

Emerging Security Challenges: A Glue for NATO and Partners?

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1. Introduction

When the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) formed as a defensive military alliance more than six decades ago, one of its fundamental tasks was to deter Soviet aggression against Western Europe. Since the end of the Cold War, the Allies have come to understand that their security depends on their ability to face threats emerging from well beyond the Euro-Atlantic space. NATO has thus broadened its focus from collective defense to security management beyond its borders: its numerous operations in this capacity have included peace support, peacekeeping, disaster relief and counter-piracy missions. These operations have taken place not only in NATO's traditional areas of intervention such as the Balkans, but also as far afield as the Gulf of Aden, the Horn of Africa, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Military operations have always constituted a key form of interaction within the Alliance, politically as much as militarily. In military terms, the new NATO command structure mirrors the lessons learned from previous operations and the need to conduct operations more efficiently. From a political perspective, the fact that partners which contribute to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) periodically meet with the 28 Allies reflects the importance of these operations. Indeed, NATO's partnerships have largely been defined by them, since emphasis has so far been placed on the Alliance's operational cooperation with its partners.

At present, NATO's operational tempo is decreasing: the training mission in Iraq was terminated in 2011; the Alliance is set to move KFOR to a deterrent presence posture; the counter-piracy and counter-terrorism missions, Operation Ocean Shield and Operation Active Endeavor respectively, have been reduced; most importantly, in 2014 the NATO-led combat mission in Afghanistan - the Alliance's major operational commitment - will become history and the Alliance will start leading a training mission. This situation presents NATO with the strategic problem of identifying other fields of mutual interest outside the context of ISAF, to engage its partners and keep them interested



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in maintaining this engagement with the Alliance. NATO needs to determine whether security cooperation on what it labels as “emerging security challenges”, namely terrorism, cyber attacks, problems related to energy security (including maritime security) and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), can serve as a means for the Alliance to maintain and strengthen its partnerships in the post-Afghanistan era.

This paper argues that, although NATO cannot take the lead in coping with all emerging security challenges internationally, the significant contributions the Alliance can make towards addressing them can be of considerable benefit to partners cooperating with it. The emphasis on engaging in partnership to deal with emerging security challenges is, indeed, an important feature of the new Strategic Concept. However, If NATO is to prove successful in building its partnerships around emerging security challenges in the post-ISAF environment and thus fulfill the Strategic Concept’s mandate, it will have to move beyond political rhetoric and clearly specify a number of points: what role it envisions playing in these areas, as well as what it can do with - and what it expects from - its partners.

Against such a background, this paper is organized as follows. First, it analyzes the logic behind choosing emerging security challenges as a field for potential cooperation with partners. Second, it discusses the importance of seeking cooperation with partners. Third, it examines whether cooperation on emerging security challenges is a win-win situation for both Allies and partners. Fourth, it offers an assessment of the challenges ahead, followed by recommendations and conclusions.

2. Nato’s Emphasis On Emerging Security Challenges

The Alliance’s post-Cold War strategic landscape has transformed fundamentally, in four main ways. First, the challenges confronting Allies today are more pernicious and complex than the more traditional threats NATO encountered at its inception. Threats such as terrorism, cyber warfare, problems related to energy security, and the proliferation of WMD cannot be addressed through traditional means. In addition, the use of military tools to thwart these threats may not be the appropriate response in most cases. To put it differently, “whether it is terrorist

attacks against pipelines or cyber-attacks on power networks, deterrence by the threat of military retaliation is as irrelevant as is a military operation against the (mostly anonymous) perpetrators.”² Second, it is also important to note that these challenges are interconnected and mutually reinforcing: for example, attacks on energy infrastructure are becoming part of the terrorist repertoire. A third characteristic is that the new security challenges are less predictable than traditional threats, and consequently more difficult to counter. Finally, in our increasingly connected world these challenges transcend geography; NATO’s security may thus be affected by threats stemming from beyond the territory of its member states. In short, the nature of these new challenges is such that no single institution or nation can tackle them alone.

NATO’s new Strategic Concept, adopted at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, recognizes the emerging challenges of the twenty-first century: “the modern security environment contains a broad and evolving set of challenges to the security of NATO’s territory and populations.” Other key Alliance documents highlight the importance of addressing these threats: both the Lisbon and Chicago Summit Declarations underline the significance of emerging security challenges, and NATO’s 2006 Comprehensive Political Guidance lists terrorism and the proliferation of WMD as principal threats to the Alliance for the next 10 to 15 years.³ Such are the doctrinal foundations on which to envision an active role for NATO in all these areas.

In line with the Strategic Concept’s emphasis on the evolving security environment and changing threats, in August 2010 NATO’s Secretary General created the Emerging Security Challenges Division, with the aim of systematically bringing together work on the areas which increasingly threaten allied security. The Division comprises sections dealing with terrorism, cyber defense and energy security, as well as the Weapons of Mass Destruction Center, the Nuclear Policy Directorate and a civilian-military intelligence unit known as Strategic Analysis Capability.

3. The Importance of Partners

Overall, NATO needs to continue engaging its partners outside operational settings for a number of reasons:

- First, partners contribute to military burden sharing, and in general to the success of NATO’s operations,

² Michael Rühle, “NATO and Emerging Security Challenges: Beyond the deterrence paradigm”, *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 33 (2011): 280. Available at <http://www.aicgs.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Ruehle-NATO-and-Emerging-Security-Challenges.pdf>

³ NATO, “*Comprehensive Political Guidance*”, 29 November 2006. Available at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_56425.htm



in various ways: by providing troops to serve alongside their Alliance counterparts, by contributing financially and through other forms of support, including intelligence sharing. As Burns et al. underline, NATO's campaign in Libya "demonstrated the important role NATO's peacetime partnerships can play in integrating non-member states during a time of hostilities", since "the Arab partners chose to participate in the operation only if it was led by NATO, because they were familiar with how to operate and communicate with the Alliance through prior training and military exercises."⁴ Although the Alliance is scaling down its operations, one cannot exclude the possibility that it will again undertake military operations in the future. The Libya operation is a case in point - NATO's engagement there was hardly predictable.

- Second, partners provide political support for NATO's operations, thus allowing the Alliance to act with greater legitimacy.
- Third, threats to the security of the Alliance may originate well beyond its territory. NATO must therefore be able to influence partner regions and work with regional players, so as to promote regional stability and defuse upcoming crises.
- Fourth, given the current budget constraints and resulting defense cuts, the Allies need partners to share the costs of providing security.

NATO's partnership system is particularly important amid the currently unpredictable, volatile security environment, in which ability to address challenges critically depends on networking, connectedness and cooperation. This is reflected in official documents and statements by NATO's leadership. The Strategic Concept lists cooperative security as one of the Alliance's "three essential core tasks", which will be partially fulfilled by NATO's active engagement to enhance international security "through partnership with relevant countries and other international organizations". NATO's "Policy for a more efficient and flexible partnership", adopted in Berlin in 2011 with the aim of deepening and broadening NATO's existing partnerships, also identifies emerging security challenges as a strategic objective of the Alliance's partnership. More recently, Allies restated their goal of achieving cooperative security through partnership during NATO's Chicago Summit in May. This increasing emphasis on partnership mirrors a realization among Allies that partners are a vital factor in addressing the threats and challenges that shape today's security landscape.

Just as NATO needs its partners, the reverse applies –

perhaps even more so, as the Alliance's partnership policy enables partner nations to work with NATO on issues of common concern and further their security interests. NATO is the Euro-Atlantic community's pre-eminent security institution, bringing together 28 member states and their invaluable experience in multilateral military and defense planning and cooperation. In a nutshell, NATO is a "force multiplier" for its partners, and a vehicle for them to achieve their security goals. For their part, partners do recognize that NATO can make valuable contributions across the spectrum of emerging security threats and have a keen interest in working with the 28 Allies on countering these new challenges.

4. Security Cooperation on Emerging Security Challenges: A Win-Win Situation?

4.1. NATO's added value and limitations

Politically, NATO is a proven institution that can serve as a major venue for regular consultations and political dialogue among the members of the transatlantic community and their partners. Consultations among allies and partners can contribute to raising and improving awareness of emerging threats, promoting common understanding of these and developing joint approaches to address them.

In the military-technical realm, NATO's main added value is in the fields of education, training and civil emergency planning. To begin with, NATO under its new Partnership Cooperation Menu offers partners around 1600 activities, ranging from training in maritime operational planning to crisis response operations and courses on arms control, non-proliferation and terrorism. Such activities allow interoperability between NATO and partner country forces.

In addition, NATO staff can offer partners training and best practices on protection of critical cyber assets and energy infrastructure systems against cyber or terrorist attacks. Additionally, NATO can work with national authorities to help them prepare better for any contingency, be it a cyber, terrorist or chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threat, and ensure greater efficiency in managing the consequences of an attack. Participation in NATO exercises in all these fields allows partner nations to build their capabilities and develop interoperability. Educational initiatives such as seminars, workshops and training courses

⁴ Nicholas Burns, Damon Wilson and Jeff Lightfoot, "Anchoring the Alliance", The Atlantic Council, May 2012, page 10. Available at http://www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/403/051412_ACUS_Burns_AnchoringAlliance.pdf



at NATO's Centers of Excellence,⁵ the NATO Defense College or the NATO School in Oberammergau are also open to partners.

At a more substantive level of cooperation, Operation Ocean Shield (counter-piracy) and Operation Active Endeavor (counter-terrorism) make NATO a military hub for operational cooperation and a repository for operational lessons learned. Partners can contribute to these two ongoing operations, and the benefits could not be more clear-cut: the more the naval vessels participating, the larger the area patrolled. Additionally, operational cooperation is an excellent way of maintaining interoperability and interconnectedness of forces.

Despite these advantages, NATO's capabilities to tackle the array of modern threats are inherently limited. For instance, the Alliance's "cyber roof" (known as NATO Computer Incident Response Capability, or NCIRC) is scheduled to become fully operational only at the end of 2012. A look at the key documents shaping NATO's cyber efforts is instructive: the Alliance's Cyber Defense Concept, Action Plan and Policy, adopted in 2011, all reveal that NATO's fundamental focus is on protecting its own communication and information systems, while the partnership aspect in its cyber defense posture is limited. This is partially explained by the fact that cyber attacks are predominantly national and as such, responding to them falls under the purview of national authorities. In another key area, NATO's Comprehensive, Strategic-Level Policy for Preventing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and Defending against Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Threats underscores both the military and political dimensions of countering WMD; the new Policy also mirrors a growing level of ambition for NATO with regard to its potential arms control contribution, stating that "the Alliance seeks to prevent their proliferation through an active political agenda of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation". Nonetheless, the text places greater emphasis on NATO's main strengths as an Alliance of "a primarily military mission" than on its potential contributions in terms of the necessary political dialogue. Indeed, a major factor that undermines NATO's non-proliferation objectives is that the Organization is not a signatory to any arms control treaty. In addition, although the NATO-Russia Council could serve as a discussion forum on topics related to arms control and non-proliferation, historically arms control has been a priority of the US-Russia bilateral relationship. In the field of energy security, one should

look at what is referred to in NATO parlance as the tasking from the Strategic Concept and the Bucharest and Chicago Summit Communiqués: NATO's greatest added value is in the field of critical infrastructure protection. Energy security being a highly politicized issue, nations are hesitant to grant NATO a greater role in this area. Status quo powers, such as Germany and France, argue that such a step would reinforce a confrontational NATO-Russia relationship, while other countries, particularly those in Eastern Europe worried about Russia's intentions, would like to engage NATO more fully in this field. NATO's role in counter-terrorism is also limited: traditionally, law enforcement agencies have primary responsibility for this.

Finally, it is worth noting that all these challenges remain national responsibilities, while other organizations such as the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have also developed expertise and capabilities to address them.

4.2. What's in it for NATO: Partners' contributions from NATO's perspective

In the light of the new security threats, NATO cannot afford to stay passive and watch a crisis emerge; to meet its mandate of ensuring the security of its member states, the Alliance should at the very minimum scan the strategic horizon with the aim of anticipating crises. Efforts to anticipate, prevent or counter these threats are intelligence-led, and certainly cooperation with partners can help NATO acquire a better understanding of what is happening in its security environment. Partners can contribute to NATO's efforts through the exchange of information and intelligence sharing, which is central to informed consultations. For instance, partners could share with NATO information on radicalization among their population. Partners in turn derive benefits from operating with NATO on intelligence-related topics: this allows them to build their capabilities, familiarize with Western intelligence procedures, and access fused intelligence information from 28 countries. However, intelligence sharing is not without its challenges. At present, NATO as an institution has no capabilities for intelligence gathering but depends on information provided by member states, which can then be shared with Allies and partners. Even within NATO, political and security barriers may inhibit information sharing among Allies who might sometimes retain a preference for intelligence sharing through bilateral channels since intelligence is a sovereignty

⁵ NATO's Centers of Excellence in the field of emerging security challenges are the Cooperative Cyber Defense CoE in Estonia, a Defense Against Terrorism CoE in Turkey, and a Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense CoE in the Czech Republic; an Energy Security CoE in Lithuania is currently under development.



issue. By the same token, individual Allies and partners may opt for bilateral information sharing rather than relying on NATO. Additionally, the level of information sharing between NATO and its partners depends on the security agreements each partner has signed with the Alliance.

A further point is that, given the transnational nature of the threats that confront the Euro-Atlantic community today, addressing them requires the extended geographic reach and the related enhancement of operational scope which partners can give NATO.

Finally, a good number of partner nations have invested in acquiring capabilities and developing national strategies to counter these threats. Here again, NATO could benefit from such arrangements.

In a nutshell, cooperation on emerging security challenges should be a win-win situation for NATO and partners, and both sides should have incentives to cooperate in this respect. Although NATO may not necessarily lead the wider effort internationally when it comes to tackling the full spectrum of emerging challenges, it has a role to play by filling important niches, by coordinating and complementing efforts made at the national level or supporting those of other international organizations, as well as by providing a forum for expanded political dialogue and awareness raising. For their part, a good number of partners come out as equals with NATO in terms of the contributions they can make. Nevertheless, several factors which are analyzed below inhibit progress towards strengthening of existing partnerships and of cooperation on emerging security challenges.

5. The Challenges Ahead

Lack of political will. The institutionalization of NATO's approach to emerging security threats with the creation of the Emerging Security Challenges Division could be seen as indicating the Allies' acknowledgment that they need to address these challenges collectively, with all 28 members involved. In actual practice, the opposite holds true. The creation of the Division was mainly a top-down initiative of the Secretary General's Private Office, rather than the result of extended discussion among NATO nations. At present, political appetite among Allies to expand cooperation with partners on emerging security challenges is limited, for three reasons. First, as highlighted by the NATO Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges, Ambassador Gabor Iklody, these challenges "do not

necessarily affect all Allies in the same way",⁶ partly because Allies' relative capabilities in these areas differ according to their national resources. For example, a cyber attack would certainly cause great concern among Allies and consultation under Article 4 would be elicited, yet the incident would not necessarily trigger an Article 5 response because cyber attacks are largely untraceable. That said, the 28 member states will have to rethink the question of how they can express solidarity with any countries involved in future asymmetric contingencies. Second, individual NATO member states do not face the same security threats, and not all member states necessarily ascribe the same importance to emerging threats. The US emphasizes the challenges of new threats and argues for a NATO with worldwide responsibilities, while members in Eastern and Central Europe support the idea of a traditional military Alliance with a stronger posture vis-à-vis a revanchist Russia. Third, the sensitivity of these topics exacerbates Allies' already diverging security interests and priorities; member states are reluctant to disclose information regarding their capabilities or vulnerabilities in these areas among themselves, let alone to partners. However, if NATO is to be successful in implementing its comprehensive policy to address these new threats, the full backing of all 28 Allied capitals is necessary.

NATO's internal issues. An important factor that needs to be taken into account is that operational issues dominate NATO's agenda. In particular, Allies are preoccupied with pressing topics such as the withdrawal from Afghanistan, which shifts attention away from topics such as emerging security challenges. At the same time, the logistical challenges emerging from the reform which NATO is currently undertaking are accentuated by austerity measures and shrinking defense budgets: this fuels a fatigue effect among Allies and impacts their political will to act. Equally important is that, with these financial constraints, some Allies may not be willing or even able to invest in acquiring the required capabilities to meet the new threats.

Reaching out to new stakeholders. A key element of NATO's approach to addressing new threats should be engagement of other relevant security stakeholders. For instance, at the national level, these new threats may not necessarily be handled by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense, which are NATO's traditional interlocutors, but may be dealt with by other domestic agencies such as the Ministry of the Interior, the intelligence services or the police. Additionally, private companies own and operate critical energy and cyber infrastructure. NATO will thus have to build effective partnerships and enhance dialogue

⁶ Gábor Iklódy, "New Challenges-new NATO," *NATO Review*, 05 January 2011. Available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2010/Lisbon-Summit/New-Nato/EN/index.htm>



with law enforcement agencies, as well as with the private sector, the scientific community, and the academic world.

Political restrictions. Unfortunately, rivalries between Allies and partners adversely affect partnership. For instance, Turkey's falling out with Israel after the Mavi Marmara incident is burdening NATO and the Mediterranean Dialogue. Turkey has in the past vetoed Israel's attempts to open a liaison office at the NATO headquarters and participate in activities between the Alliance and Mediterranean Dialogue countries; more recently, Ankara blocked Israel's participation in the Alliance's Chicago Summit.⁷ The Turkey-Israel impasse hinders the Mediterranean Dialogue's effectiveness as a cooperative security instrument, sets a bad precedent by bringing bilateral disagreements into the Alliance's cooperation with its partners, and may prompt Allies and partners to cooperate on a bilateral basis.

How global should NATO go? Allies have differing views over whether NATO should act more globally as a cooperative security instrument and thus assume a larger role in tackling new threats, or go back to its core business. Such discussion divides the 28 Allies into three camps. The Anglo-Saxon camp favors the idea of an Alliance that would assume more global responsibility and play a more prominent role in international security. The US introduced the idea of a "global NATO" in 2004, when Nicholas Burns (then US Ambassador to NATO) began to campaign for an "extension of the alliance of democracies".⁸ During the 2006 Riga Summit, the US was joined by the UK in proposing the creation of a "program of global partners", which would aim to bring together Allies and partners such as Australia, Japan, South Korea, Sweden and Finland – i.e. democratic countries which make major contributions in operational terms.⁹ Burns' successor, Ambassador Victoria Nuland, also supported the idea that NATO "should focus on deepening its co-operation with countries such as Australia and Japan and becoming a genuine globally deployable military force".¹⁰ Although such plans were never implemented, the Anglo-Saxon Allies are very much in favor of a more globalist approach. On the flip side of the coin, major European Allies such as Germany and France may voice support for strengthening ties with partners across the globe but are in practice reluctant to do so. There are a number of reasons

for this. First, they argue, this would undermine the unique nature of the Alliance as a transatlantic collective defense organization; second, it would damage intra-alliance political cohesion; third, players such as Russia and China would be alienated and their heated rhetoric that the West is trying to advance its transatlantic ideals would be reinforced. Finally, several of the former Warsaw Pact countries with security concerns about Russia support the notion that, instead of venturing out of its area, NATO should go back to its core business. It goes without saying that the Allies need to have a common vision of how global NATO should go in acting as a cooperative security instrument, a vision which could then be translated into a common strategy vis-à-vis these challenges.

Becoming more political. Addressing emerging security challenges requires a holistic approach, a key element of which is political dialogue. Unfortunately, in the words of NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges, "at present, many member states approach discussions on such security issues only hesitantly, worrying that NATO's image as a solely military, operations-driven alliance may create the impression among partner countries or the wider public that any such debate was only the precursor to military engagement".¹¹ The prospect of a greater role for NATO in energy security evokes a red line for many Allies, who argue that with "militarization" of this sort major energy players would fear possible military action by NATO with a view to ensuring availability of vital energy resources; these concerns were highlighted by the widespread belief that the NATO intervention in Libya was partly based on concern about access to the country's energy resources. On the other hand, if NATO wants to portray itself as a credible player in anti-WMD efforts, topics such as the Iranian nuclear program or North Korea should be discussed systematically among the Allies. In other words, to fully engage with current political as well as military issues, and make a meaningful contribution, NATO should not only capitalize on its military toolbox but also focus on the political dimension of these topics.

The US factor. The US is the greatest supporter of the notion that NATO should be transformed into an Alliance which will play a more important role in tackling broader

⁷ Serkan Demirtaş, "Turkey blocks Israel from NATO Summit," 23 April 2012, *Hürriyet Daily News*. Available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-blocks-israel-from-nato-summit.aspx?pageID=238&nID=19033&NewsCatID=338>

⁸ Karl-Heinz Kamp, "Global Partnership: A new Conflict Within NATO?," *Analysen und Argumente no. 29/2006*, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Berlin. Available at http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/veranstaltungsbeitraege/7_dokument_dok_pdf_9491_2.pdf

⁹ R. Nicholas Burns, "Briefing on NATO issues prior to Riga Summit," US Department of State, 21 November 2006. Available at <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/us/rm/2006/76464.htm>

¹⁰ Daniel Dombey, "US chooses awkward time to transform NATO," 23 January 2006, *Financial Times*. Available at <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/2f674ca0-8c37-11da-9efb-0000779e2340.html#axzz22nDMkRdf>

¹¹ Gábor Iklódy, "The next steps for NATO," *Carnegie Europe Commentary*, 05 June 2012. Available at <http://carnegieeurope.eu/publications/?fa=48318&lang=en>



international security challenges. That said, there are a number of reasons why the shift of US focus to the Asia-Pacific region may influence NATO's priorities too. First, the pivot means that the US is set to play a less pronounced role in NATO. Given that the European member states are less enthusiastic to see NATO increase its global responsibilities, NATO may thus have to lower its ambitions with regard to the role it will play in coping with global threats. Second, the US realignment will accentuate the need for greater burden sharing among Allies at a time when the majority of them are under severe financial strain and are even considering a reduction of their defense capabilities. This may discourage Allies from investing in development of new capabilities, which are essential if NATO wants to be ready for non-traditional challenges. Third, it has to be noted that NATO, with the exception of a few Allies, does not have the capabilities or political interest to deepen its engagement in the Asia-Pacific area at a time when the US is stepping up its engagement there. Given that NATO's partners in the region mainly view their relationship with NATO as a natural complement to strategic relations with the US, they may no longer see value in continuing to work with NATO. In brief, unless NATO governments are willing to politically and financially support greater engagement with the Asia-Pacific region, for example by organizing maritime exercises, there must be implications for NATO's partnerships there. Currently, such support does not seem to be forthcoming.

6. Recommendations

The new Strategic Concept calls for increased NATO engagement in dealing with terrorism, threats to energy security, cyber attacks and proliferation, and places emphasis on engagement with partners as a means of addressing such tasks. Despite the tasking from the Strategic Concept, the real challenge lies in implementing the intention. Against this background, the following recommendations are made:

1. NATO should clearly specify what role it envisions playing in response to emerging security challenges, and what its added value is in these areas. At the same time, Alliance leaders have to concretely state what the Allies are willing to do in partnership with other countries and put forward proposals for cooperation. To do so, the Alliance could formulate a Comprehensive Policy for Countering Emerging Security Challenges, given that these challenges are interrelated and thus cannot be addressed in

a fragmented way. The policy should define how robust NATO's role in tackling emerging security challenges should be, and identify ways to engage partners. Greater clarity will in turn help build realistic expectations among partners and prevent them from feeling frustrated.

2. NATO should invest in acquiring the capabilities demanded by new challenges, so as to fulfill the mandate of the Strategic Concept. To do so, the organization will have to determine which capabilities are required, align national capabilities with those of NATO, and make sure that duplication between Allies is avoided. Greater coordination among member states is needed. More specifically, a nation should not abolish its capability in one area if no other nation can provide it, and no nation should invest in specialist areas where another nation has comparable strengths. In any case, NATO's level of ambition in coping with new threats should match the financial wherewithal it can provide.
3. Allies should capitalize on the momentum which has been achieved with partners by standing shoulder-to-shoulder on the battlefields in Afghanistan, and take advantage of the two-year window before ISAF ends to intensify security cooperation with partners on new threats. Cooperation on emerging security challenges should be listed as a priority area for dialogue, consultation and cooperation in the individual partnership programs which each partner can agree with NATO, a step that would allow for a gradual increase of cooperation between NATO and partners on emerging threats.
4. NATO should make better use of flexible formats. The NATO Secretary General set out the conceptual framework for cooperation with partners when he stated that: "there is considerable scope for developing clusters of willing and able Allies and partners ready to cooperate in specific areas. [...] I see these clusters being flexible enough to accommodate different groups of partners, yet focused enough to deliver concrete results."¹² Clusters are perceived to be an evolution of so-called "flexible formats", within the framework of which partners and Allies will jointly discuss and work on issues of mutual interest. One or more Allies who possess capabilities and expertise in a particular area of emerging threats could mentor the most willing and capable partners. Unlike flexible

¹² Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "NATO- Delivering Security in the 21st Century" (speech delivered at Chatham House, London, U.K., 04 July 2012). Available at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_88886.htm



formats bringing together Allies and partners for a one-off discussion on a specific topic, meetings in a cluster format will take place systematically. In such a setting, priority should be given to the areas where the Allies are fully aligned and where both partners and NATO can bring added value to the table. Clusters should be functional, or topic-driven, rather than geographically based. An obvious advantage of the new cluster approach is that Allies should be supportive, in that they will be able to focus their work on areas in which their security interests lie. Potentially, clusters may irritate certain partners, who may end up not being involved in any of them. Additionally, the new approach may add to partners' frustration if NATO fails to clarify how it intends to implement clusters.

5. Following the Arab upheavals, the wider Mediterranean and the Greater Middle East region are under close scrutiny as concerns about security risks originating there have accelerated. NATO should try to address its lack of influence in the region, which hampers stronger working relationships there. The Alliance should also continue its outreach to Saudi Arabia and Oman, the only two Gulf Cooperation Council members which are not part of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.
6. In addition, NATO will have to understand that it will have to engage countries which are not politically receptive to dialogue with it but which can impact certain areas relevant to Allied security. China, for instance, can be both part of the solution and part of the problem: a significant amount of cyber attacks originate from China, while the country is heavily investing in capabilities to address this arena. Although NATO has made steps to gradually engage China in political dialogue, the country's leadership is not really willing to see the Alliance increase its influence in the Chinese neighborhood. China's growing influence and the security interests it shares with NATO in a number of areas mean that there is certainly a strong case for engagement. Political consultations with a view to raising awareness should thus continue.
7. As discussed in this paper, anticipation and crisis prevention are rapidly increasing in importance as NATO is faced with unfamiliar new challenges. In line with the Strategic Concept's pledge to "broaden and intensify the political consultations among Allies, and with partners", NATO's machinery should be used more as a forum for political

dialogue, consultation and awareness raising.

8. Partnership is a two-way street. Partners should not expect NATO to push for cooperation on emerging security challenges, but need to be proactive. They should be encouraged to make the fullest possible use of the partnership tools NATO offers. By actively and constantly demonstrating their willingness to intensify cooperation on emerging security challenges, partners will spur Allies to follow suit. On the contrary, if partners stop reminding NATO nations of the commitments made at the Berlin and Lisbon Summits, the potential strengthening of cooperation on emerging security challenges may not be fully realized.

7. Conclusions

NATO's relations with partners have been driven to a great extent by the former's operations, and in particular by ISAF. As NATO's most important current operation is steadily coming to a close, and partnership is undeniably an indispensable element of its security policy, the Alliance will have to find ways to engage partners outside the ISAF context and not necessarily in operational settings. In this perspective, cooperation on emerging security challenges can serve as a tool for NATO to maintain its partnership arsenal in the post-Afghanistan era. In today's increasingly unpredictable and interconnected security landscape, NATO Allies are ever more vulnerable to a range of security threats which are no longer confined to the Euro-Atlantic region, and NATO partners need to confront the same formidable challenges. Therefore, cooperation between NATO and partners in dealing with emerging security challenges should be a strategic imperative. However, if cooperation on emerging security challenges is to serve as a successful tool for outreach towards partners, NATO's leadership will be faced with a daunting task: it will have to summon the political will not only to move beyond mere political symbolism and further define the Alliance's role in coping with these new threats, but also to dedicate sufficient time and resources so that relevant capabilities can be developed. These limitations and difficulties must be successfully addressed to enable cooperation on emerging security challenges, providing the vital glue that will hold Allies and partners together. If this is not done, security cooperation on emerging security challenges will prove a minimally effective tool, and NATO will have squandered the opportunity to build and sustain its partnership arsenal around new challenges.