



**FINAL POLICY PAPER**

# **“NATO Post-Wales: The Future of the Alliance and Regional Stability in the Western Balkans”**

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## **“NATO Post-Wales: The Future of the Alliance and Regional Stability in the Western Balkans”**

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## INTRODUCTION

In addition to the situation in the Ukraine, the main topic of the summit, the agenda included other important issues defining future tasks and missions of the Alliance. NATO leaders discussed the alliance's new look in the post-Afghanistan period, the growing importance of the Asia-Pacific region and the worrying developments in the Middle East and North Africa.

The three key missions of the alliance, which were adopted in the Strategic Concept in 2010 - collective defense, crisis management and cooperative security - will still remain relevant. However, there will be a need to build a new consensus around the importance of each of these missions for the individual member states and for the relations among them. The package will have to be considered against the backdrop of ever falling defense budgets in the member states. It was expected that the summit would provide answers to such questions as how to build relations with Russia and how to give credibility to the “open door” policy, given that since 2008 no invitations have been issued for admission of new members.

Needless to say, it was overly optimistic to expect that NATO leaders would reach consensus on all open issues. However, they agreed that current developments on the international security scene require a continuous adaptation on the part of the alliance. Therefore, on questions about which consensus was reached, NATO heads of state and government gave political direction to the alliance's bureaucratic and military apparatus on how to grapple with the challenges.

## REAFFIRMATION OF COLLECTIVE DEFENSE

Many NATO member countries, especially the Baltic states, are keenly interested in the basic postulate of NATO: collective defense, which is defined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. During the Wales summit, NATO leaders reaffirmed the basic task which the alliance assumes in accordance with Article 5 of the founding agreement; protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states. However, in order to fulfill this responsibility, NATO needs to enhance its capacity to respond to contemporary security threats. The crisis in the Ukraine and the chill in relations with Russia have only brought forward the decision by the allies to adopt the Readiness Action Plan, which will allow realignment of NATO rapid response forces closer to Russia's borders. The Readiness Action Plan, as announced by the NATO Secretary-General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, is intended as a response not just to Russian actions in the Ukraine but to security threats in other parts of the world.

NATO already had its Respond Force. What is new is that the forces are to increase their combat readiness and will be given new bases from which to deploy. They are multinational contingents, made up of land, air force, naval and special operations forces. They can be deployed anywhere in the world to perform missions of collective defense or crisis management. With its Action Plan, NATO expects to strengthen the capacity of the Forces to respond and increase their ability to deploy in a matter of days after receiving orders. The Baltic states and Poland are seeking to have a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) deployed on their territory so that they are able to react faster. They will be made up of several thousand troops that will be assigned on a rotational basis. This

raises the question whether these forces will be large enough to deter any Russian aggression against the Baltic states. They will be more like a warning light that the alliance is under threat, so that it may field much more robust resources. Another issue that arises is the time frame within which these forces will be operational. Leaders are always ambitious when adopting declarations, but when they have to follow through on what they have agreed, problems arise.

In order for these task forces to be rapidly deployable, it will be necessary to set up the appropriate infrastructure. Needless to say, that will mean realignment of equipment, logistics and the command structure of NATO. It will also mean improving the infrastructure of the member states where the forces will be based. In other words, it will mean new ports and airports, or at the very least the upgrading of existing facilities.

Furthermore, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of alliance forces, the allies will have to beef up their early warning systems, improve their capacity for the collection of intelligence and their mechanisms for the exchange of this intelligence with other allies. Consequently, defense plans for deployment of these forces need to be updated. That implies improvement in the capacity for military and non-military training of these forces.

It goes without saying, that in order to meet the goals of the established plan, NATO needs additional resources. In other words, an increase in the defense budgets of the member states. If member states want greater security, they are going to have to pay for it. According to Deputy NATO Secretary-General, Amb. Alexander Vershbow, the allies need to halt the trend of decreasing defense budgets that began after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the last five years, total defense spending by alliance members fell by 20%, while in contrast, Russia has increased its defense budget by 50%. But if we compare the actual budgets of NATO and Russia, we see that the United States alone, as the driving force in NATO, allocates almost eight times more for its military than does Russia. Or, to put it in billions of U.S. dollars, \$640 billion versus \$88 billion. Hence, in terms of budget resources available to her military, there is no real danger that Russia could soon go up against NATO. Nor does Russia have an ideological basis on which to start a new Cold War with “the West.”

But even more important is how funds allocated for defense are being spent. While the United States together with its allies spends enormous sums on crisis-management missions in the world’s hot spots, Russia has not had to foot bills on such a large scale, at least, not yet. Undoubtedly the Ukrainian crisis will “eat up” part of the budget that had been allocated for modernization of the Russian military. Money is an important consideration when we talk about military preparedness, but it is not the only metric. Many other considerations, such as level of training and morale, are also matters of serious concern when it comes to combat readiness.

Russia immediately responded officially to NATO’s intentions, announcing a new military doctrine for its armed forces. This was to be expected. Following the strategic shift of NATO to the East, Russia has to make some changes to her own strategy in order to respond adequately to the new situation. Although NATO announced that the new forces will have a defensive character, Russian officials are disturbed. They say NATO is shifting its boundaries ever closer to the border with Russia. First it did that through the enlargement process, then, with the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine, it increased its naval presence in the Black Sea and positioned fighter aircraft near the borders with Russia, and now it is establishing new military bases.

NATO says that the new realignment will not violate the 1997 “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation”, which prohibits the presence of “permanent” bases in Eastern and Central Europe. The Russian side does not share that opinion.

NATO suspended cooperation with Russia in April this year for failing to respect international law. This action curtailed the possibility of influencing Russia through use of the mechanisms for cooperative security in the NATO-Russia Council.

With the announced changes, the alliance seeks to boost its capacity for conventional defense. This is a direct consequence of the crisis in Ukraine. Poland and the Baltic countries, primarily because of past experiences, fear they may be target of Russian aggression. For their part, the leading European powers in NATO (Germany, France, and the U.K.) have for many years been reducing their military capacities due to the “peace dividend” after the “victory” in the Cold War. Not only have they pared their armed forces in numerical terms, they have also changed their militaries’ structure, armament and equipment. They have been preparing their forces for crisis-management operations, and have forgotten the basic purpose of armies: to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state. The crisis in Ukraine has showed that once again deterrence – the traditional role of individual armies and the alliance collectively – needs to be emphasized. However, the justifiable concern of NATO’s eastern member-states due to the intervention of Russia in Ukraine should not permit the alliance again to be focused solely on the threats coming from the East. Rather, NATO, as a global alliance, should be ready to face security risks and threats coming from the four corners of the globe.

## THE UKRAINE CRISIS AND NATO’S RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

NATO’s relationship with Russia was one of the issues discussed at the most recent summit of the alliance. Because of the crisis in Ukraine, relations between NATO and its “strategic partner”, Russia, are at their lowest ebb since the end of the Cold War. In addition to differing over Ukraine, NATO and Russia have divergent views on NATO’s plans to deploy “ballistic missile defense systems” on European soil. Furthermore, the issue of revision of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) remains unresolved. Different views on the situation in Syria merely fill in the gaps in the mosaic of open questions. Russia also felt that NATO was overly aggressive in its response to the crisis in Libya. The Putin administration is not satisfied with the level of influence that it has in NATO decision-making. Hence, the crisis in Ukraine brought these disagreements to a head. It is clear to all concerned that NATO and Russia are no longer “strategic partners”, but just exactly how they will continue to build their relationship remains uncertain.

Although it has positioned itself as an opponent to the West when it comes to the principles of liberal democracy, Russia is still an important player on the international scene. Geographically it is the largest country on the planet, enjoying veto power in the U.N. Security Council and a strong position as the key supplier to Western Europe of gas, fuels and minerals. Thus, Russia, as a global power, will continue to play a very important role in world politics. Even though NATO leaders denounce Russia for no longer being a “strategic partner” of the Alliance, there are still issues of common interest to both parties, such as Iran’s nuclear program and the fight against terrorism. In all likelihood, due to their geography and historical heritage, individual NATO member countries will have different perceptions of the Russian stance. Countries like Poland or Estonia will be more antagonistic, while countries such as Germany, France or Italy will advocate greater cooperation with Russia. Hence, it is still unclear what posture NATO will have towards Russia: Will Russia remain a “strategic partner”, will it continue as a “partner” only through its role in the PfP program, or will it be viewed simply as a “neighbor”, not linked to the alliance by any agreements? The least desirable option is to return to the time of the cold war, when Russia was treated as a “mortal enemy”. Precisely

how the relationships will evolve will depend not only on the member states of the alliance but also on Russia's actions.

## MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN

For more than a decade, the mission in Afghanistan had major implications for military planning, organizational structure of forces and procurement decisions of more than 50 allies and partners. The mission was a rationale for European NATO allies not bow to public pressure and cut their defense budgets, thus giving strategic importance to the mission.

Towards the end of 2014 the military part of the ISAF mission will come to an end. NATO is planning a new mission to train, advise and assist the national security forces of Afghanistan (NSFA) to be able to perform their constitutional task. This time, in addition to military instructors, police and other civilian experts will make a key contribution.

Western Balkan countries, albeit with modest resources, have offered to participate along with NATO partners in the new mission. They will bring to the Afghans their experience as security consumers, and as active contributors, through their participation in alliance peacekeeping operations. The local population has responded positively, and is ready to accept this open-handed assistance.

Afghan National Security Forces need to have the capacity and credibility to perform the task for which they are intended. One unresolved issue is the financing of ANSF; the Afghan government will not be able to meet the cost of these forces without foreign assistance. Again the help and solidarity of the allies will be decisive.

## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

What role NATO will play in Middle East events is still another unanswered question. Developments in the region, dubbed MENA (Middle East and North Africa) by NATO, are even more challenging. With Libya, Iraq and Syria internally divided, with Egypt having an uncertain future, and with Islamic extremists proclaiming a caliphate that has no national borders, the situation is ever more dramatic. The NATO summit in Wales identified the Islamic State (IS) as a security threat and called for an appropriate response to it.

Recent developments show that the region is not so much confronted with local crises or revolutions - which sooner or later will lead to new governments and new internal order - but rather that the region is facing a very worrying trend of erosion of the survivability of states. So far, NATO has been engaged in the region mainly through two partnership programs (Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative). Besides these programs, NATO has collaborated closely with regional institutions such as the League of Arab States and the African Union. NATO's other engagement has been in the area of crisis management, in the form of military intervention in Libya that helped replace the Gaddafi regime. In Syria, the alliance seriously considered intervening, but, despite the willingness of some key alliance members to take part in the operation, could not agree on taking military action.

The situation is complicated to the degree that neither effective partnership nor military intervention by NATO is possible. If the current governments fall or if they are replaced by military or religious regimes, or if they are preoccupied with the question of their survival, with whom is NATO to cooperate? What will be the benefit of the existing partnerships in such circumstances?

The sense of “wasted interventions” in NATO is not just a result of the considerable resources expended on crisis management operations, but rather the limited results that they have achieved. NATO members have become extremely cautious when it comes to gauging the benefits of security and stability that can be achieved by external military interventions. After the 13-year-long intervention in Afghanistan and the billions of US dollars and Euros spent as part of the international efforts for post-conflict peace-building, it remains to be seen whether these efforts will bear fruit once the military operation is concluded. Flare-ups of internal strife in Libya show how limited the effects of foreign intervention are when it comes to building a new internal political order. Three years after “successful NATO intervention” in Libya, the country is still torn by tribal conflict and divided among clans and religious groups, without any sign that a stable political system will be created any time soon. The catastrophic result of the NATO intervention in Libya is one of the reasons why NATO is extremely hesitant when it comes to intervention in Syria.

NATO’s reluctance to launch a military intervention is also having an impact on the crisis in Ukraine. Russia, along with China, has already blocked the U.N. Security Council from taking action in Syria. Russia’s increasingly obstructive stance in the Security Council makes it unlikely there will be any kind of military action in the West. Since it is clear that NATO can no longer afford to intervene without a UN mandate – as it did in Kosovo in 1999 – the alliance will therefore lack legitimacy for any military intervention. In general, NATO has far fewer mechanisms for responding to and dealing with security threats in North Africa and the Middle East than does the European Union. For example, unlike the EU, NATO has no mechanism for dealing with the migrants who pose a serious security threat to Europe. Hence, the NATO Summit in Wales called for “a coordinated international approach to the problem.”

## ASIA-PACIFIC

The announcement by the United States, in 2012 that more attention will be paid to developments in the Asia-Pacific region represents a strategic shift for the alliance. This “rebalancing” of resources and political attention towards the Far East is not anti-European, nor is it simply a realignment of the military forces on the global strategic chessboard. Rather it is a political, economic and military turning towards the other half of the globe. The previous Republican administration, under the leadership of George Bush Jr., had led the way, crafting a new American outlook on Asia and establishing new ties with India, Indonesia and Vietnam. President Obama simply went one step further in more explicitly emphasizing the importance of the Asia-Pacific region.

The implications for NATO will be significant, not only because the Alliance cannot remain unaffected if its guiding force redefines its own strategic priorities, but also because developments in Asia are extremely relevant for the European countries that are NATO members. Realizing that the security interests of its member states are no longer limited by their geographic boundaries, the alliance has announced that the horizons of its field of operations are now global. Moreover, the European economies, given the production lines they have in this region, are also very interested in the stability of Asia and the maintenance of secure communications with the region, an interest which

is shared by their North American allies, the United States and Canada.

The importance of this issue confronting NATO as an institution raises the following dilemmas: Should NATO, as a leading security alliance, redefine its strategic priorities, placing a stronger emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region, and if so, to what extent? Furthermore, from NATO's perspective, what is meant by “placing a stronger emphasis”? Does it primarily mean keeping track of developments in the Asia-Pacific region and possibly consulting with partners in that part of the world or it is supposed to mean that NATO would act collectively? If NATO does intend to act, which member states have the appropriate facilities and what is meant by the term “action”? If NATO intends to act with military forces in remote areas, it is clear that it will require naval forces, and if that is the case, then it should have long-term strategies for the procurement of the appropriate resources.

## NATO ENLARGEMENT

The next question that requires an answer is how to continue with the “Open Door” policy. The last NATO enlargement took place in 2008, when Albania and Croatia received membership invitations and Macedonia was given a “conditional invitation”, contingent upon a solution being found in its dispute with Greece. Montenegro, like Macedonia, has its hopes set on NATO membership, having made numerous reforms in the short period since its independence. The crisis in Ukraine has also given new momentum to this issue.

At the NATO Summit in Chicago in May 2012, the issue of which countries should become members of NATO and when was (again) a question that divided the allies. Then Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, declared that Chicago should be the last summit that did not discuss enlargement. In the view of the United States, all future summits would include the induction of new member states into the alliance. Since then, many allies have expressed doubts about the policy of further NATO enlargement and have directed their efforts towards getting the matter delayed. In this they have succeeded.

So far only four countries have the status of “membership aspirants”: The Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia. Macedonia had been prepared to receive an invitation even in Bucharest in 2008, but remained outside the alliance due to the blockade by Greece, which insisted that a resolution of the “name dispute” needed to be a prerequisite. During the Wales summit, NATO repeated its request that the dispute be resolved more expeditiously, so that Macedonia might join the alliance. According to experts, this issue will only be resolved when it becomes “too costly” for the parties involved.

Ownership over immovable defense property has been a problem for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). It is not possible to reach an agreement which property will be registered at the Ministry of Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These need to be solved if it wants to receive a Membership Action Plan, the first practical step toward full membership. It seems that at this point the political will is lacking for faster integration of BiH into NATO.

Montenegro won the most optimistic message from the Wales summit. The final Summit Declaration stated that by the end of 2015 Montenegro will be evaluated as to its eligibility for membership. Meanwhile, an intensive dialogue will be conducted in Montenegro, and it is expected that reforms in the security sector will be completed, the rule of law will be strengthened and that public support for

NATO membership will be increased.

According to NATO experts, the critical enlargement issue is the case of Georgia. In 2008, it was embroiled in a war with Russia over its regions, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Hence, there are doubts within NATO whether the alliance should make room for Georgia, even though, mostly due to pressure from the United States, NATO gave an explicit promise to Georgia and Ukraine during the 2008 summit that they would one day become members. Since then, there has been no movement on the enlargement question. Georgia is extremely keen to join NATO and wants at all costs to be seen as a credible candidate. As a result, at the Wales summit, it received numerous concessions from NATO, so gaining recognition for its progress on the path to full membership. However, as in 2008, Georgia (unlike Montenegro at the Wales summit) was not given any indication of when a decision on its membership would be adopted.

The prime minister of Ukraine announced that the state would review its “neutrality” decision of 2010 and requested guarantees of NATO membership like those of 2008. But for this declaration to be put into effect, a decision of the Parliament is required. After the election of deputies to the Supreme Rada in October of this year, matters will become clearer. It will open the fundamental question of whether a country the size of Ukraine, a partly dysfunctional state faced with disputes over its borders and the threat of further disintegration could ever be integrated into NATO. The members of NATO, sooner or later, will have to come to grips with this issue.

On the issue of expansion, the NATO’s position has always been that it is a “win-win” process. For some of the new members, that really has been the case. Others, on the other hand, quickly forgot the obligations that come with membership and have contributed very little to the missions of the Alliance and NATO’s overall capacity. Hence NATO is facing two dilemmas: first, how to ensure that only countries that give added value to NATO and increase the security of the Euro-Atlantic region will be accepted into the alliance; second, what mechanisms to use to ensure that newly recruited members will fulfill their obligations when they become full members. In other words, how does NATO ensure that a good aspirant will also become a good member? Furthermore, NATO needs to be much more specific vis-à-vis potential aspirants, so as to give credibility to the “open door” policy.

## REFORM OF “PARTNERSHIPS”

The question of adjusting NATO’s partnership policy after completion of the mission in Afghanistan is also a critical issue for the future of the alliance. In the post-cold war period, one of NATO’s success stories has been the creation of close friendships with nations all over the planet. Through the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, NATO has formed ties with countries in North Africa and the Middle East. On the global scene, NATO cooperates with countries such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. In most cases the benefit has been mutual: NATO provided expertise through multinational military actions using common standards and common procedures. On the other hand, many partners have contributed to the success of crisis-management missions led by NATO. Global partners made an outstanding contribution to the NATO mission in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the crisis in Ukraine again opened up the issue of whether partnerships with NATO, especially those, like Ukraine’s, that carry special privileges, imply some kind of security guarantees for partner countries. In the case of Russia’s aggression against the territory of Ukraine, NATO rejected

any kind of obligation, clearly indicating that Ukraine is not a member of the alliance and therefore NATO cannot extend security guarantees in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Although this explanation has been widely accepted by the member states of the alliance, it is not true. The framework document which is the basis of the Partnership for Peace and which was signed by Ukraine, reads that each member state of the Partnership may request individual consultations with NATO in the event of an imminent security threat. NATO extended this offer in 1994, partly because the creation of the Partnership was also a kind of delaying tactic in the process of NATO enlargement and a way of buying time to convince Russia that the alliance did not pose a security threat to it. After 1999, when the new NATO members (Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic) launched a debate on NATO membership for the Baltic states, NATO members were even more explicit in providing security guarantees, at least at the declarative level. Split between pressure from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia for membership on the one hand, and Russia's firm opposition on the other, NATO officials asserted that although the Baltic states are not members of NATO, the difference between membership and non-membership is “paper thin”. This was a promise, a kind of tranquilizer, to reassure the applicants that, even though they were not members of the alliance, NATO would not remain passive if any of the three Baltic states came under threat.

For more than two decades, NATO has been working to establish a wide network of partner relationships with countries both in Europe and beyond. In many cases the partner countries cannot apply for membership due to specific geographic limitations, or are not interested in doing so. A highly sophisticated system of partnership relations was established in these years. Most of the partners were grouped into several collective agreements, such as the Partnership for Peace (PfP) / the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). In addition to these arrangements, some countries, albeit in far smaller numbers, developed bilateral partnerships with NATO.

Initially these partnerships were very successful in establishing NATO standards among partners, in spreading stability, in resolving sensitive disputes between partners and most importantly for NATO, in winning support from partners for missions in Afghanistan, Libya and the Balkans. On the other hand, the majority of partners from various regions, having their own unique interests and ambitions, brought with them problems which hampered and complicated the business of managing the partnerships. In many cases, the initial expectations of the partners were not realized.

The biggest reform of NATO's partnership policy, known as “the Berlin Package” occurred in April 2011. The aim was to facilitate the management of the partnerships. Unfortunately for NATO, although military cooperation is going very well, the political problems among the partners remain unresolved. With the completion of the military mission in Afghanistan in late 2014, it will become even more difficult to solve the political problems, because the partners will not have any “reason” to meet on a daily basis to discuss open issues. Therefore the question facing NATO now is how to group the partnerships and what format they should take going forward. Should partners be grouped according to the contribution that they have made to NATO missions, or should they be grouped according to the political orientations of the respective governments, i.e. according to the degree to which they share and support the NATO'S values?

The early partnerships were organized into geographical groups, such as the 1994 Partnership for Peace program. Today 28 NATO member countries and 22 partner countries come together in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. The Mediterranean Dialogue was also launched in 1994 as a framework for cooperation with the Mediterranean countries and North Africa. Ten years later, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative was established, with the aim of fostering cooperation with the countries of the wider region of the Middle East. In addition to these formal structures, NATO has

built partnerships, mostly on a bilateral basis with countries such as Australia, Japan, Pakistan, etc.. Since relationships with these partners were not linked to a particular geographic region and were not specified in a particular group forum, they have generally been called “global partnerships”.

Since the summit in Wales, the issue of “partnership” has become a highly political one, with a number of sensitive components. For example, what are the criteria for becoming a NATO partner? Is NATO more concerned about the political system of a partner country or about the contribution the partner makes? What if the actions of partners are inconsistent with the commitments that they have undertaken? For example, all PfP partners have undertaken to comply with NATO values, such as respect for fundamental human rights and the rule of law. Another question: how can partners’ ability to influence the decision-making process be tied to their contribution to NATO operations? Finally, what would it mean for consensus in NATO if a member country were not on good terms with a partner country?

The reforms known as “the Berlin Package” offered a pragmatic concept that was quite flexible. The idea has been for partners to be offered a variety of options for their engagement in different flexible formats based on common interests. These include such matters as cyber threats, energy security and the fight against terrorism.

The reform was intended to restructure the partnerships through reasonable management controls without getting involved in politics. Sensitive political issues were put aside, so as to ensure the approval of all 28 member states. The introduction of “flexible formats” was intended to encourage members to consider establishing partnerships on a non-regional basis, in contrast to existing ones (PfP, MD and ICI) that were defined on a strictly regional basis.

NATO did not succeed in its bid to transform the “partnerships” because it failed to establish a relations “hierarchy” that correlated with the significance of the partner. Lumping them all in the same category meant failing to fulfill the expectations of some “engaged partners” such as Sweden or Finland, for example. Within the PfP they were grouped together with some autocratic regimes (for example, Belarus) with which they had nothing in common. With the reforms they became part of an even broader framework than before. Furthermore, in some countries, such as Russia, Ukraine and Georgia, there were special partnerships as a result of a particular historical context that no longer exists.

New and old challenges for NATO remind still unresolved. First, NATO still hasn’t found a completely satisfactory mechanism for cooperating with its global partners after the mission in Afghanistan is wound up at the end of 2014. Hitherto, the Alliance has used meetings with the contributing countries to discuss issues that have no direct bearing on the mission. After 2014, there will no longer be any such meetings. Hence, the question remains as to how to involve important NATO partners such as Australia or Japan in the decision-making process if there is no formal institutional framework, like the Partnership for Peace, or a joint military operation. The idea has been floated of creating a special forum for cooperating with those partners that are capable of contributing and that are politically similar, regardless of their geographic location, e.g., Sweden, Finland, Austria, Australia, Japan and South Korea. But the creation of some kind of “Political West” or “League of Democracies” would, in effect, rank Russia as an anti-western or anti-democratic force.

## NATO AND THE CONCEPT OF COOPERATIVE SECURITY

Alliance members have different views on whether and to what extent NATO should act. Should it act globally, as a cooperative security instrument, and thus assume a greater role in dealing with the new security threats, or should it conform to its primary job as a defensive alliance. Discussions on this issue have divided the 28 allies into at least two camps.

The Anglo-Saxon camp favors the idea that the alliance should undertake greater global responsibility and play a more significant role in international security. The Americans first floated the idea of a “global NATO” in 2004. During the Riga summit in 2006, the United States joined the United Kingdom in a proposal to create the “global partners program,” which was intended to draw into the alliance partners such as Australia and Japan - democratic countries which could make a major contribution in operational terms. Although these plans were never fully realized, the Anglo-Saxon allies were keen to see a much more global approach.

On the other hand, the major European allies like Germany and France, while they may publicly have backed these proposals to boost the ties with “global partners”, in practice have balked at doing anything more. There are numerous reasons for their behavior. First, they claimed that it would water down the specific nature of the alliance as a transatlantic defensive organization. Second, it would disrupt the internal political cohesion of the alliance. Third, international actors such as Russia and China would exploit it by accusing the alliance of wanting to use force to impose its political model on the rest of the world. Finally, some of the former Warsaw Pact countries - more concerned about threats to their security from Russian actions than from global perils - pressed for NATO to return to its founding task: collective defense. Hence, the Alliance should first build its own vision for the future, and then, possibly, offer partners the scope for cooperation in dealing with the new security threats (terrorism, energy security, cyber defense and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction).

To address these security threats requires a holistic approach, for which a key element is the political dialogue. The prospect of a greater NATO role in the field of energy security represents a “red line” for many allies, who claim that the “militarization” of the issue will provoke fears among the major suppliers that NATO will attack them in order to gain access to energy for its members. These concerns were heightened by the NATO intervention in Libya, which was undertaken partly because of concerns about access to that country’s energy resources. On the other hand, if NATO wants to present itself as a credible player for the control of weapons of mass destruction, then issues such as Iran’s nuclear program and North Korea’s need to be discussed systematically among the allies. In other words, full engagement, both in the military and the political realm, will lend credibility to the alliance.

The United States is a firm supporter of the idea that NATO should transform itself into an alliance that will play a more prominent role in dealing with the new global security threats. There are numerous reasons why the U.S. shift of focus to the Asia-Pacific region can influence NATO’s priorities as well. First, the “rebalancing” of the United States towards the new priority will mean a diminished involvement of the Americans in NATO. That being the case, the European NATO member countries are less keen to view NATO as a global alliance with global responsibilities. Hence, NATO may have less motivation to play a significant role in dealing with global security threats. Furthermore, the United States’ refocus will mean that the European members will have to bear a greater share of the load, this at a time when most of them are facing severe financial problems and reductions in their defense budgets. Next, it should be noted that NATO, with the exception of a few member states, has neither the capacity nor a political interest in increasing its engagement in the Asia-Pacific region. As most of the “global partners” in the region generally see their relations with NATO as a natural

complement to their strategic relationship with the United States, they may no longer see any point in continuing to work jointly with NATO.

Basically NATO believes more in cooperation than it does in expansion. Experts say regional cooperation increases the transparency of security sector reforms, promotes reform of political systems and reduces regional risks. Therefore NATO will continue to assert the importance of regional cooperation as a tool for improving regional security and stability.

## FUTURE OF THE ALLIANCE

The disparity in military resources between the European member states of NATO and the United States grows ever wider. For 20 years various initiatives have been launched to reduce this gap, but none has proved successful. Given that the effects of the financial crisis in Europe are still being felt, the Europeans are unlikely to take more serious steps to close this gap any time soon. Hence, NATO will still have a problem in securing adequate resources for its missions. Indeed, a lack of sufficient resources has been one of the reasons why the alliance has not shown a willingness to undertake military action in Syria.

Furthermore, the announcement by the United States in 2012 that it was refocusing its commitments towards the Asian-Pacific region coupled with the rise of China is having a considerable impact on Trans-Atlantic relations. Hence it is an open question how NATO, or rather the European members of the alliance, will respond to the growing importance of this region. Will NATO focus on Gibraltar and the Suez Canal – both of them significant due to instability in the Middle East and North Africa? To put it more specifically, will the Europeans, without the help of the United States, be able to stabilize this for them very important region? Even if they affirm such intentions, what price will the Europeans have to pay, given the fact that the United States defense budget is under growing pressure?

Until now, NATO has assiduously avoided serious discussion of this issue, but the fall-out from the Ukrainian crisis will once again bring this question to the fore. European members of NATO expect credible security guarantees from the United States, as the greatest military force in the world. Moreover, many European allies want to reduce their energy dependence on Russia by shifting to the use of liquefied natural gas from the United States. The Americans, of course, agree on both matters, but in return they are asking the Europeans to allocate greater resources to defense and to increase their engagement in conflict areas. As the European members of NATO have no overriding strategic interest in Asia, they will have to promise greater engagement in the Middle East and Africa, thus freeing up military resources that the Americans will devote to the Asia-Pacific region.

A key issue for NATO in the post cold-war period was to justify the need for its existence. With the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the shift in America's focus to the Asia-Pacific region, the drastic reduction in defense budgets of all member states and the reduced “workload” for the alliance in Europe, the essential question imposed on NATO leaders was: Is there a need for a military alliance which would not be engaged militarily but would still justify its existence? The crisis in Ukraine is not entirely unwelcome, since it enables the western military alliance to remain relevant for its member countries, especially those that are close neighbors of Russia.

Russia's actions in Georgia and more particularly in Ukraine have again underscored the relevance of the Euro-Atlantic defense alliance. The current crisis also has sparked long-postponed discussions

of questions that demand an answer. Hence, the challenge for NATO is two-fold. On the one hand, it will have to protect the territorial integrity of its member states, while on the other it will have to fight to remain a capable security actor if it wants to be a relevant player on the international scene. Again, the key to NATO survival will be its ability to adapt to changes in the global security environment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The justified concern of eastern NATO member countries due to the intervention of Russia in Ukraine should not allow the alliance once again to be directed exclusively towards the threats coming from the East. Rather, NATO as a global alliance should be ready to face the numerous security risks and threats coming from all four corners of the world.

2. In its dealings with the Western Balkans (WB), NATO has insisted more on cooperation than on enlargement. Regional cooperation has increased the transparency of security sector reforms, promoted reform of political systems and reduced regional risks. Therefore, NATO should continue to insist on regional cooperation as a condition for NATO membership, at the same time stressing the importance of regional cooperation as a tool for improving regional security and stability.

3. Both the proclaimed policy of “open door” and the new security situations in the world make it imperative that the Alliance continue intensive coordination with the aspirants, in order to identify further concrete measures that each can take to meet the requirements for full membership. In addition, efforts should be made to reduce the capability gap between the existing and future member-countries. Until all aspirants become part of the Alliance, the security of the Western Balkans will remain fragile.

4. The countries of the WB region urgently need to build a pragmatic approach towards the induction of new members into the alliance, putting aside historical sentimentality and impedimenta, while at the same time giving their citizens a realistic picture of the significance of the alliance as a critical factor in regional stability and prosperity.

5. Partners from the Western Balkans should continue, individually and jointly, to contribute actively to alliance missions. Western Balkan countries, albeit with modest resources, already have offered to participate along with NATO partners in the new mission in Afghanistan. They will bring to the Afghans their experience as security consumers, and as active contributors, through their participation in alliance peacekeeping operations.

6. In addition to participating in peacekeeping operations led by the alliance, member states and partners from the Western Balkans need to cooperate in grappling with new security threats, in particular the threat of terrorism.

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FINAL POLICY PAPER

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*Regional Association of Alumni Associations of the  
Marshall Center from Southeast Europe*

## Contact

[www.ecbs.org.mk](http://www.ecbs.org.mk)

E-mail: [info@ecbs.org.mk](mailto:info@ecbs.org.mk)