



NATO AFTER STRASBOURG-KEHL

NATO at 60 : core values, new strategic thinking and the way ahead

A novelty for NATO: its 23rd summit was jointly hosted by two member countries – France and Germany – on 3-4 April 2009, exactly 60 years after the signing of the Washington Treaty.

This symbolic venue set the scene for an anniversary summit that focused primarily on the broader and more strategic issues that face the Alliance today. And more specifically, it was the first NATO summit for President Barack Obama of the United States. The Summit also announced the appointment from 1 August 2009 of Anders Fogh Rasmussen as the next NATO Secretary General.

In the limited time that NATO heads of State and government had available, they examined issues that have a profound impact on NATO:

- the adoption of a Declaration on Alliance Security that calls for a new NATO Strategic Concept;
- the adherence to basic principles and shared values, as well as the need for ongoing transformation;
- Afghanistan, NATO's key priority today;
- France's decision to fully participate in NATO military structures and the impact of this decision on the Alliance's relations with the European Union;
- the welcoming of two new members – Albania and Croatia – and the reaffirmation of NATO's open door policy; and
- NATO's relations with Russia.

New strategic thinking

The Declaration on Alliance Security

In the midst of the symbolic ceremonies held in Germany and France to mark 60 years of cooperation, solidarity and freedom in the Alliance, NATO leaders issued a “Declaration on Alliance Security”. This declaration outlines the fundamental principles that underpin the Alliance, as well as current and longer term security challenges. Its principal purpose is to stress the need for a new Strategic Concept, which takes into account radical changes in the security environment since 1999 when the Strategic Concept was last reviewed.

Values and transformation

Although NATO is firmly committed to its basic principles and values, it continuously adjusts its thinking and actions to the changing security environment. NATO leaders stated that collective defence, the transatlantic link, the indivisibility of Allied security and NATO solidarity are and will remain key principles which guide the work of the Organization.

However, NATO has evolved from an Alliance focused on collective defence to one that also engages in partnerships and crisis-management operations both in and beyond its members’ territory. The Alliance adjusts its defence posture to new security challenges by transforming its capabilities and structures. A case-in-point: NATO leaders reiterated their intention to develop a new defence-planning process and options for a comprehensive missile defence architecture should it be required in the future. They also stressed the importance of improving the NATO Response Force (NRF), as well as keeping arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation issues under active review.

It has been reaffirmed that NATO has to communicate in an appropriate, timely, accurate and responsive manner, and that strategic communications are an integral part of the Alliance's efforts to achieve its political and military objectives.

New perspectives for international cooperation in the field

Afghanistan

At the Summit, NATO heads of State and government discussed Afghanistan at great length and issued a specific declaration reiterating their determination to prevent the country from becoming, once again, a haven for terrorists and extremist activity.

They highlighted the four guiding principles on which their strategic vision is based: long-term commitment, Afghan ownership, a comprehensive approach and regional engagement. They stressed the need for greater regional engagement, both civilian and military, particularly with Pakistan. The success of stabilizing and developing the country is highly dependent on the level of cooperation with neighbouring countries and within the international community.

Afghan ownership, reconstruction, the respect of human rights, especially for Afghan women, and the fight against corruption are just some of the many challenges that were also examined. NATO leaders announced, among other things, the expansion of the Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund to sustain the ANA units and the launch of a NATO Training

Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) within the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in order to improve training of the ANA and the Afghan National Police.

Training, educating and mentoring is a key activity for NATO. It is proving to be essential in Kosovo, Iraq, for the African Union, for Partner countries implementing defence reform and, more globally, for ease of communication in NATO-led, multinational forces.

A comprehensive approach to security challenges

President Nicolas Sarkozy's decision to bring France back into the integrated military structure of the Alliance will hopefully also help to give NATO-EU relations a new impetus to boost cooperation between the two institutions. Allied leaders made it clear that they recognized the importance of a stronger European defence and deeper cooperation with the European Union, as well as with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Council of Europe.

NATO is also working with international players such as the United Nations to combine military and civilian resources in a comprehensive approach that helps to coordinate efforts, especially in countries such as Afghanistan.



New members and initiatives for Euro-Atlantic integration

Albania and Croatia: NATO at 28

Just as staging the summit in Germany and France was a powerful symbol of post-World War II reconciliation, welcoming Albania and Croatia into this tightly knit Alliance strongly emphasized NATO's intent to keep its door open to countries that aspire to membership in order to uphold its vision of a Europe whole and free.

The Balkans

NATO leaders reiterated their agreement to extend an invitation to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* to join the Alliance as soon as a solution to the issue surrounding the country's name is reached. They stressed, more generally, that Euro-Atlantic integration of the Balkans was essential for the security and stability of the entire region and neighbouring countries. In this context, they welcomed progress made in cooperation with Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia – three countries that have been NATO Partners since December 2006.

Ukraine and Georgia

NATO's desire to support the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of Ukraine and Georgia were also highlighted as heads of State and government reiterated that the Alliance will continue to support these two Partner countries in their preparations for NATO membership.

* Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Renewed relations with Russia

Lastly, agreement was reached among NATO leaders that the Alliance should resume cooperation with Russia, despite disagreements with regard to Georgia. Russia is an essential player in the Euro-Atlantic community and has a number of shared security concerns with NATO member countries including stabilization of Afghanistan, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, counter-terrorism and counter-piracy. It also participates, in various ways, in crisis-management operations led by the Alliance.

For a more detailed account of summit conclusions, consult the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit Declaration, 4 April 2009 at:
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52837.htm

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