

NATO's New Strategic Concept - Why? How?

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).

Why does NATO need a new Strategic Concept?

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.

How would a Strategic Concept be developed?

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 this special web module run by NATO's Public Diplomacy Division.

The Group of Experts will begin its work in early September and will divide its activities into two phases. The first phase, to run from September to mid-February,

will be devoted to engaging the broader strategic community and policy makers in a dialogue on the challenges facing the Alliance. It will be called the reflection phase and will be organised around a series of four seminars devoted to different topics of relevance to the new Strategic Concept which will be held in NATO countries.

The second phase will involve the Group of Experts travelling to each NATO capital to present the results of the Group's internal deliberations and preliminary conclusions directly to NATO governments with a view to receiving initial comment and feedback. This will be known as the consultation phase.

The Group of Experts will meet periodically with the Secretary General, who has overall authority over the Group's work, and with the North Atlantic Council and other stakeholders at NATO Headquarters. The Group of Experts will also meet in private session to advance its own thinking.

After the completion of the reflection and consultation phases the work of the Group of Experts will be finished. The Secretary General will take the process forward by presenting his report, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the Group of Experts, to the Allies. On the basis of the reactions and political guidance that he receives from Allies, the Secretary General will then prepare the first draft of the new Strategic Concept for negotiation among Allies during the late summer and autumn 2010 and in the run-up to the next NATO Summit.

Once the text has been approved by Heads of State and Government at this Summit it will henceforth become NATO's new Strategic Concept.

Source: <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/what-is-strategic-concept.html>

NATO Releases Report on the New Strategic Concept from the Group of Experts

Jorge Benitez | May 17, 2010

From Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO: I have been looking very much forward to this day, the presentation of the Report on the New Strategic Concept from the Group of Experts under leadership of Secretary Albright.

This Report is not the Strategic Concept itself, but it is a very important first step in preparing the new Concept. The Report is now on our website, and I'm sure it will stimulate quite some discussion. I will follow the debate closely, and take both the Report and the discussion into account when I prepare the first draft of the Strategic Concept itself, as you know it which will be approved by Heads of State and Government in Lisbon this November.

"[L]et me touch briefly for you some of what I consider to be some of the highlights. First: the report confirms that NATO's foundations are as important as ever, and should only be reinforced: the transatlantic link; the commitment to collective defence; the openness to new members. NATO's core purpose was, is, and will remain to provide for the security of its members.

But the Report is equally clear that, these days, providing for the security of our members means doing many things differently. Among many important points: It means taking on new challenges, such as cyber-attacks and missile attacks. It means broadening our political consultations within NATO, and making fuller use of Article 4 of the Washington Treaty.

It means engaging much more intensely and more broadly with global partners. As the Report says, Partnerships will be a central part of our daily work. I fully agree. In the execution of operations it means a comprehensive approach that combines military and civilian elements. These are the lessons learnt from Afghanistan. It means working for a real partnership with Russia – based on shared interests and reciprocity.

And it means reforming this organisation. The Report is very clear that NATO reform is not just a nice slogan; it is essential. And I fully share this view.

Excerpts from remarks by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at joint press conference with Madeleine Albright.

Source: <http://www.acus.org/natosource/nato-releases-report-new-strategic-concept-group-experts>



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Albright Presents Strategic Concept For NATO's Next Decade

by *Nikola Krastev*

NEW YORK -- For years, global policy-watchers have speculated on the direction NATO will take as Cold War-era divisions give way to a new range of 21st century alliances and security concerns.

This week, former U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright and a group of foreign policy experts addressed that issue in a new report titled "**NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement.**"

Albright, speaking on May 27 at the Council on Foreign Relations, a New York-based think tank, outlined a new strategic concept for NATO. Her remarks addressed the question on many minds: Is there a place in the alliance for Russia?

Russia views the expansion of NATO, particularly into Eastern and Central Europe, as one of the major threats to its own security. But Albright said no one should be excluded from NATO -- not even Russia.

"The question is whether they want to be members of NATO," Albright said. "I think that you have to want to be members, you also have to be a functioning democracy, and you have to make sure that there are not a variety of conflicts that are brought into the alliance. I think that's one of the big deals when new countries in Central and Eastern Europe came in. There were some of their conflicts that have been endemic -- the Romanian-Hungarian, various conflicts that they had to deal with."

The group of experts assigned high priority to cooperation between NATO and Russia, including the continued revival of the NATO-Russia Council, which recently resumed work after an angry break following the Russia-Georgia war in 2008.

"The NATO-Russia Council provides a very good way to have dialogue," Albright said. "We felt that there were things that we should work on in common: counterterrorism, drug trafficking, climate. A variety of issues that we had in common. And specifically, in this report, we suggested there'll be work together on missile defense."

Lessons From Afghanistan

Some of the discussion focused on NATO's changing role and what can be learned from Afghanistan. The ongoing NATO operations in Afghanistan, launched after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, were the first major military test for NATO far from home. Albright said in this way, Afghanistan has clearly proven a major lesson for the alliance as it struggles to secure its footing in the 21st century.

"There were people who said, 'Well, Afghanistan is the ultimate test for NATO and whatever happens in Afghanistan will affect NATO forever.' We didn't want to go down that road. We wanted to look at it as a lesson," Albright said.

Albright also discussed NATO's membership prospects, including the two likeliest candidates for membership, Georgia and Ukraine. Both countries have tailored partnership structures with the alliance in the form of NATO-Georgia and NATO-Ukraine commissions.

But those mechanisms have not always been sufficient. NATO, Albright said, acknowledges the failure of the partnership structure in the case of Georgia, where NATO ties did not prevent an outbreak of hostilities with Russia in 2008.

Georgia is still apparently eager to join the alliance. But Ukraine has increasingly turned its back on NATO, with its new president, pro-Moscow leader Viktor Yanukovich, announcing the country's erstwhile NATO aims are now officially off the table.

"The [2008 NATO] Bucharest conference [said that Georgia and Ukraine] would be members of NATO. And what you have is people in Ukraine, or a government of Ukraine, that doesn't want to be in NATO," Albright said. "And one of the things that we actually had a hard time persuading the Russians about is that NATO is a voluntary organization."

Despite the problematic situations in Georgia and Ukraine, Albright said, the experts group recommends that the channels of communications with those countries be maintained.

"What we did was to say that the NATO-Ukraine Commission and the NATO-Georgia Commission should continue to operate as a channel of communication no matter what the future showed, because there were ways that we needed to work with those two countries. So the structure would remain," Albright said.

Above all, Albright said that aspirant countries must understand that membership in NATO is not only a privilege but a responsibility. She pointed to the fact that even existing member states have failed to honor their financial obligations to the military alliance.

"One of the things that are supposed to happen with NATO is that each of the countries needs to give two percent of its GDP to NATO. Only six out of the 28 countries do it," she noted.

Source:

http://www.rferl.org/content/Albright_Presents_Strategic_Concept_For_NATOs_Next_Decade/2055739.html

euobserver.com

Nato strategy to look at EU relations, says Albright

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EUOBSERVER / BRUSSELS – Relations between the EU and Nato are to be included in the new strategic concept for the military alliance currently being developed by a group of experts led by former US secretary of state Madeleine Albright.

"We need to maximise collaboration with the EU and make more use of political consultation," Ms Albright told MEPs in Brussels during a special hearing on Wednesday (27 January).

Ms Albright was the US' foreign policy supremo during 1997-2001 when Nato launched its first military action in the former Yugoslavia. The 72-year old has now been appointed to chair an expert panel tasked to advise Nato secretary general Anders Fogh Rasmussen on an updated "strategic concept" for the military alliance.

The document will outline new security threats ranging from cyberattacks to terrorism and energy security and the way the military alliance, founded during the Cold War to protect Europe from a potential Soviet invasion, can respond.

"With 20 plus members, Nato can be slow and caught flat-footed by change," Ms Albright argued, highlighting "internal complacency" as a major threat.

She said the founding principle of the alliance – the military defence of its members in case of an armed attack – would remain at the centre of the organisation.

But the alliance had to take into account new threats and its own enlargement to 28 members since the last strategic concept, dating back to 1999.

In addition, Nato must take into account the EU's own expansion and its military and civilian missions abroad.

In this era of "scarce resources," when national coffers are near empty and military budgets have been slashed, avoiding duplication between Nato and the EU is of particular importance, Ms Albright argued.

For their part, MEPs called for a clear division of labour and more co-ordination between the two organisations.

Polish centre-right MEP Jacek Saryusz Wolski, in charge of EU-Nato relations, said he was struck how the two institutions were working in "totally separate worlds," despite having the same concerns and roughly the same armies and citizens, on the European side.

Of the EU's 27 members, only Austria, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Malta and Cyprus are not part of the military alliance.

At the same time, Mr Saryusz-Wolski identified converging trends as Nato looks to developing a "soft," civilian side in Afghanistan, while the EU is going for increased military capabilities within its foreign and security policy.

"If the two are going more towards each other, the question arises how to make their roles complementary and avoid overlapping," he said.

UK Liberal MEP Andrew Duff asked Ms Albright if she was worried about the possibility of a "core group" of military-capable states establishing their own club within the EU – a provision enshrined in the bloc's new legal framework, the Lisbon Treaty.

Ms Albright kept her remarks general and pointed out that her team's work was still ongoing. A draft concept is to be issued by Nato's secretary general in time for the November summit in Lisbon, when Nato leaders are meant to adopt the final document.

Source: <http://euobserver.com/9/29358?print=1>