



ATLANTIC MEMO #25

A New Strategic Policy for an Alliance in Transition

Focusing on the core mission, strengthening global partnerships, and launching broad public diplomacy initiatives should be the top three priorities for NATO. This is the main result of atlantic-community.org's special analysis week on NATO's New Strategic Concept, including op-eds from and a Skype Strategy Session with 17 members from the US, Germany, Italy, the UK, Poland, Turkey, as well as Russia, Azerbaijan, and Finland.

1. Align the scope of the Alliance with its capabilities.

The Alliance should focus its troop intensive operations on defending Europe and North America rather than engaging in stabilization missions in other geographic regions (Lawson). NATO should neither aspire to be a global policeman nor a humanitarian intervention force. It can however, continue to provide limited logistical support after earthquakes and floods etc.

Still, NATO needs to be very well prepared for out-of-area missions should serious threats materialize (von Ploetz). In light of decreasing defense budgets, NATO members should reduce other commitments to be able to prioritize training, equipping and funding of the NATO Response Force, because out-of-area missions require flexible troops with a high level of interoperability, utilizing advanced technologies (Spiessberger).

2. Create Global Partnership Council to institutionalize and deepen co-operations.

NATO should create a Global Partnership Council with military, operational, and political consultation mechanisms to build upon the existing partnership programs, as well the NATO-India dialogue and existing co-operation with Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea (Seidler).

This "Partnership 2.0" approach will enforce the idea of cooperative security and balance the doctrine of deterrence, thereby improving NATO's global image (Christman). At the same time it would help pool resources for mutual benefits, primarily in regard to naval surveillance of the world's oceans to prevent piracy, proliferation, and terrorist activities, but less so for Afghanistan-type invasions. It would need to be communicated that the partnership council would not be directed against other states.

The new Strategic Concept should include a strong commitment to overcoming enduring obstacles against better cooperation with both the EU and Russia. Russian membership of NATO is not a viable option for the time being (Benitez), but the NATO-Russia Council can and has to develop concrete collaborations (Nikolits).

NATO should engage the South Caucasus countries without relying on an eventual path to full membership and can do so with an approach similar to the EU Neighborhood policy (Sumerinli). The Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) frameworks should be strengthened and include public diplomacy programs.

3. Launch broad public diplomacy initiatives to make the case for NATO's existence.

NATO's Public Diplomacy Division should be expanded to focus more on the general public rather than cater to specialist circles. The public needs to be more directly and creatively engaged and NATO's civilian structure should be stressed. Specific attention should be paid to the Greater Middle East, for instance by providing more information on the internet in Arabic and hosting annual seminars with MD and ICI states (Scatamacchia).

Increased transparency is key to fostering public support for the Alliance. To this end, a working draft of the Strategic Concept should be published. Alternatively, the new Strategic Concept should be ratified by the parliaments of all 28 member states before it comes into effect (Davis).

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