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Reforming NATO's Institutions: Pressing Need, Enduring Obstacles, New Opportunities

Diego A. Ruiz Palmer

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NATO's history, during and after the Cold War, has been marked by nearly uninterrupted organizational reform, grafted on to a lightly defined institutional blueprint. Such reform is being pursued today in the context of the formulation of a new Strategic Concept that would set out the core purposes and tasks of the Alliance and provide essential guidance for NATO's further transformation. In the end, the aim is to make NATO more agile and relevant.

politique étrangère

Reforming the Atlantic Alliance and adapting its structures and procedures to an ever-changing security environment has been a permanent fixture of the NATO agenda since the end of the Cold War. Lessons learned from the Alliance's engagement in Afghanistan, transformational impulses within member nations and, more recently, resource concerns caused by the current financial crisis, have given additional impetus to the need for further reform.

Psychologically, NATO's reaching the mature age of 60 has prompted a new sense of urgency, as reform is also meant to facilitate rejuvenation. Last, but not least, the elaboration of a new NATO Strategic Concept offers the opportunity to associate institutional reform with a renewed sense of purpose.

Generally, various reform ideas and proposals have sought to:

- Enhance situational awareness and political consultation, particularly in support of more effective and responsive crisis management, including the initiation of new operations

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- Improve the oversight, management and resourcing of on-going operations
- Ensure a better match between political ambition, the development of modern defense capabilities and the availability of resources, notably through a reformed collective defense planning process

Some reform initiatives in the recent past have sought to shift authority over assets and resources to the Strategic Commanders. This was the case, notably, of proposals in the mid-1990s by the then Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic (SACLANT), General John J. Sheehan, to create a new Supreme Allied Commander position with extensive authority over important support functions and capabilities that were spread out across a vast range of NATO entities.¹ The trend, however, has been to move assets away from the NATO Military Authorities,² as illustrated by the consolidation of the NATO Military Committee's Advisory Group on Aerospace Research and Development (AGARD) and of the SHAPE Technical Center into new NATO civil structures,³ to achieve greater synergies but also enhanced budgetary accountability.

Other proposals for reform made by informed observers have gone much further and challenged the consensus rule that underpins NATO's 'governance' in favor of majority voting or special rights by 'coalitions of willing allies,' or have sought to adapt it by restricting its application only to decisionmaking in the Alliance's governing body – the North Atlantic Council (NAC).⁴ The record shows in a compelling way, however, that the consensus rule is a powerful source of collective political will, as well as an effective instrument for overcoming disparities in size, economic power and military capability among the allies and spreading the burden of Alliance obligations equitably. As Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen reminded a United States audience in September 2009 in reference to NATO's engagement in Afghanistan: "(...) First and foremost, all

1. On some of General Sheehan's ideas, see Mark Yost, 'A Bold Plan for Restructuring NATO,' *The Wall Street Journal*, 23 November 1995.

2. The NATO Military Authorities comprise, collectively, the Military Committee and the two Strategic Commanders, the Supreme Allied Commanders, Europe and Transformation.

3. The NATO Research and Technology Agency and the NATO Consultation, Command and Control Agency, respectively.

4. Leo Michel, 'NATO decision-making: Au Revoir to the Consensus Rule?,' *Strategic Forum*, Institute for National Strategic Studies. Washington DC: National Defense University, no. 202, August 2003. General James L. Jones, former Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), has also advocated moving away "(...) from the idea that the 'consensus rule' needs to apply in all of the Alliance's many committees." See David S. Yost, 'An interview with General James L. Jones, USMC, Retired, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR, 2003-2006,' *Research Paper* no. 34. Rome: NATO Defense College, January 2008, p. 3.

28 NATO countries are in the mission. Without exception. That is solidarity. And there are 13 other countries, all NATO partners, with troops in the field as well: 41 countries in total, NATO and non-NATO, but all under NATO command. This is no *ad hoc* coalition of the willing – this is an Alliance that is proving its staying power every day (...).⁵

NATO reform presents a dual paradox. On the one hand, NATO has been transformed in almost every aspect since the fall of the Berlin Wall two decades ago. Its expanding functions, enlarged membership, multiple partnerships with an ever-broader number of nations outside the Alliance, numerous operations and capacity-building missions across four continents and transformed defense planning attest to this unambiguously. Yet, the Alliance is not yet sufficiently streamlined and agile as the environment in which it operates would mandate. Organizational reform since the Alliance's inception has been carried out in the absence of an original institutional blueprint. The corresponding latitude has been, in an important way, a blessing. It has allowed, wherever possible, form to follow function. Accordingly, an allied committee, command or agency could be established to suit an almost infinite set of geo-political necessities, strategic or operational circumstances, or capability development requirements. This situation has also enabled structures and procedures to reflect the imperious political necessity to accommodate the participation of a very diverse, and expanding, membership, sometimes at the expense of effectiveness and often, probably, of efficiency.

NATO is not as agile as its environment requires

In sum, the constellation of institutional arrangements that constitutes NATO has responded to a compelling, enduring impulse to root the political legitimacy of the Alliance – as a dual inter-governmental and collective structure – vis-à-vis its members, through a web of organizational 'interdependencies' among them. While maybe an aberration from the standpoint of organizational theory, the complex structures and procedures of the most permanent of alliances may well reflect sound alliance theory.⁶ Meeting NATO's reform challenge in the run-up to the next summit will be determined to an important extent by the readiness of the allies to reach a new consensus that the political legitimacy of the Alliance remains robust and can be sustained successfully with a modernized but reduced institutional footprint.

5. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 'Afghanistan and NATO: The Way Forward.' Speech by the NATO Secretary General at the Atlantic Council of the United States, Washington DC: 28 September 2009.

6. See Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Reforming NATO: the record and the legacy

Reform during the Cold War

Discussion of NATO reform often ignores or masks the reality that, since its origins in 1949, the Alliance has been in a process of almost constant institutional change, the results and the implications of which still influence today's scope for reform.⁷ Part of this reform impetus has been motivated by the need to flesh out and adapt organizational arrangements in the absence of an original blueprint. Besides the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the only other body mentioned in the Washington Treaty that established the Alliance is a Defense Committee.⁸ This committee, composed of the defense ministers of the 12 original member nations, existed for only two years and was superseded in the discharge of its responsibilities by the NAC itself, meeting at ambassadorial and ministerial levels⁹ and, starting in 1957, at the level of heads of state and government as well.¹⁰ In 1963, the NAC at ambassadorial level decided that, in order to conduct NATO's new 'triennial' defense planning process with the necessary attention, it should constitute itself in 'Defense Planning Committee' (DPC).¹¹ In 1966, the Nuclear Defense Affairs Committee (NDAC) was established, as a body comparable to the DPC, but with responsibility for collective nuclear matters, with a Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) as a more exclusive deliberative body.¹² In other words, when the opportunity arose in the early 1960s, at the initiative of the Kennedy administration, to transform the governance of both conventional and nuclear defense in NATO – to make it better attuned to the political purpose and the collective nature of the Alliance, by shifting responsibility for it from the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) to the Secretary General – NATO was able to design the necessary institutional arrangements to reflect the intent of this transformation.

7. The best political, operational and institutional history of NATO during the Cold War remains Richard L. Kugler, *Commitment to Purpose: How Alliance Partnership Won the Cold War*. Santa Monica, California: The Rand Corporation, 1993.

8. Article 9 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

9. From 1951 to the early 1960s, NAC ministerial meetings brought together ministers of foreign affairs, economics and finance, and defense.

10. The first NATO summit took place in Paris in December 1957.

11. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the DPC was not created to accommodate France's withdrawal from the Alliance's collective defense planning process and integrated military structure in 1966 but, following France's decisions, the DPC became the distinct forum where defense matters in which France had decided to no longer participate were addressed by the other 14 allies at both ambassadorial and ministerial levels.

12. Rapidly, the NDAC became dormant and the NPG assumed its responsibilities, meeting at both ambassadorial and ministerial levels. Originally, whereas the NDAC was open to all the allies, only the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States were permanent members of the NPG. In 1979, all allies became permanent members. France has never been a member of either the NDAC or the NPG.

In 1968-70, 1977-79 and 1983-84, NATO also initiated long-term defense modernization programs, in the form of the *Allied Defense in the 1970s* (AD-70) program, the Long-Term Defense Program (LTDP) and the Conventional Defense Improvement (CDI) program, respectively. These initiatives aimed at overcoming the rigidities and shortcomings of the regular defense planning process and build a political constituency for enhancing allied conventional and nuclear forces in support of deterrence and defense. In the late 1970s, the NPG was seconded with two purpose-built committees, the High-Level Group and the Special Consultative Group, to reflect the Alliance's intent to proceed with the modernization of its longer-range theater nuclear forces, while, in parallel, seeking opportunities for negotiating with the Soviet Union a ban on this category of nuclear forces.

As with the Alliance's higher political structures, NATO's military structures were, from 1949 through 1989, in a process of almost continuous adaptation. In 1951-52, the Regional Planning Groups, established in 1949 to implement the initial strategic guidance issued by the Defense Committee, were superseded by three major NATO commands: Allied Command Europe (ACE), Atlantic (ACLANT) and Channel (ACCHAN). ACE, responsible for the collective defense of NATO Europe, from Norway to Turkey, included, at various times, three or four major subordinate commands¹³ and many lower principal subordinate commands, to accommodate changes in political and geo-strategic circumstances and operational necessities. The higher military structure between the three major NATO commands and the NAC also underwent institutional change: it evolved from a complex and, ultimately unsatisfactory, arrangement which combined a Military Committee (MC), representing the Chief of Defense Staff of each member nation, and a Standing Group that included only France, the United Kingdom and the United States, as the MC's executive agent, to a Military Committee vested with expanded responsibilities following the disbandment of the Standing Group in 1966.¹⁴

Reform after the Cold War

Since the end of the Cold War in 1989-1991, the Alliance's organization has undergone virtually uninterrupted adaptation, reflecting the enduring commitment of the allies to preserve a key role for the Alliance in the

13. AFNORTH, AFCENT and AFSOUTH, as well as, at different times, AFMED and UKAIR.

14. For details on these Cold War organizational changes, see a candid assessment by a former chairman of the NATO Military Committee in: Admiral of the Fleet Sir Peter Hill-Norton, *No Soft Options: The Political-Military Realities of NATO*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978, as well as NATO *Facts and Figures*. Brussels: NATO Information Service, 1978, p. 25-87.

The Alliance has experienced almost permanent adaptation since the Cold War

evolving security environment of the post-Cold War era,¹⁵ as well as NATO's inherent institutional adaptability (as explained earlier). NATO's commitment to a policy of engagement and cooperation with former adversaries and new partners led the NAC to establish, in both ambassadorial and ministerial configurations, dedicated bodies, such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (replaced in 1997 by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council), the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (superseded in 2002 by the NATO-Russia Council) and the NATO-Ukraine and NATO-Georgia Commissions, as well as specific formats to meet with Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative partner countries. Most higher-level NATO committees below the Council have adopted similar practices and expanded formats. Today, many of NATO's committee meetings and long-standing information-exchange and cooperative activities are conducted with the participation of interested partners and other non-NATO nations on a routine basis.

In the area of capability development, the model of special improvement programs of the 1970s and the 1980s (AD-70, LTDP, CDI) was replicated in the changed circumstances of the late 1990s and the early part of this decade through the pursuit, successively, of a Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI), launched at the Washington Summit in 1999, and the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) associated with the 2002 Prague Summit. DCI and PCC have aimed, in particular, at enhancing capabilities for conducting joint expeditionary operations, with commensurate investments in deployable forces, communications and information systems, logistics and medical support, as well as in strategic mobility assets, notably airlift.

From this wide-ranging and regular pattern of reform of NATO's structures and procedures, the following innovations since the end of the Cold War stand out:

(i) *NATO Headquarters in Brussels:*

(a) The establishment in 1993 of a high-level Senior Resource Board (SRB), with responsibility for providing consolidated advice to the Council on all military resource-related matters, and the creation in 2007 of an independent NATO Office of Resources to support the SRB, the Military Budget Committee and the Infrastructure Committee;

15. The best assessment of NATO following the end of the Cold War, although now dated, is David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998.

(b) The creation in 1994 of a Senior Political-Military Group and a Senior Defense Group on Proliferation to tackle the diplomatic and arms control, as well as the defense and military dimensions, respectively, of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, including their implications for NATO's deterrence policy, air-defense posture and response capabilities, and the creation in 2000 of a WMD Center to provide staff support and expertise on the subject;

(c) The establishment in 1997 of a Policy Coordination Group with a mandate to provide consolidated political-military advice to the Council, complementary to the advice provided by the NATO Military Authorities, on potential operational responses to an emerging crisis, as well as on the management of on-going operations;

(d) The establishment in 2003, as part of the International Staff, of a new Operations Division bringing together, under one roof, all staff elements dealing with crisis management, operations and consequence management – thereby establishing a single point of contact on operational matters for other international organizations – as well as of a new Public Diplomacy Division responsible for the policy and management aspects of NATO's strategic communications and for relations with the media; and

(e) The creation, within the International Military Staff, of a Cooperation and Regional Security Division with the task of developing guidelines for and managing military-to-military relations with non-NATO countries, whether they have a formal partnership with NATO or not, and the co-location with this division of the members of the International Staff dealing with the same matters, as a means to facilitate civil-military interaction and present an integrated NATO 'face' to the outside world.

(ii) NATO's military structures:

(f) Successive reforms of NATO's Command Structure in 1994, 1997, 2002 and 2008, resulting in a gradual reduction of the number of allied military headquarters from 65 at the end of the Cold War to 12 today;¹⁶

(g) As part of this reform process, the consolidation of NATO's three major Cold War operational commands – ACE, ACLANT and ACCHAN – into a single Allied Command Operations (ACO), with its head, SACEUR, exercising command over all NATO operations;

16. ACO includes SHAPE, 3 Joint Force Commands, 2 Force Commands, 2 Air Commands, 2 Maritime Commands and a Submarine Command. ACT only includes the Headquarters, SACT, at Norfolk, Virginia, USA.

(h) The creation in 2003, alongside ACO, of a second strategic command – Allied Command Transformation (ACT) – responsible for formulating guidance for the transformation of allied military forces and the development of new defense capabilities;

(i) Under ACT, the establishment of specialized entities in Greece, Norway, Poland and Portugal with defined responsibilities for training for maritime interdiction operations; doctrine development and battle staff training; joint tactical-level training, and lessons-learned collection and assessment;

(j) The creation of a dozen Centers of Excellence – autonomous from ACT institutionally, but ‘affiliated’ with ACT operationally – dedicated to the development or refinement of skills and capabilities in specialized areas, such as civil-military cooperation, cyber defense and defense against terrorism;

(k) The establishment, alongside the NATO Command Structure, of a NATO Force Structure comprising 14 multinational headquarters at high and lower readiness – nine land and five maritime – which, together with the army formations and ships affiliated with them, provide the land and maritime component commands of the multi-service NATO Response Force (NRF) created in 2002;¹⁷

(l) Under ACO, the creation in the United Kingdom of an Intelligence Fusion Centre designed to provide all-source intelligence in support of all NATO operations; and

(m) Within SHAPE, the establishment of a NATO Special Operations Forces (SOF) Coordination Center tasked with preparing Alliance SOF to participate in NATO operations.

(iii) NATO agencies:

(n) The adoption of customer-based funding for those NATO agencies that provide professional services rather than manage specialized armaments programs, and of unified best practices for all.

As suggested earlier, NATO has never been institutionally inert. Even during the Cold War, adaptation was the norm, rather than the excep-

17. The NRF's air component commands are provided by the NATO Command Structure or by individual allies. On the NRF, see Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, ‘From AMF to NRF: the roles of NATO's rapid reaction forces in deterrence, defence and crisis response, 1960-2009,’ *NATO Review*, special 60th anniversary issue, spring 2009, p. 32-37.

tion. The nature and number of organizational changes listed above provide compelling evidence of the scale and momentum of NATO's institutional reform since the end of the Cold War. In many ways, this pattern of nearly constant adaptation reflects the inherent dynamism of a diverse community of democracies coping with changing international circumstances.

How to make further NATO reform possible

The absence of an original institutional blueprint, however, means that, at least in theory, the opportunity to develop one has always existed, and partial adaptations, here and there, can be seen, in many cases, as sub-optimal solutions. The nexus between an ever-changing, and potentially more challenging, security environment, an enlarged range of core functions and supporting tasks, an expanding set of members and partners, and constrained resources, now raises, in a more fundamental way, the question of whether the time has come to look at NATO reform in a more deliberate and innovative way. This more ambitious approach should not be seen as placing the fundamental nature of the Alliance at risk, but, instead, as a necessary means to ensure its enduring vitality and relevance.

In order to be able to forge ahead on a sound political basis, NATO reform must leverage the golden opportunity that the elaboration of a new NATO Strategic Concept, until autumn 2010, represents. It is an opportunity to seek and achieve a better alignment between NATO's core purposes and associated functions and the Alliance's structures and procedures underpinning them. *NATO reform should reflect no less ambition than the new Strategic Concept.*

NATO's core purposes

Whereas it is too early to speculate on the precise scope and formulation of the Alliance's core purposes in the next Strategic Concept, the current Strategic Concept, approved in 1999, as well as Alliance practice, provide a sufficiently strong basis to hypothesize that the next one will confirm the following three core purposes:

- Deterrence, conflict prevention, the protection of *common* allied security interests and the collective defense of Alliance members
- The strengthening of Euro-Atlantic cooperation and stability
- Contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security

Combining *common* and *shared* security interests

And while the next Strategic Concept may bring subtle but important changes in the formulation of these three core purposes, it is also expected to bring innovation with regard to the readiness of the allies to assign to NATO the responsibility for advancing and protecting *shared* security interests. These are security interests – e.g., aspects of energy security, maritime security and homeland security – that may not warrant the extension and, if necessary, the execution of collective security guarantees, but where a recognized and defined NATO role would be formally agreed upon.

In addition, France's resumption of its full role in the Alliance offers the prospect of facilitating reform, including for achieving greater synergy and efficiency between NATO and the European Union. Last, but not least, the move of NATO headquarters to a new, modern building during the next decade represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to pursue organizational reform at this time.

Guiding principles for further reform

Against this background, consideration of institutional reform should start from a set of five basic guiding principles:

(a) **The Alliance must be fit to purpose and effective:** Organizationally, it must underpin allied political commitments and be able to execute, at all times, associated functions, missions and activities.

(b) **The Alliance must be united:** Institutional arrangements must reflect the indivisibility of Alliance security, strive to preserve and strengthen allied cohesion and solidarity, and promote unity of purpose. Hence, NATO structures and procedures must, as an overriding consideration, *federate* the interests, concerns, political will and military capabilities of all allies, so as to facilitate the attainment of consensus and the undertaking of common action.

(c) **The Alliance must be inclusive:** Wherever possible, structures and procedures should encourage and facilitate political dialogue, consultation, combined planning, training, exercising and operations between the allies and an increasing number of non-NATO nations, as well as between the Alliance and other international organizations, whether they have a formal partnership with NATO or not.

(d) **The Alliance must be efficient:** Organizational arrangements must strive to optimize the advantages of a permanent Alliance – for instance, by

ensuring that collective defense planning facilitates force generation in support of current and new operations – and enable the Alliance to help fulfil the requirements of individual allies, particularly those that could best be met on a multinational or collective basis. The pursuit of improved efficiency must aim at generating both tactical effect and strategic impact. Tactically, efficiency means that all Alliance processes and activities must strive to consume a lower level of resources. Strategically, efficiency means that the Alliance is more than the sum of its members. Great emphasis should be placed on those functions where NATO brings a distinct and recognized value-added and where it is a genuine enabler for the individual allies. This means that, *from the stand-point of operations, NATO must be a grand orchestrator in the generation of Alliance forces and assets, and from the stand-point of defense transformation and capability development, NATO must be a grand architect.*

(e) **The Alliance must remain distinct:** In the current and foreseeable security environment, NATO's greatest contribution to the security and welfare of its members, as well as to the maintenance of international peace and security, is its distinctive ability, as a political-military alliance, to deliver an unrivaled combination of political purpose and military capability. While NATO must spare no effort to embed itself in the wider web of international organizations cooperating in mutual ways under the banner of the Comprehensive Approach – because the desired end-state of today's complex civil-military engagements in crisis areas cannot be achieved by military means alone – the pursuit of this objective should not come at the expense of NATO's distinctive combination of hard power with a smart touch.

NATO's non-military dimension

NATO's 'building blocks'

Any reform endeavor must also consider that, organizationally, NATO is a complex architecture of six complementary 'building blocks.' Taken together, these provide the overall Alliance capability but, taken individually, they may not be as effective or efficient as they might be; they are not necessarily, organically or operationally, in full harmony with one another, and their internal components may not all be as necessary to NATO's future success as they were in the past:

- (i) At NATO Headquarters, a civil International Staff and an International Military Staff with, to a large extent, symmetrical structures;
- (ii) Approximately 350 committees and working groups meeting at NATO headquarters from several times a week to only twice a year, made

up of in-house as well as out-of-town committees, and of committees with a very senior membership, as well as lower-level expert groups;

(iii) Some 12 specialized NATO agencies responsible for either the management of a collective capability – such as air command and control, communications, and the provision of logistic support services – or the development of a particular weapon system;

(iv) The NATO Command Structure;

(v) The NATO Force Structure; and

(vi) The Centers of Excellence.

Furthermore, several allies host on their territory other national and multinational military headquarters and defense agencies. While these are not formally connected with NATO, they contribute indirectly to the Alliance's overall capability, but they also absorb human and budgetary resources, and should not be ignored in any assessment of NATO's own requirements, capabilities, effectiveness and efficiency.

Lastly, any new reform initiative must recognize that perhaps the greatest obstacle to change is the legacy of what NATO is today institutionally; that the constellation of staffs, committees, agencies and headquarters is the end result of hundreds of individual initiatives, compromises and consensus decisions spread out over 60 years. Yet, most allies would admit readily that emerging strategic necessities and current resource considerations make the maintenance of this sub-optimal institutional practice unsustainable financially and undesirable politically. Sooner rather than later, the setting of a more ambitious reform agenda and the achievement of a more streamlined organization are unavoidable. Identifying early for member nations *the aims, boundaries, stakes, options, trade-offs and expected benefits of reform* will go a long way in helping to bridge that gap.

Towards a more agile NATO

Against the construct of core purposes, reform principles and 'building-blocks' set out above, further NATO reform should aim at improving:

1. **NATO's capacity to anticipate and to react to crises:** Enhance the ability of the North Atlantic Council to consider, consult and decide upon the most important policy, diplomatic, operational, capability development and resource issues, and to act strategically, unconstrained by excessive attention to routine matters or technical detail.

2. **The quality, coherence and timelines of advice:** Elevate the status or respective roles of the five key policy committees around the NAC – the Military Committee, (Senior) Political Committee, Policy Coordination Group, Executive Working Group and Senior Resource Board in the provision of *concerted* advice and input to the Council, and better synchronize their individual work plans and align their agendas with the political agenda of the Council. These steps should help ensure that the intent and guidance from the Council are translated into well-designed and timely advice that reaches across NATO's military and civil bodies.

3. **NATO's non-military dimension:** Ensure that, when the allies decide to engage the Alliance operationally, it benefits from the civil expertise at the political level and capacity on the ground necessary to complete its mandate successfully, in concert with other international organizations and local actors; this may require the creation of a civil security committee or an analogous structure.¹⁸

4. **The organizational cohesion and internal synergy of NATO as a whole:** Orient not only NATO headquarters but a streamlined set of NATO bodies in and outside of Brussels, to deliver against a rolling set of strategic-level priorities, to enhance transparency, visibility and commonality of purpose across the Alliance. These priorities should be reviewed and approved every six months by the Council, ahead of the formal meetings of NATO defense ministers in June and NATO foreign ministers in December.

5. **The Alliance's operational capacity to act:** Streamline the NATO Command and Force Structures to ensure a better match between forces and command arrangements and between requirements and resources – including by reviewing the roles and contributions of NATO agencies and the Centers of Excellence, as well as of national and multinational military headquarters and defense agencies not currently connected with NATO.¹⁹

At the same time, future reform efforts should acknowledge that a range of activities undertaken by subordinate NATO committees will continue to fulfill the shared needs of only two or more allies, in such areas as armaments or logistics, rather than the collective requirement of all member nations. This is a legitimate function for NATO bodies, but its distinct purpose needs to be recognized as such, and structures and practices must

18. See David McGregor Pursley V, *NATO's organisational evolution: the case for a Civil Security Committee*. Rome: NATO Defense College, November 2008.

19. Together, these multinational arrangements amount to approximately 70 individual entities, in most cases each with its own facility.

accord with it. This may mean that interested allies and non-NATO nations may need to assume more of the administrative burden of supporting these worthwhile endeavors, in view of their narrower focus.

Lastly, in an Alliance as active and engaged as NATO is today, consultation has a distinct quality of its own and must lead to the formulation of political guidance at the highest level on a periodic basis. Accordingly, formal summit meetings, such as those held every 12 to 18 months – most recently in Riga (November 2006), Bucharest (April 2008) and Strasbourg/Kehl (April 2009) – should be complemented with more frequent informal summit meetings of no more than a day in duration, focused on just a couple of issues of the highest importance, with a special priority accorded to operations and to arms-control issues.

At the end of the day, NATO reform must choose one of two paths: the time-tested approach of proceeding through carefully calibrated reform measures with limited scope but with sufficient impact that they meet, in most cases, the political, operational or resource requirement at hand, while preserving, on the whole, the overall consensus on the construct as a whole; or a riskier, untested, but more ambitious attempt at grand institutional design truly aimed at modernizing NATO in a way compatible with the requirements of the 21st century and the vision to be set out in the next Strategic Concept.



KEYWORDS

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NATO
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