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Abstract

External Discussion Forum 1

**“NATO'S New Strategic Concept: NATO as a Forum
for Consultation on Worldwide Security Issues”**

"NATO has to reform [...] the way we do our traditional business, the way we address new threats and last but definitely not least, our structure and organization." (Rasmussen)

Therefore, NATO is working on a new Strategic Concept, to be presented on its Summit in late 2010. And since in that inclusive process an interactive dialogue with the broader public is encouraged we hope to see well prepared and ambitious delegates who want to join us in our debate and are willing to write a high-quality resolution.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization - NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an alliance of 28 countries from North America and Europe committed to fulfilling the goals of the *North Atlantic Treaty* signed on 4th April 1949. In accordance with the Treaty, the fundamental role of NATO is to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means. NATO safeguards the Allies' common values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes and promotes these values throughout the Euro-Atlantic area.

The Alliance has worked since its inception for the establishment of a lasting peaceful order in Europe based on common values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This central Alliance objective has taken on renewed significance since the end of the Cold War because, for the first time in the Post-war history of Europe, the prospect of its achievement has become a reality.

NATO provides a forum in which the United States, Canada and European countries can consult together in security issues of common concerns and take joint action in addressing them.

The Organisation is committed to defending its member states against aggression or the threat of aggression or to the principle that an attack against one is an attack against all.

Also dialogue and partnership with non-NATO countries are helping to overcome the division of the Cold-War era and to extend security and stability well beyond NATO borders.

Why does NATO need a new Strategic Concept?

At their Summit in Strasbourg / Kehl on 3 and 4 April 2009, NATO's Heads of State and Government tasked the Secretary General to develop a new NATO Strategic Concept. This exercise should be completed by the time of NATO's next Summit, which is expected to take place towards the end of 2010. The Summit also tasked the Secretary General to convene and lead a broad based group of qualified experts who will lay the ground for the new Strategic Concept. This will be done with the active involvement of NATO's highest decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council (NAC).

A sound transatlantic consensus on NATO's roles and missions and on its strategy to deal with security challenges is essential if NATO is to function optimally. The Strategic Concept is the core NATO document that establishes and reflects this transatlantic consensus. Clearly, as the security environment that NATO has to deal with changes, so the Alliance's Strategic Concept has to be periodically updated. The current Concept dates from 1999, a time when NATO had 19 members compared to the 28 it has today and when NATO's focus was very much on challenges within Europe or on Europe's periphery.

Clearly the new Strategic Concept, which must be elaborated and approved by all 28 current Allies, has to take account not only of the way in which security challenges have evolved, such as the new emphasis on proliferation, failed states, piracy, energy supplies, terrorism and climate change, but also of how NATO has adapted and transformed in the last decade to be able to better tackle these challenges. The new Strategic Concept will therefore not be only an analytical document. It will need also to give specific guidance to NATO governments on how they need to further transform the Alliance and their own national defence structures and capabilities to be successful in meeting NATO's core tasks in the 21st century. The Strategic Concept must also give public opinion in the Alliance countries and beyond a clear sense of why NATO still matters and how in many ways it is helping to make them more secure.

The process leading to the new Strategic Concept will be an inclusive one. All Allies, from the largest to the smallest, will be actively consulted and involved. Moreover, the process should engage partners in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, as well as partners cross the globe. The process should also be transparent and engage other key international actors such as the EU and the UN as well as NGOs and all those in the strategic community who believe they have

something useful to contribute and expertise to offer. Finally, an interactive dialogue with the broader public is encouraged via a special web module run by NATO's Public Diplomacy Division.

Sources and Links for further Research

1. Obligatory reading for all participants of the EDF 1

NATO's strategic documents from 1949 to 1969, available at:

<http://www.nato.int/archives/strategy.htm>

NATO's post cold war strategic concept (1991), available at:

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-D1BBF4B6-E3310EB3/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm

NATO's current strategic concept (1999), available at:

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-D1BBF4B6-E3310EB3/natolive/official_texts_27433.htm

2. Further Information

Kaplan, Lawrence S.: NATO Divided, NATO United: The Evolution of an Alliance. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Paperback, 2004

Chart of the evolution of NATO strategy from 1949- 1999, available at:

http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2009_07/20090728_strategic_concept.pdf

NATO Partnerships:

<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/51288.htm>

Video Material on NATO:

<http://www.natochannel.tv/default.aspx?aid=3985>

2010 Munich Security Conference (in German and English):

<http://www.securityconference.de>

The Guardian (UK) on the topic NATO:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/nato>

The New York Times (US):

http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/organizations/n/north_atlantic_treaty_organization/index.html