

**ASG SPEAKING POINTS FOR NATO'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC  
AND THE DONATION FROM THE USAID**

- Ladies and gentlemen,  
  
REAR ADMIRAL Vitiello,  
  
Mr. Gustafson,  
  
Mr. Silkworth,  
  
Commander Lepore,  
  
Colleagues,  
  
Good morning.
- It is a pleasure to be here today at the Southern Operational Center in Taranto. Let me start by thanking all of you personally for taking the time to participate at today's ceremony.
- This ceremony marks an important initiative--the donation of 200 ventilators from the United States, through the US Agency for International Development, to a stockpile of medical supplies NATO has established to prepare for the next wave of the pandemic.
- This is a reflection of the generosity of the American people and the great support by our Ally the United States. These ventilators will be provided to Allies that need them if a second wave hits.
- Despite the devastating effect that COVID-19 has had on the United States, it is impressive that you continue to assist other Allies when they need it.
- We are also very thankful to Italy for offering the location for the stockpile, here, at the Southern Operational Center and to NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) for the logistics support for the medical equipment and supplies that the stockpile will contain. Those contributions are also essential to our success.
- The COVID pandemic remains a top-priority of Secretary General's agenda. Our focus from the NATO perspective is to prevent the health crisis from becoming a security crisis, which includes maintaining our deterrence and defence posture.

- Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, our disaster response coordination center has received a volume of requests that is without precedent in its 22 year history. This includes 19 requests from Allies, partners, military commanders in the field, as well as other international organisations.
- The Center has coordinated 125 offers of support in response to those requests. This is only a fraction of the efforts of Allies and partners have provided to each other.
- Military forces from across the Alliance have flown more than 100 missions to transport medical personnel and hundreds of tons of supplies, facilitated the construction of field hospitals, and added tens of thousands of treatment beds; and thousands of military medical personnel have been deployed in support of civilian efforts.
- We have already done a lot of work together to ensure that NATO's mission will not be affected by a second wave of the pandemic and to demonstrate that NATO Allies remain committed to each other, no matter what the threat is.
- We are here today because that work continues. I would like to express my gratitude once again to the United States for this substantial donation.
- Thank you