Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to all of you.

Thanks to RUSI for inviting me again. Happy to be back and speak about NATO’s BMD just three months before our next Summit in Warsaw.

Earlier today, you could hear about NATO’s ambition to declare the Initial Operational Capability in Warsaw. Allies recognise the significant increase in capability provided by the Phase II of the US EPAA, but they also know that certain parameters need to be met to declare the IOC, be it in technical, operational or political domain.

I believe that Roberto Zadra gave you a clear and comprehensive overview of areas that need to be still addressed, be it command and control arrangements, voluntary national contributions, BMD programme or wider strategic environment. This allows me to elaborate in further depth on some selected aspects.
Specifically, I would like to speak about policy framework for NATO BMD. If we look on the main policy principles governing BMD in NATO, we can see that they have not basically changed since NATO summits in Lisbon and Chicago in 2010 and 2012 respectively.

NATO BMD is a tool to exercise our core task of collective defence. It is driven by the threat posed by increasing proliferation of ballistic missiles. There might be nuances in individual perception of threat by Allies, but based on the principle of indivisible security, solidarity and fair burden sharing, we are assessing the threats together, we collectively decide on main parameters of any action taken and we retain political control at 28.

Our capability is adaptive - if the threat changes, NATO BMD will change too. But BMD is only part of a broader response to the possible threat, besides numerous diplomatic, political or legal mechanisms tackling proliferation. BMD is also a contribution to the overall deterrence and defence posture of NATO, including its traditional conventional and nuclear components.

In terms of particular BMD architecture, the only portion which is commonly funded by all 28 Allies is the BMC3I backbone. Necessary sensors and weapon systems to be plugged into this backbone are made by Allies on a voluntary basis.

Last but not least, NATO BMD is not against Russia. It is neither designed nor capable to be used in this direction.
• Having briefly summarised the main building blocks of a policy framework for NATO BMD, I repeat that none of them has changed since Lisbon and Chicago. I would even go further and argue that none of them will actually change in Warsaw. Indeed, I stand to be overtaken by real events, but I do not assume any of these principles being modified in near future.

• BMD will remain in our toolbox for collective defence as the threat will not diminish soon and neither its increasing trend. BMD programme will remain to be implemented and funded collectively, while offering sensors and interceptors will remain subject to voluntary decision by nations. Finally, despite the Russian behaviour over last two years, territorial BMD will – as a matter of policy – remain excluded from NATO plans and reassurance measures responding to Moscow’s assertiveness.

• You can ask now, whether I have picked the policy framework as a topic of my intervention just to conclude that nothing has changed recently and will not change soon? Actually, I do see a policy area related to BMD, which has experienced quite an interesting development over last few years.

• It is the BMD role in the broader Integrated Air and Missile Defence. The integrated approach to the air and missile defence might not have been as explicit as some other parameters, but I believe it has been part of the policy
framework for BMD from the very decision in Lisbon in 2010.

- IAMD does not feature in any of the Summit declarations in last years, but you could find clear references to it in all internal comprehensive reports Allies have done on BMD in advance of their summits, at least since 2010. Below the public level, Allies have been recognising for quite a long time that there is – as one of the NATO papers stated prior to the Warsaw summit – an “ultimate goal of integrating air and missile defence”.

- We have even several NATO committees and internal staff entities, as well as concepts and policies that have air and missile defence in their respective titles.

- That said, what integration really means depend very much on whom you ask. For engineers, it could be about integration of various C4I systems or about multi-use sensor and weapon systems. For planners, it could be about single set of requirements or solitary defence design. For operators, it could be about unity of command or common operational picture. For policy or doctrine makers, it could include uniform set of rules and provisions for both air and missile defence.

- All these might be true and valid approaches, but it often requires a change of political perception to fully implement all the underlying visions, expectations or ambitions of distinct subject matter experts. As regards political perception of what IAMD means, this has
relatively recently evolved in NATO in a noteworthy fashion.

- There has been for a while a good and consensual understanding that BMD forms just a part of broader IAMD mission, together with other components addressing protection against threats coming through the air, be it aerodynamic or ballistic ones, including cruise missiles, RPAs, conventional aircrafts, or RAM. However, the relative significance of each of them may have developed significantly.

- While the air defence was strongly recognised as having an utmost importance for NATO in the Cold War times, its significance for political masters relatively dropped in the two decades following thereafter, when any real air opponent seemed to disappear.

- We see a kind of revival – if I may use such a term – of air defence in terms of political perception only in the last years. This indeed comes as a consequence of unfortunate developments in our neighbourhood, be it Syria or Ukraine, and our learned limitations to address these crises and to respond to some particular capabilities and ambitions demonstrated by other actors, including in the airspace.

- The BMD – and I should say “territorial” BMD – curve in NATO context has been a bit different over the same period of time. We only recognised the need for some BMD in late 90’s and then spent a decade to address
various technical and pol-mil concerns before actually deciding to develop our own capability in Lisbon.

- However, at least since the Summit in Bucharest in 2008, the BMD has continuously featured very high in the NATO agenda, including all the subsequent summits.

- We should also note an interesting and relevant developments regarding perception of the theatre BMD. Despite the fact the TBMD is conceptually part of BMD, it is much closer to traditional air defence and perception of its significance has to some extent evolved in similar way.

- While we decided in 2005 to develop our TBMD to protect deployed troops in operations outside NATO, we learned only after events in Syria from 2012 that TBMD might be relevant for collective defence, too. Though some might claim that the Patriot deployments in Turkey were rather a political signal, it drew attention of our leaders and our public to the lower layer of BMD, which had been to some extent overlooked before.

- I would therefore argue that we can currently see a more balanced perception of the individual components of the IAMD at political level. I also believe that the need for a holistic approach is better understood and recognised.

- Nevertheless, changing one’s mind-set takes time and we are not yet there. Supporting the pol-mil work in NATO, I can see many national representatives, as well as staff
members, including myself, who are constantly learning what integrated approach really means.

- Full implementation of a holistic approach certainly does not go without challenges. But not without opportunities either. Let me mention some, staying deliberately at the pol-mil level as I have neither ambition nor expertise to elaborate in detail on technical or operational implications of the IAMD.

- One immediate challenge I can see relates to Russia. I leave it up to you, whether it is more a strategic communications or real policy issue. The question is: Can we successfully retain our key message that BMD is not against Russia, while at the same time not excluding that other portions of the IAMD are?

- In other words: Can we provide sufficient assurances to all NATO members to address any threat, if required, including the air and missile ones, while at the same time claiming that BMD is not a tool against Russia, i.e. we do not recognise any ballistic threat from Russia?

- I am personally convinced that we can, though it may be challenging. We just need clear internal policies, as well as consistent and strong external messaging. In this context, Allies recognise importance of NATO strategic communications.

- Turning to benefits and opportunities of a holistic perception, I would mention national contributions. While
the emphasis – at the time – on the BMD (or even more specifically on the upper layer segment) could give only little room for relevant participation of European Allies, recognition of the equal importance of lower layer and other components of IAMD can provide real opportunity, including for multinational cooperative projects.

- At later stage, this could involve even nations beyond NATO itself, though there is still some way to go. Several Allies and partners possess, plan to acquire or plan to develop assets with some lower layer BMD capability, be it sensors or interceptors. This does not necessarily mean we will soon have as much as we need, but it could be at least a bit easier to get the right political traction now.

- Another benefit that I could see, if we start looking at the IAMD in its entirety is a slight de-politisation of the BMD itself. It can be a wishful thinking of a frustrated staff member, but I observe that BMD is still sometimes suffering too much political attention, comparing to other components of the IAMD, which are not necessarily less important, less relevant, less sensitive or less complex.

- Let me quickly conclude now. There is still some work to do to enable declaration of the BMD IOC in Warsaw. Despite the clear increase in capability, we should certainly not expect any revolution in terms of the main political parameters for BMD, but we should note an evolving policy recognition and political perception of a holistic approach towards the IAMD.
• This could be certainly a longer term trend, going beyond the potential IOC declaration.

• Thank you for your attention.