

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2014*

**Statement on the Completion of Anders Fogh Rasmussen's Term as Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

*September 26, 2014*

Today marks the end of Anders Fogh Rasmussen's term as Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As Secretary General, he has been a dedicated leader and tireless advocate for the importance of the transatlantic alliance as the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic relations and security. Under his leadership, NATO allies have worked together to address a wide range of security challenges, from continuing our work in Afghanistan and the Balkans to leading the international effort in Libya. In the final year of his tenure, his leadership has been critical in guiding NATO's response to unexpected and serious challenges posed to our common security by Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine and the growing threat of ISIL in the Middle East. Secretary General Rasmussen's strategic vision for the alliance has helped guarantee our readiness to meet any threat, and our alliance is stronger because of his leadership.

Anders brought a deep personal commitment to assuring a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace, based upon his unwavering commitment to the shared common values that bind us as allies: freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and the dignity of the individual. So as he leaves his post today for the last time, we express our gratitude for his friendship and selfless service to NATO, a sentiment I know is shared deeply on both sides of the Atlantic.

As Secretary General Rasmussen's term comes to an end, we warmly welcome his successor, former Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg. Secretary General Stoltenberg will bring energy, experience, and a keen understanding of the importance of defending our values and maintaining our commitments to each other's security, and I look forward to working with him to address the new and emerging challenges we face as an alliance.

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