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NATO's new Strategic Concept

An Illustrative Draft

Explanatory note

As a contribution to the debate, this “illustrative draft” for NATO’s new Strategic Concept was developed against the background of the author’s close involvement with the creation of the Strategic Concepts of 1991 and 1999 *and* in light of the ideas for a new one which he has been putting forward for more than three years.¹ When in 2007 he proposed, in an essay published by the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”, twelve main themes for a new Strategic Concept, Lothar Rühl, the nestor of German security policy debate, growled in the same paper a few weeks later: “Many themes are not yet a concept”.² On the one hand that is true, but first the right questions had to be asked. On the other hand it was a challenge “to deliver”, to which this publication responds.

Following the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit in April 2009 with the related tasking , on 7 July 2009 the process of elaborating a new Strategic Concept for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was officially launched by NATO’s Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. It will replace the Strategic Concept of April 1999 and is to be agreed by Alliance Heads of State and Government at their next Summit meeting at Lisbon in November 2010. For the preparation of this basic document in an “inclusive and participatory approach” and “interactive dialogue with the broader public”, the Secretary General established a Group of Experts, chaired by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, which, after an intense series of seminars and consultations, on 17 May 2010 presented its Report.³

The Secretary General is now expected to distribute his draft “at the end of the summer”. He has set his sights on a “short and crisp” document that can be understood by the general public. This illustrative draft is meant to demonstrate two things: *firstly* that it is possible to produce a document which is brief (6 pages), succinct and concise as well as publicly comprehensible, and yet lays out NATO’s “grand strategy” in a meaningful and substantive way, providing clear guidance for NATO’s foreseeable future. (It is proposed, however, to place the more detailed capability guidance in an annex.) Much space could already be saved by avoiding communiqué style, long historic or factual narrations and the constant repetition of diplomatic, hedging formulae such as “on a case-by-case basis”, “as appropriate”, “if and when appropriate”, “subject to decisions of member states”, “in accordance with national constitutions” and “the Allies concerned”. The avoidance of such formulae becomes of course easier the more unity exists among Allies.

Therefore, *secondly*, this illustrative draft means to demonstrate how much dispute potential still prevails. Against the background of longstanding reluctance towards revising the extant Strategic Concept for fear of a “divisive process”, the main thesis of a *Forum Paper* in September 2009 (“To-

wards a new Strategic Concept for NATO")⁴ was that Alliance member states are so divided on many important subjects that a "uniting effort" was needed. Public debate, transparency, inclusiveness are desirable, and the "participatory process" can "loosen the ground" as it were, prepare consensus, fuel public debate and interest in NATO, get the strategic community involved, provide transparency and induce member states to clarify their positions and "show the colour of their cards". But this will not replace the political work governments must do to create or re-establish the consensus on the central contentious issues. That cannot be achieved by informal groups and seminars, and it should not be left to the drafting and negotiation process. Work on a draft cannot *create* political unity on highly controversial matters, it cannot replace tough decisions. Ideally, the Strategic Concept would *reflect* the consensus previously established among governments. (For the 1991 Strategic Concept this was achieved through so-called "Council brainstormings" on the salient issues.⁵)

Consequently, in this draft endnotes are added to statements where the author believes that they would be contingent on preceding political "homework" among Allies. This necessary effort includes finding new unity regarding the question whether NATO is a regional or a global organization, its political or military character, the balance between collective defense and expeditionary orientation, the assessment of certain security challenges, the NATO-EU relationship and its political "blockage", the UN mandate issue, the approach to Russia, nuclear weapons policy etc. The Forum Paper contained many considerations on those and other subjects, and with so many issues "pending", a second annex is proposed to contain an "action plan".

Furthermore, one must be concerned about the Secretary General's schedule. There is not much time between "the end of the summer" and the Lisbon Summit. And only once a draft is on the table will negotiations begin in earnest (where particularly the members states not represented in the Expert Group might claim their dues). It should be recalled that for the 1999 Strategic Concept more than a dozen revolving drafts were needed. Thus, a worry must be that disagreements will just be papered over and the process of finalization might degenerate into something like communiqué negotiations.

Also, even if it is right to aim with the new Strategic Concept at enhanced public understanding of NATO's *raison d'être* and at greater support for its actions, one must warn against just writing a public relations document with glittery advertisement phrases. The Concept must contain clear guidance to steer NATO and its Allies through this decade. Nonetheless, in this text, without an "academic" ambition, a few "educative", explanatory passages are proposed which might help public understanding.

Finally, this illustrative draft certainly takes account of the Expert Group's Report and reflects its findings to a large extent, albeit not in all respects. Major differences are addressed in the endnotes. Readers may find that not enough of the richness of the Experts' Report is imported into this text. But then it would not be a short document. Not a single phrase from this attempt may eventually appear in the Secretary General's draft. But it is an effort to show what the new Strategic Concept *could* look like, what it *might* contain - and how much work there still is ahead, if NATO's Strategic Concept is to express credible recommitment of all Allies.

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The Alliance's Strategic Concept (Illustrative Draft)

A Strategy of Assured Protection and Comprehensive Cooperation

Introduction

1. The **North Atlantic Treaty** of 1949, NATO's founding document, finds its concretization in the Alliance's Strategic Concept, constantly reviewed and periodically updated, last in April 1999. The Treaty itself remains valid with its commitment to international peace, security and justice, to the freedom, common heritage and civilization of its peoples founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, to the purposes and principles of the United Nations and to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Also the Washington Treaty's main provisions endure: consultation (article 4), mutual assistance in the case of armed attack (art. 5) and openness for new members (art. 10).

2. In the **three phases of its history**, NATO safeguarded Europe's security during the East-West conflict, helped consolidate and stabilize Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe after the end of the Cold War, and took on peace missions beyond its area of mutual assistance after the terrorist attacks of September 2001. But the tasks of a new phase have not simply replaced the old ones: Assured protection of member states' territory, populations and forces remains a permanent mission even without any concrete adversary;⁵ much remains to be done to achieve a Europe "whole and free"; and out-of-area missions will continue to be asked of NATO, albeit not as its only action pattern for the future.

3. This Strategic Concept encapsulates NATO's "grand strategy", reflecting the **reaffirmation** of NATO's founding ideals, tasks and proven qualities as well as the readiness for constant **renovation** of an Alliance continuously adapting to the changing security landscape and its demands. The document has a threefold purpose: It expresses the political commitment of member governments to the Alliance goals and their unequivocal resolve to implement them; it contains the principles and priorities to guide NATO and its military authorities through this decade; and it explains to member countries' publics, but also to a global audience, NATO's identity, legitimacy and efficiency as well as its policy as a force for liberty and peace, and as an essential source of stability. It is agreed at a time when NATO faces an increasingly globalised security environment, a demanding operation in Afghanistan and great financial constraints.

NATO's Identity and Legitimacy

4. NATO is a **politico-military security organization**,⁷ not a global one,⁸ but with a regional focus on protecting its members in the Euro-Atlantic region. However, because of developments in the globalized world and the fact that security dangers and threats transcend national borders, it cannot limit its tasks to territorial defense but must also deal with situations beyond its traditional area of mutual assistance. Unlike in the period of East-West confrontation, in future not an existential "war of necessity" will be

the norm, but rather "wars of choice" ("discretionary operations"). Because of potentially different threat perceptions and assessments, this taxes the Allies' potential for finding consensus and requires their constant broad consultation.

5. NATO is strictly committed to **international law** and to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Its legitimization to threaten or use military force is derived from article 51 of the UN Charter (self-defense) or from a mandate by the UN Security Council. Although in 1998, in an exceptional situation of "ethnic cleansing" in the Kosovo, and in the absence of effective enforcement provisions for the pertinent UN resolutions, the Alliance decided to actively end a humanitarian disaster, it clearly respects the prerogative of the UN Security Council.⁹

6. The Alliance's initial, basic and continuing main function, the protection of its members' freedom, territory, populations and forces, is performed through cooperation, deterrence and, if required, collective defense. However, with the broader array of global security challenges, more tasks are posed by a volatile, diffuse and unpredictable security landscape. Questions regarding the **legitimacy of the use of military force**, exacerbated by the controversy about the Iraq war, require clarity. From NATO's perspective, "prevention" is a broad and constructive concept, "pre-emption" is legal under international law in case of an imminent attack, and "preventive war" is rejected in principle.¹⁰ But the emergence of new dangers and vulnerabilities, including WMD proliferation with the future possibility of apocalyptic terrorist attacks without warning, points to the need for developments in international law and for enhanced efficiency of the international order. This need is also posed by the ongoing paradigm change to "human security" and the UN-proclaimed "responsibility to protect", and obliges governments and international organizations to develop adequate precautions and responses. NATO and its Allies will contribute to the relevant conceptual deliberations.¹¹

Nuclear Disarmament and Strategy¹²

7. NATO's nuclear weapons policy supports the **aspirations for a nuclear-free world**. But as long as these weapons exist, the minimum requirements for **deterrence** - in an appropriate mix of conventional and nuclear weapons - will be maintained by the Alliance. NATO backs nuclear arms control and has revived the "Senior Consultative Group" to actively accompany it.¹³ In this process, it is important for the Alliance and member governments to reconcile the public expectations and the moral imperative to rid the world of nuclear threats with the continuing requirements of deterrence. Disarmament *per se* does not produce security.¹⁴ But NATO is ready to discuss measures for de-alerting, separate storage etc. that can contribute to building confidence.¹⁵

8. Having drastically reduced its nuclear stockpiles in numbers, types and roles after the Cold War, NATO will enhance transparency, and adopt a “sole purpose” doctrine that is not directed against nuclear weapon states who are members of the Non-proliferation Treaty and in compliance with its provisions.¹⁶ It will, however, not espouse an explicit “no-first-use” doctrine, since it does not have a declared “first-use” doctrine either. Uncertainty in the mind of a nuclear aggressor or extorter, who would have to envisage incalculable and unacceptable damage, remains at the core of deterrence. In deterrence doctrine the gradual shift from “punishment” (through counterstrikes) to “denial” (of options, through defensive measures) is of importance. NATO supports the strengthening of the global non-proliferation regime, and its WMD Center contributes to consequence management.

9. **Extended deterrence**, including forward basing of some nuclear systems by the United States, also ensures that a great number of nations do not regard the possession of their own nuclear weapons as necessary. Nuclear sharing arrangements underpin the transatlantic link and contribute to solidarity, burden-sharing and influence on nuclear planning by non-nuclear Allies. Decisions about changes to these arrangements, including about systems stationed in Western European countries, will be taken by the Alliance as a whole. The forward-basing issue is not unconnected to Russian weapons of this kind.

The Transatlantic Link

10. Notwithstanding political and economic difficulties and an increasing multipolarity of the international order, the United States of America with its global reach, military might and broad responsibility remains an indispensable, order-maintaining power and the leading member of NATO, this alliance of sovereign and democratic states. NATO is the only contractual expression of the United States’ relationship with Europe. The Transatlantic link not only serves the West but indeed global security and stability. The close connection, solidarity and cooperation between Europe and the North American nations USA and Canada is the core of NATO. No other group of countries has stronger mutual affinity, a more solid common base of values, and cooperates more closely with one another. Sustaining Transatlantic security requires a continuing US interest in Europe, adequate European defense efforts and budgets, constant close consultation on all global and regional security matters as well as an appropriate sharing of responsibilities and burdens.¹⁷

NATO’s Open Door

11. In accordance with the Washington Treaty, NATO can “invite any other European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede”. The **accession** of 12 Central and Eastern European countries after the end of the Cold War fostered European peace and stability. It was not “expansion” of NATO, but the desire of these countries to be included in a sphere of liberty, security, stability and transparency. Russia’s concerns were “cushioned” in the first two rounds of enlargement by the creation resp. upgrading of the NATO-Russia Council. NATO failed to act accordingly in the case of Ukraine and Georgia, who in any case did not meet some of the relevant membership criteria.¹⁸

12. The 1990 Charter of Paris entitles every country to determine which security arrangement it wants to be part of. The **criteria for NATO membership** are laid down in its Enlargement Study of 1995 and include: a functioning democratic political system based on market economy, the treatment of minority populations in accordance with OSCE guidelines, demonstrable work to resolve outstanding disputes with neighbors and an overall commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes, the ability and willingness to make a military contribution to the Alliance and to achieve interoperability with other members’ forces, and the commitment to democratic civil-military relations and institutional structures. For European countries who meet these criteria, NATO’s door to membership remains open.¹⁹ NATO assistance in security sector reform through Partnership programs is not an automatic way to membership, but can help towards it.

NATO’s Essential Security Tasks²⁰

13. The Alliance concentrates on the following priority tasks:

1. **Protection of its members through cooperation, deterrence, collective defense and reassurance:** To safeguard the freedom, independence and territorial integrity of all member states in accordance with art. 5 of the Washington Treaty remains NATO’s prime purpose. Reassurance of the reliability of this protection, of Allies’ solidarity and of the indivisibility of security in the entire Euro-Atlantic region is the prerequisite for everything else NATO does. This includes, *tous azimuts*, contingency planning, reinforcement preparations and exercises, without targeting any concrete potential adversary. NATO makes of Europe and North America one indivisible security space.
2. **Consultation on all security-relevant topics:** Without automatically implying the intent for Alliance military action, all topics bearing on global, regional or member states’ security (including non-conventional security challenges) must be discussed in the NATO Council in accordance with article 4 of the Washington Treaty. This can lead to further consultations with Partners, International Organizations and other actors. Timely, broad and thorough consultation can prevent crises from escalating into armed conflict.
3. **Cooperation within the International Community and with Partners:** NATO is part of the International Community, with particular capabilities (military forces, command structure, planning staffs, experience in multinational military cooperation, joint defense and force planning) which it contributes to international peace efforts in a comprehensive approach.
4. **Contribution to global prevention, crisis management and stabilization:** In the interest of peace and stability and normally in coordination with the UN, NATO contributes with threat assessments, planning capacities, expeditionary forces, command arrangements, training support and assistance in security sector reform.

The Security Environment

14. Through its policies and actions, NATO has helped to forge for its members a zone of security, peace and prosperity. But there are potential dangers at its periphery, and it is affected by developments in the globalized world that is more dangerous and uncertain than when, in 1999, the previous Strategic Concept was adopted. **Security challenges**, jeopardizing peace, stability, progress and the rule of law, most prominently include

- the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and delivery means;
- the ambitions of international terrorist groups, acting in global networks of often loosely associated groups and making use of modern technologies;
- the persistence of regional, national, ethnic and religious rivalries and conflicts;
- the vulnerability of information systems, on which modern societies and militaries increasingly depend;
- a potentially growing competition for strategic resources and raw materials;
- the link of some of these phenomena with organized international crime and money laundering, including trafficking in drugs and human beings;
- dangers emanating from failed or failing states;
- threats to sea lines, particularly at choke points, and piracy;
- threats to oil and gas transport infrastructure;
- cumulative consequences of demographic trends and migration, food and water scarcity, environmental degradation and climate change, all of which can be catalysts for serious crises, lead to conflicts and even make inter-state wars more probable again in the future.

“Asymmetry” of many threats includes the total disregard of certain actors for international and humanitarian law.

15. Most of these security challenges are not, or not mainly, of a military character, and can therefore not be countered by primarily military responses. But NATO embraces a broad concept of security and, in concert with other states and institutions, must keep observing, assessing and consulting about those dangers and their potential for armed conflict. Defense against security threats may have to begin well beyond Alliance territory. Since security policy is an insurance against the **unforeseen and unpredictable**, it must cater for surprises, given that in the last two decades with the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, the terrorist attacks of September 2001 and the Russo-Georgian war in August 2008 unexpected events changed security paradigms overnight.

16. All this calls for a **potent analysis capacity** at NATO Headquarters and for vigorously strengthening the use of the **consultation provision (article 4)** of the Washington Treaty. Also, NATO will overhaul its crisis identification, assessment and response provisions and the precautionary system.²¹ The capability to act is a matter of NATO’s credibility, also with regard to potential art. 5 contingencies on the entire NATO periphery. Concrete measures to underpin the mutual protection and defense pledge serve to reassure all member states. That “an attack on one is an attack on

all” also means that security concerns of one member must be of concern to all Allies.

„Unconventional” Threats

17. Several novel threats in particular demand the attention of Allies. They include attacks involving weapons of mass destruction, terrorist strikes, cyber assaults by weapons “of mass disruption”, piracy and the interference with critical supply lines. They may even reach the level of attacks invoking art. 5 of the Washington Treaty. Constant analysis of such threats and their potential origin, an updated definition of “defense”,²² adaptation of the means at NATO’s disposal and close liaison with others are ways to mitigate such threats. With regard to “energy security”, NATO does not intend to take on tasks of other organizations, and will limit its own contribution to where it adds value, mainly in the protection of infrastructure and transport lines.

Regions

18. Obviously, NATO has security and stability interests beyond its own territory. In the Middle East, these focus on extremist violence, Arab-Israeli tensions and the suspected nuclear weapons program of Iran. Cooperation with Maghreb countries is important for stability in the Mediterranean region. In South Asia, not least because of its engagement in Afghanistan, regional approaches must be advanced, and the continuation of the rivalry between India and Pakistan is worrying. In the Caucasus, at the crossroads of energy interests, and a region of great ethnic diversity and historical legacies, the peaceful resolution of so-called “frozen conflicts” is of the essence. In the Central Asian Republics, members of the Partnership for Peace, energy interests intersect, and adherence to the PfP basic document’s principles is desirable. In Asia, regional stability should not be upset by the rise of powers such as China and India, and the policies of North Korea are of concern. NATO’s members have an interest in assisting Africa with chronic problems and trouble areas, and the African Union needs sustained support. Problems and tensions in all these regions may affect NATO members through spillover or through “unconventional” threats. Therefore NATO will monitor regional developments in an intensified way.²³

NATO’s Place Within International Security Structures

19. NATO is but one, albeit important, **component** of the international institutional order that is less central and more complex than in the past, consisting of multiple fora and institutions. With its contributions, in cooperation with others, NATO offers its **particular capabilities, expertise and experience**. It does not aspire to take on tasks for which other institutions are better suited. Although NATO is ready to participate in discussions about Russia’s proposals regarding the European security structure,²⁴ the task of this decade is not to devise a new security “architecture”, but to develop the potential of the existing organizations and to improve the cooperation among the “inter-locking institutions”.²⁵

20. Due to the **United Nations’** role within the world system, the North Atlantic Treaty’s faithful reference to the “purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN”, and the UN Security Council’s authority to approve the use of force, the NATO-UN relationship is

a special one. NATO aims to strengthen the ability of the UN to secure a rule-based international order. Provided the North Atlantic Council agrees and resources are available, NATO will also in future consider requests from the UN for peace forces. Their cooperation, close to satisfactory on the ground in foreign missions, requires enhancing consultation at the political-strategic level. The UN-NATO Declaration, concluded in 2008²⁶, needs to be filled with life. Liaison procedures and effective consulting practices are necessary. The UN's Peacebuilding Commission should be a venue for institutional cooperation.

21. The **European Union's** Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) is an important complement to NATO, better enabling European countries to take responsibility for security and stability on their continent as well as beyond Europe and its periphery. The EU has a comparative advantage with its numerous instruments, military and civilian. The enhancement of its military capabilities must happen in a matching way, not lead to competition, and must recognize that the 24 states who are members in both organizations have only one set of forces. NATO aims at a truly comprehensive cooperation that is working, cost-effective and reciprocal, and where political disagreements do not interfere with the requirements of communication and coordination.²⁷ In line with the Lisbon Treaty, NATO supports the strengthening of the EU's military capabilities and command structures.

22. NATO and the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe** (OSCE) cooperate in fields that are important for NATO's security tasks; the OSCE complements those with its emphasis on "soft security" such as human rights, confidence-building and early warning. NATO is keen to intensify that relationship, all Allies being also OSCE members, and to jointly strive for better crisis management and prevention of violent conflict.

23. The **African Union** (AU) embodies the approach by Africa's nations to take ownership of African problems. It deserves all possible support by NATO, not only in terms of concrete operations, but also with the wealth of NATO experience in fields such as consultation, civil-military cooperation, education and training, security sector reform, force planning, arms control and confidence-building. NATO is open to dialogue with the **Collective Security Treaty Organization** (CSTO) as part of the effort to improve relations with Russia,²⁸ and also with the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization** that comprises China,²⁹ starting with information and confidence-building, but possibly moving to subjects of common concern such as terrorism, humanitarian relief and border security.

Relations With Russia³⁰

24. NATO and Russia are bound to work together in particularly close cooperation, for which the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was founded. Its full use has however been impeded by resentments, and there are uncertainties about Russia's future course. Whilst the West did not "take advantage of Russia's weakness" after the end of the Cold War, NATO faces up to its share of responsibility in the **worsening of the relationship**.³¹ It badly understood Russian political psychology and fear of marginalization, poorly orchestrated the last enlargement push, paid no attention to Russian proposals for the adaptation of the CFE Treaty, failed to present

the missile defense issue as a truly common cause and has not contributed sufficiently to making optimal use of the NRC, particularly when it was most needed in the Georgia crisis. NATO offers for this decade a genuinely new beginning of the cooperation with Russia, which it does not regard as an adversary. In turn, Russia should cease to see NATO as a "danger" or even "threat", and not aim to constrain or split it.

25. In the awareness of many common interests in building the "common European house" and in hedging against universal dangers, threats and vulnerabilities, NATO is ready for **broad cooperation with a Russia**³² that would share the same values, respect the principles of the Charter of Paris, overcome old geopolitical and geostrategic categories, abandon Cold War clichés about NATO, give up the idea of a "special sphere of influence", not instrumentalize "Russians abroad", renounce revisionism and fully support sovereignty and independence of its neighbors, contribute itself to their "reassurance", fully embrace cooperative (as opposed to confrontational) security, follow up first positive steps in "history policy" vis-à-vis Poland (and in future also others), and realize that Russia can only "isolate" itself. Together NATO and Russia must overcome zero-sum thinking in security policy, where one side can allegedly only gain at the expense of the other. On the basis of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, whose potential is far from being realized, Russia and NATO together can cooperate on a host of issues of common interest and for the benefit of the peoples of Europe and beyond.

Partnerships³³

26. NATO's extended network of Partnerships is subject to **stock-taking**: The Partnership for Peace (PfP) has been a great success in transforming Central and Eastern European states with regard to their security sector and preparing many of them for their accession to NATO. But the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council requires activation and the consultation clause in the basic Partnership document concretization.³⁴ The Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) for Gulf countries provide a basis for progress, but are still in the initial phase of mutual acquaintance, information and confidence-building.³⁵ Global partnerships with likeminded nations in Asia such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea ("contact countries"), who also take part in NATO missions and are thus "operational Partners", must avoid the risk of being interpreted as "NATO going global".

27. The different sets of Partnerships, each on their own merit, will be **further developed** in order to lead to the freest possible exchange of ideas,³⁶ and observing principles such as: consideration of interests and concerns of individual Partners and groups of Partners, development of interoperability for cooperation in NATO-led operations, involvement of participants in the decision-making, and *mutual learning*. The NATO-Ukraine and NATO-Georgia Commissions express the Alliance's interest in the sovereignty and independence of these European countries. Relationships with global Partners will progress in great transparency, and NATO is open to dialogue with all nations of good will around the globe. Trust in NATO's good intentions also requires reaching out beyond officials to the civil societies of Partner countries.

Broader Cooperation

28. Already in NATO's first Strategic Concept of 1991, the "broad concept of security" formed the basis of NATO's novel strategic thinking - the awareness that security and stability, besides their military dimension, have political, economic, social, cultural and economic aspects and are therefore multidimensional. The "**Comprehensive Approach**" proclaimed by NATO's Riga Summit in 2006 is the practical reflection of this concept and acknowledges that missions like the one in Afghanistan cannot reach their goals by military effort alone. Peace missions and stabilization operations require, in addition to their continued joint, inter-agency and multinational character, close and synergetic cooperation with International Organizations (IOs) and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs). This is not about hierarchy; NATO does not aspire to a dominant position, it does not want to coordinate others, but to coordinate *with* them. The Comprehensive Approach presupposes that inter-agency cooperation *within* member states functions satisfactorily.

29. More than further conceptualization, the Comprehensive Approach needs convincing persuasion and better implementation. Self-evident as the concept is, greater efforts are needed to make it work as a truly integrated civilian-military effort, overcoming national and institutional interests and bias. Improvement of NATO's interaction with **Non-governmental Organizations** (NGOs) is crucial. It brings about the meeting of different, often opposing, institutional "cultures", where the military wishes to take control, whilst the NGOs seek to preserve their independence and impartiality as critical for their success. NATO will make further efforts towards better mutual understanding through dialogue as well as joint planning and training.³⁷

30. NATO is concerned about the growth of **Private Military Companies** (PMCs), eroding the state's monopoly on the use of military force faster than regulatory measures are put into place. Outsourcing of logistical, transport, supply, maintenance and medical services is an accepted trend in all modern armed forces. But the expansion of the role of PMCs in conflicts worldwide, providing training, security services, armed support, or even actively participating in combat within foreign missions, raises important ethical, political, legal and military concerns. NATO as a community of values does not support warfare for profit.³⁸

31. **Multinationality**, including with Partner armed forces, has great political value with regard to solidarity and mutual support as well as to the legitimacy of an operation, and there are many military benefits with various nations contributing their capabilities. On the other hand, multinational forces, often mixed down to the battalion level, entail important training and support challenges, if a demonstrable operational capability is to be forged, and national limitations for the employment of forces ("caveats") must not hinder the multinational effort.³⁹

Peace Missions

32. In decisions about future peace missions, NATO will heed politico-military and strategic **experience and lessons** from its past operations, which include the following: By intervention in a country, the International Community takes long-term respon-

sibility for it. Toppling a regime is not yet "regime change". Ambitions for nation-building and the spread of democracy must be modest. Scale, duration and cost must not be underestimated. Realism in timelines and criteria for "progress" are required. Troop levels need to be sufficient from the outset, the force generation for agreed requirements must not leave important deficiencies, and commanders must have full operational control and not be impeded by numerous national limitations. A lack of ground troops leads to the calling-in of air strikes entailing, in turn, increased civilian casualties. Counter-insurgency has become a task also for NATO.

33. **Pacification and reconstruction** cannot be mainly done by the military, and NATO is but one actor among others (and not the leading one). NATO will in future be clearer about what jobs it does *not* regard itself as competent and responsible for, and keep the International Community to its responsibility. Development requires security, however not as sequential tasks: They are mutually conditional and must proceed simultaneously, and the population of a war-stricken country under reconstruction must see rapid and tangible progress in their basic living conditions such as food, power, infrastructure, health services and public order. This demands more civilian efforts from the outset and a comprehensive civilian-military approach with unity of effort. "Winning the hearts and minds" must succeed or can fail in the very early phases of an operation. Also, early reconciliation efforts are necessary rather than, as in Afghanistan, late and from a weakened position. And from the beginning a regional approach to pacification must be followed.

34. From these insights, NATO will develop **guidelines** for future decisions of this character⁴⁰ observing the following factors: the legitimacy of a mission (normally expressed in a mandate by the UN Security Council) and its conformity with international law, the urgency of action by the International Community, the extent and imminence of danger to Alliance members, the exhaustion or apparent ineffectiveness of alternative steps, the ability and willingness of NATO members to provide the means required for success, the involvement of other organizations and Partners in helping to ensure an effective and timely handling of the task, the collateral impact on other NATO needs and missions, the degree of domestic and international support and the presumable consequences of inaction.

Arms Control

35. As stated above, NATO supports nuclear arms control including mutual transparency and confidence-building, emphasizing that disarmament must enhance security, not diminish it. In the same vein, it promotes a **new departure in conventional arms control**. Partially also through NATO's failure to adequately respond to Russia's proposals for adaptation of the CFE Treaty to post-Cold War, non-bloc conditions,⁴¹ the Treaty is now suspended and its confidence-building instruments of verification and transparency are corroding.

36. NATO thus encourages, for this decade, **broad talks** among all European states, most prominently including Russia, about conventional military forces, their potential linkage to tactical nuclear weapons, threat perceptions, doctrines, force levels, weapon

holdings - leading to negotiations about numerical limitations, regional constraints and transparency measures. Such a new departure would enhance confidence in the strictly defensive orientation of military postures, advance cooperative security among the nations of Europe, and might support nuclear disarmament and missile defense cooperation.⁴²

Military Capabilities/Transformation⁴³

37. After limited success of various defense capability initiatives since the Washington Summit in 1999, mainly because of limited and inefficient military spending by European Allies, another effort is needed to create a flexible, deployable, networked and sustainable military force posture that can meet the full range of Alliance responsibilities at an affordable cost. The guidelines at Annex 1 serve to meet the following conventional defense needs:

- provide reassurance on the article 5 commitment for all Allies;
- achieve deployability, sustainability and interoperability goals;
- broaden the role of the NATO Response Force (NRF),
- capitalize on the commonality between article 5 and expeditionary missions,
- improve C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) as NATO's operational "glue",
- strengthen Special Operations Forces (SOF) capabilities,
- improve the contribution of the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) as the agent for the military transformation of NATO's forces,
- transform NATO education and training,
- enhance maritime situational awareness;
- respond to the rising danger of cyber attacks;
- development of counter-insurgency capabilities and know-how.

These must be underpinned by reform and efficiency measures including common funding, development of truly multinational formations, pooling arrangements (e.g. for strategic lift), multinational logistics and more NATO common capabilities following the model of the AWACS fleet (e.g. for logistics, training, air-to-air refuelling, ground surveillance, combat search and rescue).⁴⁴ NATO-EU cooperation in capability development and planning is of the essence.

38. **Nuclear capabilities:** As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will continue to maintain secure and reliable nuclear forces, with widely shared responsibility for policy, deployment and operational support, at the minimum level required by the prevailing security environment.

39. **Missile Defense** will in future be an essential mission of the Alliance. Such a system will enhance deterrence and transatlantic sharing of responsibility and reinforce the principle that security is indivisible. Russia is invited to fully participate in the development of such an all-European system.⁴⁵

40. The "**Unconventional**" threats addressed above require extensive intelligence, consultation, research, development of concepts, coordination and cooperation with other institutions and organizations as well as a clear analysis of what the military and NATO can contribute to combating such multi-faceted dangers and to reduce vulnerabilities.

41. With its assets, expertise and experience, collectively and in the member states, NATO will continue to render to Partners training **assistance**, support their security sector reform (SSR) and help in demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR).⁴⁶ NATO's centers of excellence also serve those purposes.

Internal Conditions for Success

42. NATO's transformation is not limited to the military forces and capabilities; it also includes **administrative reform** for which the Lisbon NATO Summit has given the Secretary General a clear tasking and far-reaching authority. This includes: reflection on the decision-making process in order to make it more responsive while not impairing the consensus principle, adaptation of the Headquarters structure and improvement of the civil-military interface, streamlining the military command structure, reducing costs and reforming the funding procedure for operations, and creation in the HQ of a full-fledged analysis and assessment capability regarding 21st century security challenges.

43. However, with all imaginable institutional improvements NATO will only continue to be efficient if all **member states** remind themselves that it is the best possible community of like-minded nations and that the political will to consult and act together is the recipe for success. This requires new readiness to see the big aims and to compromise on paltry national needs and desires. It also requires an effort to create better public understanding of, confidence in, and support for its mission. To explain the Alliance's relevance is however not only NATO's responsibility, but that of all member governments.

44. Much conceptual and political work remains to be done in order to develop **broader consensus** on salient issues and thus to improve the Alliance's unity and efficiency. This need is reflected in the "Action Plan" at Annex 2.

Conclusion

45. This Strategic Concept reaffirms NATO's founding ideals: its commitment to democracy and peaceful conflict resolution as well as the resolve of its members to safeguard their security, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Beyond this core task of **assured protection**, NATO contributes to security and stability in an uncertain and dangerous globalized world in **comprehensive cooperation** with all states, institutions and non-governmental actors of good will. NATO continues to adapt to evolving circumstances and security challenges, and the Strategic Concept, kept under constant review, governs the Alliance's security and defense policy, its operational concepts, its conventional and nuclear force posture and its collective defense arrangements, charting the course for NATO in the decade ahead.

Annex 1

Capability Guidance (Force transformation, defense and capability planning, agreed set of priorities)

[There is a tension between the requirement for clear, professional guidance regarding military capabilities, transformation and planning *and* the desired readability for the public. Therefore it is proposed to place that guidance in an annex, for which the Comprehensive Political Guidance (CPG) agreed by NATO's Riga Summit in November 2006 as well as the Experts Group's Report contain much of the relevant material. Here also NATO's "level of ambition" should be established.]

Annex 2

Action Plan

[Since it is obvious that much of NATO's political "homework" in forging or reestablishing consensus on essential issues will not have been achieved by the Lisbon summit, it would be important to clearly identify the "unfinished business" in the Strategic Concept and mandate the follow-on work for NATO's further adaptation as well as for conceptual issues and the resolution of disagreements. Illustratively, that would include:]

1. Requirements for „reassurance“ (art. 5);
2. Overhaul of NATO's crisis identification, assessment and response system including precautionary measures;
3. Assessment of "novel" dangers (terrorism, energy security, cyber threats, long-term consequences of climate change - analysis capacity in NATO HQ);
4. Strengthening of regular and systematic consultation not least on regional developments (art. 4);
5. Lessons from operations (particularly Afghanistan) – and guidelines for further NATO operations;
6. Counter-insurgency (COIN) in a NATO context;
7. Assessment and further development of multinationality;
8. Measures to make the Comprehensive Approach work (MoUs, civilian planning unit, specialists, the contribution of reservists, NGO cell);
9. Training assistance, SSR, DDR (and NATO's "clearing house" function);
10. NATO-UN and NATO-EU cooperation;
11. Institutional cooperation with OSCE, AU, CSTO, Shanghai Cooperation Organization;
12. Development of the relationship with Russia (common interests, NRC, fields for co-decision, CSTO, "conditionality");
13. Further development of Partnerships (revision of PFP basic document, EAPC, basic documents for MD and ICI, guidelines for cooperation with "global partners" including transparency – and all this in consultation with Partners);
14. NATO's nuclear policy and strategy, including the "global zero" issue and its ramifications;
15. NATO's contribution to non-proliferation;
16. Nuclear arms control, monitoring of US-Russian negotiations(SCG);
17. Revival of conventional arms control (HLTF);
18. Capability development (priorities, national commitments, resource issues, efficiency measures such as pooling, specialization and NATO-common capabilities, role and contribution of ACT);
19. Missile Defense;
20. NATO's institutional reform;
21. Public diplomacy (including the role of national governments);
22. Fields for particular study and formulation of common Alliance positions;
 - Developments in international law regarding defense in light of potentially apocalyptic attacks with no pre-warning;
 - "Responsibility to protect" in cases of genocide and massive human rights violations, problems of "humanitarian intervention", implications of "failed states";
 - Future interpretation of "armed attack" (art. 5);
 - Further development of a credible deterrence doctrine in a multipolar world with a multitude of state and non-state actors;
 - Possible technological breakthroughs (IT, cognitive and biological sciences, robotics, nanotechnology) and their implications.

¹ Klaus Wittmann, The Road to NATO's New Strategic Concept. In: Gustav Schmidt (ed.), A History of NATO – The First Fifty Years. Houndmills: 2001, vol. 3, p. 219-237. Klaus Wittmann, Ein neues Strategisches Konzept. In: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung vom 07.07. 2007, p. 9. Klaus Wittmann, Towards a new Strategic Concept for NATO. NATO Defense College, Rom, September 2009 (Forum Paper 10). Klaus Wittmann, NATO's new Strategic Concept should be more than a "Shopping List". In: The European Security and Defence Union, vol. 4/2009; p. 35-37. See also Ronald Asmus, Stefan Czumur, Chris Donnelly, Aivis Ronis, Tomas Valasek, Klaus Wittmann, NATO, new allies and reassurance. Policy Brief. London: Centre for European Reform, May 2010.

² Lothar Rühl, Viele Themen sind noch kein Konzept. In: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 3 August 2007.

³ NATO 2020: Assured Security, Dynamic Engagement. Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO. Brussels: NATO Headquarters 17 May 2010

⁴ See note 1.

⁵ See Klaus Wittmann, The Road to NATO's New Strategic Concept (note 1).

⁶ The „killing argument“ that something is a „relic of the Cold War“ is easily used (against heavy weapons, against those who advocate responsible homeland defense, against tactical nuclear weapons), but does not always reveal thorough deliberation.

⁷ The sterile debate about whether NATO is a political or a military organization or whether it should become “more political” should be finally put to rest.

⁸ Although the Expert Group's Report seems to reflect agreement on this, it is far from clear (and must be candidly debated among governments) whether the US has given up the ambition to use NATO as a “toolbox” for carrying out its global responsibilities. Also, the frequently used presumptuous description of NATO as a “global security provider” is not helpful.

⁹ NATO should be more unequivocal than in the 1999 Strategic Concept (para 31), where the controversy about the requirement without exception of a UN mandate was fudged with “diplomatic language”. The formulation proposed here would not entirely exclude autonomous action in a comparable situation, given total blockage of the UN Security Council and all Allies' agreement to respond to the need to act.

¹⁰ It is important that the confusion about these terms be cleared up.

¹¹ This a broad but urgent theme for future consultation within NATO and for cooperation with the UN.

¹² The “illustrative draft” addresses this subject up front because of its topicality and because of its link with “legitimacy” addressed before. Also, nuclear policy and strategy should not, as was done in the two previous Strategic Concepts, be relegated to the last, force guideline, chapter.

¹³ Another important item for the Action Plan, which should envisage more intense consultation at NATO also on US-Russian nuclear arms-control negotiations .

¹⁴ The „Report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament“ (“A Practical Agenda for Global Policymakers”. Canberra, Tokyo November 2009) should be broadly debated within NATO, and it is telling that it is titled “Eliminating Nuclear *Threats*” not “*Weapons*”.

¹⁵ An important issue for further debate, and thus for the Action Plan.

¹⁶ This might be one step that NATO could take to partially comply with public expectations. But then it should also be clear about the “no first use” issue.

¹⁷ It also requires an awareness of perennial debates that are there to stay, for instance: in Europe between Europeanists and Atlanticists, in the EU between integrationists and sovereignists, in NATO between voluntarists and minimalists, more generally between unilateralists and multilateralists and between a more robust attitude to the use of force and a more restrictive one.

¹⁸ This NATO policy “flop” should be clearly addressed. See the section on Russia, where it is argued that some self-criticism on NATO's side might be constructive for the prospect of reengagement with Russia.

¹⁹ However, ideas to invite Russia for NATO membership should not be pursued. It is easy to imagine how the response from Moscow and the conditions posed would throw NATO into a great predicament.

²⁰ This differs somewhat from what the Albright Report proposes as “core tasks”. Two main differences: the transatlantic link should not be narrowed to consultation, and the concept of Partnership (as explained in note 25) should not be used in too broad a sense. Also, it was found that the Report's proposal to have an additional set of “four central interrelated military missions” to “complement the core tasks” is overcomplicated and confusing. That is why those “military missions” have been worked into this set of “Essential Security Tasks”.

²¹ For details see Asmus et al. (note 1).

²² The future signification of “armed attack” requires debate and clarification, although in the concrete case it may then be a matter for Council decision.

²³ Establishing a consultation method and rhythm for discussion of regional developments and NATO's interests is also a subject for the Action Plan.

²⁴ First in his Berlin speech of June 2008, President Medvedev raised questions criticizing the present European security architecture. He aimed some criticism at NATO and the EU, and the speech contained elements to drive a wedge between the US and Europe. Also an overarching pan-European organization with authority over NATO in a legally binding construction smacks of Soviet ideas of many decades ago. But in spite of all this there would be no harm in making such ideas subject of a dialogue with Russia and in asking questions. This could be used to revive the Paris Charter of 1990, and it should not be forgotten that the Helsinki Final Act, which had such positive consequences in recent European history, was the result of originally Soviet proposals. The debate should not be entirely left to the OSCE and could be used to make clear NATO's views about which Russian “security interests” it regards as justified and which not, also regarding reassurance.

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- ²⁵ This draft makes a distinction between institutional cooperation and “Partnerships”. The Experts’ Report uses „Partnership“ in too broad a sense, covering all cooperative relationships, which in the view of this author blurs the concept. Many useful ideas for the development of institutional cooperation are discussed in: David S. Yost, NATO and International Organizations. Rome: NATO Defense College 2007, Forum Paper 3.
- ²⁶ Joint Declaration on UN/NATO Secretariat Cooperation, New York, 23 September 2008.
- ²⁷ Turkey’s interests with regard to Cyprus and the EU should at last be subordinated to the vital necessity to make the CSDP work. Turkey’s NATO Allies, in turn, should better understand what is, i.a., behind Turkey’s position: In the WEU it was an associate member, and when the WEU tasks were taken over by the European Union, Turkey lost what it regarded as its “WEU acquis”. But the frustration should be overcome in a new effort. Turkey’s participation in the CSDP and in the European Defence Agency (EDA) could be one way to enhance Turkey’s status, but would also require concessions and cooperative spirit on the side of Greece and Cyprus. And the Turkish candidacy for EU membership should be left out of the NATO debate.
- ²⁸ In connection with the next section, this is a subject for political debate in NATO.
- ²⁹ This idea also requires political debate in principle.
- ³⁰ The future approach to Russia is likely to be the most contentious issue and requires substantial debate among NATO governments. NATO should make a broad offer for cooperation in the coming decade, though a conditional one, starting with signs of veritable goodwill that would include some self-criticism regarding the development of the relationship in the last decade. The “conditional offer” idea would correspond to the “dual approach” of the 1968 Harmel Report, to the philosophy of NATO’s dual-track decision of 1978, and also to the “cushioning” of the first two rounds of NATO’s enlargement with the creation and upgrading of the NATO-Russia Council.
- ³¹ It may be quite problematic to address this in the Strategic Concept, but this author firmly believes that a certain self-criticism on NATO’s side (and its candid expression) is one key to reengagement with Russia. If, as can be expected, there is no consensus about such text in the Strategic Concept, one could think about placing similar statements in the Summit Declaration.
- ³² This is now “mirroring” the note of NATO self-criticism : the “prerequisites” side of what is proposed here as a “conditional offer” to Russia.
- ³³ As indicated before, the term “Partnership” should not be extended to include all other types of cooperation.
- ³⁴ A general debate is necessary that might lead to a revision of the basic Partnership for Peace document.
- ³⁵ The Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative might, for their further development, also require basic documents.
- ³⁶ This is one important task for the Action Plan. What are needed are an adapted, clear rationale for the Partnership concept and for the different fora, its convincing explanation, some weeding out of the PFP terminology and bodies, injection of new life into the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), basic documents with operable consultation provisions for subjects that matter, and clarity about the fact that “global Partners” does not mean NATO “going global”.
- ³⁷ Good proposals in: Laure Borgomanno-Loup, Improving NATO-NGO Relations in Crisis Response Operations. Rome: NATO Defense College, March 2007, Forum Paper 2. B. argues that the UN mechanisms of cooperation with NGOs should be used by NATO, and that even the establishment of a Consultation and Advisory Cell at NATO HQ might be useful: *ibid.*, p. 59.
- ³⁸ It is clear to the author that this raises a very contentious subject. But not easily justifiable is the inclination of some Western governments to have PMCs or mercenaries fulfill tasks for which they want to avoid the public controversy their conduct by the regular armed forces would stir up – PMCs as a reserve army outside public interest. “License to kill” in a foreign country without a firm legal base, accountability, jurisdiction and transparency should not occur in connection with NATO operations. Recent incidents have raised public concerns and possess the potential to damage the credibility not only of individual member states, but also of the Alliance *in toto*. NATO should take a clear, critical stand on this admittedly controversial issue in its basic strategy document.
- ³⁹ These are only some issues (others are cultural, legal and doctrinal differences, unity of command, funding and force generation) which require clarity at a strategic level, worth further debate.
- ⁴⁰ This will be an important task in the Action Plan.
- ⁴¹ This is one of the instances for some self-criticism by NATO, as explained in the section about NATO-Russia cooperation
- ⁴² NATO should prepare an initiative in this regard (Action Plan) and perhaps again establish a body like the High Level Task force (HLTF) that in the 90s accompanied the CFE negotiations.
- ⁴³ In order to rid the draft of the technical (though necessary) details that the guidance for force planning must contain, it is proposed to place this guidance into an annex, and paragraphs 37-40 serve as a - publicly understandable - lead-in to that annex.
- ⁴⁴ Here much innovative thought and initiatives are required – a task for the ACT, perhaps in cooperation with the European Defense Agency (EDA).
- ⁴⁵ Much more collective thought needs to be given to this subject (Action Plan). Also it might be useful in this context to form a NATO opinion about Space matters. While a “militarization” or “weaponisation” of space is regarded as undesirable and a cooperative approach is preferable, the US’ uncontested supremacy is coming to an end. Such issues require debate among Allies in the context of its evolving strategy, and the at least the Summit Declaration, if not the Strategic Concept itself, should send out a message of cooperative intent, while demonstrating at the same time that NATO is not naive in this regard.
- ⁴⁶ It would appear in order for the new Strategic Concept to highlight NATO’s contribution to Education and Training, SSR and DDR as an important, albeit complementary, task that has considerably expanded and also contributes to interoperability and to the projection of stability. Such statements should be prepared by a solid discussion about the objectives and about lessons learnt – not least with regard to “ownership” and *mutual* learning (as opposed to “NATO preaching”). Also, improved mutual information within NATO (“clearing house”) about individual activities of Member States, bilateral and sometimes competing with those of others, should lead to better coordination and targeting.

