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NATO’S FUTURE DIRECTION: STRENGTHENED REGIONAL ALLIANCE OR WEAKENED GLOBAL GROUPING?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NATO has evolved since the end of the Cold War, enlarging from twelve to 28 members and transitioning from a reactive defence posture to include proactive use of force outside the Euro-Atlantic area. Whilst NATO has proven robust and outlived the predictions of its detractors, the Alliance now faces a critical moment in its history, with many member states developing widely divergent views on the core purpose and the future direction of the Alliance. Reformers, such as the United States, pursue a globally active vision of the Alliance, traditional European powers typically argue for a more cautious, approach; and new Central and Southern European members seek a clear priority to be placed on collective territorial defence as the primary purpose of the Alliance. Differing views on the most pressing threats to security, their geographic proximity, and the inequities in risk and burden sharing exposed by ongoing operations in Afghanistan have placed significant stress on the Alliance, threatening its effectiveness and ability to address emerging complex and uncertain challenges, from international terrorism to energy security.

NATO must therefore redefine its purpose. We argue that the Alliance should refocus on the collective defence of its member states. Article 5 is the heart of the Alliance, and the core concept that gives it meaning as a credible deterrent. The Alliance must therefore ensure the maintenance of territorial defensive capability as its primary objective. In doing so, however, it must develop a more detailed understanding of collective defence in the modern security environment which goes well beyond classical inter state military conflicts and the confines of geographical borders. Member states share vital interests far from their borders and NATO must be ready and equipped to engage in a wide range of possible expeditionary operations, out of area, and without host nation support, to protect these vital interests.

NATO must develop the political will, mechanisms and capacity to engage in such expeditionary operations. The Alliance will need to eliminate the sort of stresses caused by, for example the imbalance in commitment to combat operations in Afghanistan, inequitable funding mechanisms, restrictive national caveats, and lack of interoperability. These out of area missions may be anticipatory in nature – designed to defeat a current threat but also to deter future insecurity. NATO use of force outside of its territorial boundaries therefore should only be undertaken when such action can be shown to meet an agreed set of criteria which should include the following:

The Alliance can achieve overwhelming military superiority

Risks to territory or vital interests exist that can be reasonably defined as imminent, therefore demanding proactive or even anticipatory military action;

Military action will prevent current and deter future degradation of the regional security environment, such as human rights abuses, genocide, or other humanitarian crises;

The Alliance has achieved consensus on the need for military action; however, active participation by all members is not required, and NATO military forces may act in lead or support of operations to another organisation or coalition of nations.
NATO must develop ready and deployable expeditionary forces, whilst continuing to pay due regard to the requirements for collective defence within the Alliance’s geographical boundaries. In many cases, although not in all, expeditionary forces will be suitable for Article 5 collective defence, although this is rarely the case in reverse and expeditionary forces clearly cost considerably more to field and maintain. Current transformation efforts, many of which began after NATO’s first out of area missions to the Balkans in the 1990’s, have faltered. The Alliance must reconsider capability development, according to the current strategic context and operational experience over the past decade. Most of the assumptions underlying current efforts have proven inaccurate. Coalition and ISAF operations in Iraq, the Mediterranean, and in particular Afghanistan should become the key drivers for Alliance transformation initiatives. A true high readiness reaction force, which replaces the NATO Response Force, should be established with agreed common funding mechanisms. This force will need to be truly deployable and Alliance members will need to develop the political will and consultative mechanisms to collectively and quickly commit to its use. Downward pressure on defence spending, caused by the financial crisis, will force nations to restrict procurement in the coming years, and the political will to purchase and maintain advanced capabilities will suffer accordingly. The creation of smaller, expeditionary joint headquarters will be necessary as will pooling military assets or the specialization of the armed forces of smaller or NATO frontier nations with territorial defence concerns. Much better defence procurement collaboration will also be necessary to maximise Alliance value for money in pursuing transformation goals.

Finally, NATO must temporarily halt further enlargement while it develops a clear vision and purpose. If the Alliance enlarges in the future, it must remain firmly grounded in Article 10, and therefore bounded within the continent of Europe. NATO should remain a regional Alliance, based on the defence of Euro-Atlantic security. Enlargement to include current partners in Asia or Australasia will inevitably lead to greater stresses within the Alliance and even greater difficulty in reaching consensus on engagement in expeditionary operations. Furthermore, enlargements within Europe must only be considered within the prevailing strategic context and according to a prospective member state’s ability to contribute to the defence of the Euro-Atlantic area. Whilst new members will be strictly limited, NATO should continue to strengthen its global partnerships, especially with countries that routinely participate in operations, such as Australia, South Korea and Japan. Partnerships with states and international organisations can only enhance the effectiveness of NATO expeditionary operations, whether in lead or support. NATO should not be a global Alliance; however, its member states have shared global interests and therefore ambitions that are not confined by geography.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

NATO has proven to be remarkably robust in the face of considerable political changes on the world stage, including the end of the Cold War and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The enduring nature of the Alliance is due primarily to the continued relevance of the shared values and aspirations of its member states, as well as a similar, if not completely shared, view of security requirements. A lengthy history of effective cooperation has built enduring Alliance institutions.

As NATO has evolved, however, the nature of the Alliance may have endured but its character has changed. The necessary rush in the 1990’s to ensure that turmoil in Eastern Europe and the Balkans could be stabilized for mutual good created the political drive to achieve an expanded Alliance with a proven capability to act collectively, and, more significantly, on an expeditionary basis well outside of the traditional geographic NATO sphere of interest. It is also very clear, however, that this expansion created new dynamics and stresses within the Alliance which have weakened its ability to reach consensus and act decisively.

The Allies are therefore unsure of the Alliance’s future direction. Some, primarily the United States, seemingly wish to continue to expand the Alliance, perhaps evolving into a global security relationship with the possible membership of other traditional U.S. allies, and democracies, such as Australia and Japan. During the 2008 U.S. Presidential primaries, Republican candidate Rudy Giuliani asserted that “we should open the organisation’s membership to any willing state that meets basic standards of good governance, military readiness (and) global responsibility, regardless of location … I think we should consider countries such as Australia, Singapore, India, and Japan”.

Others, primarily traditional continental European powers, call for a more conservative approach, arguing that the Alliance must take stock of what it has become and focus its activities more clearly on the strategic requirements, and traditional threats, facing its current members, without actively seeking “out of area” missions or global ambitions, and ultimately commitments which are not commensurate with its regional focus. Chancellor Angela Merkel, speaking before the lower house of Germany's Parliament, said “the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation should not be expanded indefinitely; I don't see a global NATO.”

The challenge for NATO rests in identifying the nature of the Alliance’s future, accommodating these diverse views while remaining effective.

1.2 Thesis and Overview

This study examines the possible NATO transformation from a regional Alliance focused primarily on collective defence to a global cooperative security organisation. For some, this transformation has already occurred. Whilst there is little argument that the Alliance has already evolved beyond its original regional and collective security model, best exemplified by the mission in Afghanistan, it has not yet, however, become a truly global organisation.
The question is not whether NATO should revert to an exclusively geographically-based collective defence Alliance, akin to its existence during the Cold War, or whether it should become a global cooperative security organisation with member states from around the world. The question is to what extent NATO should pursue shared interests beyond the borders of its member states with military power, if necessary, and under what conditions it should take such action.

This paper argues that NATO enlargement has reached a pragmatic conclusion at the current membership of 28 states. Any future enlargement must be carefully considered within the larger strategic context. The admission of a limited number of additional members, most notably Georgia and Ukraine, may bring positive benefit; however, the overall Alliance focus must shift to consolidation of the current membership into a more coherent and effective Alliance. In order to retain and build upon its effectiveness and success NATO must remain an essentially regional Alliance focused primarily on the collective defence of its members.

The concept of collective defence must be redefined, however, within the context of an international security environment that is remarkably different than at the time of the Alliance’s founding. From within a strong and effective regional basis the Alliance should continue to promote global stability and establish mechanisms and a framework to protect, and further, the shared vital interests of its members. This may require “coalitions of the willing” that have the approval, if not participation, of all Alliance members. The Alliance must therefore remain capable and willing to intervene out of area when it is deemed necessary, in accordance with conditions based on its conceptual foundation. The Alliance must also continue to transform so that it fields capable, effective, interoperable and deployable forces which reflect an equitable sharing of risks and burdens across the Alliance.

2.0 NATO EXPANSION AND THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

2.1 The Path to 28

The Alliance was founded on 4 April 1949 by twelve members: the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Norway, Luxembourg, Holland, France, Italy, Iceland, Denmark, Canada and Belgium. The Alliance anticipated enlargement beyond its founding members since inception. The basis for NATO enlargement can be found in Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which states that "The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of the Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty."

Progressive enlargement of the Alliance has been aimed at extending the zone of security and stability to other European countries, thereby strengthening peace and stability throughout the Euro-Atlantic area. The first enlargement of the Alliance after its creation in April 1949 took place in 1952 when Greece and Turkey acceded to the Treaty. The Federal Republic of Germany became a member in 1955 and Spain in 1982. With the unification of Germany in 1990 the whole of Germany became a de facto member of the Alliance. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland joined the Alliance in 1999. Seven countries, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia,
formally became NATO members on 29 March 2004. The most recent members, Croatia and Albania, joined the Alliance on 1 April 2009, bringing the total membership to 28.

2.2 Evolution of Out of Area Missions

Following the end of the Cold War, NATO has taken a wider and more comprehensive view of security beyond territorial defence. The euphoric feeling of lasting peace in Europe in the early 1990’s, as well as the apparent victory of the Western approach to governance, rapidly subsided with NATO intervention in conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. On 30 August 1995 NATO launched its first air campaign, OPERATION DELIBERATE FORCE, against Serbian targets in Bosnia and Herzegovina, effectively ending any debate on NATO’s post-Cold War “out of area” role. NATO led the 60,000-man Implementation Force (IFOR) to enforce the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords. Four years later, in 1999, NATO executed a 78-day air campaign, OPERATION ALLIED FORCE, against Serbia, a campaign that was followed by the deployment of another NATO-led peacekeeping mission, the Kosovo Force (KFOR). In September 2001, NATO deployed OPERATION AMBER FOX, to protect international monitors and oversee implantation of the peace plan in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, would lead to a further expansion of NATO’s role. The Allies invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, for the first time in NATO’s history. NATO members made immediate contributions, such as the deployment of five Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) aircraft to the United States. The U.S. led coalition OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM toppled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2002 with NATO taking command of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in August 2003. Initially charged only with security in and around Kabul, by 2006, ISAF’s area of operations and security responsibilities had expanded to cover the entire country. Its missions expanded as well, to include training the Afghan Army and supporting good governance, to reconstruction and development, and, in some cases, combat operations. The Alliance deployed a much smaller NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTM-I) in August 2004 to train, advise and mentor Iraqi security forces. From June 2005 to December 2007, NATO provided training support and airlift to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). A contingent of NATO warships comprised OPERATION ALLIED PROVIDER, the armed escort of World Food Programme (WFP) chartered vessels to Somalia from October to December 2008 and resumed anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa in the summer of 2009, establishing OPERATION ALLIED PROTECTOR.

The shared interests behind these military deployments range from the aim to stabilise weak states and promote good governance, to stopping ethnic cleansing and genocide within Europe, to fighting piracy on the high seas. The interventions display a gradual expansion of expeditionary NATO military activities beyond the continent of Europe over the past two decades. These operations have proven controversial, both within the NATO alliance as well as among traditional external critics. Military action in Kosovo in 1999 was undertaken in the absence of a United Nations mandate; the deployment of ISAF to Afghanistan in 2003, as well as the creation of the training mission in Iraq, while under the auspices of United Nations resolutions, are not considered Article 5 missions and have been met with varying degrees of risk and burden sharing among member states.
Despite greater NATO involvement in operations across the spectrum of intensity and at further distances than at any time since the Cold War, this has been a difficult period with serious differences of opinion on the efficacy, scale and nature of Alliance involvement or intervention in the various trouble spots throughout the world. This tension reached its extreme during the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Continuing disagreement amongst allies has often made consensus on action difficult to achieve and left the Alliance unable to act in a meaningful way in a number of cases, leading to greater use of “coalitions of the willing” either with or without the benign consent of other allies and in some cases a total lack of concerted international response.

2.3 Current Alliance Policy and Stated Objectives

The cornerstone of NATO, as restated at the 60th Anniversary Strasbourg/Kehl Summit in April 2009, remains Article 5 and collective defence, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. It remains dedicated to protecting democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law within the Euro-Atlantic area. This central objective is evident within the Alliance’s periodic statement of purpose, the Strategic Concept. The 1999 Strategic Concept reaffirms NATO's essential and enduring purpose, set out in the Washington Treaty, which is to "safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means." To achieve this aim, the Alliance identified the following “fundamental security tasks”:

- Security: to provide one of the foundations for a stable Euro-Atlantic security environment;
- Consultation: to serve, as provided for in Article 4 of the Washington Treaty, as an essential transatlantic forum for Allied consultation;
- Deterrence and Defence: to deter and defend against any threat of aggression against any NATO member state, as provided for in Articles 5 and 6.

The 1999 Strategic Concept forecast numerous challenges facing the Alliance, but acknowledged an overall positive strategic environment given that the threat of conventional war in Europe had faded considerably. The risks included ethnic and religious rivalries, territorial disputes, conflict, human rights abuse, and the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their means of delivery. The concept placed emphasis on the traditional use of force only as it relates to the maintenance of security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area:

“The primary role of Alliance military forces is to protect peace and to guarantee the territorial integrity, political independence and security of member states. The Alliance's forces must therefore be able to deter and defend effectively, to maintain or restore the territorial integrity of Allied nations and - in case of conflict - to terminate war rapidly by making an aggressor reconsider his decision, cease his attack and withdraw. NATO forces must maintain the ability to provide for collective defence while conducting effective non-Article 5 crisis response operations.”
The current Strategic Concept was written before the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, and the deployment of NATO into Afghanistan, and is therefore in need of significant re-evaluation. At the April 2009 NATO Summit in Strasbourg/Kehl, the members agreed to develop a new Strategic Concept which will define an enduring and relevant future role for NATO. At the same time the members issued a Summit Declaration, which, beyond citing support for ongoing Alliance missions, also issued direct guidance on future enlargement. The declaration references Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, stipulating that while “NATO’s enlargement has been an historic success … NATO’s door will remain open to all European democracies which share the values of our Alliance …” While enlargement remains a possibility, it is clearly confined to democracies on the continent of Europe.

The Alliance also issued a Declaration on Alliance Security at the April 2009 summit. While not providing specificity on the future role and mission of NATO in a complex world, it does provide broad guidelines that reaffirm a role for NATO based on diverse and global threats, and not bound by geography:

“We will improve our ability to meet the security challenges we face that impact directly on Alliance territory, emerge at strategic distance or closer to home. Allies must share risks and responsibilities equitably. We must make our capabilities more flexible and deployable so we can respond quickly and effectively, wherever needed, as new crises emerge. We must also reform the NATO structures to create a leaner and more cost-effective organisation. We will strengthen NATO’s capacity to play an important role in crisis management and conflict resolution where our interests are involved.”

3.0 THE FUTURE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Any discussion of NATO’s future role must be based on an appraisal of the most likely, and most dangerous, future threats to shared interests. Most attempts to predict the future international environment are doomed to failure. However, much of the analyses of the evolution of the security environment over the next few decades agree on several basic predictions. Most analysts see an increasingly multi-polar world, in which power is increasingly diffuse and shared among rising Asian powers such as China and India as well as non-state actors, such as criminal networks and terrorist organisations. Similarly, and particularly in light of the financial crisis of 2008-9, most analysts see a lasting global shift in wealth and economic power from West to East. Multi-polarity, with changes in the distribution of power across the international system, will inevitably lead to instability and the increased likelihood of conventional, interstate wars of high intensity. In addition to these relative certain outcomes, other factors, such as climate change, demographic and migration trends, critical resource scarcities, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction must also be considered.

3.1 Climate Change, Demography, and Migration

The potential security impacts of climate change are manifold. Sea level change will undoubtedly lead to new lines of maritime communication and new resources may be unveiled or become available for extraction, which would create the possibility of interstate conflict. In addition climate change could lead to decreasing rainfall with consequent food shortage and the creation of what some analysts have called
“environmental refugees.” State policies designed to regulate limited resources could result in regional instability. The effects of climate change can be seen in the possible opening of a Northwest Passage in the High North. Issues of sovereignty, rights to seabed resources, as well as freedom of transit on the global commons are currently debated among a host of nations with competing interests, at least four of whom, the United States, Canada, Denmark and Norway are NATO members.

Demographic change will also have unanticipated effects on security and stability. The citizenry of most of the developed countries of the world, which includes most of Europe and Russia, is growing increasingly older, and reproduction rates have plummeted. On the contrary, the population of much of the developing world is young and growing. The vast majority of population growth over the next 20 years will occur in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The impacts are diverse but what is clear is that the developing world will be stressed, with unemployment and resource scarcity possibly fuelling internal unrest. Meanwhile, the developed world will grow increasingly reliant on an immigrant population, that it views with some suspicion and which consumes significant resources. Economic migration will likely increase as well, with people flowing to urban areas that will grow in size and complexity.

3.2 Resource Scarcity and Energy Security

Climate change and demography will undoubtedly lead to ever increasing demand for resources, primarily food, water, and energy, that by most predictions will grow increasingly scarce. Those regimes with accessibility, availability and capacity to provide these resources can and will abuse their position and leverage with the foreseeable risk of political, economical and social instability. Lack of access to a stable supply of water, particularly for agricultural purposes, is a growing concern, a problem that will only deepen as populations continue to urbanize and grow. It is probable that water, and methods of using water, will become a significant source of interstate conflict, especially in the Middle East and Africa. The availability of adequate food supplies will continue to plague efforts to promote and maintain stability, particularly on the African continent and other areas where population is growing. The World Bank estimates that food demand alone will rise by 50 percent by 2030.

Demand for energy will continue to revolve around traditional sources, oil and gas, as large scale exploitation of alternative sources of energy is still far into the future. The dependence on hydrocarbons equates to increasing vulnerability, especially for developed countries, placing resource-rich countries, such as Russia, at a comparative advantage in the near term. Most analysts, however, predict that production will inevitably decline among the current, traditional energy producing states. The supply will therefore either decline or not grow at the rate required to meet increasing demand. Nations will likely compete for untapped energy resources located in unstable parts of the world. And as wealth inevitably shifts eastward, China will be in a position to increasingly satisfy its growing energy demand and purchase access to increasingly scarce resources.

3.3 International Terrorism and Organized Crime

The nations of NATO will continue to face lethal and financial threats imposed by non-state actors, chief amongst these will be international terrorists and organized
criminal networks. International terrorism fuelled by extremist ideology will likely not abate over the coming decades. The existence of either failed states, such as Somalia, or largely ungoverned areas within unstable states, such as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, will continue to offer sanctuary for terrorist organisations and threaten regional stability. Iraq and Afghanistan will continue to pose challenges to the international community, requiring stabilisation efforts to prevent fracturing into disorganized and under governed states from where terrorist organisations can find safe haven. Organised crime may threaten state sovereignty, destabilising countries and providing access to money and weaponry for terrorist networks. It will also make use of innovation and technology to undermine institutions for example by the use of Cyber Attack against essential networks. The nexus of crime syndicates, terrorism, and failed states is exemplified by rampant piracy off the Horn of Africa in 2008-9. Threats to the free flow of commerce on sea lanes of communication will likely continue.

3.4 Weapons of Mass Destruction

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction will continue. As of 2009, Iran has continued to pursue a nuclear program, essentially negating its accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. North Korea tested nuclear weapons in October 2006 and May 2009, and conducted multiple tests of both long-range and short-range ballistic missiles. The increasing multi-polarity of the world over the coming decades makes it more likely that states will find incentive to engage in nuclear weapons programs. Iranian and North Korean emergence as nuclear powers could lead other states in their respective regions, such as Japan or Saudi Arabia, to develop similar WMD programs. Furthermore, impoverished and isolated countries such as North Korea are the most likely sellers of WMD to terrorist organisations.

3.5 Financial Crisis

The long-term effects of the financial crisis are uncertain. As previously mentioned, most analysts see its impact as accelerating the flow of relative wealth from Western countries to Eastern economies. One unavoidable consequence in the West will be a continued reduction in defence spending among NATO member states. While the United States currently spends approximately 4% of its GDP on defence, European nations, on the whole, do not meet the 2% NATO target. In 2007, the European NATO members spent an average of 1.73% GDP on defence. While this deficit only exacerbates the capabilities gap between the United States and Europe, it also threatens the basic participation of countries in any operations. The financial crisis will inevitably exert further downward pressure on defence expenditures, and this reality must be considered as part of any analysis of the future strategic context.

3.6 Resurgent Russia

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has considered the development of constructive and cooperative relations with Russia as a key element for security and stability in Europe. Chances for increased cooperation between NATO and Russia have been hampered by a widely divergent view on NATO’s post-Cold War role and its continuing eastward expansion. As strategist Colin Gray has written, “…what appeared geopolitically as manifest destiny to Washington translated as crass opportunism to Moscow.” This core difference in perception has been exacerbated by a series of disputes, including the August
2008 war in Georgia, planned U.S. missile defence deployments in the Czech Republic and Poland, Russia’s relations with the Ukraine, and the viability of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. In all of these disputes, Russia has proven itself adept at using tough measures, from conventional military operations in Georgia to restriction of fuel supplies, to achieve its aims.

Russia’s renewed ability to engage in competitive international politics will weigh heavily on any enlargement beyond the current 28 members, and will affect NATO’s assurances to Georgia and Ukraine on future membership given at the Bucharest Summit in 2008. Then-President Vladimir Putin summarized the Russian view in remarks at the Munich Conference on Security Policy in February 2007:

“I think it is obvious that NATO expansion does not have any relation with the modernisation of the Alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust.”15

4.0 COLLECTIVE DEFENCE FOR THE 21st CENTURY

4.1 The Role of the Alliance

NATO’s identity crisis is well-documented. It is no longer the single purpose, territorial defence-driven military Alliance of the Cold War. Through its enlargement into a seemingly unmanageable 28 nations it has evolved, in practice, into a multilateral security forum, in which many members’ interests and threat perceptions drastically diverge. The Alliance has multiple potential futures. It may retain its basis of solidarity and consensus, which makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to agree upon and execute operations. It may also evolve into a broad, global partnership, in which coalitions of the willing join to protect shared interests with the tacit approval, and non-participation, of other members.

Further exacerbating the debate on the future of the Alliance is the view that nations have already drifted into one of two “tiers.” This commitment gap among nations threatens not only the interoperability of Alliance forces, but also reinforces the rising perception of inequity in the risk and burden sharing in combat operations. U.S. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates publicly decried the evolution of risk and burden sharing among European allies in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2008:

“I worry a great deal about the alliance evolving into a two-tiered alliance, in which you have some allies willing to fight and die to protect people's security, and others who are not. And I think that it puts a cloud over the future of the alliance if this is to endure and perhaps even get worse … And there are allies that are doing their part and are doing well. The Canadians, the British, the Australians, the Dutch, the Danes, are really out there on the line and fighting.”16

The “tier” argument is more complex than a simple assessment of willingness to expend blood and resources on behalf of Alliance missions. Afghanistan is perceived very differently by NATO member states. To some it is seen as posing such a low direct threat, that whilst nations are happy to support the action in principle, accepting the need...
to act, they are content to be involved only in limited measure with narrowly defined objectives, national caveats and relatively low levels of resource and manpower commitment. Other nations perceive it as a vital commitment to keep terrorism at bay from their own territory and are convinced that the Alliance must succeed against the odds in bringing stability to the region whilst devoting considerable resources and bearing many casualties to achieve this aim. These latter nations are becoming increasingly exasperated by the former and tensions and cracks within the Alliance grow more evident day by day. As Clausewitz would have rightly observed, policy differences predictably invade and dominate operational, and even tactical, decisions. The Alliance’s problems in Afghanistan are therefore reflective of a larger, continuing divergence in views among member nations on the essential purpose and meaning of the Alliance, as illustrated by the oft-quoted Carl Bildt, the former Prime Minister of Sweden, in 2003:

“While we talk of peace, they talk of security. While we talk of sharing sovereignty, they talk about exercising sovereign power. When we talk about a region, they talk about the world. No longer united primarily by a common threat, we have also failed to develop a common vision for where we want to go on many of the global issues confronting us.”17

4.2 Diverging Views – Use of Force and Threat Perception

The fundamental disconnect among member states manifests in a variety of forms, from failure to participate in NATO missions due to a perceived or genuine lack of domestic public and political support, to placing caveats on deployed forces. These actions are driven by deep, fundamental disagreements on the vision of the Alliance. Analysts have identified three broad views of the Alliance that exist among the major powers within NATO.18

One view, focused on reform, is identified most often with the United States and to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom and Canada. This view holds that the Alliance should continue to expand in partnership, if not membership; directly address broader challenges such as WMD proliferation; and occupy an active global role in the maintenance and protection of liberal democratic values. A second view, generally embodied by larger, continental European powers such as Germany and France, is essentially scepticism of a global role for the Alliance because of its possible negative impact on relations with other international organisations and great powers, primarily Russia and a desire to add a strong emphasis on European defence matters and protect European interests. The final view, primarily held by central and eastern European member states that are the Alliance’s newest members, seeks reversal of current trends. This view holds that the Alliance should focus primarily on territorial defence and Article 5 obligations, placing less emphasis on out of area missions and plan for the difficulties posed by an increasingly assertive Russia.

A nation’s view of the Alliance largely determines the response to the most pressing questions of its future. Reform-minded countries view enlargement as a way to spread NATO’s military acumen and liberal democratic political ideals as essential to maintaining the stability of the Euro Atlantic area. The conservative-minded powers are likely to be wary of enlargement, fearing it may actually lead to instability in Europe, antagonise Russia and hamper consensus and positive action within the Alliance. Powers seeking a reversalist approach would view further expansion as valuable only in as much
as it would benefit other former Soviet states and provide further European allies against the threat of Russian belligerence.

The differing views lead to distinct and varied threat perceptions and judgments on the use of force. Reformists view a wide array of threats, such as international terrorism and proliferation of WMD, as challenges to vital interests and therefore worthy of the use of military force as one of a range of positive actions. Traditional European powers whilst equally recognising the severity of these threats are more likely to place a greater emphasis on non-military means as the primary method of addressing such issues. Finally, reversal-minded nations see a resurgent Russia as the primary threat to stability and security in Europe, and view Article 5, and the implication of the use of force to protect the territorial integrity of member states, as tantamount.

4.3 The Utility of Force

The consensus view of the legitimate use of force throughout most of NATO’s history was primarily reactive in nature. During the Cold War, NATO deemphasized the proactive use of force as a feasible military option. NATO thinking on this matter during the early years of the Cold War is best expressed in MC48, approved in 1954, which stated that “as the initiation of a war by NATO would be contrary to the fundamental principles of the Alliance, it has been ruled out as a possibility.” While this refusal to consider initiating atomic war with the Soviet Union can and must be understood within the strategic context of the Cold War, it displays the consensus approach of the allies that sought the preservation of peace and stability through the absence of armed conflict. The core defensive strategic concept remained essentially the same over the course of the Cold War, albeit with slight variations, such as the creation of a strategy of flexible response for conventional forces. This defensive and largely territorial view of the use of force is clearly stated in the 1991 Strategic Concept:

“The Alliance is purely defensive in purpose: none of its weapons will ever be used except in self-defence. The role of the Alliance’s military forces is to assure the territorial integrity and political independence of its member states, and thus contribute to peace and stability in Europe.”

Beyond the strategic continuity of its defensive origins, NATO’s view on the legitimate use of force is also based firmly on the United Nations Charter. The UN Charter provides two grounds for the initiation of the use of force. The first is Article 51, which establishes the “inherent right of individual or collective self-defence.” The second is to be found in Article 42, which establishes the UN Security Council’s authority to “take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace or security.”

Strategic continuity in a strictly defensive view of the utility of force, as well as the necessity of UN sanction for military action, ended in the 1990s with the advent of NATO operations in the Balkans. NATO military action in Kosovo in 1999 broke with both conditions: not only was it not sanctioned by a UN Security Council mandate, it also involved the anticipatory, or pre-emptive, use of military force out of NATO territory. NATO operations were designed not only to immediately end horrific human rights abuses, but can also be understood as pre-emptive in nature, in that these operations
sought to prevent the possibility of future atrocities. As Lord Robertson, then-NATO Secretary General, put it in 2003:

“Nineteen NATO countries decided that they would act pre-emptively to stop the slaughter that Milosevic was the architect of in Kosovo, to stop the torture, to stop the ethnic cleansing that was going on there. We didn’t wait until the end of the process before action was taken. We took it, inevitably pre-emptively.”

NATO use of force shifted dramatically to address the new threats of the post-Cold War world. As Lord Robertson recognized, pre-emptive action designed to end atrocities and improve the security environment became a de facto legitimate use of military force. NATO operations in Afghanistan also display the proactive use of military force to create a security environment for stabilization and reconstruction to prevent future threats. This use of force, like the Balkan operations, is anticipatory in nature – seeking to create a positive future environment by eliminating current and deterring future threats.

While NATO’s military actions since the end of the Cold War have broken with the prevailing strategy, for the most part its official publications, and Strategic Concepts, lagged behind in fully establishing a truly proactive military role. However, a more detailed statement of anticipatory Alliance use of force can be found in the Military Concept for Defence Against Terrorism, published in October 2003. The document identifies a strong offensive, and out of area, role for NATO, stating that “terrorists should not be allowed to base, train, plan, stage and execute terrorist actions and that threat may be severe enough to justify acting against these terrorists and those who harbour them, as and where required, as decided by the North Atlantic Council.” The document further stipulates that NATO can either “take the lead” in operations, or act “in support” by providing “assets and capabilities to support operations … undertaken by or in co-operation with the European Union or other International Organisations or coalitions involving Allies.”

### 4.4 Conditions for Military Action

The central purpose of NATO military action is, and will remain, the Article 5 commitment to the defence of its member states. NATO must optimize and routinely exercise its military capability to use force, if necessary, to defend the territory of its members. Without this core purpose and corresponding conventional military capability NATO loses all meaning and legitimacy as a military alliance. In keeping with this central focus on collective defence, NATO must also consider suitable and feasible responses to unconventional threats to member states, such as cyber warfare or the manipulation of energy supplies. While such actions may be considered an Article 5 attack in certain extreme conditions, they are not necessarily best addressed by the use of military force and are not easily governed by conditions or guidelines. Any response, political or military, must be evaluated within the strategic context at the time of the incident; however, NATO must engage in planning and anticipate not only the likely nature of possible attacks but also the range of likely responses.

NATO must also develop a broad consensus understanding of collective defence as the deterrence, reduction, and if necessary direct response to threats to vital interests of member states. These threats are unlikely to be defined by geographic boundaries. Such
a view necessitates out of area and anticipatory military operations, which should be conducted under specific conditions. NATO should only act with military force out of area when:

**The Alliance can achieve overwhelming military superiority.** Initiating military operations in conditions otherwise would incur greater risk of failure, inability to achieve Alliance objectives, and a greater possibility of significant numbers of casualties, all of which would threaten support among Alliance members.

**Risks to territory or vital interests exist that can be reasonably defined as imminent, therefore demanding proactive or even anticipatory military action.** Military action should be legitimate, in accordance with international legal frameworks and agreed NATO policies, and relevant to the stated purpose of the Alliance. Proactive military action may be controversial, and may require significant work within Alliance processes to achieve consensus; however, as previously argued, current and future threats demand action that is pre-emptive and out of area.

**Military action will prevent current and deter future degradation of the regional security environment, such as human rights abuses, genocide, or other humanitarian crises.** NATO must meet its moral obligations in keeping with the values shared by member states’ political and civil societies.

**The Alliance has achieved consensus on the need for military action; however, active participation by all members is not required, and NATO military forces may act in lead or support of operations to another organisation or coalition of nations.** The Alliance must reach consensus on the need for action, but all member states need not participate in all operations. Current and future threats demand that NATO be flexible in the application of military force, with the ability to work in support or lead of international organisations or coalitions.

These conditions should form the basis for evaluating the prudence of any out of area military operations. These conditions alone, however, will not solve lingering problems with the Alliance’s ability to act in a timely and effective manner. As previously discussed, the wide variance in threat perceptions among member states will make the imminence of a threat, particularly out of area, difficult to define and agree upon. For some member states and their polities, an Alliance built on democratic values is not well-suited for anticipatory military action, especially given the negative connotation in many European countries of the concept of pre-emptive military action after the coalition invasion of Iraq in 2003. Consensus will be difficult to achieve; however, action without full participation already has precedent within NATO, as when Greece supported consensus for OPERATION ALLIED FORCE but chose not to contribute aircraft to the operation.26

### 5.0 THE PRINCIPLES OF A STRONGER ALLIANCE

There is currently little consensus among NATO allies on the suitable level of ambition for the Alliance. Moreover, the new security environment encompasses threats
that are, for the most part, no longer directed against the territory of one of the Alliance's members, but are in many cases trans-national or irregular in character. As previously discussed, NATO must adopt a new approach to the use of force, built on a renewed meaning of Article 5 and the utility of anticipatory and out of area military operations.

5.1 NATO’s Enduring Purpose

NATO’s core purpose must remain the Article 5 commitment to member nations – the defence of territorial integrity, and the deterrence of and appropriate response to any threat to the security and stability of the members. NATO member states, and, more importantly, their citizenry, must develop a more detailed and common understanding of shared interests and new, more complex, threats and challenges. Threats to Euro-Atlantic security and the vital interests of the allies are not defined by geography but are global in nature, from piracy and crime that imperil the free flow of commerce on the global commons, to failed states within which terrorist groups find sanctuary. These threats are more effectively addressed by the combined, multinational efforts of the Alliance, rather than an individual or ad hoc grouping of member states. NATO must be equipped and prepared to lead or provide support to complex deployed operations, which may be led by other entities such as the European Union. NATO must engage in the defence of its interests abroad and this must be understood as a core purpose of NATO second only to its role as guarantor of state territorial integrity. This will require enhanced expeditionary capabilities, political will, and commitment beyond levels that are currently present.

5.2 Defining NATO

To remain effective, NATO should hold enlargement at or near its current membership of 28 nations while it develops a new Strategic Concept and determines its future role. If the Alliance decides to enlarge in the future, it must remain firmly grounded in Article 10, and therefore bounded within the continent of Europe. NATO should remain a regional Alliance, based on the defence of Euro-Atlantic security. Enlargement to include current partners in Asia or Australasia will inevitably lead to greater stresses within the Alliance and even greater difficulty in reaching consensus on engagement in expeditionary operations. A further enlarged Alliance also risks being seen as a competitor to the UN as well as the increased danger of the Alliance being perceived in a negative or threatening way by non aligned nations, particularly the emerging powers of India and China.

Membership must be based on primarily military, but also political and economic, capacity to contribute to the collective defence of Europe and the North Atlantic. Further enlargement without a sense of purpose risks devolution of the Alliance into a global security cooperative, with missions limited to partner capacity building and no real ability to reach consensus on difficult decisions on the effective, timely and appropriate use of force. One of the most recent entrants – Albania, in 2009 – offers an instructive case of NATO enlargement beyond purpose. The nation has proven willing to participate in NATO and coalition operations, contributing a rifle company to ISAF as well as a slightly larger deployment in support of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. However, the admission of a country with the 116th largest world economy, large scale poverty by the standards of other Alliance countries, a significant amount of corruption, unacceptable levels of organised criminal activity and under-equipped armed forces, brings little direct
benefit to Alliance collective defence capability. Whilst the short term political gains may be considerable the balance of benefit may not be in the Alliance’s favour.  

5.3 Maintaining and Strengthening Global Partnerships

NATO and the European Union must work cooperatively to develop the military assets and capabilities required by both organisations. This cooperation should extend to the creation of a common, coherent, and collaborative defence planning review process, a complex area where NATO has proven tools and is willing and able to assist the EU in meeting its Headline Goal. The NATO-EU relationship will work best if close consultation takes place at many different levels-political and technical, formal and informal-with an emphasis on full transparency between the two. The EU and NATO can also complement each other with civilian / military expertise respectively, in a civil-military comprehensive approach, where each of the two organisations contributes its own characteristics and capabilities.

There are risks associated with the development of a parallel European defence identity, primarily the danger of expending limited resources on duplicating capabilities and structures. As Madeleine Albright, then-U.S. Secretary of State, famously wrote in the “3 Ds” article in the Financial Times in 1998, the European Union should avoid decoupling its decision-making from NATO, duplicating force planning, command structures and procurement mechanisms, and discriminating against non-EU members of NATO. In the ten years since publication of the article some of her fears have come to pass as tensions, duplications and an element of decoupling have become evident in the evolution of the ESDP. However, French re-integration into the NATO integrated military command structure offers a real opportunity to move the EU-NATO relationship forward on a more mutually beneficial basis.

More than any other relationship, the United Nations may help NATO improve its global outreach without running the risk of being perceived as an expansionist military bloc, a relic of the Cold War, or merely a tool at the command of the United States. More frequent engagement of NATO under the umbrella of the United Nations would mitigate two major challenges without weakening NATO’s core mission: the dilemma over the legitimacy of NATO actions and the difficult coordination and cooperation with civil organisations. As described by David S. Yost, the UN could provide a political framework that helps the Alliance by “furnishing a context for the contributions of other international organisations and non-governmental organisations in demanding tasks such as stabilization, state-building, and promoting sustainable security.”

The framework agreement concluded in September 2008 by the Secretaries General of the two organisations is therefore a step in the right direction. The two organisations agreed to expand their consultations and their co-operation, to engage in regular exchange and dialogue at senior and working levels on political and operational issues and to hold staff level meetings between NATO and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as well as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). NATO also decided to make a contribution to the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (UN CTC). This framework will allow better coordination and will establish much closer ties between the two organisations.
Another important element of NATO’s transformation into a stronger and more efficient alliance is its partnership program. The most successful partnership program in terms of promotion of security and stability was without any doubt the Partnership for Peace Program (PfP). However, the majority of this success is due to the perception among most participating countries that PfP was a stepping stone to full membership. Now that continued enlargement is unlikely, and, as we argue, for the most part, unwise, NATO’s partner programs must now be re-oriented away from action plans for potential members to individual nation capacity building in areas that are of critical importance to the Alliance. NATO contact countries, particularly Australia, whose armed forces have fought alongside NATO in Afghanistan, must remain a focus of interoperability and inclusion, as NATO assumes lead or supporting roles in expeditionary activities. Global partners such as the Republic of Korea and Japan are critical for an Alliance that defines its interests in global terms, not bound by geography.

5.4 Public Diplomacy

As the unwillingness to accept risks as contributors to NATO operations becomes more pronounced in some NATO member states as well as outside the organisation, the Alliance grows susceptible to losing the necessary support of the broader public and of the decision makers in its member countries and in the world. In many circumstances, and especially in large parts of the Muslim world, its image is predominantly negative. This will make it difficult in certain cases to conduct operations under a NATO flag, although NATO would be the most suitable actor available from a purely military perspective. Under these circumstances, if a NATO operation is conducted, it will heighten the risk for the forces deployed.

NATO member states will only be able to provide the funds and assets that NATO needs to successfully fulfil its mission, if it is perceived by the public of its member states as an organisation that contributes to peace and stability, and provides security to its members. Much of NATO’s transformation is not understood by a larger public beyond expert circles. Without a strong and clear message of what NATO is about and why it is still relevant after the Cold War, support will continue to wane and it will become ever more difficult for the governments of NATO’s member states to convince their electorates of the need to invest, both personnel and money, into NATO’s future.

6.0 CAPABILITIES REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE THE VISION OF THE FUTURE

NATO out of area operations have resulted in unintended consequences beyond the aforementioned crisis in identity currently facing the Alliance. Peace enforcement operations in Kosovo in the late 1990’s, as well as stability and support, and in some cases combat, operations following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 have exposed a significant gap in the military capabilities of the United States and its European allies. A concerted effort to reverse failing enhancement initiatives, and dedicate resources to achieving critical capabilities, is essential to creating a meaningful and effective Alliance military force.

6.1 Initiatives and Commitments
The uncertain post-Cold War threat environment of the 1990’s, culminating in NATO’s air war against Yugoslavia, first uncovered military capability gaps within the Alliance.31 These perceived shortfalls led to the creation of the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI) at the Washington summit in 1999. DCI was originally designed to improve the Alliance’s ability to conduct collective defence requirements as well as out of area, or expeditionary, missions. DCI tasks focused on enhancing capabilities in five categories: mobility and deployability; sustainability; effective engagement; survivability; and interoperable communications.32 DCI was flawed from the start, however, because the wide array of required upgrades would have required most member nations to significantly increase defence spending. DCI came into existence just as the European NATO countries had initiated significant reductions in defense spending, so that by 2000-2001, only seven out of the eighteen members with military forces fulfilled the defense spending target of 2.0 percent of GDP.33

The DCI was quickly seen to be over ambitious and at the 36th Munich Conference on Security Policy in February 2000, then-U.S. Secretary of Defence William Cohen noted that progress on the DCI was “not acceptable.”34 Shortly thereafter, the attacks of September 11, 2001, the resulting invocation of Article 5, and U.S. military response further exposed persistent capability shortfalls and DCI’s failure. The Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC), agreed upon at the Prague summit in 2002, envisioned a renewed Alliance effort to enhance capabilities in eight refined, specific areas:

- Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense;
- Intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition;
- Air-to-ground surveillance;
- Command, control and communications;
- Combat effectiveness, including precision guided munitions and suppression of enemy air defenses;
- Strategic air and sea lift;
- Air-to-air refueling;
- Deployable combat support and combat service support units.

6.2 Tool for Transformation: The NRF

At the 2002 Prague summit the allies also created the NATO Response Force (NRF), a “technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land, sea, and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed, as decided by the [North Atlantic] Council.”35 The NRF was designed to serve as an engine for Alliance transformation efforts, and achieved full operational capability in November 2006. In concert with the creation of the NRF, the Alliance undertook efforts to create a larger pool of deployable forces. At the 2004 Istanbul Summit, the allies agreed to enhance the operational effectiveness of their military forces by implementing a goal of having 40 percent of each nation’s land forces prepared and equipped for foreign
deployment, with eight percent of those land forces capable of sustained foreign operations.36

6.3 Judging the Initiatives

By the 2006 Riga summit, PCC cooperative initiatives had begun to show some signs of progress, primarily in one of the most pressing goals, strategic airlift: the Strategic Airlift Interim Solution, under which nations chartered transports until the purchase of A400M Airbus cargo aircraft by 2010, and the NATO Strategic Airlift Capability, under which participating states pool funds to purchase C-17 aircraft to be based in Hungary and available for use in a wide variety of Alliance missions.37 The promise of continued progress continues to be hampered, however, by delays and wavering commitment. The first flight of the A400M was originally scheduled before the end of 2008, but postponed.38 Initial success in the C-17 program masks continuing difficulties as well. Twelve nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding in October 2008, activating the NATO Airlift Management Organisation; however, the Czech Republic, Italy and Latvia pulled out of the program and did not sign the MOU. Furthermore, one of the first three C-17s acquired is a U.S. donation.39

The NRF, intended as the primary vehicle to transform the capabilities of the European allies’ military forces, is a visible example of the shortages in deployable forces. The stated NRF requirement is 25,000 combined land, air and naval forces, containing a brigade-sized element of ground forces, approximately 3,000 personnel, available for deployment within five days and self sustaining for up to 30 days. Since its inception, however, NATO has struggled to fully resource the forces, especially its ground component. For example, two months prior to its mission window in 2008, widely publicized reports suggested that the NRF had achieved only 26% fill for ground forces and no commitments for helicopters or logistics.40 Total troop contributions have consistently declined in recent years, from over 21,000 for NRF 8 to 17,000 for NRF 12.

6.4 Building Essential Capabilities

NATO’s various transformation initiatives have not produced sustained improvement in its stated goals. As previously argued, suboptimal production of advanced capabilities is the result of a variety of factors, from a lack of committed funding to an inability to clearly define and prioritise essential capabilities. The Alliance should therefore reconsider the concept of transformation as it is currently constructed, including the need for its strategic level command that oversees these efforts, Allied Command Transformation (ACT), in light of a few harsh realities: NATO and coalition live operations are the true engine for Alliance transformation initiatives. Commitment, in terms of blood and resources, to ongoing operations, in particular active combat in Afghanistan, is more valuable than commitment to a notional force, such as the NRF, which is unlikely to be ready for deployment in any crisis situation. Downward pressure on defence spending, caused by the financial crisis, will force nations to restrict procurement in the coming years, and the political will to purchase and maintain advanced capabilities will suffer accordingly.

A review of the NRF concept is desperately required which must include replacing the current land component of the NRF with a more effective and useable
manoeuvre element such as a NATO Ready Brigade, with responsibility rotated among nations that possess the equivalent of at least three manoeuvre brigades, with smaller nations contributing enabler forces as equitably as possible. The Ready Brigade should be able to deploy, if necessary, within five days of activation for NATO operations; equipping should be resourced by national funds, whilst deployment and sustainment of operations should be funded by NATO common funds, breaking with the current “costs lie where they fall” rules.

NATO should retain its ISAF headquarters structure as a standing stabilization and reconstruction task force, primarily aimed at capturing and maintaining the many lessons learned over the course of several years of operations in Afghanistan. NATO must also develop a minimum of two standing Joint Task Force headquarters within each operational joint forces command, built on restructured land, air, and sea component commands; the Deployable Joint Staff Element (DJSE) concept is a good first step in this direction.

NATO will need to establish innovative methods of delivering some large ticket capabilities such as Strategic Sea and Air Lift. Many nations will find it difficult to contribute directly to such programmes and common funding mechanisms will need to be extended to ensure an equitable share of the procurement burden. Larger nations will also have to learn to collaborate better in the procurement of such high cost capabilities and engage industry in potential partnerships to drive down costs and increase availability and usability.

NATO must also address a more fundamental problem with its current transformation efforts. Should smaller and somewhat poorer member states, especially central and eastern European nations that are primarily reversalist and focused on territorial threats, build rapidly deployable forces? For many nations, the expense of building a very small expeditionary capability may not be the most effective use of resources, when the same country may be able to afford the maintenance of territorial forces that are better suited for its most pressing perceived threat. Such nations may be able to contribute with niche forces or form bi-lateral or multilateral groupings to bring a more effective collective force contribution. NATO may want to consider, as part of its refocus on its core Alliance 5 commitment, creating a dichotomy of effort among member states, with the periphery maintaining an emphasis on territorial defence and the larger states building the expeditionary capability framework. While this approach may make the most of limited resources, it will inevitably raise issues with equitable risk and burden sharing, as some nations will simply not participate in more numerous, and likely, out of area missions because they lack adequate capability. However, a fair assessment of a new approach to transformation, that balances the many varied concerns of member states, is long overdue, especially given the increased likelihood of significant reductions in defence spending.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NATO must remain a regional military alliance, with proven and credible combined military capabilities to defend the territorial integrity of its member states. At the same time, given the evolving nature of threats no longer confined by geography, NATO must develop and maintain the capability to promote stability and security wherever its interests are at stake as part of its collective defence efforts. This
transformation should strengthen the Alliance, with a stronger focus on the common good and promotion of shared values. NATO must build upon its enduring purpose, temporarily halt and clearly define its geographic boundaries for membership, yet develop the mechanisms, and capacities, to act out of area, in lead, or support, of smaller coalitions, to protect vital interests shared by its members. Whilst further enlargement is neither wise nor necessary, and will hinder the ability to act quickly and decisively, the maintenance of strong relations with global partners and international organisations is essential.

A complex view of collective defence demands the ability to act out of area, and in an anticipatory manner, with military force to protect shared vital interests of the member states. While the return to a strong and credible territorial defence capability is essential, NATO must also develop the capability to act militarily, out of area, in accordance with the following conditions:

The Alliance can achieve overwhelming military superiority;

Risks to territory or vital interests exist that can be reasonably defined as imminent, therefore demanding proactive or even anticipatory military action;

Military action will prevent current and deter future degradation of the regional security environment, such as human rights abuses, genocide, or other humanitarian crises;

The Alliance has achieved consensus on the need for military action; however, active participation by all members is not required, and NATO military forces may act in lead or support of operations to another organisation or coalition of nations.

Despite an overall negative assessment and bleak outlook for transformation efforts, NATO must develop the military tools to maintain its core defence capability as well as a proactive military posture in a world of increasingly complex, out of area, threats. The NRF concept, whilst effective in the Air and Maritime components, needs to be reviewed in favour of an effective ground manoeuvre force capable of rapid deployment at Brigade Plus size, with additional enablers to support sustained out of area operations.

NATO needs to restructure its Headquarters and Command and Control structures to be slimmer and more effective in the direction of deployed operations.

There will be a need for much improved collaboration, innovation and partnering with industry to deliver some elements of strategic, operational and battlefield support such as strategic sea and airlift for example, which is unlikely to be able to be met in full if pursued by individual nations as separate projects.

A return to core values and purpose, the territorial security guarantee to all member states, as well as a recognition of the necessity of a conditioned out of area military role, will ensure that NATO remains the most successful military alliance in modern history. True political and financial commitment to essential military capabilities, for territorial defence as well as expeditionary operations, is necessary to
ensure the future viability and credibility of the Alliance. Each NATO member state must be prepared to expend blood and resources on behalf of collective security, but every state need not participate in all military operations; NATO should be able to quickly assemble and deploy in support or at the head of specific-purpose coalitions. Risk and burden sharing inequities, coupled with a growing divergence of threat perception, pose the greatest threats to the Alliance. A renewed Alliance purpose with clear sense of the utility of territorial, as well as anticipatory and out of area military force; realistic force goals and transformation efforts; and the political will to support these endeavours will strengthen and preserve the Alliance and its shared democratic ideals.
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