



Promoting a more transparent and accountable NATO

An Evaluation of the Wales Summit: NATO builds coalitions for conflict on multiple fronts

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- NATO leaders plan to protect eastern members from a resurgent Russia, pledge to reverse the decline in their defence spending, and form an embryonic coalition to combat Islamic militants in Iraq
 - Afghanistan post-2014 strategy remains uncertain without a legal framework
 - Alliance proposals for evolution towards global network of active partners

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Official Documents of the Wales Summit

- ✚ [Wales Summit Declaration on Afghanistan Issued by Heads of State and Government of Allies and their International Security Assistance Force \(ISAF\) troop contributing partners](#), 4 September 2014
- ✚ [Armed Forces Declaration By The NATO Heads Of State And Government](#), 4 September 2014
- ✚ [Joint Statement Of The NATO-Ukraine Commission](#), 4 September 2014
- ✚ [Wales Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales](#), 5 September 2014
- ✚ [The Wales Declaration on the Transatlantic Bond](#), 5 September 2014

Headline Decisions

- ✚ 15 million Euro package of measures for Ukraine covering rehabilitation for injured troops, cyber defence, logistics, and command and control and communications. Additional support provided on a bilateral basis by Member States.
- ✚ Readiness Action Plan to strengthen NATO's collective defence, which will include a continuous presence and activity in the air, on land and at sea in the eastern part of the Alliance, on a rotational basis.
- ✚ A Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) to be added to the NATO Response Force. This 'spearhead unit' will consist of 4,000 troops able to deploy within a few days.
- ✚ France will not schedule delivery of the first of the two Mistral-class amphibious warships to Russia.
- ✚ Reaffirmation of the commitment to supporting Afghanistan and (subject to the necessary security agreements) a 'train advise and assist' mission will commence in 2015.
- ✚ Commitment to reverse the trend of declining defence budgets: Allies whose defence spending is below 2% of GDP will halt any decline, aim to increase defence



(NATO Secretary General giving his 'doorstep statement' - photo credit: NATO)

expenditure as GDP grows; and aim to move towards the 2% guideline within a decade; and Allies who currently spend less than 20% of their defence budget on major new equipment, will aim to do so within a decade.

- ✚ Ten states led by the United States form a "core coalition" to fight the Islamic State. NATO ready to assist with a defence capacity building mission in Iraq and agrees a "coordinating role" for efforts carried out by individual nations.
- ✚ Pledge to strengthen political dialogue and practical cooperation with NATO partners. Two new partnership initiatives: a Partnership Interoperability Initiative to build on partnerships forged during the war in Afghanistan and a Defence Capacity Building Initiative to assist with defence and security reforms initially in Georgia, Moldova and Jordan.
- ✚ Montenegro may be offered a membership invitation by the end of 2015.
- ✚ Georgia presented with a substantive package of measures to advance its preparations towards membership.
- ✚ "Enhanced opportunities" within the Partnership Interoperability Initiative" for Georgia, Sweden, Jordan, Finland and Australia.
- ✚ Public declaration of solidarity through 'The Wales Declaration on the Transatlantic Bond' and renewal of the military covenant through an 'Armed Forces Declaration'.
- ✚ An Enhanced Cyber Defence Policy under which a large-scale cyber attack on a member state could be considered an attack on the entire Alliance, potentially triggering a military response.
 - ✚ Poland will host the next Summit.

Post-Summit

Guide to Key NATO Decisions

This was the first NATO Summit on UK soil since 1990 and one of the largest ever organised. More than 60 countries and organisations were represented and the British Government took the opportunity to mount a [mini-defence exhibition](#) in the grounds of the Celtic Manor golf resort hosting the Summit.

In his '[doorstep statement](#)' at the start of NATO's 26th Summit, Secretary General, Anders Fogh

Rasmussen described it as a "crucial Summit at a crucial time" He said: "To the East, Russia is attacking Ukraine.... to the Southeast, we see the rise of a terrorist organization, the so-called Islamic State... ..to the South, we see violence, insecurity, instability." He pledged that the Summit "will take important steps to counter these threats and to strengthen the defence of our allies". These steps include:

- Adopting a Readiness Action Plan;
- Reversing the trend of declining defence budgets;
- Discussing what "individual allies and what NATO can do" to counter the threat from Islamic state;
- Enhancing cooperation with Ukraine;
- Enhancing cooperation with other partners;
- Strengthening the Transatlantic Bond; and
- Opening a "new chapter" in NATO's relationship with Afghanistan.

Overall, the Secretary General claimed that the Summit "will shape future NATO". How did the Summit match up to the Secretary General's expectations?

Afghanistan post-2014: what next?

NATO has been operating in Afghanistan since 2003, leading the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). NATO effectively has three missions in Afghanistan: first, to assist the Afghan government to rebuild and stabilise the country; second, to train the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) - army and police; and third, to combat the insurgency in southern Afghanistan, stronghold of the Taliban which was ousted from power by a US-led coalition in 2001.

In his [opening remarks](#) at the meeting on Afghanistan at the level of Heads of State and Government, the NATO Secretary General said: "We have done what we pledged to do. We have dealt a blow against international terrorism in Afghanistan and we have built up capable Afghan forces of 350,000 troops and police."

The NATO leaders reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Afghanistan and called on the two presidential candidates to work together and to conclude the necessary security agreements (the US-Afghanistan Bilateral Security Agreement and NATO-Afghanistan Status of Forces Agreement) as soon as possible. The rival politicians, Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, [said in a separate](#)

[statement in Kabul](#) that they are fully committed to signing the two agreements that would allow NATO to stay on and 'train advise and assist' the Afghan army after its combat operations end in December.

Leaders from NATO nations joined by ISAF partner countries reaffirmed their readiness to launch such a non-combat mission in Afghanistan after 2014, providing the necessary legal arrangements are signed without delay. "I cannot stress too strongly how important this is," the Secretary General said at his [press conference](#) after the meeting. "Without a signature, there can be no mission. Our planning is complete but time is short." Asked about numbers for the mission, he said:

We are in the process of generating forces for the training mission to be established by the 1st of January 2015. But I'm not able to announce any exact figure at this point; also, because the political process in Afghanistan has not yet been finalized! And this is the reason why not all countries have come forward with final contributions. But I'm confident that if the legal framework would be put in place very soon; then we will also be able to establish a training mission that is fully resourced and fit for purpose.



(Meeting on Afghanistan at the level of Heads of State and Government - photo credit: NATO)

ISAF currently numbers around 44,000 troops, including more than 30,000 Americans. US President Obama outlined

a plan in May to withdraw all but 9,800 American troops by the end of the year and pull out the rest by the end of 2016. About 4,000 troops from other NATO nations were expected to stay on beyond 2014 to participate in the training mission.

The post-2014 Resolute Support Mission (as agreed at the Chicago Summit in 2012) is one of the three pillars of NATO's proposed long-term engagement in Afghanistan. The other two are a contribution to creating a sustainable Afghan National Army and the strengthening of long-term political and practical cooperation with Afghanistan: the so-called NATO-Afghanistan Enduring Partnership. "With the end of ISAF in December, we will change the nature and the scope of our involvement in Afghanistan," said Anders Fogh Rasmussen. "But our commitment will endure because stability in Afghanistan also means security for us."

The size of the Afghan force and the funding it will need after 2014—an estimated \$4.1 billion annually—remain issues of contention. During the

meeting, ISAF leaders renewed their commitment to support Afghan forces financially until the end of 2017. Afghanistan remains highly dependent on foreign donors to pay for the huge army and police force, now numbering 350,000 people. At his press conference the Secretary General said he was "confident that we will reach our goal as it was set out at the Chicago Summit in 2012".

ISAF leaders also underlined the importance of continued support by the international community, and of sustained efforts by the Afghan Government. Notably in continuing to increase its financial accountability and contribution, improve governance and rule of law, promote and protect human rights for all. The Summit also restated the aim, agreed at Chicago, that Afghanistan should assume, no later than 2024, full financial responsibility for its own security forces.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen highlighted the need for financial accountability during his press conference, saying: "Managing the money will require transparency, accountability and openness. We need to know where our funding is going, and how it is being spent." All very laudable of course, except for the fact that NATO itself does not yet provide basic information about its income, expenditure or performance evaluations to the general public. Good governance starts at home: [why is it still not possible to download a copy of NATO's own budget?](#)



(Afghan National Policemen and a US Army Soldier interact with villagers while on patrol near Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan - photo credit: US Army/ flickr)

Afghan Defence Minister Bismullah Khan Mohammadi, leaders from Japan, Central Asian states, as well as representatives from key international community partners from the United Nations and the European Union also attended the meeting.

NATO had hoped that a new Afghan president would be appointed in time for the Summit, enabling the Alliance to celebrate Afghanistan's first democratic transfer of power. But the deadlock over the election result meant the defence minister had to come instead. The current President, Hamid Karzai, [declined to attend](#) because of disagreements with Washington over post-2014 Afghan security needs.

At the previous Chicago Summit, the NATO leaders had agreed to an "irreversible" plan to end the war in Afghanistan responsibly, pulling almost all troops out of the country by the end of 2014.

NATO Watch analysis: In his closing press conference at the NATO summit in Chicago, US President Obama said the Alliance had a clear roadmap ahead in Afghanistan: handing over combat operations to the ANSF, with the US-led NATO mission assuming a support role. Since then, NATO has withdrawn from more than 800 bases and outposts across Afghanistan and the NATO force has shrunk by a third.

On the plus side, since taking over lead responsibility for security, the ANSF protected two rounds of national elections this year with a higher turnout and less violence than the 2009 elections (that had been overseen by President Obama's military surge, which enlarged the US military footprint in Afghanistan to 100,000 troops).

However, the Afghan army remains fragile, and [reports](#) suggest that the Afghan police force—nearly half of the entire ANSF—lacks sufficient weapons to fight the well-equipped Taliban. Moreover, a peace process started in 2010 was expected to reduce the need for a robust Afghan force after 2014, but attempts at reconciliation have faltered and fighting has intensified again.

Sustaining the financial commitment is also going to be a challenge. Since toppling the Taliban regime in 2001, [the US alone has contributed nearly \\$93 billion in assistance to Afghanistan](#), of which more than \$56 billion has been spent training, equipping and supporting Afghan security forces. At the Chicago Summit, it was assumed that the size of the Afghan forces would drop to about 228,000 after 2014. On that basis, it was estimated that about \$4.1 billion per year would be necessary to fund those forces.

However, given that it is now widely expected that the Afghan government will try to maintain the ANSF at about 350,000 troops and police into the foreseeable future, **the annual bill could be around \$6 billion per annum. This is going to be a difficult sum to raise, especially since many countries' contributions are still unspecified.**

Enhanced cooperation with Ukraine (and increased confrontation with Russia)

Russia, according to NATO and many individual Allied leaders has intensified its activities in Ukraine in recent weeks. NATO last week released [satellite images](#) of tanks and artillery positions to corroborate accusations that more than 1,000 Russian forces were actively involved in the Ukrainian fighting.

After his '[doorstep statement](#)' at the start of the Summit, the Secretary General was asked about President Putin's peace plan for Ukraine. His response was scathing:

On the so-called peace plan, let me stress that we welcome all efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Ukraine. Having said that, I also have to say that what counts is what is actually happening on the ground. And we are still witnessing unfortunately Russian involvement in destabilizing the situation in eastern Ukraine. So we continue to call on Russia to pull back its troops from Ukrainian borders, stop the flow of weapons and fighters into Ukraine, stop the support for armed militants in Ukraine and engage in a constructive political process. That would be a genuine effort to facilitate a peaceful solution to the crisis in Ukraine.

In his [opening remarks](#) at the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission at the level of Heads of State and Government, Rasmussen again called on Russia "to step back from confrontation and take the path of peace" and then continued in the same vein in the subsequent [press conference](#):

Russia is now fighting against Ukraine, in Ukraine. Russian troops and Russian tanks are attacking the Ukrainian forces. And while talking about peace, Russia has not made one single step to make peace possible. Instead of de-escalating the crisis, Russia has only deepened it.

During a meeting with Ukrainian President Poroshenko, NATO leaders pledged to provide strong support to help Ukraine improve its own security. "Our support is concrete and tangible," [said](#) NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. "We highly value Ukraine's contributions to our operations and the NATO Response Force. Ukraine has stood by NATO. Now in these difficult times, NATO stands by Ukraine."

The meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission strongly condemned Russia's violations of

international law. In a [Joint Statement](#) the Commission strongly condemned "Russia's illegal and illegitimate self-declared "annexation" of Crimea and its continued and deliberate destabilization of eastern Ukraine in violation of international law. We call on Russia to reverse its self-declared 'annexation' of Crimea, which we do not and will not recognise".

The Commission has established, in the words of the Secretary General, "a comprehensive and tailored package of measures" to help Ukraine. The focus of NATO support will be on four areas; rehabilitation for injured troops, cyber defence, logistics, and command and control and communications. NATO's assistance to Ukraine to boost cooperation will amount to around 15 million Euros. NATO's 'advisory presence' in Kyiv is also being reinforced.

The Statement also notes Ukraine's requests for military-technical assistance, and states that "many Allies are providing additional support to Ukraine on a bilateral basis". When asked whether NATO ought to go further with military support to the Ukrainian government, the Secretary General [said](#): "Let me stress that NATO as an Alliance is not involved in delivery of equipment; because we do not possess military capabilities. These are possessed by individual Allies; so such decisions are national decisions. And we're not going to interfere with that."



(Joint press conference with Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, and the NATO Secretary General after the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission - photo credit: NATO)

The Joint Statement concludes with a commitment to deepen cooperation in the future:

As noted at previous NATO Summits, including in Madrid, Bucharest, Lisbon and Chicago, an independent, sovereign and stable Ukraine, firmly committed to democracy and the rule of law, is key to Euro-Atlantic security. We reiterate our firm commitment to further develop the Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine which will contribute to building a stable, peaceful and undivided Europe.

When asked at the joint press conference whether Ukraine might seek NATO membership, President Poroshenko [said](#):

Next week we will present a programme of reform which was developed in strong cooperation with the European Union and NATO. I think that the new parliamentary election will help us a lot to accelerate

the reform process. When the country is adequate to the criteria for the membership, the Ukrainian people will decide when and how it happens.

The Secretary General echoed those sentiments:

It is for the Ukrainian people to decide and the Ukrainian political leadership to decide how to develop its future relationship with NATO. But whatever decision, it is of utmost importance to improve our ability to work and operate together. This will be a focal point within the NATO-Ukraine Commission and the Annual National Program and the trust funds we have decided to establish.

NATO Watch analysis: The day after the conclusion of the NATO Summit session on Ukraine and after five months of intensifying combat that has killed at least 2,600 people and displaced over a million, the Ukrainian government and separatist forces signed a [cease-fire agreement](#). Whether the cease-fire holds will probably be determined by negotiations over the political future of the south eastern region of Ukraine and on whether the Kremlin finds the solution acceptable.

The most likely outcome is another frozen conflict, along the lines of those in Georgia and Moldova, with a *de facto* partition of the country. Ukrainian President Poroshenko received ample verbal support and was shrewd enough not to bring up his goal of eventual NATO membership, which is a red line for Putin and something that divides the Alliance. Poroshenko did hint that some individual member states offered arms as well as non-lethal support, but [four of the five named states later denied it](#).

The Ukraine crisis is a symptom of the even larger problem of Russia's rejection of the security architecture devised and promoted by the West since the end of the Cold War. And Russia is only [partly to blame for destabilising Ukraine](#).

Eugene Rumer, Director of Carnegie Europe's Russia and Eurasia Programme draws a compelling comparison between [what was done for Germany in the 1950s and was not done for Russia in the 1990s](#) after the West 'won' the Cold War and the Soviet Union collapsed. The necessity of devising a new security arrangement to replace both Cold War structures—the Warsaw Pact and NATO—was never considered. Instead, the entire European political and security architecture was built on the foundation of two institutions—the European Union and NATO—which did not include Russia.

The NATO leaders clearly struggled over how strongly to push back against Russia. While some no doubt argued against an overreaction that would risk military confrontation, it is clear that

deterrence against Moscow is once again NATO's top priority. And the proposed limited buildup of forces along the latest East-West divide will take the 'border' hundreds of miles closer to Moscow than it was in the Cold War era. In so doing, however, NATO leaders have failed to understand that Russia too has security interests along its borders. Cold War warrior Paul Nitze in Congressional testimony in April 1998, said:

NATO expansion distracts both us and the Russians from (the goal of lending political and economic support to the development of a democratic, market-oriented society in Russia.) Indeed, the open-ended expansion being proposed for the alliance points toward increasing friction with post-Communist Russia for years to come. Driving Russia into a corner plays into the arguments of those most hostile to forging a productive relationship with the US and its allies. It is not a sound basis for future stability in Europe, particularly when no current or projected threats warrant extending that alliance.

While expansion doesn't justify the Russian reaction, it does help explain it. Russia is concerned about the consequences of Ukraine joining the West and the potential for contagion in parts of Russia itself. Of course, it is far-fetched to think that NATO expansion into Ukraine would threaten Russian national security, but the crisis reveals the complete failure of NATO, the EU and Russia to find a path toward defence and security cooperation in the post-Cold War era.

The support for the 'open enlargement' of NATO has continued to send the wrong signals to both Kiev and Moscow. The decisions taken at the Summit raise the prospect of continual and possibly escalating NATO-European-Russian tensions.

As the three former US ambassadors to Moscow argue in the [New York Times](#), NATO responded to Russia's intervention and violence in Ukraine "with an escalation of their own — including further sanctions, enhanced military presence in front-line states, and possibly greater support for Ukraine's armed forces. This amounts to more of the same, with little if any assurance of better outcomes".

An opportunity in Wales has been missed to mount a concerted US-EU-Russian policy to prevent Ukrainian state collapse, bankruptcy and socio-political instability.

At some point, a 'grand compromise' between the US, Europeans and Russia will be required in which US, EU and Ukrainian 'vital' interests and those of Moscow are eventually redefined and reconciled. The alternative is a period of intense geopolitical and arms rivalry that could soon prove even more dangerous than that of the Cold War.

But the Summit had also made clear there was little, if anything, that NATO could do to roll back the territorial gains already made by Russia and its separatist allies

The Readiness Action Plan - new wine in old bottles?

On the second day of the Summit, NATO leaders agreed a Readiness Action Plan to strengthen NATO's collective defence. "This is a demonstration of our solidarity and resolve," said NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in his [press conference](#) after the meeting of the North Atlantic Council.

The Secretary General also said that Allies face a security environment which is more unpredictable than ever. "In these turbulent times NATO must be prepared to undertake the full range of missions and to defend Allies against the full range of threats," he said. NATO leaders agreed to maintain a continuous presence and activity in the air, on land and at sea in the eastern part of the Alliance, on a rotational basis. The Summit Declaration tasks Defence Ministers to oversee the "expeditious implementation" of the Plan.

(The NATO Response Force in action - photo credit: NATO)



They also agreed to create a 'spearhead unit' within the NATO Response Force which would be a very high readiness force able to deploy at very short notice. "This spearhead will include several thousand land troops ready to deploy within a few days with air, sea and Special Forces support," said Mr. Rasmussen. The 'spearhead'—or Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), as it is titled in the Summit Declaration—is to be amassed from existing national high-readiness forces and may also be used for expeditionary missions outside the NATO treaty area.

To facilitate reinforcements, NATO will set up an appropriate command and control presence, reception facilities and will pre-position equipment, supplies and planners. NATO will step up intelligence sharing, upgrade defence plans and hold more short-notice exercises as well.

When asked for further details about the make-up of the VJTF and the countries willing to host the forward-operating bases, Mr. Rasmussen was rather more guarded:

All the military details will be worked out after the Summit. But actually work has already started. Let me stress that implementation will start immediately. It also remains to be seen exactly where the reception facilities will be located. But so far I have noted indications from the Baltic States, from Poland, from Romania that they are willing to host such reception facilities.

However, [press reports](#) suggest that Britain has agreed to provide up to 25% of the troops for the multinational VJTF which will number 4,000 and aim "to be deployable anywhere in the world in just two to five days", according to UK Prime Minister David Cameron. The 1,000-member UK contribution is expected to be a battle group and a brigade HQ, with Szczecin, in northwestern Poland, another likely candidate to host a command. The US is also expected to commit some forces as part of the [\\$1 billion European security fund](#) President Obama pledged in June.

NATO officials are reluctant to break the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, which forbids placing permanent bases in the Baltic states and eastern Europe. When asked whether the Plan was in compliance with the 1997 Treaty, the Secretary General was emphatic:

We haven't taken any decision to walk away from the NATO-Russia Founding Act. We stick to the principles of that founding act; while it's clear that Russia has gravely violated the fundamental principles of that Joint NATO-Russia document.

As was [his earlier reply](#) to a similar question during his door step statement:

All the measures we have taken, all the measures we are going to take to provide effective defence of our Allies are in full accordance with the NATO-Russia Founding Act. It's clear to everybody that Russia has violated the fundamental principles of the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Nevertheless, we are strong supporters of a rules-based security architecture in Europe, and so far, that security architecture has been based on the NATO-Russia Founding Act, the NATO-Russia Rome Declaration that established something very special, namely the NATO-Russia Council, and we have decided that while we have suspended all practical cooperation with Russia we will keep this political channel open for political and diplomatic dialogue with Russia.

The Secretary General was also asked whether Poland (which had been pushing for a larger, permanent deployment of at least two divisions of NATO troops on its territory) was happy with the Plan, to which he [replied](#): "Poland has expressed great satisfaction with the Readiness Action Plan.

And all other Allies did exactly the same. There is really a very broad support for this Readiness Action Plan."

The Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk's endorsement was not quite as convincing: "We would have liked more but let's be happy with the decisions taken in Newport. We still have a lot of work to do to make this quantitative change satisfying." But, he insisted: "This signal is very strong and our Eastern neighbour (Russia) cannot ignore it."

NATO Watch analysis: In the days leading up to the Summit, much attention was focused on the fielding of a multinational NATO readiness force. This new force is being described as the spearhead of the existing 25,000-strong [NATO Response Force](#).

But in November 2013 the Secretary General was [describing those forces](#) as a spearhead:

The purpose of the NATO Response Force is to be able to defend any Ally, deploy anywhere, and deter any threat – all at short notice. It is the spearhead of NATO. Every year, we test it, to make sure that it is sharp and ready for use.

But obviously not sharp enough. So NATO is going to create a rapidly deployable spearhead for its existing rapidly deployable spearhead. The UK Prime Minister also indicated in a [statement on the NATO Summit](#) to the House of Commons that the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) might be granted pre-authority to use the spearhead in a dire emergency, thereby negating the need to seek approval from the 28 member states. **Such pre-approval would transfer control of the Readiness Action Plan from political to military leaders and should be resisted.**

But whatever its size or sharpness, NATO's newly approved Rapid Response Force is not a solution for the security problems in the east. At best it will offer limited protection against the 'little green men' (the name given to Russian soldiers in unmarked uniforms who have allegedly infiltrated parts of Ukraine) but is an inconsequential deterrent to Russia's 'proper' armed forces (which number about 1 million active troops and another 2 million in reserve).

In Moscow the new measures will be portrayed as a provocation and a violation of the agreements it has with NATO. The Alliance claims to be getting round those commitments by holding permanent exercises in the region—such as [Exercise Steadfast Javelin II](#) which is currently taking place with 2,000 soldiers from nine nations across five countries (Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland)—modernising air bases, pre-positioning equipment and deploying the spearhead force on a rotational basis. **But in effect, both Russia and NATO are violating the spirit of the 1997 Treaty.**

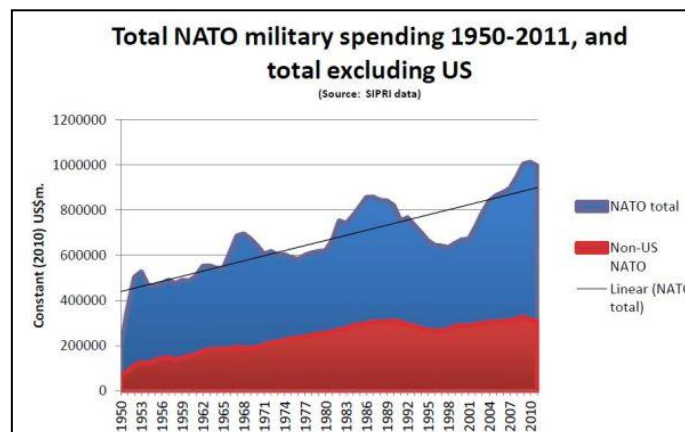
(Slowly) reversing the trend of declining defence budgets

As expected, NATO leaders also made a commitment to reverse the trend of declining defence budgets and raise them over the coming decade. "In this dangerous world we recognise that we need to invest additional effort and money so today the Alliance made a pledge on defence investment," [said the NATO Secretary General](#).

During the Cold War the political (non-binding) benchmark was 3% of GDP. In 2006 NATO defence ministers agreed that: "Allies who currently devote to defence a proportion of GDP which is at or above 2% should aim to maintain the current proportion. Nations whose current proportion of GDP devoted to defence is below this level should halt any decline in defence expenditures and aim to increase defence spending in real terms within the planning period".

However, only four member states—the US, UK, Greece and Estonia—currently hit that 2006 target. Prior to the Summit, a number of other NATO members announced commitments to increase their spending to the 2% mark, including Poland, Romania and the Baltic states. But several of NATO's major powers remain well

below this figure (e.g. Germany 1.3%, Italy 1.2% and Canada 1%).



(The longer linear trend in NATO defence spending is upward - [as shown by the chart](#) - and NATO's defence spending has doubled in real terms since the 1950s, although, of course, NATO membership has also risen)

According to the Secretary General, allies will direct their

defence budgets as efficiently and effectively as possible "and aim to move towards the existing NATO guideline of spending 2% of GDP on

defence and with a view to meeting NATO capability priorities". In addition, allies who currently spend less than 20% of their annual defence spending on major new equipment, including related Research & Development, will aim, within a decade, to increase their annual investments to 20% or more of total defence expenditures.

Progress in meeting these guidelines will be reviewed on a yearly basis. Mr. Rasmussen said that member states would have a lot of work to do, but added: "the security of our countries and citizens is too important for us to cut corners, or to cut still more funds and without security we can have no prosperity."

During his [press conference](#) Rasmussen said that while Russia has increased its defence spending by 50% over the past five years, NATO allies on average have decreased their defence spending by 20%. "Obviously, this is not sustainable," he said. "I think this new security environment will be the driving force for now actually implementing this pledge."

NATO Watch analysis: This latest commitment is unlikely to have much impact in the short term and certainly not across the entire Alliance. Indeed, on the day the new spending pledges were announced, a report suggested that the UK would soon drop below those spending goals. "On current spending plans and growth projections, the UK's defence budget—excluding spending on any new operations—is set to fall to an estimated 1.88% of GDP in 2015/16," [the Royal United Services Institute said in a paper](#).

In addition, German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen has [gone on record](#) after the Summit as saying that she did not believe Berlin should dramatically increase its defence budget (and also questioned the validity of the 2% of GDP benchmark, as discussed further below).

There are also four wider points to be made on this issue. First, despite defence budgets being cut by many NATO Member States, the Alliance collectively continues to account for a large proportion of global military expenditure. One [recent analysis](#) shows that, in constant 2011 dollars, the total military spending of NATO nations in 2010 was greater than at any other point in the Alliance's history. This includes at any point during the Cold War.

Second, one of the longest running fault lines within NATO has been the ['burden sharing' debate](#), with accusations that Europe spends too little on defence and is being protected at American taxpayer expense. However, large parts of the US military budget have nothing whatsoever to do with NATO or European

security, while in Europe, NATO is seen by its member states as the cornerstone of their defence policies.

Moreover, [claims that the disparity between the US and Europe is at a historic high](#) are misplaced. [NATO defence spending](#) was at its most disproportionate in 1952, when the US constituted almost 77% of the Alliance total. Conversely, NATO military spending was closest to parity in 1999, when the US constituted 55% of the total and when Europeans were making major contributions to NATO stability operations in the Balkans.

Defence spending is only one determinant of overall military ability, albeit a significant one. It is possible to unpack the NATO-specific commitments of each country and thereby provide a more comprehensive picture of NATO's military commitments and capabilities. It is something that NATO Watch has been interested in doing for some time, but simply does not have the resources. [Others](#) have also suggested capability mapping to complement the 2% benchmark.

The bottom line is that Americans do pick up a disproportionate share of the NATO tab but this is nowhere near the level that is widely accepted as 'common currency' in the debate

Third, NATO's limited financial (and other) transparency makes it difficult to ensure that NATO-related spending (by both member states and collectively) is efficient and effective. Financial management information is routinely provided by intergovernmental bodies such as the EU and World Bank. **But NATO does not yet provide basic information about its income, expenditure or performance evaluations to the general public.**

One way for the public and parliamentarians to really understand what is happening in NATO is to follow the money. But without a publicly available annual budget or reliable performance metrics, it is often impossible to grasp the significance of what is being proposed or implemented within the Alliance.

Public information about NATO's budgets and results is sparse because most of the information is classified. Thus, there is no way of knowing whether NATO is delivering value for the taxpayers' money. Consequently, citizens and parliaments of member countries are unable to monitor whether their contributions to NATO result in an efficient international organisation.

Interestingly, the Netherlands Court of Audit (NCA)—the official auditing body of the Dutch government—shares this view and recently

launched a [new website](#) that aims to stimulate further debate and progress on this important issue.

Former US Senator [Sam Nunn](#) has also called for greater accountability:

NATO should commit to publicly scoring the contributions and improved military capabilities of its members, as they implement their Wales summit commitments. Then, NATO should review progress every six months. NATO members have an historic pattern where pledges and promises on necessary military improvements vastly exceed implementation. NATO member states must be held accountable for meeting their commitments.

Perhaps as a result of this growing pressure, the foot of the Summit Declaration (paragraph 112) commits the Alliance to "further work in the areas of delivery of common funded capabilities, reform governance and transparency and accountability, especially in the management of NATO's financial resources". **As ever with NATO, the devil will be in the detail, although a progress report on these reforms is promised by the time of the next Summit. Is it too much to ask for such a report to be placed in the public domain?**

Finally, it is also interesting to note that while only a handful of current members meet the voluntary 2% target, all new member states would have to. The US Senate (which has to ratify any new NATO member states) has a mandatory requirement that all new NATO states must spend 2% of their GDP on defence. Thus, if Sweden, for example, opted for NATO membership, its defence budget would need to almost double.

Another 'coalition of the willing' bound for Iraq

The rise of the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria dominated discussions on the sidelines of the Summit. But while President Obama and Prime Minister Cameron appeared to suggest in the run-up the Summit that NATO should play a role in containing the militants, they were less specific in what action they would seek from the Alliance. In the event, NATO's role is likely to be minimal and dependent on a request from the Iraqi government, as the Secretary General said in response to a question following his [door step statement](#) on the opening day:

I welcome that individual Allies have taken steps to help Iraq. I welcome the American military action to

stop the advance of the terrorist organisation Islamic State, I welcome that other Allies have contributed in different ways. I do believe that the international community as a whole has an obligation to stop the Islamic State from advancing further.

As regards NATO, we haven't received any request for a NATO engagement, I'm sure that if the Iraqi government were to forward a request for NATO assistance, that would be considered seriously by NATO Allies. In that respect let me remind you that NATO has assisted Iraq in the past. We had a training mission in Iraq until 2011, and if the Iraqi government were to request resumption of such training activities I think NATO Allies would consider such a request seriously.

US Secretary of State John Kerry's [pitch](#) at the side-meeting on 'Building an Anti-ISIL Coalition', co-chaired by US and UK Defence and Foreign Secretaries, outlined the parameters of how the US Administration sees the war against the Islamic State unfolding:

There is a strategy that is clear, becoming more clear by the day. And it really relies on a holistic approach to ISIL. That is to say that we need to do

kinetic, we need to attack them in ways that prevent them from taking over territory, that bolster the Iraqi security forces, others in the region who are prepared to take them on, without committing troops of our own, obviously. I think that's a redline for everybody here, no boots on the ground...

(NATO Summit Wales 'Family' Photo - photo credit: NATO)

We need a major humanitarian component that needs to be coordinated with the economic component, which will be real, to help Iraq get on its feet. We need a foreign fighter component.

In addition, we need an all-military aspect. Some people will not be comfortable doing kinetic. We understand that. Or some people don't have the capacity to do kinetic. But everybody can do something. People can contribute either ammunition or weapons or technical know-how or intel capacity. People can contribute advisors...

Following the ensuing discussions, nine NATO states (the US, UK, France, Germany, Canada, Turkey, Italy, Poland and Denmark) and Australia agreed to form a 'core coalition' to fight the Islamic State. While the meeting stopped short of committing to supply 'boots on the ground', it did discuss other military options including coordinated air strikes and greater efforts to train and support the Iraqi forces where necessary.

Some of the coalition partners, including Britain, France and Canada, have already participated in



humanitarian airdrops to besieged Iraqi communities and have delivered weapons to the Iraqi military or Kurdish fighters in northern Iraq. Germany has said it will also supply weapons. The coalition aims to have a plan ready in time for the UN General Assembly meeting later this month.

"I did not get any resistance or pushback to the basic notion that we have a critical role to play in rolling back this savage organization that is causing so much chaos in the region and is harming so many people and poses a long-term threat to the safety and security of NATO members," President Obama said at the Summit conclusion. "So there's great conviction that we have to act, as part of the international community, to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL, and that was extremely encouraging."

Significantly, the coalition does not include any Arab nation and only one of Iraq's six neighbours, although Obama expects the group to be expanded beyond Western nations: "I think it is absolutely critical that we have Arab states and specifically Sunni-majority states that are rejecting the kind of extremist nihilism that we're seeing out of ISIL, that say that is not what Islam is about and are prepared to join us actively in the fight", he said.

Denmark's Foreign Minister Martin Lidegaard said the effort against the militants "is not only about a military effort, it is also about stopping the financial contributions to ISIS, to coordinate intelligence, it is about stopping foreign fighters, young people from our own societies. It is decisive that we get more countries along."

Speaking at his closing press conference, Prime Minister David Cameron added that a military commitment was required, but that the government was not at the stage of making decisions on air strikes. The US has launched more than 100 air strikes against the militants in northern Iraq in the past month to try to check their progress.

Similarly, the NATO Secretary General in his [closing press conference](#) reiterated that there "are two tracks of work" in play: one involving individual members and the other "is the NATO track". In addition, to standing ready to assist with a defence capacity building mission in Iraq, this second track also includes 'a coordinating role' of efforts carried out by individual nations (e.g. coordination of an airlift) and enhanced "cooperation in exchanging information on returning foreign fighters".

NATO Watch analysis: While details are still sketchy, it does like as if the United States is going to coordinate a 'new' military strategy

with strong echoes of the war on terror developed by George W. Bush, more than a decade ago.

The current US Administration talks of building a broad coalition to 'degrade and defeat' the militant group, but defeating Islamic State without indirectly aiding President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, previously a US target for regime change, will be no easy matter. And if, as President Obama suggests, the game plan is to be the one used in Pakistan (and Yemen) this in itself raises many questions about the efficacy and legality of the use of drones and air strikes. Such attacks against foreign states with which the US is not at war are widely regarded as a violation of international (and US) law. Moreover, the Achilles heel of counterinsurgency/counter-terrorism is identifying the insurgent/terrorist. Otherwise the bombs simply refuel the next wave of militants.

Turkey is arguably the most crucial country in President Obama's coalition, [but it also seems to be the least willing](#). And by announcing a coalition before a new Iraqi government is established and Sunni Arab neighbours are engaged, Washington may once again be putting the military cart before the political horse. Moreover, some of the Arab states—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates—that the US will be looking to join the coalition, provided support for the rise of Islamic State, in part to counter-balance Shi'ite Iranian influence in Iraq and Syria.

In a separate section on combating terrorism, the Summit Declaration reiterated earlier NATO commitments that any counter-terrorism intervention by the Alliance would be "in accordance with international law and the principles of the UN Charter". But while NATO itself will not take part in any military action against Islamic State, its main role is likely to be as a 'toolbox' for the US to put together interoperable coalition forces. This role will require close supervision and oversight if some of the worst excesses of the war on terror are not to be repeated.

Allegations, for example, that [NATO played a part in the CIA's rendition programme](#) have never been satisfactorily answered. While NATO's involvement may have only been marginal—the evidence suggests that NATO meetings were used to facilitate bilateral discussions and planning of such activities between US officials and several individual member states—there need to be checks and balances to prevent similar planning meetings descending into illegality in the fight against Islamic State.

Enhancing NATO's global network of partners (while keeping the door open to aspirant members)

Over the two-day Summit there was a bewildering range of partnership meetings. On the first day, NATO Foreign Ministers met their counterparts from the four aspirant countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro and Macedonia). Meanwhile, NATO Defence Ministers met their counterparts from 24 partner countries which cooperate with NATO on interoperability. The format was 28 Allied Defence Ministers and Ministers from the following partner countries: Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Macedonia, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates.

On the second day, Foreign Ministers held consultations with the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, while NATO Defence Ministers met their counterparts from Australia, Finland, Georgia, Jordan and Sweden, to discuss enhanced opportunities for cooperation. So, what were the key outcomes of all these discussions?

In the Summit Declaration, NATO leaders "collectively pledge to strengthen the political dialogue and practical cooperation with our partners who share our vision for cooperative security in an international order based on the rule of law". They also reaffirmed their commitment to the 20-year old Partnership for Peace programme, and Mediterranean Dialogue, as well as the 10-year old Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. In all three fora, NATO is seeking to deepen its political dialogue and practical cooperation.

But the dazzling array of partnership initiatives does not end there. The Summit Declaration also:

- commits NATO to "intensify efforts to engage with and reach out to those partners across the globe that can contribute significantly to addressing shared security concerns" within the so-called Berlin Partnership Policy;
- adopts a comprehensive Partnership Interoperability Initiative to build on partnerships forged during the war in Afghanistan (and includes an Interoperability Platform launched by

Defence Ministers with 24 specific partners "that have demonstrated their commitment to reinforce their interoperability with NATO"); and.

- launches a Defence Capacity Building Initiative (DCBI), "to reinforce our commitment to partner nations and to help the Alliance project stability without deploying large combat forces", according to the Secretary General.

The DCBI is NATO's latest initiative in assisting nations with defence and security reforms and is initially being extended to Georgia, Moldova and Jordan, although both Libya ("when conditions permit") and Iraq (subject to a request) are earmarked for similar support.

The Summit Declaration also states that NATO's "Open Door Policy under Article 10 of the Washington Treaty is one of the Alliance's great successes". Hence, one group of partner countries is deemed to "hold a special relationship with NATO". These are the countries which aspire to join the Alliance, once they fulfil the criteria.

They were told that "NATO's door remains open. Each country will continue to be judged on its merits. And no third country has a veto over NATO enlargement".



(Radoslaw Sikorski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland; Baroness Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative; Didier Burkhalter, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office; Thorbjorn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council

of Europe and NATO Deputy Secretary General - photo credit: NATO)

One of the four—Montenegro—may be offered a membership invitation by the end of 2015 following 'intensified talks'. Another, Georgia, was presented with a "substantive package of measures that will help Georgia advance in its preparations towards membership of NATO". Macedonia's application remains stymied by Greece, while Bosnia & Herzegovina still has much to do in terms of internal reforms.

Georgia is also part of a group of five countries (the others are Sweden, Jordan, Finland and Australia) that became part of a programme for "enhanced opportunities within the Partnership Interoperability Initiative". No specific agreement was signed to launch the enhanced opportunities programme and details of the new level of partnership will apparently take shape as practical co-operation develops.

Finnish Defence Minister Carl Haglund said at the close of the Summit that the most important aspect in the widened programme is the exchange of views on the political level. Encounters are to continue regularly at the ministerial level, Haglund said.

NATO Watch analysis: Clearly, NATO wants to strengthen its partnerships around the world, but a key weakness remains an inability to seriously engage with major emerging powers, especially the so-called BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China). Drawing those countries into a closer relationship would need to be a future priority if the alliance entertains any serious ambition to become a hub for global crisis management and cooperative security.

The growing relationship with Georgia may well also be storing up further problems with Russia. After the Summit, US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel [said](#) "Russia's blatant aggression in Ukraine" has made the United States and Georgia determined to build stronger military ties. But while the United States is clearly determined to help Georgia join NATO, there is little enthusiasm among many other member states.

The 'enhanced opportunities' for [Sweden and Finland](#) may also prove problematic, especially where assistance is provided in emergency situations. While NATO troops can only enter either country following Finnish or Swedish invitation, the decision to invite or not to invite during a crisis may be difficult.

While Finnish President Sauli Niinisto said that Finland was not "entering NATO through the back door", some critics argue that the creation of a closer technical framework for cooperation with NATO will help facilitate the political decision of actual membership a little further down the line. While the support for NATO membership has grown slowly in both Finland and Sweden, the majority of both populations appear to be against it for the moment.

Reaffirming the Transatlantic Bond and other measures

As anticipated, NATO leaders publicly declared their solidarity, although the nine-paragraph document, [The Wales Declaration on the Transatlantic Bond](#), is no more than a summary of

the Summit Declaration and is unlikely to live long in the memory.

Similarly, the [Armed Forces Declaration](#), agreed on the opening day, pays homage to "the skill and dedication of the men and women serving in our Armed Forces", but is short on practical measures, other than a commitment to "seek to enhance the sharing of best practices and lessons learned in support of our Armed Forces personnel and their families, including on our national approaches to providing medical care to injured personnel and support to families".

NATO leaders also endorsed a package of "16 priorities" designed to ensure the Alliance "remains robust and ready", according to the Secretary General's [press conference](#).

While it is not possible to identify each of those priorities in the Summit Declaration, a number of them do stand out. The most eye-catching is an Enhanced Cyber Defence Policy, under which NATO leaders agreed that a large-scale cyber attack on a member country could be considered

an attack on the entire Alliance, potentially triggering a military response.

(Armed Forces Declaration by NATO Heads of State and Government - photo credit: NATO)

"Today we declare that cyber defence is part of NATO's core task of collective defence," said

Secretary General Rasmussen. The decision marks an expansion of NATO's remit, reflecting new non-military threats that can disable critical infrastructure, financial systems and government. According to the Summit Declaration, "A decision as to when a cyber attack would lead to the invocation of Article 5 would be taken by the North Atlantic Council on a case-by-case basis".

Another project launched in the sidelines of the Summit is designed to [strengthen cooperation in the munitions sector](#). With Denmark in the lead, the project will focus on multinational approaches toward air-to-ground precision-guided munitions (PGMs). The other participant member states are: the Czech Republic, Greece, Norway, Portugal and Spain. It is being hailed as demonstrating the success of the Smart Defence initiative.

Finally, the Secretary General also welcomed the announcement by Poland that it would host the next NATO Summit which he said was "a strong signal of Poland's leadership in NATO and NATO's more visible presence in the eastern part of our Alliance."



NATO Watch analysis: As with all summits, there is an element of window-dressing, with announcements that do not in the end amount to very much. There were several of these in Wales. It is hoped, however, that the commitment to establish best practice in dealing with psychological and physical damage to soldiers was not one of them. Action on this issue is long overdue in some member states. [Rates of suicide](#) and domestic violence among service personnel and cases of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have continued to rise. In the US military, for example, 30% of the 834,463 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans receiving hospital treatment since 9/11 have been diagnosed with PTSD.

Other items of window-dressing can have unintended consequences and lead to broken panes. NATO's reaffirmation of the territorial integrity of Caucasian states in the Declaration, for example, sparked [renewed diplomatic wrangling](#) between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The decision to apply the Alliance's mutual-defence obligation to large-scale attacks in cyberspace was flagged well in advance of the Summit. But how will NATO determine whether an attack is government-sponsored and how will the Alliance react if it determines that China or Russia is the source of the attack?

Two topics that did not get much attention at the Summit were missile defence and nuclear weapons. This is because [neither provides protection against the threats concerning NATO](#). **The Summit Declaration did acknowledge the significance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty but failed to recognise the contradictions between the non-proliferation commitments to the UN treaty and the acts of proliferation by NATO member states.**

European countries, whose pilots are trained to deliver US 'free-fall' B-61s to their targets, are facing expensive decisions to replace their existing aircraft with the US F35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF). And the projected cost of turning the B-61s into precision-guided nuclear bombs is likely to [exceed \\$10 billion](#). NATO is undertaking an expensive nuclear escalation by default.

It is clear that more resources need to be put into non-military solutions to the security challenges ahead. Many of the most important emerging security challenges do not easily lend themselves to traditional military solutions. Preventive diplomacy, pre-emptive and early-

warning technologies, and cooperative transnational partnerships are the most appropriate tools of the trade, and NATO has major capability gaps in such 'soft power'.

Conclusion: NATO at the nucleus of a new Cold War?

The measures agreed at the Wales summit were considerable. Military initiatives are being extended to Georgia, Moldova and Jordan. More pressure has been applied against Moscow, with NATO content to bring its military forces within gunshot of brooding Russian border guards. In addition to increased air patrols over the Baltics and naval deployments in the Black Sea, a new 'Readiness Action Plan' will create an enhanced Rapid Response Force.

The blurring of demarcation lines between NATO activities, those of member states and partners is becoming an Alliance trademark. This appears designed to give political and legal cover to 'coalitions of the willing' and partners. Some of those 'partners' are so integrated into NATO mechanisms that they are now *de facto* member states, yet remain outside the Alliance as far as the wider world is concerned.

It is also hard to disagree with Christian Trippe, writing in [Deutsche Welle](#), when he says that "the old terms are now back in play: deterrence and containment, the language of the Cold War". NATO leaders have made it clear to Russia that their 'red line' is the border of the Alliance, and if Moscow violates that border, NATO would respond with force. Defining what exactly would constitute such a breach remains an open question: a full-on tank invasion or something more understated, such as [the 'abduction' of an Estonian officer](#) or a cyber attack perhaps?

James Bissett, a former Canadian diplomat [writes](#) that the current crisis in Ukraine threatens global security "and at worst has the potential for nuclear catastrophe. At best it signals a continuation of the Cold War". Sadly, the crisis has been escalated by the propaganda onslaught against Russia during the Wales Summit. One that matches the Kremlin's own propaganda machine. Two years ago, Moscow had a seat at the NATO table; today instability and violence are back in vogue, not only between East and West, but in many other points of the compass.

(The NATO Secretary General Designate, Jens Stoltenberg, greets the outgoing Secretary General - photo credit: NATO)

