

Palabras de S.M. el Rey en la audiencia a los participantes en la 68ª sesión anual de la Asamblea Parlamentaria de la OTAN

20.11.2022

Para empezar, me gustaría darles oficialmente nuestra más cordial bienvenida a España. Para nosotros es un gran honor recibirles con motivo de la 68ª sesión plenaria anual de la Asamblea Parlamentaria de la OTAN; y hacerlo aquí en este Palacio Real en el que precisamente hace 5 meses la Reina y yo recibimos a los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno que asistieron a la Cumbre de la Alianza.

The traditional holding of this Plenary Session of NATO's Parliamentary Assembly at the end of the year, certainly gathers a special dimension in the current circumstances.

War has dramatically hit Europe again in 2022. Russia's illegal and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine has not only caused the ominous spread of death and destruction throughout its territory, but it has also brought to NATO's doorstep an extremely serious and unacceptable damage to peace and a rules-based international order.

Nine months have passed since the first Russian missile strikes and air bombings hit Ukrainian soil, since a massive tank and troop's offensive breached its internationally recognized northern, eastern and southeastern borders, violating the security, integrity and independence of a sovereign nation. That day, 26th of February, marked the beginning of this conflict at the heart of Europe, with dramatic consequences both for the Ukrainian people and for international stability.

Allow me to take this opportunity to convey once again a strong message of support and solidarity to the brave Ukrainian people and their leaders.

However grave this conflict –and international crisis– is, far from damaging transatlantic unity and solidarity, it has actually reinforced them in an extraordinary way. The Madrid Summit, last June, represents –and resulted– a clear, firm and unanimous proof of this.

A Summit that will remain a milestone for NATO, having reaffirmed the principles and values that unite us, provided strategic depth and guidance through the new Strategic Concept, and adopted an ambitious set of measures that give us the necessary tools to strengthen our deterrence and defence, and face the challenges of the incoming decade.

These challenges to Euro-Atlantic security, which we face in cooperation with the EU and the rest of NATO partners, come from all directions and in very different fields: from cyberspace to outer space, from keeping at the forefront of technological advancement to energy resilience, from terrorism to the impact of climate change on security.

In this respect, let me stress the important role played by the Parliamentary Assembly in facing all these challenges. Your work guides the Alliance, contributes to shaping its policies, and supports the strengthening of relations with its partners –thanks to the Assembly’s effort to cooperate with them for decades. But, above all, the Parliamentary Assembly provides the Organization with an essential link with Allied societies, something crucial for the democratic values we all stand for.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, here in Spain, the year 2022 could easily be labelled “the NATO year”. To celebrate the 40th anniversary of our country's accession and the subsequent Madrid Summit has allowed us to reaffirm Spain’s unwavering commitment to the Alliance. Good proof of that is also the remarkable and exemplar performance that our troops on the ground –our air and seamen and women– have shown in different NATO missions and operations. I am certainly proud of them –and most people here in Spain are too– and on this 40th anniversary, they deserve our full recognition, for their service and loyalty side by side with the men and women from all member states that serve under the NATO flag.

To host tomorrow’s plenary session will undoubtedly be a brilliant final touch to this very special year for Spain.

Thank you very much. I hope you can enjoy this evening and also find some time to enjoy your time here in Madrid. Welcome and thank you very much.