

NATO AT A CROSSROADS*ENHANCING NATO'S CREDIBILITY, COHESION, AND CAPABILITIES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION***NATO Emerging Leaders Working Group Report to the Secretary General**

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The 2014 Wales Summit: A Critical Juncture for NATO

NATO is at a crossroads. At a time when the world's most important political-military alliance is facing an increasing number of internal and external challenges, its current military posture, political commitment, and vision are insufficient to maintain the necessary strength, credibility, and cohesion needed to overcome these challenges.

Recent events in Ukraine and the renewed attention for NATO have underlined that the Wales Summit represents an opportunity to reinvigorate the Alliance. After discussions in recent years about the role of NATO, 2014 is a year marked by the end of NATO's ISAF mission in Afghanistan and a deterioration of the security situation inside Europe. We are at a critical juncture. Despite NATO's understandable refocusing on Europe, dangerous out-of-area challenges throughout the globe, the ongoing threat posed by terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and the rise of new power centers make clear that NATO cannot just return to its traditional strategic posture. While the Alliance has to pay more attention to its immediate neighborhood in the future, it cannot ignore the manifold threats and challenges beyond its borders.

The Alliance is also challenged from within. Different interpretations on the very purpose of NATO have long been obstacles to effective collective action by its member states. As a result of the financial crisis, latent financial austerity has already affected NATO's defense capabilities and threatens to undermine it further. Widespread domestic skepticism concerning NATO's missions in far-away places has led politicians to be reluctant in making the case for NATO. Most critically, the relevance of the Trans-Atlantic bond has become less clear for younger generations. Whereas previous generations have seen NATO as a prime example of Allied solidarity and unity against the backdrop of the Cold War, millennials and their younger counterparts of the post-9/11 era have been raised at a time of growing Trans-Atlantic mistrust, debates about the effectiveness of operations in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, doubts about common values, and disagreements about burden-sharing. In some member states more than in others, trust in the institutions and values of liberal democracies has suffered.

These numerous challenges notwithstanding, we believe in NATO's values, core mission, and role as an indispensable alliance. As the institutional embodiment of our community of liberal democracies and the Trans-Atlantic bond, NATO is vital to the stability, security, and prosperity of current and future generations. In order for the Trans-Atlantic Alliance to continue to play this role, the Allies need to take bold steps at the Wales Summit. If they fail to adapt and forge a compromise between the legitimate concerns of all members, NATO risks the real danger of slowly fading into irrelevance. Bold and effective policy has to go beyond finding the lowest common denominator.

Our vision for NATO calls for: a strengthening of the credibility and capabilities of the Alliance, not merely maintaining the institution's status quo; active Allied participation, contributions, and solidarity, not merely statements of the values of membership; responses to both conventional and asymmetric threats to the Alliance, not merely a reversion to old ways of doing business; an

acceleration of NATO's ability to respond faster to rising or newly emerging threats and genuine action; a debate about what it means to be an alliance of liberal democracies and a process of self-reflection, instead of a repetitive refrain that we all share the same values.

Short-Term Recommendations (measures to be taken in the run-up to or at the Wales Summit)

1. **Reaffirm solidarity and undergird reassurance with concrete measures:** To erase any doubt about the Alliance's commitment to Article 5 and any perceived weakness in NATO's deterrence capabilities, NATO needs to refill the security vacuum that has lingered on NATO's doorstep, particularly along its eastern and southeastern borders. In the short-term, Allies should build on the measures undertaken by NATO already and regularly hold exercises and rotate troops to those member states that feel most vulnerable. All member states, not only a few, should take part in these reassurance measures, which should include apportioning new significant funding to such measures, demonstrating that Allied security is indivisible.
2. **Reiterate NATO's open door policy:** NATO's transformative power remains critical among aspirant countries and its vitality rests on the ability to support democratic reform, defense transformation, and stability on NATO's borders. At the Wales Summit, NATO should clearly state that the door to membership remains open to countries able to meet threshold obligations, specifically to Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.¹ NATO should also state its intentions to advance Georgia's membership aspirations through offering it a Membership Action Plan (MAP).
3. **Advocate for the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP):** TTIP is of strategic importance to the Trans-Atlantic bond and Alliance members' position in a rapidly changing international order. The Summit declaration should support efforts by the United States and the European Union to conclude the agreement.
4. **Begin with a strategic overhaul of the Alliance:** The Wales Summit offers an opportunity to launch a truly strategic overhaul, leading up to the next NATO Summit in 2016, tasking the incoming Secretary General with the development of an extensive review process, involving both NATO member states as well as its populations. Misaligned national policies, unbalanced caveats, absent strategic guidance, and insufficient civil security expertise have compounded political and operational challenges. A detailed review of the Alliance's key political and military missions and efforts in the past 10 years would assist understanding of how these internal challenges have undermined overall success and highlight opportunities for improvement in conducting future missions.

Mid- to Long-Term Recommendations (to be undertaken after the Wales Summit leading to a new Strategic Concept to be adopted at the next NATO Summit in 2016)

Contributions

1. **Ensure that NATO disposes of the necessary capabilities to answer any threat:** Member states must make clear that they will invest in their collective capabilities to deter and respond to any threat that might emerge in the short or long run. All members should commit to increasing national defense budgets by a set increment until NATO's required threshold of 2 percent of member states' GDP is reached within 5 to 10 years in order to enhance Trans-Atlantic burden-sharing and avoid a Trans-Atlantic solidarity crisis. When deciding on high-level posts, the Alliance should give priority to citizens of those member states abiding by their commitments.

¹ Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Crisis Management

2. **Agree on a new level of ambition and prioritize among different types of NATO missions accordingly:** Allies have voiced different views about NATO's geographical focus and level of ambition. In order to ensure the long-term health of NATO, its members have to compromise and find a balance between collective defense in and around Europe and operations in places far beyond its borders. While both tasks generally rely on similar types of forces, Allies have to invest in these capabilities to ensure that the Alliance will be able to fulfill them. However, NATO cannot be everywhere and do everything. NATO's defense planning should therefore proceed accordingly and prioritize areas where NATO is willing to assume necessary risk. Members should decide which operations will require the full commitment of the Alliance as a whole, which missions will require a portion of members relying on NATO's military infrastructure, and which missions should be undertaken by NATO partners and only supported by the Alliance under specific circumstances.

Collective Defense

3. **Reexamine NATO responses to attacks of all kinds:** Allies should reexamine Article 5 and the concept of aggression and armed attack and expand NATO's interpretation of an "armed attack" to include efforts to destabilize a country short of all-out conventional war. NATO should develop an action plan effectively to thwart destabilization operations for which military responses seem ill-prepared and insufficient (e.g., improved intelligence, early warning, cyber security, and public diplomacy capacities). In addition, NATO needs to be better prepared to respond to other non-traditional and asymmetric attacks, especially in relation to the cyber realm.
4. **Strengthen civil-military and homeland defense interoperability:** NATO should help Allies and partners to deal with asymmetric warfare, evaluating capabilities in intelligence, counterintelligence, prevention, anticipation, repression, and neutralization of threats. Alliance exercises and training events should include scenarios dealing with "destabilization campaigns" to demand members and partners work and plan by, with, and through civil society and homeland defense enablers, particularly those adept at addressing issues such as the rule of law, human rights, and gender (e.g., international NGOs, EU Police Mission Force). The mission of the Civil-Military Cooperation Center of Excellence should be re-scoped to reflect these new objectives.
5. **Reinvigorate NATO presence in Central and Eastern Europe:** Given what many have termed the most severe crisis in Euro-Atlantic security since the end of the Cold War, the Alliance has to question its strategic posture within Europe. Allies should reconsider the unilateral commitments made under the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, especially regarding the establishment of permanent installations and troop stationing in Central and Eastern Europe. In order to underwrite the principle that every ally enjoys the same level of security, NATO should prepare measures expanding Allied military presence in Poland and the Baltic states. In order to have a more balanced distribution of NATO installations across the Alliance, a major NATO command should be moved to Poland. The Alliance should also reexamine and bolster contingency plans for the defense of all NATO Allies.
6. **Agree on and implement a new Russia policy:** For more than 20 years, Trans-Atlantic security has been based on the assumption that there is no longer a conventional threat to Europe's east. Russia's annexation of Crimea and destabilization of eastern Ukraine raises doubts about previous assumptions. NATO should develop a consolidated and coherent NATO policy towards Russia, focused on an internal agreement that contemporary Russia can no longer be considered a partner if it acts in an adversarial manner. All arms sales to Russia should be suspended. In parallel, NATO should continue to work with Russia on areas of

common interest, holding the door open to cooperation with future generations of Russians that see Russia as a part of the Euro-Atlantic family of nations.

Cooperation

7. **Encourage new approaches with regional partners and prepare for future enlargement:** The Alliance has to find new ways to engage other countries such as Ukraine that want to cooperate with NATO. In addition to completing the admission of candidate countries, NATO should prepare for additional rounds of enlargement. As NATO partners are currently being punished for their integration efforts, the Alliance has to reflect on possible tools that can support partners such as Georgia as they become members of NATO. Allies should invite those European countries that have repeatedly demonstrated their quality as NATO partners and invite them to join. Specifically, NATO should publicly offer Sweden and Finland fast-track NATO membership and regional command positions as a way to frame that conversation and shape public opinion.
8. **Reorganize NATO global partnerships:** NATO's partnerships have become ever more important in recent years. Yet, despite managerial reforms of its partnership programs, the Alliance has not developed a common view of their purposes. Rather than continuing with a pick- and choose-model, NATO members should distinguish between different categories of partners and provide them with different possibilities to engage and influence NATO. Partner countries that share our liberal-democratic values—no matter where they are located—should receive preferential treatment and privileged access to internal NATO deliberations and instruments in order to bind them more closely to the Alliance. NATO should continue to cooperate with partner countries that do not share liberal values and work with them on defense transformation and the proliferation of NATO standards, facilitating cooperation in a number of fields. Key partners for political and military engagement must include the world's largest democracy and the country with the largest population, India and China, respectively. Similarly, NATO should develop partnerships with Brazil and South Africa, both considered to be pillars of regional stability and rising international players. NATO and its operations could only be strengthened if informed by these countries' perspectives—and potentially augmented by their capabilities. However, the Allies should make clear that NATO's identity as a value-based alliance means that particularly close relationships including influence of decision-making will be limited to liberal democracies.
9. **Intensify NATO-EU security cooperation:** To enhance the efficacy and efficiency of NATO-EU cooperation on political and security issues, the NATO Secretary General and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy should hold formal joint meetings of the North Atlantic Council and the EU's Security and Political Committee. Member states should be encouraged to streamline their contributions to EU and NATO formations such as the NATO Response Force and the EU Battle Groups. Closer planning and coordination between NATO's Smart Defence initiative and the EU's pooling and sharing agenda should be undertaken.

Investing in People

10. **Increase the importance of NATO for national civilian and military careers:** As increased familiarization with the Alliance and its members would likely develop a stronger appreciation for NATO and its functions, civil servants and military personnel should be given increased opportunities for NATO postings earlier in their professional careers. Such experiences would strengthen Trans-Atlantic bonds on a personal level, and bonds would be further strengthened when incorporated into members' respective home networks. NATO members should strengthen exchange programs between them and plan more common education and training on all career levels, particularly in fields where significant disparities in national capabilities exist, such as cyber defense and C4ISR.

11. **Ensure optimal support of the Centers of Excellence (COE) to the Alliance's goals:** Following a new NATO Strategic Concept, COEs themselves would benefit from a corollary strategic assessment. The assessment should specifically examine the individual efficiencies of the COEs, as well as their synergy relating to the Alliance's overarching missions, and reveal whether current COEs might require repurposing to ensure optimal support.
12. **Foster vitality through outreach:** NATO Public Diplomacy Division should lead an ongoing dialogue to encourage the continued infusion of ideas on ways to strengthen the Alliance. Such an initiative should consist of speeches and debates that highlight the diverse perspectives shaping and surrounding NATO, to include testimonials from those who have served with the Alliance. For civilian researchers, NATO should reintroduce fellowships supporting academic research on topics related to the Alliance. National defense colleges should encourage students to research and write on opportunities and challenges affecting the Alliance with means by which their findings can be shared at an appropriate level. NATO should engage community managers and NATO honorary ambassadors to talk about the Alliance in a way that reflects national specificities. In order to make NATO more appealing to a younger generation there needs to be a greater focus on making NATO accessible. Instruments ranging from NATO Academies to stories of missions and experiences from real or fictional characters should be used to develop awareness and aspirations about the values it promotes. Strengthening online media and educational activities would be an asset for this aim.
13. **Promote women, peace, and security:** Building on its existing initiatives to support United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 that recognizes the disproportionate impact of war and conflict on women and children, NATO should promote an environment both within its organization and through its missions that recognizes the equal contribution of men and women to international peace and security and work to promote the principles of the initiative as part of its values.
14. **Encourage self-reflection and debate the meaning of the West for the 21st century:** For the 65 years of its existence, NATO has not only defended its member states' territory, but also a specific set of liberal values. Its ongoing adaptation to a changing security environment has been facilitated by this normative base, which is at the core of the Trans-Atlantic community. Unfortunately, NATO members have lost some moral ground in recent years by not always living up their professed values. Even worse, increasing parts of our societies have lost faith in the foundations of our political systems. As a value-based alliance, NATO has not only to "live" its values in its operations, but also to protest against any weakening of democratic standards in its member states and encourage a debate about those values that still have the potential to serve as the political glue for the Trans-Atlantic community in the 21st century.

ABOUT THE EMERGING LEADERS WORKING GROUP

This report was prepared by members of the Emerging Leaders Working Group that NATO asked the Atlantic Council to convene in advance of the NATO Summit in Wales. Members were selected through a highly competitive and open application process. Members attended the Atlantic Council's April 2014 *Toward a Europe Whole and Free* conference in Washington, DC to begin preparing recommendations and will reconvene at the *NATO Future Leaders Summit* on September 4-5, 2014 in Wales. The report and its recommendations represent the general consensus of working group members' personal views, not necessarily the full view of each individual member or the views of the Atlantic Council or of members' employers. The Atlantic Council is a nonpartisan organization that promotes constructive US leadership and engagement in international affairs based on the central role of the Atlantic community in meeting today's global challenges. The working group members are:

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