



Promoting a more transparent and accountable NATO

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NATO Watch Media Briefing

Hybrid Wars and Hollow Words: A Preview of the NATO Wales Summit

4-5 September 2014

Introduction

NATO's Summit in Wales (4-5 September 2014) comes at a vital time in the Alliance's 65-year history as the global security environment is becoming increasingly unpredictable and unstable. In addition, NATO is preparing to complete its longest combat mission and to open a new chapter in its relationship with Afghanistan.

25 years after the end of the Cold War are we at a turning point in international relations? A key narrative within NATO for at least two decades has been: should the alliance focus on collective defence in the immediate transatlantic region, or would its security be enhanced by [reaching out to global partners](#)? In fact, it is trying to do both – and more besides.

<Look out for our post-Summit analysis on the [NATO Watch website](#)>

The Context

Six important contextual issues:

1. The Russia-Ukraine conflict. Russia's actions against Ukraine have changed the strategic environment in a fundamental way. The idea of a "true strategic partnership" with the Russian Federation, duly embedded in [NATO's 2010 Lisbon Strategic Concept](#), is over. According to NATO officials, Russia has changed borders through force, and continues to subvert a sovereign state through covert means and a cynical disinformation campaign. The view from Brussels is that Moscow has ripped up the international rule book and sought to recreate a sphere of influence based on a new doctrine of limited sovereignty for countries that form part of the so-called 'Russian World'. The NATO charge-sheet against Russia also includes the war with Georgia in 2008, a cyber attack against Estonia in 2007 and an alleged breach of the INF Treaty by testing a ground-launched cruise missile. [The view from Moscow](#) on all of these issues is very different.

2. The 'Arc of Crises' narrative. Again, according to NATO officials, there is an arc of crises surrounds the Alliance, with growing instability and security challenges across the Middle East and North Africa, and beyond, as well as newer threats such as cyber and missile attacks. This narrative was outlined by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and NATO's supreme allied commander for Europe Philip Breedlove in the [Wall Street Journal](#) on 17 August:

The dangers of 2014 differ from the threats of the Cold War. They are multiple and more insidious. Instability rages to the south, with an arc of crises spreading from North Africa to the Middle East. And Russia is resorting to a hybrid war, with snap exercises, secret commandos and smuggled missiles.

3. The rising relevance of China and the Asia-Pacific region. To what extent will the US-pivot to Asia be reflected in future NATO commitments or reversed in the light of heightened tension with Russia?

4. Intra-NATO divisions. The Alliance has never effectively resolved deep debates about its strategic rationale in the post Cold War world. The governments and electorates of NATO members regularly cling to noticeably different opinions about the magnitude of threats and the willingness to risk military casualties and invest in national defence.

5. Intervention fatigue. Recent large-scale Western military intervention, in [particular in Iraq](#), has had unintended negative consequences and several NATO states and partners have become very cautious over the future use of force. However, is this reluctance to deploy military force now changing again with the crisis in Ukraine and growing calls to combat Islamic State in Iraq?

6. A new Secretary General. This Summit is the last to be chaired by Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Jens Stoltenberg, Norway's former Prime Minister, will become chief of the Alliance when Rasmussen steps down after the Summit. He will be [the first Secretary General from a country bordering Russia](#) and the first with anti-war credentials in his youth.





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The Secretary General and UK Prime Minister Cameron will officially welcome Heads of State and Government

However, while Prime Minister for almost a decade he was very pro-NATO. Can he negotiate NATO reforms amid an increasingly tense security climate?

The Agenda

The Summit will open on **Thursday 4 September** and the Secretary General will put it in context at a doorstep statement scheduled for 0935 hrs local time. The Secretary General and UK Prime Minister Cameron will officially welcome Heads of State and Government at 11.45 hrs. This will be immediately followed by an official photograph at 1230 hrs.

The Summit will formally open with a **meeting on Afghanistan** at 1300 hrs. The Allied Heads of State and Government will meet with 27 partner countries including ISAF contributors (Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Jordan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Montenegro, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates), countries from the region (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan) as well as Japan. High level representatives of the United Nations and the European Union will also attend.

The second meeting of the day will start at 1645 hrs, where President Poroshenko of Ukraine has been invited to attend the **NATO-Ukraine Commission**.

NATO Defence and Foreign Ministers will attend the Summit and hold **parallel meetings**. On 4 September at 14.15 hrs, NATO Foreign Ministers will meet their counterparts from the **four aspirant countries** (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

At 1630 hrs NATO Defence Ministers will meet their counterparts from **24 partner countries** which cooperate with NATO on interoperability. The format will be 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, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name), Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates.

Two separate working dinners will take place in Cardiff for Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers. A separate dinner with partner countries will take place at Celtic Manor.

On **Friday 5 September**, the 28 leaders will hold two sessions of the **North Atlantic Council**. The first session will take place at around 0930 hrs. The second session will start around 1300 hrs.

At 0930 hrs Foreign Ministers will hold consultations with the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. The Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (Didier Burkhalter), the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Thorbjørn Jagland) and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union (Catherine Ashton) are invited.

At 1100 hrs, NATO Defence Ministers will meet with their counterparts from Australia, Finland, Georgia, Jordan and Sweden, to discuss enhanced opportunities for cooperation.

Several events may also take place on the margins of the official programme involving delegations in a bilateral or multilateral format.

Key Themes

The Summit will have five broad themes:

1. The crisis in Ukraine and relations with Russia

The relationship between Russia and NATO – and the West more generally – has deteriorated, taking on a radically changed quality. While claims of a resurgent Cold War may be over-stated, the Alliance's newest members are undeniably distrustful of Moscow's emboldened stance. Since the illegal annexation of Crimea, NATO has suspended all practical civilian and military cooperation with Russia, while leaving some channels open for dialogue on the situation in Ukraine. The Alliance will review its relations with Russia at the Summit and will also continue to intensify cooperation with Ukraine.

Key areas of disagreement: How to shape long-term relations with Russia? Threat-perceptions of Russia are not held equally by all 28 member states, as some (such as Germany, Italy and Spain) balance their security concerns with dependence on Moscow's energy imports. The US also want to restrict the sale of advanced European military systems to Russia (and China), but France is still the main outlier with the [Mistral sale](#).

2. Maintaining strong defence and deterrence in Europe

Russia's actions have prompted NATO to go 'back to basics' and to re-emphasize the Alliance's original purpose of collective defence. NATO has already doubled its air-policing missions, deployed more ships



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to the Black Sea and the Baltic, and conducted more exercises in Eastern Europe. NATO Defence Ministers in June discussed a Readiness Action Plan in preparation for the Wales Summit. This is expected to include improving the reaction time of the NATO Response Force, enhancing NATO's intelligence and awareness capabilities, pre-positioning equipment and supplies further East, and carrying out more high-intensity military exercises in more demanding scenarios. While the exact figures and technical details will be worked out after the Summit, in his [press conference](#) in Brussels on 1 September, the NATO Secretary General outlined the upgraded Response Force:

We will now significantly enhance the responsiveness of our NATO Response Force. We will develop what I would call a spearhead within our Response Force – a very high readiness force able to deploy at very short notice. This spearhead would be provided by Allies in rotation, and could include several thousand troops, ready to respond where needed with air, sea and Special Forces support.

Key area of disagreement: In March, Poland urged NATO to station 10,000 troops on its territory on a permanent basis. But NATO has resisted doing this because it might infringe treaties such as the NATO-Russia founding act that proscribe new permanent troop deployments in Eastern Europe. The 'frontline' NATO states are unlikely to be satisfied by the compromise on offer.

3. Afghanistan -post 2014

NATO has led ISAF for over a decade and is now focusing on completing the mission by the end of 2014. From 2015, NATO will remain committed to Afghanistan through the NATO-Afghanistan Enduring Partnership (2010), the Afghan National Army Trust Fund and a follow-on mission – Resolute Support. The launch of Resolute Support - a "train, advise and assist" mission - is dependent on whether the necessary legal arrangements will be in place. Once a new security agreement is in place, estimates suggest that some 14,000 international troops will remain in Afghanistan in 2015 (8,000 US troops, 4,000 NATO troops and a 1,800 US counter-terrorism force). It is not clear what specific decisions, if any, NATO leaders will make at the Summit given the continued uncertainty. But NATO officials say they will be sending a signal that they are prepared for a long-term commitment.

Key area of disagreement: Finding the \$6 billion a year to continue to fund the Afghan security forces numbering some 350,000 is a major headache. Since toppling the Taliban 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.

4. The Transatlantic Bond

It is likely that a formal 'Transatlantic Declaration' will be agreed in which North American and European allies reaffirm their mutual commitment to each other's security and will agree to do more to share the burden of security more equitably. This commitment might be translated into an undertaking by European Allies to progressively increase their defence spending and move towards the NATO benchmark of 2% of GDP. However, in 2013 only the US, Greece, Estonia and the UK met or exceeded that level and at least two member states ([Germany and Canada](#)) are opposed to binding long-term commitments of higher defence spending.

Key area of disagreement: This 'burden sharing' debate is one of the longest running fault lines within NATO, 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 most, if not all, of its member states as the cornerstone of their defence policies. 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. In any case, persuading Europe's taxpayers to increase defence spending remains an uphill challenge and any summit agreement will probably rely on vague language of "aiming to" meet the 2% target.

5. 'Future NATO'

Another key objective is making sure that NATO is ready to deal with any challenge, wherever it happens, and whenever it occurs. It is essentially about having the right **capabilities**, the right **concepts** and the right **partnerships** to enable the Alliance to deal with both the predictable and the unpredictable events that the future might bring. In addition to 'reassurance measures' in Europe, there are at least two other key areas that will influence the 'Future NATO' discussions:

A. Dealing with global risks and threats: In order to deal with all the challenges from terrorism, piracy, proliferation, energy security and cyber warfare the Strategic Concept that NATO adopted four years ago identified three core tasks for NATO: collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security through partnerships. So NATO is talking about being a "full-spectrum Alliance". In particular, it is seeking to fill capability gaps, especially key enabling capabilities – drones, transport aircraft, Special



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Why is it still not possible to download a copy of NATO's own budget?

Forces, deployable C2 – that are needed to react to all threats, whether in Europe or 'out of area'. There are two key approaches to this end:

1. 'Smart Defence' - multinational capability projects and further regional cooperation are at the heart of this approach; and
2. Reversing the downward trend in allied defence spending over the past few years (as discussed above).

B. Investing in relationships and NATO's Open Door policy. NATO has built a network of partnerships with more than 40 countries from all over the globe. Dialogue and cooperation with partner countries is perceived as a vital part of NATO's vision for the future. This includes partnerships with countries in North Africa and the Middle East, countries in Europe like [Finland and Sweden](#), and also countries further afield, like Australia Japan, and South Korea.

NATO is now looking at various ways to deepen and broaden those partnerships. They might, for example, intensify political consultations by making them more frequent and more focused. They could engage certain interested partners on specific subjects of common concern, by using both established fora like the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, as well as smaller, more flexible formats. They want to preserve and strengthen interoperability with partners through participation in joint military education, training and exercises, as well as Smart Defence projects.

Key areas of disagreement: Future NATO membership is a [controversial and divisive issue](#). Cyprus and Macedonia are prevented from accession by, respectively, Turkey and Greece, pending the resolution of disputes between them. Other countries which have a stated goal of eventually joining include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Georgia. Georgia, which fought a five-day war with Russia in 2008, is pushing to speed up its membership in the Alliance, and is expected to be granted a package of measures at the Summit which will bring the country closer to NATO but not provide the Membership Action Plan that it craves. Questions about the value of further enlargement will ensure caution in the practical application of NATO's 'open door' policy for the foreseeable future.

NATO Watch conclusion

The crisis in Ukraine has made NATO go 'back to basics' and focus more on collective defence. But it is unlikely to prevent the Summit in Wales from continuing to advance a broader, 'Future NATO', project in which both capabilities and connections are strengthened.

Whether these are the right tools for evolving 21st century security needs remains an open question. The support for the 'open enlargement' of NATO has continued to send the wrong signals to both Kiev and Moscow. And the current reaction within NATO raises the prospects of continual, if not escalating, NATO-European-Russian tensions. There is a crucial need for a concerted US-EU-Russian policy to prevent Ukrainian state collapse, bankruptcy and socio-political instability.

The key challenge now is to find ways for the US, EU, Ukraine and Russia to cooperate in a Contact Group, while working with the NATO-Russia Council and NATO-Ukrainian Commission. But truly engaged diplomacy in which US, EU and Ukrainian 'vital' interests and those of Moscow are eventually redefined and reconciled appear not to be on anyone's agenda at present. Instead, the portents are for a period of intense geopolitical and arms rivalry that could potentially prove as dangerous as that of the Cold War.

There is a need more than ever for the wider application of soft power – from humanitarian aid to assistance in nation building. Instability and bad government create misery and can encourage people to turn to terrorism. NATO has also failed to adapt its decision-making. The framework of NATO's security policies has changed fundamentally over the past 20 years, but the way in which those policies are arrived at has not. Fundamental questions about transparency and accountability will once again fail to be addressed at this Summit. In an age when NATO has its own facebook page, [why is it still not possible to download a copy of NATO's own budget?](#)

(NATO Wales Summit logo unveiled by NATO foreign ministers, June 2014 - photo credit: NATO)

