.

With that, let me say also that the chairman and I have discussed this matter at length between ourselves and there is no daylight between us as to our view of this matter either.

About 4 months ago, Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent a seismic shock through the transatlantic community and it made it abundantly clear that the assumptions many had made about security in the 21st century were false or at least misperceived and forced us to reconsider how we will restore peace and preserve it.

Our immediate response has been strong, but there is no doubt NATO needs serious updates and reforms if we hope to face these emerging challenges over the long term, and it is going to be a long term, obviously. One of these proposed changes is the enlargement of our alliance to include Finland and Sweden.

In this hearing today, I look forward to a deep and thorough discussion of Finland and Sweden's potential accession to NATO. Any country that meets the requirements like Sweden and Finland should be able to join if they want.

Sweden and Finland both have strong democracies and capable militaries that will contribute immediately to NATO. Through their participation in multiple joint combat operations they have both proven their willingness and their ability to fight alongside NATO allies, and through multiple NATO partnerships programs they have proven their commitment to NATO's goals and developed highly interoperable NATO standard forces.

Let us also be clear. Sweden and Finland in particular have been guarding NATO's High North for decades. They have been doing the mission of NATO from the outside. This has been an asset to NATO and transatlantic security. It is fair that they be allowed to finally sit at the table with everyone else.

With this hearing, the Senate will take its first official step in considering this next wave of NATO enlargement. Throughout this entire process, we must remember to take the utmost care as we examine the details and implications of this decision.

In my mind, both countries have fully demonstrated their worthiness to join NATO and the value they each will bring to it, but we cannot leave any room for doubt about their place and commitment in our alliance.

I also want to reiterate my expectation that once the North Atlantic Council agrees and sends out the accession protocols, that the Biden administration will swiftly prepare the final reports and submit everything to the Senate quickly so we can begin our consideration.

In closing, let me say raising the—addressing the issue that the chairman also raised regarding Turkey's remarks about not being in favor of accession at this time, we are told and assured by both Sweden and Finland that they have been in good faith involved with Turkey in discussions to resolve that.

I think that is best left to them, between them and Turkey, without us at this point in time. Let there be no mistake, this must be done. This is so important. It must be done.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

We will start with our witnesses. Both of your statements will be included fully in the record, without objection.

Secretary Donfried, we will start with you. We would ask you to summarize—both—in about 5 minutes or so so that we can have a conversation with you.

The floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF KAREN DONFRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. DONFRIED. Thank you so much.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the critical role NATO plays in our security and the safeguarding of our freedom and democratic values, and Finland and Sweden's future place in the Alliance.

I welcome the opportunity to share with you today why the Administration strongly and unequivocally supports Finland and Sweden membership in NATO.

We strongly support NATO's open door policy and firmly believe that these two countries' membership in the Alliance would benefit the national security of the United States and strengthen the collective defense of NATO and the broader security of the Euro-Atlantic region.

As President Biden said when he welcomed Finnish President Niinistö and Swedish Prime Minister Anderson to the White House last month, we are proud to offer “the strong support of the United States for the applications of two great democracies and two close highly capable partners to join the strongest, most powerful defensive alliance in the history of the world.”

Likewise, I want to thank the more than 80 senators who signaled their full support for Sweden and Finland's applications for NATO membership in a letter to the President, as well as the bipartisan Senate Resolution 646 in support of their NATO accession.

This provided yet another endorsement for these two strong and capable democracies. The Administration has provided reports to Congress on Finland and Sweden's accession as called for in the



Senate's resolution of ratification of the NATO accession protocols for Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

Russia's unprovoked February 24 full-scale invasion of Ukraine caused a seismic change in both Swedish and Finnish public support for NATO membership.

Each country carried out inclusive and thorough democratic processes, leading to the decision to apply for NATO membership.

In an historic foreign and security policy shift, Finland and Sweden together officially applied for NATO membership on May 18. Since its inception, NATO's goal is to achieve a lasting peace in the North Atlantic area through collective security based on the common values of democracy, the rule of law, and individual liberty.

As advanced democracies that uphold the rule of law and world leaders in protecting and promoting global human rights, Finland and Sweden would strengthen NATO as an alliance of values and expand the circle of North American and European democracies committed to defending each other.

The United States has close bilateral defense relationships with both Finland and Sweden and has built robust cooperation and interoperability with these two countries through exercises and presence in the Baltic Sea region and elsewhere.

In addition, Finland and Sweden both are already active in NATO political dialogues, exercises and operations, and are highly interoperable with NATO.

Since Russia's further invasion of Ukraine in February Finland and Sweden have drawn even closer through enhanced political dialogue and sharing of information with the Alliance.

The two countries began cooperating with NATO in 1994 through the Partnership for Peace program. In 2014, Finland and Sweden were granted enhanced opportunities partner status, which affords partners the closest level of cooperation short of being a member.

Sweden has participated in NATO missions since 1995, including in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, and Libya, share cyber defense information, is home to a world-class defense industry, and is steadily increasing defense spending with the stated goal of reaching 2 percent of GDP as soon as possible.

Finland has contributed to NATO missions in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, and Kosovo, and will spend 2.16 percent of its GDP on defense in 2022.

In 2026, Finland will receive the first of its 65 F-35As from its \$12 billion deal, the largest national procurement in Finland's history and one that will give Finland a significant military capability, increase interoperability with the United States and other NATO allies, and have a positive economic impact on both the U.S. and Finnish economies. Both countries will enhance NATO's situational awareness and capabilities in the High North.

In short, I concur with what you both and many other senators have said already. NATO enlargement that includes Finland and Sweden would further bolster the Alliance. They would be net providers of security to NATO and would enhance the national security interests of the United States.

Turkey has raised concerns about some of Finland and Sweden's policies in advance of NATO accession. We recognize Turkey's le-

gitimate concerns regarding terrorism, which NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg has also highlighted.

We continue to encourage Stockholm, Ankara, and Helsinki to work together to find a path forward that addresses the security concerns of all allies and urge the Alliance to reach consensus on the accession process in an expeditious manner.

We are confident Sweden and Finland would be net contributors to the alliance and their membership will bolster the security of every NATO member.

Thank you so much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Donfried follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Ms. Karen E. Donfried**

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the critical role NATO plays in our security and the safeguarding of our freedom and democratic values, and Finland and Sweden's future place in the Alliance. I welcome the opportunity to share with you today why the Administration strongly and unequivocally supports Finland and Sweden's membership in NATO. We strongly support NATO's Open Door policy and firmly believe that these two countries' membership in the Alliance would benefit the national security of the United States and strengthen the collective defense of NATO and the broader security of the Euro-Atlantic region. As President Biden said when he welcomed Finnish President Niinistö and Swedish Prime Minister Andersson to the White House last month, we are proud to offer "the strong support of the United States for the applications of two great democracies and two close, highly capable partners to join the strongest, most powerful defensive alliance in the history of the world." Likewise, I want to thank the more than 80 senators who signaled their full support for Sweden and Finland's applications for NATO membership in a letter to the President, as well as the bipartisan Senate Resolution 646 in support of their NATO accession. This provided yet another endorsement for these two strong and capable democracies. The Administration has provided reports to Congress on Finland and Sweden's accession, as called for in the Senate's Resolution of Ratification of the NATO Accession protocols for Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

Russia's unprovoked February 24 full scale invasion of Ukraine caused a seismic change in both Swedish and Finnish public support for NATO membership. Each country carried out inclusive and thorough democratic processes leading to the decision to apply for NATO membership. In an historic foreign and security policy shift, Finland and Sweden together officially applied for NATO membership on May 18.

Since its inception, NATO's goal is to achieve a lasting peace in the North Atlantic area through collective security based on the common values of democracy, the rule of law, and individual liberty. As advanced democracies that uphold the rule of law and world leaders in protecting and promoting global human rights, Finland and Sweden would strengthen NATO as an alliance of values and expand the circle of North American and European democracies committed to defending each other.

The United States has close bilateral defense relationships with both Finland and Sweden and has built robust cooperation and interoperability with these two countries through exercises and presence in the Baltic Sea region and elsewhere. In addition, Finland and Sweden both are already active in NATO political dialogues, exercises, and operations, and are highly interoperable with NATO. Since Russia's further invasion of Ukraine in February, Finland and Sweden have drawn even closer through enhanced political dialogue and sharing of information with the Alliance. The two countries began cooperating with NATO in 1994 through the Partnership for Peace program. In 2014, Finland and Sweden were granted "Enhanced Opportunities Partner" status, which affords partners the closest level of cooperation short of being a member. Sweden has participated in NATO missions since 1995 including in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, and Libya; shares cyber defense information; is home to a world-class defense industry, and is steadily increasing defense spending with the stated goal of reaching 2 percent of GDP as soon as possible. Finland has contributed to NATO missions in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, and Kosovo and will spend 2.16 percent of its GDP on defense in 2022. In 2026, Finland will receive the first of its 64 F-35As from its \$12 billion deal—the largest national procurement in Finland's history—and one that will give Finland a significant military capability, increase interoperability with the United States and other NATO Al-

lies, and have a positive economic impact on both the U.S. and Finnish economies. Both countries will enhance NATO's situational awareness and capabilities in the High North. In short, I concur with what many of you have said already: NATO enlargement that includes Finland and Sweden would further bolster the Alliance. They would be net providers of security to NATO and would enhance the national security interests of the United States.

Turkey has raised concerns about some of Finland and Sweden's policies in advance of NATO accession. We recognize Turkey's legitimate concerns regarding terrorism, which NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg has also highlighted. We continue to encourage Stockholm, Ankara, and Helsinki to work together to find a path forward that addresses the security concerns of all Allies, and urge the Alliance to reach consensus on the accession process in an expeditious manner. We are confident Sweden and Finland would be net contributors to the Alliance and their membership will bolster the security of every NATO member.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of this Committee, Finland and Sweden are NATO's closest partners, and we look forward to welcoming them into the Alliance. Neither country's membership would detract from the ability of the United States to meet or fund its military requirements outside the North Atlantic area. We believe U.S. and overall Transatlantic security will be strengthened by their membership. Once the accession protocols are signed, we urge the Senate at the earliest opportunity to provide its advice and consent. Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.  
Secretary Wallander.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CELESTE WALLANDER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Dr. WALLANDER. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today alongside Assistant Secretary Donfried to express the Department of Defense's unwavering support for NATO membership for the Republic of Finland and the Kingdom of Sweden.

Thank you for holding this important hearing. This historic moment builds on the positive relationship that the Department of Defense enjoys with Ministries of Defense and Armed Forces of both Finland and Sweden.

DoD strongly assesses that the membership of both Sweden and Finland would be an asset to the North Atlantic Treaty as a values-based organization for defense and security.

Both countries maintain a high degree of interoperability and cooperation with NATO and are capable military partners whose values align closely with that of the United States.

A few key points on each of these NATO aspirants.

On Finland, general conscription, a well-manned and trained reserve, and a strong will to defend the country are the foundations of Finland's defense. Finland's location on the Baltic Sea, diplomatic experience with Russia, and advanced capabilities make it an asset to the Alliance.

Finland spends more than 2 percent of its GDP on defense and possesses unique military capabilities and expertise, particularly operating in the Arctic environment.

As a democracy and market economy, Finland's foreign policy is underpinned by a commitment to and the promotion of democracy, individual freedom, and rule of law. Finland is a modern, highly industrialized democratic country with one of the highest standards of living in the world.

The country has a well-educated and media savvy population, making its citizenry and institutions resilient to misinformation and malign influence while serving as a model to others.

In particular, Finland would augment NATO's capacity to defend critical infrastructure, operate in the cyber domain, and strengthen individual and collective resilience.

Finland first participated in a NATO-led operation in 1996 and became a NATO enhanced opportunities partner in 2014. It has contributed to or otherwise supported NATO missions in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, and Kosovo.

The Finnish Defense Forces comprise a total active and reserve force and strength of 280,000 with an additional 900,000 trained individuals available for military service.

Unlike many other European countries, Finland has maintained a general conscription model for defense. This allows Finland to rapidly call up its reserve force when needed at a lower overall training cost.

On Sweden, Swedish accession to NATO would further the principles of the North Atlantic Treaty by combining a first-rate and rapidly growing military with a principled foreign policy that ardently defends democracy and human rights.

Sweden is both a highly capable military partner and home to a world-class defense industry. Its military expertise in the Arctic and undersea environments would substantially advance Alliance capabilities.

Sweden already maintains a high degree of interoperability and cooperation with NATO, having become a NATO Partnership for Peace member in 1994 and a NATO enhanced opportunities partner in 2014.

Sweden has contributed to or supported NATO missions in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Kosovo, and Libya. Sweden's membership in NATO will strengthen the security of the Baltic Sea region, which remains an active area for Russian military activity, and accelerate regional maritime and air domain awareness.

Our bilateral defense relationship currently focuses on deepening interoperability, enhancing Sweden's defense capabilities, building regional air and maritime domain awareness, increasing Swedish contributions to multinational operations, and aligning strategic communications.

In particular, Sweden has an acknowledged level of competency in domestic crisis resilience and preparedness that distinguishes it as a leader among European nations.

The Department of Defense is confident the accession of Sweden to NATO will have a positive effect on the Alliance's military effectiveness based on Sweden's defense capabilities, support of U.S. and allied actions in multiple theaters, and expectation that Sweden will be able to contribute available capabilities to operations.

In closing, the Department of Defense assesses that Finland and Sweden are ready for NATO membership. Their accession will provide additional security and stability in Europe.

They already have close bilateral defense relationships with the United States, close working relationships and military interoperability with NATO as enhanced opportunity partners, and are

thriving democracies that share our values and fit the ideals of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Wallander follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Dr. Celeste Wallander**

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to express the Department of Defense's support for NATO membership for the Republic of Finland and the Kingdom of Sweden. This historic moment builds on the positive relationship that the Department of Defense enjoys with Ministries of Defense of Finland and Sweden and the interoperability we have worked to develop with each country's Armed Forces. The Department fully supports both countries' sovereign choice to apply for NATO membership.

FINLAND

Finland is a highly capable military partner whose democratic values align closely with those of the United States. General conscription, a well-prepared and trained reserve, and a strong will to defend the country are the foundations of Finland's defense capabilities. At the core of Finland's will to defend itself is the belief that the Finnish way of life is worth protecting. Finland's location on the Baltic Sea, experience with Russia as a frontline state, and advanced capabilities would make it an asset to the Alliance. Finland spends more than 2 percent of its GDP on defense and possesses unique military capabilities and expertise, particularly its experience operating in the Arctic environment.

In 2016, DoD and the Finnish Defense Ministry signed a Statement of Intent to increase practical cooperation. Our bilateral defense relationship currently focuses on deepening interoperability, enhancing Finland's defense capabilities, building regional air and maritime domain awareness, increasing Finnish contributions to multinational operations, and aligning strategic communications. Finland and the United States have enjoyed strong military-to-military cooperation dating to Finland's acquisition of F/A-18 Hornets in the mid-1990s. In December 2021, Finland announced plans to purchase 64 F-35A fighter jets, which will only deepen our cooperation and ensure another generation of close bilateral defense ties.

Finland also maintains a high degree of interoperability and cooperation with NATO. Finland first participated in a NATO-led operation in 1996 and became a NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partner in 2014, the closest level of partnership with the Alliance. It has contributed to or otherwise supported NATO missions in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, and Kosovo.

Finland's membership in NATO would further the principles of the North Atlantic Treaty and enhance the security of the North Atlantic area. As a democracy and market economy, Finland's foreign policy is underpinned by a commitment to and the promotion of democracy, individual freedom, and rule of law. Finland is a modern, highly industrialized democratic country with one of the highest standards of living in the world. Finland has a well-educated and media-savvy population, making its citizenry and democratic institutions resilient to misinformation and malign influence while serving as a model to others. As an advanced democracy, Finland's support of values enshrined in NATO's founding Washington Treaty—including democracy, human rights, and respect for territorial integrity—align strongly with those of the United States.

Finland's NATO membership will be an asset to the Alliance as a values-based security organization. Finland is a world leader in advanced telecommunications. As a NATO Ally, Finland would augment NATO's capacity to defend critical infrastructure, operate in the cyber domain, and strengthen individual and collective resilience. A founding member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and a member of the European Union (EU) since 1995, Finland has demonstrated for decades its commitment to individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Finland emphasizes the importance of international cooperation to collectively resolve the world's most pressing global challenges, including climate change, international terrorism, defending human rights, and promoting open and fair trade. Finland has a seat on the UN Human Rights Council from 2022–2024, will serve as OSCE Chair in 2025, and has ambitions to join the UN Security Council in 2029–2030.

The Finnish Defense Forces comprise a total active and reserve force end-strength of 280,000, with an additional 900,000 trained individuals available for military service. Unlike many other European countries, Finland has maintained a general conscription model for defense. This allows Finland to rapidly call up its reserve force when needed, at a lower overall training cost.

In addition to military forces, Finland maintains a comprehensive security model with a whole-of-society approach to security and preparedness. Vital societal functions are handled together by government authorities, businesses, NGOs, and citizens ensuring that every part of society is invested and understands the role they play in defense of the country.

Finland's accession to NATO is likely to decrease the United States' overall cost-share percentage of NATO's common funded budgets. Relative to other accessions, Finland's modern military forces and existing close partnership with NATO will reduce the time, effort, and costs associated with its integration into NATO structures. Finland would provide a net increase in security and military power to the Alliance. Given Finland's capable military forces, high level of readiness, and ability to provide for its self-defense, Finland's NATO membership presents no discernable additional cost requirements to the U.S. defense budget.

The Department of Defense is confident the accession of Finland to NATO will have a positive impact on the Alliance's military effectiveness. This high level of confidence is based on Finland's defense capabilities, its support of U.S. and NATO actions in multiple theaters, and its ability contribute available capabilities to operations.

#### SWEDEN

Swedish accession to NATO would further the principles of the North Atlantic Treaty as Sweden will combine a first-rate and rapidly growing military that will contribute to the collective defense of the North Atlantic area, with a principled foreign policy that ardently defends democracy and human rights.

Sweden is a modern, highly industrialized democratic country with one of the highest standards of living in the world. A member of the European Union (EU) since 1995, Sweden's commitment to democracy, individual freedom, and rule-of-law align closely with those of the United States.

Sweden is a highly capable military partner and home to a world-class defense industry. Sweden's military expertise in the Arctic and undersea environments would further the Alliance's capabilities. The Swedish Armed Forces, which has about 60,000 personnel, set a goal in 2020 to reach 90,000 by 2025. Sweden is working to increase military spending to 2 percent of GDP as soon as practically possible, expecting to meet this benchmark not later than 2028.

Sweden also maintains a high degree of interoperability and cooperation with NATO, having become a member of Partnership for Peace in 1994. Sweden first participated in a NATO-led operation in 1995 and became a NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partner in 2014, the closest level of partnership with the Alliance. Sweden has contributed to or supported NATO missions in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Kosovo, and Libya.

Sweden is a capable military partner that would be a net contributor to Alliance and transatlantic security should it be approved for NATO membership. Sweden has an acknowledged level of competency in domestic crisis resilience and preparedness that distinguishes it as a leader among European nations. In 2016, the Department of Defense and Swedish Ministry of Defense signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) to increase practical cooperation. Our bilateral defense relationship currently focuses on deepening interoperability, enhancing Sweden's defense capabilities, building regional air and maritime domain awareness, increasing Swedish contributions to multinational operations, and aligning strategic communications.

Sweden would be a net provider of security and military power to the Alliance area, thus enhancing the national security interests of the United States and all NATO Allies. Sweden considers the United States and Finland to be its two most significant strategic partners. Both the governing coalition and the opposition are committed to strong ties with the United States. Sweden's inclusion will not detract from the ability of the United States to meet or fund its military requirements.

Sweden's membership in NATO will strengthen the security of the Baltic Sea region, which remains an active area for Russian military activity. Swedish NATO membership will accelerate regional maritime and air domain awareness.

Sweden's accession to NATO is likely to decrease the United States' overall cost-share percentage of NATO's common funded budgets. Sweden's modern military forces and existing close partnership with NATO will reduce the time, effort, and costs associated with Sweden's integration into NATO structures, relative to other

recent accessions. Given Sweden's capable military forces, high level of readiness, and ability to provide for its self-defense, its NATO membership presents no discernable additional cost requirements to the U.S. defense budget.

The Department of Defense is confident the accession of Sweden to NATO will have a positive impact on the Alliance's military effectiveness. This high level of confidence is based on Sweden's defense capabilities, Sweden's support of U.S. and Allied actions in multiple theaters, and expectation that Sweden will be able to contribute available capabilities to operations.

In closing, the Department of Defense assesses Finland and Sweden are ready for NATO membership. Finland and Sweden's accession will provide additional security and stability in Europe. They have close bilateral defense relationships with the United States; already enjoy close working relationships and military interoperability with NATO as Enhanced Opportunity Partners; and are thriving democracies that share our values and fit the ideals of the North Atlantic Treaty.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both for very comprehensive testimony.

We have votes going on on the floor. It is the chair's intention to just continue through and rotate to somebody presiding so we can get through the hearing.

Let me start with you, Assistant Secretary Wallander.

Some of this you have—both have referred to, but I want to just detail the record. Is it accurate to say that Finland and Sweden have large, technologically advanced militaries and both have long partnered with NATO contributing to NATO operations, including in the Balkans and Afghanistan, and also understand that both countries either meet or have plans to meet the 2 percent NATO spending benchmark?

Dr. WALLANDER. Yes, Senator. That is accurate.

The CHAIRMAN. Since Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, popular support for joining NATO in Finland and Sweden and their governments' commitments to NATO have grown significantly.

Secretary Donfried, can you speak to how attitudes towards joining NATO in Finland and Sweden have changed and where those countries stand today on the subject?

Ms. DONFRIED. Yes. I agree with your analysis that February 24 fundamentally changed the perspective of both Finland and Sweden. We saw Finland very decisively make a decision then to move on NATO membership, and Sweden shortly joined Finland in that membership aspiration.

I think—it is interesting, there is a colleague of mine who works for the European Union who has talked about February 24 as Europe's 9/11, and I think for many Europeans it was unthinkable before February 24 that Russia would undertake a full-scale, brutal, unprovoked invasion of its neighbor, Ukraine, and that action fundamentally shifted security perspectives.

I agree with you that is how to understand the change in public opinion that we have seen in both countries and the strong support for NATO membership.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Respect for human rights, commitments to transparency, rule of law, democracy, are values that NATO members share and which are important to look at in assessing candidates for NATO membership.

Assistant Secretary Donfried, can you speak to how Finland and Sweden exemplify those values?

Ms. DONFRIED. I would be happy to do so.

When we are talking about Finland and Sweden, we are talking about two of our closest partners, and one of the fundamental things that unites us is our respect for democracy and human rights.

If you look at Sweden, there are so many examples that we could point to. One would be Sweden's 1-year OSCE chairpersonship in 2021 where they played an important invisible role on so many issues—Ukraine already at that time, Belarus, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in Transnistria—and Sweden brought to all of these conflicts its deep commitment to global democracy and human rights.

We also see gender equality as a fundamental aim of Swedish foreign policy and we also see Sweden as having been an active contributor to last December's Summit for Democracy where Sweden co-hosted a side event on women's economic empowerment.

I think there is no question that Sweden is deeply committed to advancing democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and will do so also in its upcoming presidency of the European Council of the European Union in 2023.

Then if we shift our attention to Finland, Finland, too, in all of its foreign policy has shown a deep commitment to promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Finland has emphasized the importance of the rules-based international system to collectively resolve the world's most pressing global challenges.

Finland, too, has been a leader in international fora, whether it is the number of Finns in the U.N. system and other key international organizations, whether it is promoting democracy in the OSCE in the Human Rights Council, and I believe that we will see Finland continue to cooperate strongly with the United States, with the EU, and will bring that sensibility to NATO membership.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Secretary Wallander, Finland has a long history of opposing Russian military advances and Sweden has a well-equipped fighting force.

Could you confirm that enlarging NATO to include Finland and Sweden will reduce the burdens including defense burden on the United States rather than increase them?

Dr. WALLANDER. Senator, membership in NATO of Sweden and Finland would enhance the capabilities of the NATO Alliance on both the ground, air, and sea domain and in new domains of importance, including the cyber domain and combating Russian malign influence in the area of disinformation, and both countries bring strong economies and strong democratic support for defense spending.

The Department of Defense sees no negatives in the membership of Sweden and Finland on burden sharing or on the capabilities of the Alliance.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Congress has a long and bipartisan track record of support for Baltic security as well as a more generally robust defense of NATO's eastern flank.



How would Sweden and Finland's membership in NATO affect our security posture in the eastern part of the Alliance?

Dr. WALLANDER. We have already seen in just the last month the potential of an improved—enhanced capability of NATO from the membership of Sweden and Finland with a participation in the BALTOPS exercise, which is vital for the ability of the NATO Alliance to enhance the security in the Baltic region where Russia is active and often irresponsible in its military presence.

Already BALTOPS has benefited from Swedish and Finnish participation as partners, but having a higher degree of interoperability and integration from members of the Alliance would further support those kinds of planning and exercises.

The CHAIRMAN. Finally, Secretary Donfried, even though we do not yet have texts of accession protocols, all NATO accession protocols are substantively identical and we are well positioned to assess the candidacies of Finland and Sweden even prior to the signature of the protocols.

Would you say that that is your understanding as well as it relates to the protocols?

Ms. DONFRIED. Yes. My understanding is that once the accession protocols are signed, we would then urge the Senate at its earliest opportunity to provide its advice and consent.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I am strongly supportive of accession and will work both with the ranking member through the committee and on the floor to get this ratified.

Senator Risch.

I am going to ask Senator Kaine to preside so I can go vote. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I think we have had a really good robust discussion here and one of the reasons is because we are all ready and we have all been expecting this, and as the chairman just pointed out, I wrote a letter—I do not know—2 weeks ago—maybe it is 3 weeks ago now—to both the White House and State directing your attention to the fact that this was coming down the pipe pretty quickly and to start work on it.

Can you give us any kind of a time frame? You talked about as early as possible and what have you. How quickly can you get that material to us, I guess, is the question I would have?

Ms. DONFRIED. So the accession protocols—what is happening now, as was already mentioned, is there is a conversation happening among Turkey, Finland, and Sweden, and the decision within NATO is a consensus decision, and Turkey has raised some concerns relating to terrorism in the approach of Sweden and Finland.

Of course, the United States, along with Turkey, shares a desire to end the scourge of terrorism and we all take this very seriously. My understanding is those conversations are moving at pace. They are happening among those three countries.

What we saw this week is that NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg also invited the parties to have a conversation that he mediated. That was on Monday. We understand that was constructive.

We are confident that there will be progress here and that will allow the accession protocols to be signed and the ratification process here to move forward.

Senator RISCH. Are you intending to be in Madrid next week?

Ms. DONFRIED. Yes, sir. I am.

Senator RISCH. Okay.

Again, I come back to time wise. We all want to work as quickly as possible. Can you give us—let us assume that we get this one wrinkle ironed out next week. How quickly can we expect to see something here in the Senate?

Ms. DONFRIED. I think, to use your term, Ranking Member Risch, once that wrinkle is ironed out I think it would move immediately.

Senator RISCH. That is important.

I think you indicated about consensus. By the word consensus did you mean unanimously, essentially?

Ms. DONFRIED. Yes. Yes.

Senator RISCH. So have a clear understanding of that.

All right. That is clear, and as you have heard from the chairman and I, we are all in on this and we want this to happen as rapidly as possible.

It is something that is—it will be a great addition for NATO, for the North Atlantic, and I appreciate your work on it.

With that, I am going to yield back, Mr. Chairman, as we have had a—or Mr. Acting Chairman.

Senator KAINE [presiding]. Mr. Acting Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Ranking, and to our witnesses and others.

I, actually—oh, excuse me, do we have either—anyone on by WebEx right now?

All right. That means I am next.

I want to thank, actually, Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch. Apropos of this discussion, this committee acted in the last couple of months on a resolution I have with Senator Rubio to make clear that no president of the United States can withdraw from NATO without congressional approval.

The Constitution is silent about exiting treaties. It is very clear about entering treaties. A two-thirds Senate vote is needed.

It is squarely within the jurisdiction of this committee, and the chair and ranking had a markup on this and it passed overwhelmingly in the committee. They gave me permission—a clearance—to try to get it added to the annual defense authorizing bill, which we passed out of the SASC Committee last week overwhelmingly.

Because SASC will not consider matters in the jurisdiction of another committee, even with the agreement of the chair and ranking, I was not able to get it added.

I was trying to get it added because I thought it would send a really powerful signal about congressional support for NATO on the verge of this next NATO meeting, but we can have another opportunity.

Senator RISCH. There is other ways of doing that, as the senator well knows.

Senator KAINE. Yes. We will look for other ways to do it. I just wanted to thank the chair and ranking for being willing to let us try it in the Armed Services bill. We will look for another way.

One of the things that I think is interesting about Sweden and Finland—and we have talked about their respective capacities, economic strength, worked together with the United States in the past—is the fact that on these defense matters they also have a really significant cooperation among them.

So you are not just getting two different new allies. You are getting two allies that have significant capacity, but that also do a lot together, and the fact that they would both approach this NATO membership together is also interesting to me.

Talk a little bit about the long-term defense and diplomatic relationship between Sweden and Finland, because I think that actually brings an additional element to the table as we consider NATO accession for the two countries.

Ms. DONFRIED. I am happy to start, and you may want to weigh in as well.

I think your observation is on point, and it is striking how closely Finland and Sweden do cooperate in the security and defense area, and, interestingly, we saw Finland be the first to announce its intention to seek NATO membership and then Sweden followed.

If you look at public opinion in Sweden, you saw about a 10 percentage point jump when the Finns announced their commitment to pursuing this and I think that get to your point of how joined up these two countries are when they think about their own security and it also relates to how current NATO member states see this.

There was a question earlier about the BALTOPS, and it is interesting because if Finland and Sweden or when Finland and Sweden join NATO, the Baltic littoral, with the exception of the Russian coast on the Gulf of Finland and Kaliningrad, would be ally territory, which enables NATO to better monitor activity in and plan the defense of the entire vital region.

You have seen the Baltic foreign ministers state publicly that they and NATO will benefit from Finland and Sweden's strong military capabilities so I think you see that benefit both on the diplomacy side and on the military side.

Over to you.

Senator KAINE. Secretary Wallander, do you have anything to add to that?

Dr. WALLANDER. Thanks. Yes.

Finland and Sweden bring not only common advantages as strong potential allies, but have, through their own complementary capabilities, worked together, participated in NATO-led or, simply, multinational exercises in really constructive ways.

I will give you a couple of examples. One is Finland, obviously, has a very strong territorial defense capability, very important for a country with an over 800-mile border with Russia and experience of fighting the Soviet Union in the 1930s and doing so effectively.

Sweden has been—has substantial capabilities in the maritime domain and has carefully monitored Russian maritime and air activity over the Baltics, and Sweden also has participated in bilateral programs and cooperation with the United States in the area of Special Operations Forces as well.

The two potential allies—aspitant allies bring similar strengths in their democracies, in their market economies, in their strengths

as European countries, and then they each bring their own complementary military capabilities that will further strengthen the NATO Alliance.

Senator Kaine. That is excellent.

Secretary Donfried, I want to ask you a question. You said that some of your colleagues in Europe have described this moment, the February 24 attack of Ukraine, as Europe's 9/11, and I am pretty sure I know what you mean by that, but I kind of wanted to dig into it further.

People who are not spending a lot of time in Europe and do not know the European reality might think, oh, but Finland and Sweden, they are quite a ways away from Ukraine so why would they view an attack on Ukraine as the equivalent of a 9/11 style attack on Europe.

Just dig into that a little bit more. I think I know what you mean, but I think it would be important to get this testimony out there.

Ms. Donfried. Thank you for the question.

I will tell you how I heard it, in fairness to the individual who said it, but the way I heard it was just the sense of shock that Russia, in 2022, would undertake this full-scale, unprovoked, unjustified brutal invasion of its neighbor, Ukraine.

Of course, in the first instance, that has tragic implications for Ukraine, and I think we have all been inspired by the bravery of Ukrainians in meeting that challenge and their resilience.

It also fundamentally alters the European security landscape, and so that is how I understood it, that every country in Europe recalculated its own assessment of its security, and I think Finland and Sweden in so doing, whereas in the past they always believed their security interests were best served by having a NATO partnership, but not being members, that changed almost overnight.

That was how I understood the comment.

Thanks.

Senator Kaine. Thank you very much for that.

This is one where in my 10 years here I have never seen a bigger gulf between the United States and our European allies on our predictions about what was going to happen.

We shared the hopes for what would happen or would not happen and we were sharing the same set of facts upon which to make a prediction.

I agree, I think there was a degree—and I can, certainly, understand that wishful thinking is a somewhat derogatory phrase, a deep hope that, of course, Russia is not going to invade. I mean, it is a muscle flexing exercise.

When it became a reality, which much of U.S. intel was saying it was going to become a reality, I can see that that caused this kind of continent-wide recalibration as you describe.

I am going to—oh, please.

Ms. Donfried. I should just—I should not lump all of Europe together. I want to be clear.

Senator Kaine. Yes.

Ms. Donfried. I do think there were differences in perception—

Senator Kaine. Yes.

Ms. DONFRIED. —across the European continent, just to be clear. I do not mean to say all of them.

Senator KAINE. Yes. I hear you.

There being no senators on WebEx now, Senator Hagerty, you are up next.

Senator HAGERTY. Okay. Thank you very much, and to our witnesses here today, Assistant Secretaries Donfried and Wallander, welcome to you. Thank you for being here to discuss an important topic regarding strengthening the NATO Alliance.

I would like to take you back to my service as U.S. Ambassador to Japan. There, I spent a tremendous amount of my time and effort in increasing the capabilities of the U.S.-Japan alliance on a military front, trying to ensure that the agility, the interoperability, and the overall military capability was being maximized for our combined forces.

I worked very often with then Prime Minister Abe on this topic. I support our current Ambassador Emanuel as he works with current Prime Minister Kishida in the same arena. It is very important.

Up front, I would like to say I support Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO because their addition will be accretive to the overall capabilities of the Alliance, and I appreciate that.

As the United States advances its NATO policy in the 21st century, I believe it is going to be important to get back to the basics. There, I mean, in the very first instance, NATO is a military alliance that needs to focus on deterring military threats with real military capabilities, and if the last year has demonstrated anything it is that the NATO Alliance must stand stronger to better deter Russia's military threat to us and to our allies.

My first question will be to you, Assistant Secretary Wallander.

When will Finland and Sweden, respectively, meet the goals of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense? I know that Finland is closer than Sweden, but both were on track, as I understand it.

Can you give me your sense of when they will meet their goals?

Dr. WALLANDER. Sure. It is a great question, Senator, and I share your commitment to making sure that NATO allies are contributing to security of the Alliance.

Finland already in 2022 does meet the 2 percent floor—the Wales Pledge. Finland's defense spending is at 2.2 percent of GDP and Sweden is—

Senator HAGERTY. That is projected for 2022?

Dr. WALLANDER. This is for 2022. Sweden's government has committed to meeting the 2 percent pledge as soon as possible and no later than 2028.

I would note also that Sweden meets the NATO—the less cited, but no less important NATO standard of spending at least 20 percent of its defense budget on acquisition of capability.

Senator HAGERTY. I met with Sweden's ambassador recently and she told me in very encouraging terms that they were doing everything they could to accelerate their progress toward that goal. So thank you for that.

Assistant Secretary Wallander, you also talked with Senator Kaine about some of the current capabilities that Finland and Sweden will contribute to the Alliance.

Can you give me a sense of what you would like to see them develop for the future?

Dr. WALLANDER. Certainly, one of the hopes would be that both countries would contribute and, I believe, will contribute to the battle groups on the eastern flank, the eight eastern front countries of NATO.

Finland and Sweden both have very strong bilateral relations with the Baltic countries, in particular—

Senator HAGERTY. Yes. Yes.

Dr. WALLANDER. —and they—Sweden and Finland can become not just strong defense partners or allies of the Alliance, but strong contributors as those countries face Russian aggression right on their borders.

Senator HAGERTY. I hope you will work to guide their acquisition strategies in that direction and I look forward to their contributions.

I want to sum it up, though, with you, Assistant Secretary Wallander.

It is your testimony today, I presume, that from the Defense Department's perspective that adding both Sweden and Finland to the NATO Alliance will, indeed, strengthen NATO's military capabilities and, therefore, their deterrence capabilities?

Dr. WALLANDER. Yes, Senator. That is the Department of Defense assessment.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you very much.

I would like to turn to you, Assistant Secretary Donfried.

I support adding Finland and Sweden to the NATO Alliance, as you know, but I also want to ask you about other important things that the United States should be doing to counter and, to frankly, defund Russia's military aggression.

The Biden administration's energy policies have perversely helped to fund Putin's war machine in Ukraine. Do you dispute the fact, or the assessment at least, that despite international sanctions, Vladimir Putin's regime has earned nearly \$100 billion from energy exports during the first 100 days of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine?

Ms. DONFRIED. Senator Hagerty, thank you for that question.

What I would say is I think it is a complicated equation because what we have seen is that as more Russian oil is going off the market we are also seeing that Russia has declining oil profits as a result of being forced to sell its oil at steep discounts.

So there is a calculation about what is the discounted price of that Russian oil and then how does that affect the scarcity of supply. So I—

Senator HAGERTY. Actually, what has happened is there has been a windfall that has come to Russia. Do you accept the fact that oil and gas markets are global markets?

Ms. DONFRIED. Yes, they are.

Senator HAGERTY. All other things being equal, if the United States were to actually ramp up its oil and gas production, would the increase of energy supplies actually lower the global price of energy?

Ms. DONFRIED. An increase in energy supply should reduce the price.

Senator HAGERTY. It certainly should. If you think about Russia's energy exports, they made up half of Russia's budget—more than half of their budget before the windfall that has come into the marketplace took place.

Is that—is a price increase actually helpful or hurtful to Vladimir Putin?

Ms. DONFRIED. A price increase is helpful, but if you are having a challenge selling Russian oil because of the sanctions, that is what has forced some price decline on Russian oil, in particular.

Senator HAGERTY. The reports are that Russia has actually had a massive increase in its revenues from oil sales just in the first 5 months of this year. Its oil sales are up close to \$100 billion. That is more than enough—in fact, almost one and a half times its annual military budget.

In effect, we are inadvertently funding Vladimir Putin's war machine. That is the point that I am trying to make, and I want to encourage you to please take the message back home that when President Biden decided to wage the war on fossil fuels here in America, it has a global impact and that global impact not only hurts American consumers here at home, but it also is hurting the brave Ukrainians that are trying to fight right now because they are also a casualty of President Biden's anti—

The CHAIRMAN. [Presiding.] The time of the senator has expired. I just want him to acknowledge I have given him a significant amount of time over the time.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope this will change.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I was watching part of the hearing on WebEx and, of course, we were interrupted by votes.

Let me, first, thank our witnesses for their work.

As has been already demonstrated in this hearing, there is strong support for NATO expansion in Finland and Sweden, and we recognize there is a process we go through and we also recognize, as you have already pointed out, that all NATO members have to agree and you want to give space for Turkey to be able to have the conversations it needs with the aspirant countries.

We all appreciate that, but we certainly urge that we have to make sure that that is constructive and timely and we would hope that the—our leadership would help provide that type of accommodations so that those conversations take place, but they do not unnecessarily delay the considerations of their entry into NATO.

I want to sort of follow up on the impact that this is having on Russia's calculation—Mr. Putin's calculation. He is, obviously, watching very closely what is happening with Sweden and Finland. He is also watching what is happening with the European Union and their invitations in regards to Moldova and Ukraine.

Can you just tell us how you feel these expansions, whether of the EU or of NATO, would affect Mr. Putin's calculations in regards to his aspirations for a greater Russia?

Dr. WALLANDER. Let me start on the defense and military side.

The accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO would significantly complicate Russian military planning for any kind of military operations against NATO by doubling the length of Russia's front border with NATO allies and by strengthening NATO-allied capabilities in the Baltic Sea region and in the Arctic High North.

There is no question that this accession of Finland and Sweden is something that is not welcome in Moscow as it plans for a hostile relationship with NATO. NATO is a defensive alliance, but the Russian military would have to take this into account.

I would simply also note that for 20 years Russia has sought to divide the NATO Alliance on multiple issues, sought to fracture it in order to paralyze it diplomatically and militarily, and the strength with which the—and the public and political strength of the desire to accede to NATO by both Finland and Sweden has further strengthened the Alliance and has shown to the Kremlin that its efforts to weaken the Alliance have not only failed, but have actually reverberated negatively.

Ms. DONFRIED. If I could just make two quick comments in response to your question, Senator Cardin.

First, in terms of your question about the impact on Russia's calculation, the irony here is that Vladimir Putin said one of the reasons he was engaging in this brutal assault on Ukraine was his concern about NATO getting too close to Russia's borders.

Well, what a miscalculation. What a strategic miscalculation. If that was his concern, he now has Finland with an 830-mile border with Russia and Sweden saying they want to join NATO. That is quite striking.

The second point is, of course, we are concerned also about the security of Finland and Sweden in this interval between their application and accession. We are confident that we and our allies are well positioned to help these two countries address their security needs and any concerns that they might have in this interim period, and President Biden said on May 18 that while their applications for NATO membership are being considered, the United States will work closely with both countries to remain vigilant against any threats to our shared security and to deter and confront aggression or the threat of aggression.

As has already been mentioned, we exercise regularly together in the Baltic Sea region and the U.S. military routinely maintains presence in the vicinity of both countries. We feel that we are also being vigilant during this interim period.

Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Let me just make a comment. We are, today, concerned about the expansion as it relates to Finland and Sweden, but we also need to be concerned of the focus in the Black Sea.

Russia clearly is interested in dominating the Black Sea, and with Ukraine being compromised by the Russian presence, it even makes it more urgent for us to shore up NATO's capacity within the Black Sea.

I just mention that because I think we need to look at that as the next chapter of our challenges in regards to national security threats.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.



Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Great to see both of you here. Thank you for your service.

Just for the record, President Biden has been calling upon oil refiners in the United States to increase their capacity. In fact, the other day he said he might—he is looking at the Defense Production Act as a potential tool to push that in the right direction.

I am a strong believer that having both Sweden and Finland as part of the NATO Alliance would be good for the Alliance and good for those countries. They are both democracies. They both believe in the rule of law.

We already have strong security partnerships and they would be great additions, in my view, to the NATO Alliance.

My question to you, Assistant Secretary Donfried, we have the Madrid Conference coming up. What is the likelihood that we will be in a position to offer a formal invitation to Sweden and Finland to join the Alliance at the upcoming Madrid Conference?

Ms. DONFRIED. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen, for that question.

What has been happening is that Turkey, which has expressed its concerns about, in particular, Swedish and Finnish stances with regard to the fight against terrorism, has been engaged in conversations with Finland and Sweden to find a resolution to their concerns, and this week we saw the NATO Secretary General help in mediating that conversation. On Monday there were meetings among those parties, which we heard were quite constructive.

So we are confident that this will be resolved in a positive way. There is broad and deep support across the NATO Alliance for Finnish and Swedish accession. We are hopeful that we will soon achieve a positive resolution.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Look, I am hopeful as well and I am glad to hear the talks are coming along, but let us be clear on what we mean by Turkey's so-called concerns about Sweden and Finnish positions in the fight against terrorism.

We are specifically talking about President Erdogan's concerns about support for the SDF and elements of the SDF, right?

Ms. DONFRIED. It is a concern, in the first instance, about the PKK, which we all recognize is a terrorist organization, and then you are right, it has to do with those PKK-affiliated groups.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Right, but just to be clear, Sweden already has a law on the books that recognizes or identifies the PKK as a terrorist organization, correct?

Ms. DONFRIED. Yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. They are in line with the United States and most of our other partners. Is it not the case that the United States has been a strong partner with the SDF in the fight against ISIS?

Ms. DONFRIED. Yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Right.

Just to be clear, I mean, we want to work this out, but we should make clear to President Erdogan that they are criticizing Sweden and Finland for taking actions the United States Government has taken.

President Erdogan also wants to extradite Gulen. We are a country that recognizes the rule of law. So are Sweden and Finland. Again, we have had concerns here about the deployment of Russian S-400s by Turkey and have taken action in this committee and the Congress.

I want to, amend, support the ongoing talks, but let us recognize, I think, that the positions that Sweden and Finland have taken are pretty much on the same page with the position the United States has taken with respect to the SDF and the very important fight against ISIS and terrorism.

Sweden and Finland have been, in my view, on the right side in that fight against ISIS.

Can you just lay out what you see as the time line, again, whether you are—whether you believe that we will be successful at getting everybody on the same page, including Turkey, by the time the Madrid Conference comes around?

Ms. DONFRIED. I will say that we certainly are pushing for that.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. All right. I am going to end there. Again, I think we all recognize what the challenge is here. We want to make sure these are constructive talks.

Sweden and Finland have already taken measures in response to Turkey's concern. Is that not correct?

Ms. DONFRIED. That is correct. Finland and Sweden have been engaging very constructively in these talks and they have been forward-leaning in terms of being responsive to the concerns raised.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Right. I mean, Sweden, as I understand it, ended their arms embargo against Turkey. Is that right?

Ms. DONFRIED. That is correct.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Got it. All right.

Thank you both. I think we would all like to see for the good of the Alliance and to make sure we send a strong signal to Putin that what he is doing is an attack on democracy, on the rule of law, and I would hate to see—this moment, which you described, would underscore the fact that Putin's invasion of Ukraine is a strategic failure because it actually encouraged Sweden and Finland to join this defensive alliance.

I would hate to see that moment squandered because of an inability to address the issues that we are talking about today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Let me just echo Senator Van Hollen's bit of frustration about the comments we make about Turkey, Sweden, and Finland as it relates to urging them to work together.

As, Secretary Donfried, you know I had the opportunity to speak to the chiefs of missions this morning—all of our ambassadors around the world and several others. I know you were there.

I am not constrained by the constraints maybe you all feel you have at the State Department. I believe you call out whoever is wrong on something, and if there are multiple parties that are wrong then you call out multiple parties.

As Secretary Van Hollen has said, Secretary, there is a possibility in the future—as Senator Van Hollen has said, the reality is is that Finland and Sweden are aligned with our own policies as it relates to the PKK and the SDF and our fight against ISIS. So

it is a little disingenuous to suggest we urge all parties to work together.

Of course, it would be great for them all to work together and come to a conclusion. I do not know what Turkey is trying to extract from them.

At the end of the day, that is what this is about, and maybe if we get in the game they want to extract from us, too, which I will be vehemently opposed to.

We do not need for any extraction to take place or any concessions to take place to have two great democracies join NATO.

Having said that, I just think, for the record, it is one of the things that for 30 years of doing foreign policy irks me about the State Department, regardless of which Administration is in, that we call upon all parties to do something when not all parties are responsible, at the end of the day, for the conflict that we have, with the issue that we have, or the problem that we have.

I have extended the time here to—I know there are some members who had an interest, but there is no member presently before me either on—virtually or in the committee.

So with the thanks of the committee for your participation and for your insights, this record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:50 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

