

Promoting Accountable Burden Sharing

Last year, as Washington played host to the NATO Summit, allies “reaffirmed” a commitment to spend 2% of their GDP on defense. Yet, allies had made that very commitment a decade prior and failed to deliver – instead allowing the U.S. to carry the burden of European security. Then and still now, NATO allies refuse to overcome the perennial burden sharing problem. A year removed from this “recommitment” and even as conflict in Ukraine continues in their own backyard, one-third of NATO members remain deficient. It is unreasonable for the U.S. to continue subsidizing the security of a peripheral theater, while allies neglect to even signal a willingness to carry a greater share.

As the alliance prepares to convene at The Hague later this month, the President has rightfully demanded greater burden sharing and higher defense spending. As the Summit opens, Senator Lee plans to reintroduce two pieces of legislation to support the burden sharing agenda. The Allied Burden Sharing and NATO Burden Sharing Report Acts require regular reporting on allied contributions to the common defense.

The burden sharing narrative cannot be dictated by empty platitudes, from deficient allies, at an annual Summit. These bills promote burden sharing accountability, removing any doubt as to who deficient allies are and equipping Congress with the information it needs to perform necessary oversight.

Allied Burden Sharing Report Act

Requires DOD to prepare an annual report on the defense spending of all 59 U.S. allies – including:

- Annual defense spending of each allied nation, both as a nominal figure and percentage of GDP
- Activities of each allied nation that contribute to military or stability operations in which the Armed Forces of the U.S. are a participant or could be called upon per the obligations of a cooperative defense agreement of which the United States is a signatory
- Any limitation placed by an allied nation on the use of such contributions
- Any actions undertaken by the U.S. or by other countries to minimize such limitations

NATO Burden Sharing Report Act

Applies only to NATO member countries and includes all of the above reporting requirements plus:

- A description of each member’s hard vs. soft power contributions for Ukraine
- Defense industrial base health and comparative advantages
- Size and structure of armed forces
- Any areas where the country would be fully reliant on allied assets
- FMS deliveries or contracts in the previous year
- Any change in defense spending over the previous year and anticipated future spending