ATLANTIC COUNCIL

NATO Global Partnerships:
Strategic Opportunities
and Imperatives in a Globalized World

Franklin D. Kramer

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About the Author

The Honorable Franklin D. Kramer is a national security and international affairs expert and holds multiple appointments, including as an Atlantic Council distinguished fellow and a member of its Board of Directors and Strategic Advisors Group. Mr. Kramer has been a senior political appointee in two administrations, including as assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs for President Clinton, and previously as principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs.

Foreword

This report is the third that the Atlantic Council has issued in the last year focusing on how NATO needs to respond to the increasingly dynamic currents of history that the transatlantic nations face. What they all have reflected is that the world is at a turning point, where new powers are rising, new challenges are emerging, and long-practiced approaches to international security must be rethought. For NATO, the question is whether one of history's great institutions can also become one of the future's most relevant players. It won't happen without change, or, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "Above all, try something."

The first report, "Transatlantic Nations and Global Security: Pivoting and Partnerships," emphasized that the most fundamental challenges of the twenty-first century now lie beyond the transatlantic area and that for NATO to remain relevant in addressing these threats, the allies will need to develop a more sophisticated set of interoperable allied capabilities, even in the face of significant budgetary pressures.

The second report, "Anchoring the Alliance," focused on leadership, stating that NATO's future is in doubt if its members do not change their ways. It offered concrete suggestions for steps allies can take individually and collectively to ensure the new Strategic Concept does not become a document reflecting overly ambitious goals for an alliance that lacks political will.

This third report incorporates both the crucial nature of challenges beyond the transatlantic community and the need for the Alliance to change its ways. The focus is on the importance of NATO's global partners and the capabilities they bring to ensuring global security.

I am especially grateful to Franklin D. Kramer, Atlantic Council distinguished fellow and former Pentagon senior official, whose vast experience and expertise in transatlantic security policy have served as a tremendous resource to the Atlantic Council on this project and many other efforts over the last decade.

This publication is a flagship effort of the Atlantic Council's Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, ably led by Barry Pavel. We are thankful for the efforts of Assistant Director Simona Kordosova in executing the workshops that informed the substance of this report, and also to the embassies of Sweden and the United Arab Emirates, which hosted such discussions.

We hope that this report will make an important contribution to shaping the policy debate both for NATO and global partner countries by offering concrete initiatives that will ensure the enduring relevance of history's most enduring alliance.

Frederick Kempe
President and CEO
Atlantic Council

Executive Summary

International security in today's globalized world demands a framework responsive to interconnectedness, multiple power centers, shared vulnerabilities, and dramatic change. To meet these diverse challenges that affect the security of its members, NATO, as the West's premier security organization, must reach beyond the transatlantic arena, linking with other nations whose world views are comparable and whose capacities complement NATO's strengths. NATO's global partnerships are critical elements in providing an effective international security framework and, therefore, are a vital key to generating a stable and secure international system.

NATO has long had partnerships as an element in its strategy and operations. Multiple flexible structures have enabled Alliance-partner relationships which have been instrumental in activities as different as the enlargement of NATO, the conflict in Afghanistan, peacekeeping in the Balkans, counter-piracy operations off the African coast, and the operation in Libya. In today's globalized world, continued development and usage of partnerships offers NATO strategic opportunities to contribute to the Alliance's three fundamental missions of collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security. Moreover, with NATO members' defense budgets and capabilities decreasing significantly, the imperative for NATO to strengthen and better leverage its partnerships is greater than it has ever been.

There are four key reasons underlying that conclusion.

First, the geography of significant security concerns likely will remain outside the North Atlantic area for the foreseeable future. In such event, partners would have invaluable benefit to NATO both from a standpoint of greater understanding of the relevant context as well as from the benefit to legitimacy of operations that their involvement with NATO would engender.

Second, the types of security challenges that NATO faces increasingly involve the global commons and transnational issues including cyber, maritime piracy, energy security, nonproliferation, and counterterrorism. While NATO obviously will not be the only institution involved in dealing with these matters, it already engages in many such spheres. Since the issues are global or transnational, future engagement will be enhanced by partners that can bring knowledge and capabilities toward creating effective solutions.

Third, and related to the foregoing, the United States defense strategy issued in January 2012 focuses heavily on areas outside of Europe. But the strategy is very much not a "go it alone" approach, but rather one that plans to rely heavily on partners from those regions who have particular value. The emphasis that the United States has put on these regions and partnerships in terms of challenges and responses warrants NATO, whose member nations' national interests substantially overlap with those of the United States, likewise focusing in this same regard.

Fourth, security ultimately depends on the provision of resources, and viable partners can add important resources to NATO's capabilities. NATO's partners have included multiple countries with significant resources, among them Australia, Finland, Japan, Qatar, South Korea, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates. These and other partners maintain effective militaries and have the resources to utilize them in appropriate circumstances.

Accordingly, this report proposes a four-part partnership strategy that complements NATO's approach for the member states of the Alliance including: 1) interoperable partner military capabilities, 2) working with partners in the global commons and with respect to transnational security problems, 3) undertaking education, training, and mentoring for partner military/security sector development, and 4) establishing strategic cooperation with partners on matters of international security concern. In implementing this strategy, NATO and its partners should utilize the concepts of strategic differentiation and flexible structures to ensure that partnerships as part of the NATO operating approach contribute to international security.

Specifically, the report recommends NATO take the following ten actions:

Military Operations:

1. Encourage its most effective operational partners to join the NATO Response Force (NRF).

2. Create an enhanced exercise schedule for partners and act as a clearinghouse to coordinate national-led multinational exercises.

3. Include its most effective partners in an operational chain of command for regional contingencies.

Global Commons and Transnational Threats:

4. Develop, with partners, cyber security standards for partner operational networks.

5. Develop operational counterterror capacities with partners built around special operations forces.

6. Work with partners to maintain counterinsurgency and comprehensive approach capacities.

7. Develop a maritime force that works with partners in the Gulf, the littorals around Africa, and the Arctic.

Education, Training, and Mentoring:

8. Establish a clearinghouse budget category to organize and complement the many national efforts with partners in order to maximize effectiveness and utilize resources efficiently.

9. Expand long-term educational efforts regarding the proper role of a military in a democracy.

Strategic Cooperation:

10. Create Strategic Partnership Groups with its key Gulf and Middle East partners and with its Pacific partners. Partners who have joined a Strategic Partnership Group and who are part of the NRF should have a right of consultation with NATO as NATO has extended to its Partnership for Peace (PfP) partners.

NATO Global Partnerships:
Strategic Opportunities and Imperatives in a Globalized World

International security in today's globalized world demands a framework responsive to interconnectedness, multiple power centers, shared vulnerabilities, and dramatic change.

The United States National Intelligence Council recently wrote that, "The empowerment of individuals and diffusion of power among states and from states to informal networks will have a dramatic impact, largely reversing the historic rise of the West since 1750, restoring Asia's weight in the global economy, and ushering in a new era of "democratization" at the international and domestic level.[1]

The recent US strategic defense guidance concludes that the world is at an "inflection point" with the "global security environment present[ing] an increasingly complex set of challenges and opportunities.[2]

Such global challenges demand that security institutions have the knowledge and capacity to respond effectively. NATO, as the West's premier security organization, must have those capabilities. But as a transatlantic alliance, NATO itself needs the interconnectedness and global awareness necessary to meet the diverse globalized challenges that affect the security of its members. NATO's global partnerships are a critical element of providing that interconnectedness and global capacity and, as a consequence, are a key to generating a stable and secure international system.

Accordingly, this report proposes a four-part partnership strategy that complements each aspect of NATO's approach for the member states of the Alliance including: 1) interoperable partner military capabilities, 2) working with partners in the global commons and with respect to transnational security problems, 3) undertaking education,

training, and mentoring for partner military/security sector development, and 4) establishing strategic cooperation with partners on matters of international security concern.

In implementing this strategy, NATO and its partners should utilize the concepts of strategic differentiation and flexible structures to ensure that partnerships as part of the NATO operating approach contribute to international security.

The report first sets forth the rationale for enhanced partnerships. It then describes NATO's current partnership efforts. Finally, it develops the enhanced strategic approach set forth above building on the institutions and capabilities that NATO has established over the years.

I. The Rationale for Enhanced Partnerships

NATO has long had partnerships as an element in its strategy and operations. Multiple flexible structures have enabled Alliance-partner relationships which have been instrumental in activities as different as the enlargement of NATO, the conflict in Afghanistan, peacekeeping in the Balkans, counter-piracy operations off the African coast, and the operation in Libya. In today's globalized world, continued development and usage of partnerships offers NATO *strategic opportunities* to contribute to the Alliance's three fundamental missions of collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security. Moreover, with NATO members' defense budgets and capabilities decreasing significantly, the *imperative* for NATO to strengthen and better leverage its partnerships is greater than it has ever been.

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[1]   National Intelligence Council, Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds, p. iii.

[2]   Sustaining U.S. Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense (January 2012), p. 1.

NATO's partnership opportunities and imperatives necessarily depend on its strategic approach to international security challenges. As befits a globalizing world, NATO's posture is itself evolving. Beyond classic collective defense of the NATO region itself—which remains a bedrock requirement—there are four broad categories of actions NATO can strategically undertake:

- Developing capabilities as a military contingency organization able to respond to periodic requirements for the use of force for crisis management;

- Establishment of security in the global commons and with respect to transnational security problems;

- Enhancing education, training, and mentoring activities; and

- Developing a broader and deeper approach to strategic cooperation which could shape both crisis management and cooperative security.

As a matter of ongoing activities, NATO is working in all these areas.

NATO's missions of collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security have all benefitted from partner involvement in the past. In the future, partnerships will be even more central. Four points underscore this conclusion:

First, the geography of significant security concerns likely will remain outside the NATO geographic area. To be sure, consequential events could occur that would have an impact within NATO's formal arena—the obvious ongoing example is the Syrian crisis on NATO's Turkish border—but it is simply the case that the Greater Middle East, south and southwest Asia, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific all present more dynamic security considerations than do Europe and North America. This does not mean that there cannot be impact from such dynamics that would have consequences within the NATO member countries. September 11 is illustrative of the fact that forces from the outside can wreak devastation within NATO countries. Concerns over nonproliferation are potentially another example. Nonetheless, not only the threat but likely any associated operations would generally be expected to eventuate away from the NATO area. In such

event, partners would have invaluable benefit to NATO both from a standpoint of greater understanding of the relevant context as well as from the benefit to legitimacy of operations that their involvement with NATO would engender.

Second, the types of security challenges that NATO faces may increasingly involve the global commons and transnational issues. Significant challenges exist in multiple arenas including cyber, nonproliferation, counterterrorism, and maritime areas with respect both to energy security and piracy.

A recent report by NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT) on the global commons concluded that:

> Access to and transit of the maritime, air, space, and cyber domains will continue to be threatened or disrupted by nations and nonstate actors. In the future, we may be denied access to critical resources from the Global Commons, and the means to deliver them where they are needed. It is not difficult to imagine societies overwhelmed by large-scale disruptions of civil and military networks through increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks…It is particularly significant that, while globalization and the use of the Global Commons have increased dramatically, the cost of disruption has declined precipitously as disruptive dual-use technology has become more readily available, affordable, and easy to use.[3]

NATO has similarly recognized the challenges of proliferation and terrorism. At the May 2012 Chicago summit, NATO highlighted the "proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), as well as their means of delivery" and stated that the Alliance will "ensure NATO has the appropriate capabilities, including for planning efforts, training and exercises, to address and respond to CBRN attacks." Similarly, NATO reiterated, "Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations can never be tolerated or justified" and "endorsed NATO's Policy Guidelines on Counter-Terrorism, and task[ed] the Council to prepare an Action Plan to further enhance NATO's ability to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism by identifying initiatives to enhance our threat awareness, capabilities, and engagement.[4]

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[3] Maj. Gen. Mark Barrett, Dick Bedford, Elizabeth Skinner, Eva Vergles, "Assured Access to the Global Commons," Supreme Allied Command Transformation, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Norfolk, Virgina USA, April 2011, p. xiii.

[4] Chicago summit communiqué, paras. 50, 51. The Policy guidelines provide: "Terrorism poses a direct threat to the security of the citizens of NATO countries, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly and will remain a threat for the foreseeable future. Terrorists have demonstrated their ability to cross international borders, establish cells, reconnoiter targets and execute attacks. The threat is exacerbated by terrorist groups and individuals that continue to spread to, and in, areas of strategic importance to the Alliance, including Allies' own territory. Modern technology increases the potential impact of terrorist attacks employing conventional and unconventional means, particularly as terrorists seek to acquire chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) capabilities and cyber abilities. Instability or conflict can create an environment conducive to the spread of terrorism, including by fostering extremist ideologies, intolerance and fundamentalism." NATO Policy Guidelines on Counter-Terrorism , para. 1.

By definition, the global commons engage countries worldwide and NATO's potential partners would likewise be affected by the putative disruptions that the ACT report discussed. This is similarly true in responding to the challenges of proliferation and terrorism—as, for example, NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative partners face directly the threat of Iranian nuclear proliferation. Most relevant to the future, the ACT report also underscored the value of partners in dealing with these disruptive challenges:

> Assuring access to the Global Commons will be the central challenge of the coming decade. In the wake of Lisbon, NATO is in a unique position to build partnerships in support of the goals presented here … We will best do so by opening doors, and preserving common spaces on the high seas, in the air, in space, and in the cyber world. In this way, NATO will continue to demonstrate its enduring support for openness rather than exclusivity as vital Alliance interests and for the unconstrained use of the Global Commons in responsible ways that sustain and nurture our mutual security and prosperity.[5]

While NATO obviously will not be the only institution involved in dealing with matters of the global commons or transnational concerns, NATO does already engage in many such spheres. But since the issues are global or transnational, once again future engagement will only be enhanced by partners that can bring knowledge and capabilities toward creating effective solutions.

Third, and related to the foregoing, the United States defense strategy issued in January 2012 focuses heavily on areas outside of Europe. The secretary of defense's cover letter to the strategy discusses the need for a "global presence emphasizing the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East." The strategy itself elaborates this geographic focus, stating that the "primary loci of these [extremist and destabilizing] threats are South Asia and the Middle East"[6]; and that "US economic and security interests are inextricably linked to developments in the arc extending from the Western Pacific and East Asia into the Indian Ocean region and South Asia …"[7]

But the strategy is very much not a "go it alone" approach, but rather one that plans to rely heavily on partners, declaring that "US policy will emphasize Gulf security, in collaboration with Gulf Cooperation Council countries when appropriate, to prevent Iran's development of a nuclear weapon capability and counter its destabilizing policies" and that "*To support these objectives, the United States will continue to place a premium on US and allied military presence in–and support of – partner nations in and around this region.*"[8]

It continues, "Our relationships with Asian allies and key partners are critical to the future stability and growth of the region. We will emphasize our existing alliances, which provide a vital foundation for Asia-Pacific security. We will also expand our networks of cooperation with emerging partners throughout the Asia-Pacific to ensure collective capability and capacity for securing common interests.[9]

In short, the United States strategy is one that builds heavily on partners in regions where partners have particular value. The emphasis that the United States has put on these regions and partnerships warrants NATO, whose member nations' national interests substantially overlap with those of the United States, likewise focusing in this same regard.

Fourth, security ultimately depends on the provision of resources, and viable partners can add important resources to NATO's capabilities. NATO's partners have included multiple countries with significant resources, among them Australia, Finland, Japan, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates. These and other partners maintain effective militaries and have the resources to utilize them in appropriate circumstances.

II. NATO's Current Partnership Approach

A. Institutions and Operations

Historically, NATO has undertaken two types of approaches to partnership—institutional and operational—with partners frequently, but not always, engaging in each.

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[5] Id.

[6] Sustaining U.S. Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense (January 2012) at p. 1. See also: "Our defense efforts in the Middle East will be aimed at countering violent extremists and destabilizing threats, as well as upholding our commitment to allies and partner states. Of particular concern are the proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction (WMD)." Id.

[7] Id. at p.2.

[8] Id.

[9] Id.

i. Institutional Structures

The Partnership for Peace was NATO's initial significant partnership effort.[10] As has often been noted, the PfP program established a structured approach for NATO to work with the central and eastern European countries, including former Warsaw Pact members, especially focused on their becoming members of NATO.[11] In addition, however, to being a way-station for countries to join the Alliance—twelve former PfP countries have done so[12] — PfP has been an important institution in and of itself for non-NATO countries in northern and central Europe[13] as well as being a mechanism for engagement at varying levels for countries of eastern Europe,[14] the Balkans,[15] the Caucuses,[16] and central Asia.[17] PfP has provided both for substantial military interoperability interaction and a mechanism for strategic dialogue. Furthermore, all PfP countries have a right of consultation with NATO in the event that they believe they face significant security threats.

NATO also has additional multilateral partnership frameworks, but none have had the impact of PfP. The Mediterranean Dialogue was established in 1994 and now comprises seven North African and Middle Eastern countries.[18] It has proved to be mostly an opportunity for conversation. The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative was established in 2004, inviting six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council to participate, of which four have done so.[19] While conceptually allowing for significant military cooperation, it has in practice been fairly limited in scope. Many partners involved in both these efforts have been underwhelmed by the outcomes.

NATO also has established formal partnership relationships with additional countries that are not part of its other partnership frameworks—Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Mongolia—referring to them as "partners across the globe" and more recently "global partners."[20] Following the 2012 Chicago summit, NATO has entered into deeper security cooperation agreements with Australia (Joint Political Declaration) and South Korea (Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program). These countries have engaged with NATO in operations, including providing forces and/or other support such as funding or civilian workers.

NATO's bilateral arrangements also include countries with whom NATO's relations are less settled, particularly Russia through the NATO-Russia Council, Ukraine through the NATO-Ukraine Commission, and Georgia through the NATO-Georgia Commission. While each of these countries has supported various NATO operations, other issues have made their interaction with NATO far from straightforward. Generally, while each of the NATO frameworks has helped to manage complex relationships, they have not been the key factor in the interactions of NATO or its member nations with any of the countries.

The multiplicity of arrangements that NATO has had demonstrates significant capacity on the part of the Alliance for flexibility when engaging partners. As further discussed below, maintaining that flexibility will be valuable to implementing effective partnerships for the future.

ii. Operational Activities

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has engaged in numerous types of operations including in active conflicts (Kosovo, Afghanistan, Libya), peacekeeping and peace enforcement (Bosnia, Macedonia), maritime patrolling (counterterrorism in the Mediterranean and counterpiracy in the Indian Ocean), and humanitarian efforts (Pakistan).[21]

Partners have been regularly engaged in these operations. Important recent examples include in Afghanistan, where twenty-two partners have supported the mission, and during the Libya conflict, where Jordan, Qatar, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates participated in NATO's air operations with a total of forty aircraft.

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[10] PfP's predecessor, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, was useful for consultation, but did not provide for practical security cooperation. The NACC was formally ended when the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council was established.

[11] GAO, NATO Partnerships: DOD Needs to Assess US Assistance in Response to Changes to the Partnership for Peace Program (September 2010), p. 6.

[12] Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Albania, Croatia. Republic of Macedonia likely would be able to join NATO if and when it resolves its name issue with Greece.

[13] Sweden, Finland, Austria, Ireland, and Switzerland

[14] Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus

[15] Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia

[16] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia.

[17] Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan.

[18] GAO, supra note 2, at p. 6. The MD countries are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia.

[19] GAO, supra note 2, at p. 6. Four of the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries have joined the ICI—Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. The other two countries are Saudi Arabia and Oman.

[20] NATO has also referred to these countries as "Contact Countries."

[21] See Ruiz-Palmer, Two decades of NATO operations: Taking stock, looking ahead, NATO Review, http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2012/Chicago/Stock-Looking-Ahead/EN/index.htm. A list of the thirty-five NATO operations from 1991-2012 is included at the end of this article.

Because of such regular involvement, over time NATO has sought to clarify and deepen its operational arrangements with partners. At Berlin in 2011, NATO approved the "Political Military Framework For Partner Involvement In Nato-Led Operations" which provides for "full consultation, cooperation, and transparency with operational partners and as appropriate potential operational partners, on all relevant aspects of the operation throughout its life-cycle."[22] More recently, at the Chicago summit, NATO confirmed this approach of broad consultation, inviting thirteen operational partners[23] to participate and stating in the communiqué, "our meeting in Chicago with partners provides us with a unique opportunity to discuss the lessons learned from our cooperation, and to exchange views on the common security challenges we face."[24]

B. Partnership Processes and Tools

The breadth of NATO's institutional and operational arrangements has led the Alliance to establish multiple processes and tools to interact with partners. The goals generally are two-fold: 1) to enhance interoperability, capabilities, and common approaches and/or 2) to support democratic processes and transparency.[25]

In support of these objectives, the available tools to utilize with partners have been multiple and overlapping including, among others: the Planning and Review Process, Individual Partnership Action Plans, Membership Action Plans, Operational Capabilities Concept, Training and Education Enhancement Program, Partnership Action Plan on Terrorism, and Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building. The essence of these, as noted above, is to promote interoperability and common operational approaches as well as democracy and transparency.

More recently, NATO sought to regularize and upgrade its partnership activities and tools. Accordingly, in 2011, NATO approved in Berlin "A More Efficient and Flexible Partnership

Policy" which provides, " NATO will … open all cooperative activities and exercises to partners and … will establish a single Partnership Cooperation Menu and a tailored Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) as an entry-level programme available to all partners."[26]

As part of the upgrading effort, the Policy provides, "The Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) and Planning and Review Process (PARP) will also be opened to partners beyond the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)/PfP, on a case by case basis and on decision of the NAC."[27]

One additional key NATO activity also available to partner participation is the NATO Response Force (NRF), which is comprised of three parts:

- a command and control element from the NATO Command Structure;

- the Immediate Response Force, a joint force of about 13 000 high-readiness troops provided by allies to which nations commit land, air, naval or Special Forces units for a twelve month period; and

- a Response Forces Pool, which can supplement the Immediate Response Force when necessary.

The NRF is open to partner countries once approved by the North Atlantic Council (NAC). Currently, relatively few partners engaged with the NRF, with only Ukraine and Finland having committed.

Even though all partnership programs are technically open to all partners, NATO has significant resource constraints. Accordingly, NATO has determined that it will prioritize its "limited resources for partnership objectives" on the basis of whether the partner "aspires to join the Alliance," "shares the values on which NATO is based," "supports militarily, politically, financially or otherwise NATO's ongoing operations and missions," "is of special

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[22] Political Military Framework For Partner Involvement In Nato-Led Operations, paras. 8. The Framework further provides: "Consultations will take the form of regular meetings, in the appropriate military and political bodies, including the Military Committee, and at Council level "Operational partners will be consulted and offered the opportunity to put forward views on all relevant issues and be fully involved in the discussion of documents, in particular Concepts of Operations … Operations plans, Rules of Engagement, and their revisions, and Periodic Mission Reviews, prior to the start of decision-making … At all levels, the NATO political and military staff will maintain appropriate and active regular informal contacts with all operational partners." Id. paras. 8 & 9.

[23] Australia, Austria, Finland, Georgia, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Morocco, New Zealand, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates

[24] NATO Chicago Summit Communique, 2012, at para. 24, which further provided: "Joint training and exercises will be essential in maintaining our interoperability and interconnectedness with partner forces, including when we are not engaged together in active operations. We will share ideas generated at this Chicago meeting with all our partners, within the appropriate frameworks, for additional discussion."

[25] Those are the goals set forth in the PfP Framework Document which provided for five objectives: a) facilitation of transparency in national defence planning and budgeting processes; b) ensuring democratic control of defence forces; c) maintenance of the capability and readiness to contribute, subject to constitutional considerations, to operations under the authority of the UN and/or the responsibility of the CSCE; d) the development of cooperative military relations with NATO, for the purpose of joint planning, training, and exercises in order to strengthen their ability to undertake missions in the fields of peacekeeping, search and rescue, humanitarian operations, and others as may subsequently be agreed; and e) the development, over the longer term, of forces that are better able to operate with those of the members of the North Atlantic Alliance.

[26] A More Efficient and Flexible Partnership Policy, Paras. 12 & 13.

[27] Id. para. 13.

strategic importance," "has a special and developed bilateral cooperation framework with the Alliance," has the "capacity…to finance its cooperative activities," and focuses on NATO's "priority areas."[28]

Factors such as these are indeed highly relevant in determining how and with which countries NATO should enhance its partnership efforts.

III. Enhanced Partnerships: Strategic Opportunities

A. Global Partnerships—Key Components

Given the substantial reasons for NATO to maintain and enhance its partnerships, it is useful to recognize that there are different types of partnership activities and different benefits from each. Generally, four substantive types of partnership interactions stand out, and NATO can enhance its members' security by working with partners in each of these arenas:

1. **Interoperable Military Capabilities:** It is impossible to predict specific future NATO operations, but history teaches that they will occur and that they will include partners. Which partners would actually participate in a particular operation and how they would do so will be determined by the multiplicities of geopolitical context. What is clear enough is that in a globalized world, geography will not be the sole nor necessarily even the dominant determinant. For example, historically, in the Balkan operations in Europe, countries from North Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and South America were engaged.[29] In North African operations in Libya, partners from Northern Europe, the Gulf, and Middle East participated.[30] In operations in Afghanistan in southwest Asia, over twenty partners from Europe, the Gulf, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Asia-Pacific have been involved.[31] In short, with respect to the decision to participate with NATO, much more significant than geography has been the partner's analysis of security interests at stake—a calculus that can be impacted by the nature of the partner's relationship with NATO members as well as consideration of what the security consequences of the operation will entail.

The broad conclusion from NATO's perspective is that working with partners to develop and utilize military capabilities that can interoperate with and complement the Alliance's own capabilities will have significant value. In the first instance, the generation of capabilities by partner nations depends on their own national decisions regarding the organizing, training, and equipping of their militaries. But involvement with NATO can enhance those capabilities and make them more usable for Alliance operations. As was stated at the Chicago summit, "Joint training and exercises will be essential in maintaining our interoperability and interconnectedness with partner forces, including when we are not engaged together in active operations."

Partners therefore need to understand and be associated with NATO's most important military initiatives such as Smart Defense, Connected Forces Initiative, NATO 2020, and the NRF. For certain partners, they may find it valuable to increase their capacity through available NATO programs. Most importantly, individualized programs (such as the IPAP) that are integrated by NATO into a coherent whole (through PARP or equivalent force planning) can help make potential partner contributions most useful. When such a partner force structure then is integrated into NATO exercise efforts via the NRF— and also other NATO exercise programs—the value of such combined capacity will be maximized.

The three most important steps NATO can take in this regard will be 1) to have its most effective operational partners join the NRF; 2) to establish a significant training schedule for key operational partners; and 3) to maintain partners in an operational chain of command for regional contingencies.

The NRF can be NATO's first responder in crisis and, even if it is not used as an entity, it will have developed capacity for forces to work together. Partners who exercise with the NRF will be best placed to engage with NATO in operations.

As the foregoing suggests, exercises are crucial for readiness. NATO maintains a coherent exercise approach, but especially as force involvement in Afghanistan winds down, exercises including

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[28] Id. at para. 16.

[29] Argentina, Chile, India, Mongolia, Morocco, United Arab Emirates. Australia and New Zealand sent personnel by arrangement with the United Kingdom. European partners included Armenia, Austria, Finland, Ireland, Russia and Ukraine as well as countries that have since become NATO members.

[30] Sweden, UAE, Qatar, Jordan.

[31] Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Jordan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Montenegro, New Zealand , Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sweden, Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates.

those partners should be enhanced. NATO should particularly run exercises with its NRF partners to ensure operational capability is maintained. NATO also can act as a clearinghouse to help ensure that national-led exercises that engage multinational partners are utilized most effectively.

Finally, partners need to be involved in operational decision-making and command and control. Militarily, nations that provide significant substantive capabilities, that have joined the NRF and that have extensively trained with NATO will have the capacity to operate effectively within the chain of command. Politically, such countries will be more able to provide such capabilities if they are included in the Alliance's military and political-military calculations. No partner nation should receive such inclusion without a significant operational commitment, but nations that do provide real operational capabilities and which have demonstrated by prior training the capacity to operate effectively as part of the chain of command should have that opportunity.   NATO should therefore include its most effective partners in an operational chain of command for regional contingencies.

2. **Actions in the global commons and on transnational threats:** As the Chicago summit statements on proliferation, terrorism, and cyber as well as the ACT report on the global commons make clear, security is no longer limited in geographic scope nor even to purely military considerations. In responding to those challenges, partners can have important roles.

   a. **Cyber**: With respect to cyber, there are both military operational requirements as well as larger security considerations that are of importance. On the operational side, partner national military networks need to meet NATO standards that are required for resilience. If a partner's national networks do not meet such standards, they will be a source of cyberattack and can be used to defeat NATO capabilities. If national militaries cannot meet such standards and are a source of malware and other cyber issues, those networks would have to be cut off from NATO operations—and that would undercut NATO's greatest strength, its interoperability. In the recent Libyan operation, partner aircraft from Jordan, Qatar, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates flew together with NATO forces, but if one or more of those countries'

networks had been an infected source of malware, those nations could not have been included in NATO's combined air operations unless resilience capabilities were present. NATO should therefore develop with its partners cyber security standards for partner operational networks.

A more complicated issue arises as NATO operates outside of its own arena where it may be necessary for it to rely on the electricity or telecommunications infrastructures of partner countries. Understanding the critical nature of these entities to security and their particular vulnerability to cyberattack underscores the need for a new paradigm to provide resilient security. The recent Shamoon attacks in Saudi Arabia that destroyed 30,000 computers demonstrated the vulnerabilities associated with cyber attacks. NATO needs to consider how it will plan to operate in the future if host nations have vulnerability, and the Alliance needs to take steps in advance through partnerships to limit such problems. This is not a problem that can be solved immediately and it is not one that affects only militaries. Nonetheless, the military consequences could be very significant. Accordingly, a good initial effort would be to establish working groups with select partners to evaluate the military requirements of critical infrastructure protection.

   b. **Counterterrorism:** With respect to terrorism, NATO's existing policy proposes substantial engagement with partners. The policy provides:

> To enhance Allies' security, NATO will continue to engage with partner countries … in countering terrorism. The Alliance will strengthen its outreach to and cooperation with partner countries…to promote common understanding of the terrorist threat and to leverage the full potential of each stake-holder engaged in the global counter terrorism effort … Particular emphasis will be placed on raising awareness, capacity building, civil-emergency planning and crisis management in order to respond to specific needs of partner countries and Allied interests … Counterterrorism training, education, and support for capacity-building will be consistent with the objectives and priorities of NATO's policy on partnerships.[32]

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[32] NATO policy guidelines on counter-terrorism, para. 12 (May 21, 2012), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87905.htm

NATO has had a Partnership Action Plan on Terrorism since 2002 to implement those objectives. As valuable as those efforts are, one critical additional capability would be the development with partners of operational counterterror capabilities. In support of that goal, a key effort that NATO could undertake is to enhance and integrate partner special operations forces capabilities. NATO nations, of course, have special operations forces (SOF) capabilities and NATO itself has a Special Operations Headquarters. However, the campaigns in Libya and Afghanistan, the desire to enhance preventative capacities, and potential benefits from training and supporting host nation militaries all underscore the value of expanded SOF with partners. This is especially true since counterterrorism requires a high degree of understanding of the local environment. Partner nations from a given region understand their own environment better than any NATO nation will. Accordingly, there is an operational benefit from such interaction. Moreover, in addition to operational value, partner counterterrorism involvement is extremely important for legitimacy and international rule of law considerations.

Beyond their functional capabilities, SOF fit well into an "age of austerity" budget approach because their resources requirements are relatively less substantial. That is because of both their leveraging approach—i.e., fewer forces are necessary—and because they have relatively fewer highly expensive equipment demands. A NATO effort to increase cooperation with partner nations' SOF capabilities would look forward to the more likely types of activities that NATO might be engaged in including preventative actions, counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. In sum, NATO should develop operational counterterrorism capacities with partners built around special forces.

c. **COIN/Comprehensive Approach:** After Afghanistan, it is certainly the case that no NATO member will want to engage in a prolonged, troop-heavy counterinsurgency or comprehensive approach activity. Nonetheless, despite the difficulties of stabilization and counterinsurgency operations, the unpredictability of future events means that the requirements for such actions

cannot be discounted. Simply as an example, no one predicted the French intervention in Mali. Consequently, the capabilities developed over the past decade and a half since NATO first undertook such operations in the Balkans likely will remain relevant to crisis management and cooperative security efforts in multiple regions including the Greater Middle East and Africa.

Accordingly, NATO should work with partners to maintain counterinsurgency and comprehensive approach capacities. A good initial approach might be for ACT to be given the mandate for such actions, but, in establishing the effort, the value that partners would bring should be clearly understood. From a political-military viewpoint, partners are likely to have invaluable regional understanding. Equally important, partners often will have force structure and operational arrangements that likely would be more comparable to the capabilities and resources available to a host nation than NATO approaches which often demand much more significant resources than host nations have available.

A complementary useful approach would be to create a Center of Excellence to focus on these issues. There is an existing center of excellence for civil-military relations headquartered in the Netherlands, but it is neither fundamentally oriented to counterinsurgency nor the more difficult aspect of the comprehensive approach. If a center of excellence is to be established and be effective, it will need a focused approach that can be made available for training efforts and it should engage with partners as a regular part of its activities.

d. **Maritime:** NATO has a recent Alliance Maritime Strategy that explicitly recognizes the value of working with partners both in terms of cooperative security (i.e., outreach to partners) and maritime security (i.e., addressing security threats arising in the maritime environment), stating with respect to the latter, "Maritime security is a suitable area for cooperation with partners."[33]

In developing maritime security, there are three sets of actions that NATO could undertake. First, it could work with its regional partners to provide NATO support to the free flow of commerce in the

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[33] Alliance Maritime Strategy (2011), para. 14.

Gulf and also as a deterrent to Iranian activities. To be sure, the United States is already very active in the Gulf and the United Kingdom, France, and other NATO member countries are periodically engaged, but having NATO per se as a participant would both increase capabilities and deterrence. Second, NATO could expand its very useful counterpiracy activities off the eastern part of Africa to undertake patrolling with African nations on both the east and west coasts on a regular basis. Such activities would have significant cooperative security benefits, helping to create stability and security in the African littorals and also provide training and humanitarian activities. Third, as the Arctic opens further, NATO could support efforts in this region including with its partners.

In sum, NATO should develop a maritime force that works with partners in the Gulf, the littorals around Africa, and in the Arctic.

3. **Military/security sector development:** Functioning military and security sectors are requirements for all effective nation states, and therefore military and security sector development is often a high priority in partner countries. NATO has long worked on such issues, including through its Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building and more recently through Defense Education Enhancement Programs currently undertaken with eight countries.[34] In September 2012, NATO held a clearinghouse conference to further coordinate such efforts. Further expanding NATO's educational and military sector reform activities would be a low-cost, high-payoff activity for the Alliance.

NATO has significant experience in this arena. In the development of the role of the militaries for the countries of central and eastern Europe, the transatlantic effort included both bilateral and multilateral actions, including significant efforts through NATO. It is important to note, however, that not all actions ran through NATO. The United States, the United Kingdom, and France, among others, all undertook significant bilateral efforts—and this was particularly true with respect to the provision

of resources, whether in funding or in the provision of in-kind assistance (such as training and advisory efforts). NATO did, of course play a key role, and especially NATO's Partnership for Peace activities were focused toward this end—and NATO was used to provide a clearinghouse to help coordinate efforts by nations.

NATO has since built on this approach, as the Defense Educational Enhancement Plans demonstrate, and it can do so in very cost-effective ways for the future. As has been the case and was fully discussed at the September 2012 clearinghouse, assistance can be provided through a variety of mechanisms, both multilateral and bilateral. Those include strategic dialogues, advisory and organizational consultations, education and training efforts, joint operations, resource provision, and partnership agreements. Various NATO and national institutions such as the NATO Defense College and the US Marshall Center, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, and the Africa Center for Strategic Studies can play worthwhile roles as can institutions from other NATO countries.

A critical factor in expanding the use of a clearinghouse to support partner military reform will be funding. However, the costs for such efforts (generally involving the development of curricula and the provision of subject matter experts) are extremely low on a comparative basis to almost any other partnership activity. NATO could have a highly leveraged result if it set forth a focused category for such efforts in its annual budget. This would complement national money provided on a bilateral basis, and it would be potentially invaluable in starting new programs beyond those currently in existence.

In sum, in an era of austerity, NATO should expand long-term educational efforts regarding the role of a military in a democracy. NATO should enhance its activities as a clearinghouse to include the establishment of a NATO clearinghouse budget category to organize and complement the many national efforts with partners in order to maximize effectiveness and utilize resource efficiently.

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[34] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Mauritania, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

4. Strategic cooperation: In two prior reports,[35] the Atlantic Council challenged key countries of NATO to take a more strategic approach. The critical steps for NATO would be to be explicit about the need for continued involvement in multiple regions and to create more effective processes for doing so.

In a globalized world, there are substantial reasons for NATO to be involved on a continuing basis in the Greater Middle East, south and southwest Asia, and the Asia-Pacific. It is true that NATO has been engaged in some of these arenas. But, generally, that has been on a contingency basis in response to an ongoing crisis. A more strategic approach will allow NATO to get ahead of the curve and help set security conditions that would enhance stability and avoid crisis. For reasons developed below, NATO should create strategic partnership groups with its Gulf and Pacific partners.

The value of a strategic partnership group will depend in great part on three factors. First, it will need to look at the whole region and be willing to do so periodically with a regional lens rather than dealing with each different problem as a sort of encapsulated issue. Second, it will need to analyze and recommend a full spectrum of operational approaches—political, diplomatic, economic, intelligence, information, and military. Third, and most importantly, it will need to include partners who have capabilities and understandings beyond those within the NATO family.

No strategic partnership group would displace bilateral activities nor would it be the only multilateral venue. What it would do, however, is focus the Alliance on key theaters in which its interests are at risk. A good way to start such an approach would be to create closer links with NATO's partners in the Middle East and the Pacific.

In the Middle East, NATO should seek to enhance its relationship with its Gulf partners and Jordan and Morocco. The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and the Mediterranean Dialogue have proved only to be

starting places. NATO nations have a fundamental interest in the Gulf region, the Levant, and North Africa for multiple reasons. Among others, the Iranian proliferation threat and the flow of oil in the Gulf are critical security concerns, and the proximity of the Levant and North Africa necessarily makes them of high consequence. NATO should institutionalize its relationships with these partners to develop more operational security arrangements. As noted above, a NATO maritime force for the Gulf area would be of beneficial deterrent and operational value. Similarly, Jordan and Morocco could have important counter-terror capabilities. But the arrangement should not be all one-way. If NATO will derive security benefit, so should the partners. Accordingly, partners who join such a strategic partnership group and have joined the NRF should have a right of consultation on significant security issues as NATO has already extended to its PfP partners.

NATO also should create a strategic partnership group with its Pacific partners. As written in a prior Atlantic Council report:

> A new Pacific Peace Partnership would bind NATO to important US allies with shared values and common interests, including Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, and Singapore. Such a relationship would further the important goal of multilateralizing the US alliance system while permitting NATO to strengthen interoperability with like-minded, capable allies and increase collaboration on shared challenges of borderless scope, like cybersecurity. Furthermore, closer European linkages with key US Pacific partners will help ensure that European allies retain the capacity to shape security in a region toward which the global balance of power is rapidly tilting. It would be better for NATO proactively to build stronger links with like-minded and capable Pacific partners rather than be caught flat-footed in a future contingency.[36]

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[35] "Anchoring the Alliance" (May 2012) by R. Nicholas Burns, Damon M. Wilson, and Jeff Lightfoot; and "Transatlantic Nations and Global Security: Pivoting and Partnerships" (March 2012) by Franklin D. Kramer.
[36] "Anchoring the Alliance," supra note 34, at p. 11

IV. Conclusion

NATO has the opportunity to enhance significantly security and stability for its members and more broadly by strengthening its relationships with partners. Ten actions should form the heart of NATO's enhanced partnership policy:

Military Operations:

1. NATO should have its most effective operational partners join the NATO Response Force.

2. NATO should create an enhanced exercise schedule for partners. NATO should also act as a clearinghouse to coordinate national-led multinational exercises.

3. NATO should include its most effective partners in an operational chain of command for regional contingencies.

Global Commons and Transnational Threats:

4. NATO should develop, with partners, cyber security standards for partner operational networks.

5. NATO should develop operational counterterrorism capacities with partners built around special operations forces.

6. NATO should work with partners to maintain counterinsurgency and comprehensive approach capacities.

7. NATO should develop a maritime force that works with partners in the Gulf, the littorals around Africa, and the Arctic.

Education, Training, and Mentoring:

8. NATO should enhance its activities as a clearinghouse to include the establishment of a NATO clearinghouse budget category to organize and complement the many national efforts with partners in order to maximize effectiveness and utilize resources efficiently.

9. NATO should expand long-term educational efforts regarding the role of a military in a democracy.

Strategic Cooperation:

10. NATO should create strategic partnership groups with its key Gulf and Middle East partners and with its Pacific partners. Partners who have joined a strategic partnership group and who are part of the NRF should have a right of consultation with NATO as NATO has extended to its PfP partners.

As NATO plans for such activities, it is important to remember its own criteria for partnership involvement and maintain focus on the activities with the highest return. Sensible differentiation will continue to be important, both from NATO's perspective as to the value of particular partnerships and from the partners as to the worth of their engagement with NATO. From the perspective of each, however, there are good reasons to think that a significantly enhanced partnership policy will be of consequential effect.

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