

WHAT IS NEXT FOR NATO?

Throughout the last 65 years of NATO history, the focus of the Alliance has evolved and adapted to its geopolitical environment; this is no different today. NATO's strength and capabilities are inherently based on forming, sustaining, equipping, and training an adaptive force where the only constant in the geopolitical terrain is change. The security climate in locations such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, Africa, and the Balkans continues to shift and evolve around us, demanding our constant vigilance. The Alliance was formed because the whole was greater than the sum of our parts. The consistent factor is the enhanced security each nation receives from being a member of the Alliance. Turkey has been a stalwart ally, and there is no question of the Alliance's commitment to the security of Turkey.

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*“To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.”
- Winston Churchill*

Founded on the bedrock values of democracy and individual liberty, NATO was created, has expanded, and is honed to be the vigilant guard, the watchful eye, and the shield of our nations. In order to fulfill this duty fully we must embrace another consistent feature in NATO: Change.

As 2014 gets underway, the NATO alliance is once again at the cusp of a new era, one in which the bulk of the Alliance’s focus will turn from the deployments in Afghanistan to enhancing our training and readiness to take on the full spectrum of security challenges to come.

Today, more than 60,000 men and women are deployed in three continents in support of NATO-led operations. These efforts, which span from patrolling against piracy off the coast of Africa to providing advice to military and civilian administrators in Afghanistan, are as varied as the challenges that fill today’s security environment. The security climate in locations

such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, Africa, and the Balkans continues to shift and evolve around us, demanding our constant vigilance. We cannot stand by and take for granted our past success, hard-earned interoperability and combat-forged partnerships. We must remain prepared to counter the next threat, to assist with the next humanitarian disaster, or respond to the next request for support from our Allies.

Throughout the last 65 years of NATO history, the focus of the Alliance has evolved and adapted to its geopolitical environment; this is no different today. Keeping pace with emerging security challenges around the globe and identifying and mitigating any threats –before they have to be solved with military force– remains a priority. As reflected in the 2010 Strategic Concept, the Alliance will continue to prepare its forces to engage threats and respond to crises, not only as they emerge but throughout the entire developmental process.



Through diplomacy and military-to-military exchanges in peacetime, NATO friends and partners are regularly engaged in an ongoing dialogue with each other and with those who might affect our security. The success of these communication efforts, however, is dependent upon the credible availability of trained and ready military assets. This is why it is so important that we continue to focus on maintaining the interoperability and high standards of our training and our equipment. When our political leaders in NATO decide to call for military support, they must be assured that the alliance has the capabilities needed to achieve success.

This focus on readiness is not a new idea for our militaries; in fact it's quite familiar. The NATO Response Force, for example, has been operationally capable since 2004. This force demonstrates our operational readiness and acts as a "test bed" for Alliance Transformation. It can be used as a vehicle for greater cooperation in education and training, increased exercises and better use of technology. With the unprecedented number of NATO troops in our ranks who have completed operational deployments for so long, we have a golden opportunity to leverage this experience to design and conduct the most challenging individual and collective training.

Nearly 14 years of intense combat operations in Afghanistan have refined the interoperability of the Alliance to levels never experienced before. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission has required an unparalleled sharing of joint operational and strategic tactics, techniques, and procedures between our militaries. This sharing has greatly informed our approach to the training and equipping challenges of NATO with the Connected Forces Initiative, which stresses interoperability of both equipment and training, and the Smart Defense effort, which seeks ways to leverage military resources more efficiently. The ISAF mission has made the alliance stronger, both militarily and politically, with all Allies demonstrating their commitment to forces that are more interoperable, versatile, and deployable than ever.

So, what's next for NATO?

Completing the ISAF Mission in Afghanistan

Over the course of this year, NATO will end its ISAF mission and prepare for Resolute Support, the proposed "train, advise, and assist" mission in Afghanistan, continue to support the Afghan National Security Force to better sustain its members after 2014 as they assume full responsibility for their own country's security. The sacrifices and achievements of our ISAF troops, alongside those of the Afghan

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forces, have been too many to list here. For more than a decade, ISAF carried out its responsibilities – assisting the Afghan authorities in maintaining security and developing new Afghan Security Forces. This is what we set out to accomplish as requested by the Afghan government and with the mandate of the United Nations. Our many nations’ combined troops have made an unprecedented investment in Afghanistan and we have honored that commitment.

We can be proud of what we have accomplished in Afghanistan. We have made sure that Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for international terrorists who can attack our member countries. Thanks to the work of ISAF and the strong Afghan forces they have trained, Afghanistan has come a long way over the past decade. Today, more than 70 percent of Afghans have mobile phones connecting them to the rest of the country and the modern world. There are more than 30,000 km of new roads that foster trade. There are more than seven million children in school (three million female), up from one million with nearly no girls. There are now more than 250 media outlets up and running across the country. This progress is very encouraging, and it is part of the reason that I am optimistic about Afghanistan’s future.

But there is still some way to go before Afghanistan will be fully able to deliver stability to its people and sustain its security forces over the long-term. The international community has made clear its commitment to supporting and sustaining the Afghan security forces after 2014. It is also clear that the Afghan government must fulfill its commitments. With our support, Afghanistan has a strong foundation to build a secure future, but it is ultimately up to the Afghans to achieve that success.

Shifting from Deployed to Ready

As we’ve seen throughout the numerous transitions and shifts of focus in our history, NATO will continue to evolve to meet the demands for a capable and flexible Alliance to take on current and emerging threats as needed. Therefore we plan to increase the size, complexity and frequency of our exercises and will place further emphasis on the training and education of our troops.

We have already taken initial steps to ensure we maintain our hard-earned strategic and operational capabilities. In November, we held NATO's largest live-fire exercise in nearly a decade called Steadfast Jazz, which incorporated over 6,000 troops from 28 NATO nations and three partner-nations. In one single exercise, Steadfast Jazz demonstrated skills learned from operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia, Libya, and maritime and peace-keeping operations. We will continue in future exercises to tie NATO forces together, to maintain our exceptional level of interoperability while testing the command and control elements necessary to succeed across the spectrum of conflict.

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Building and Developing our Partnerships

In addition to certifying the NATO Response Force, an important aspect of the Steadfast Jazz exercise was that it was transparent and open to our many partner nations. This is an area in which we will continue to seek opportunities for growth in the future, as NATO seeks to increase security first and foremost through cooperation and building relationships.



This type of relationship-building was exemplified during Steadfast Jazz when our troops hosted a number of military observers from Russia, shortly after a number of our NATO military observers had attended part of a Russian exercise called Zapad 2013. While it is well known that NATO has different views with Russia in certain areas such as missile defense, there are many other areas in which we are working together in order to achieve the goals set out at the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) summit in Lisbon in 2010. The desire, as restated by Allied leaders at the Chicago Summit in May 2012, is to see a truly strategic partnership between NATO and Russia to build trust, reciprocal transparency, and predictability.

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To this end, we have cooperatively worked in several key areas over the past few years. First, Russia has supported ISAF by approving the transport of nonmilitary equipment through its territory as well as contributing to the NRC helicopter maintenance trust fund, which helps the ANSF keep its helicopter fleet flying. Russia also participates in the support of training to help counter the threats posed by trafficking in Afghan narcotics. In combating terrorism, Russia and NATO have cooperated in several areas by conducting table top exercises, establishing a rapid communication channel to warn about hijacked aircraft, and even jointly developing explosive device detection technology.

Though it is clear that there will likely continue to be areas of policy differences between NATO and Russia, it is also clear that the progress made thus far encourages us to redouble our efforts to find areas of cooperation as we move forward.

Turkey’s Role in the Alliance

As we look toward the future, the Alliance will rely on its members, partners and friends to anticipate and respond appropriately to the shifts in military and economic power across the globe. Since 1952, Turkey has stood at the nexus of many of these power shifts as a staunch member of the NATO alliance, playing a crucial role in NATO efforts to build dialogue with North Africa and the Middle East through the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

Turkey, notably, has been the home of the NATO Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism (COE-DAT) since 2005, providing a vibrant and effective hub for the best practices and current thinking in this area.

But Turkey, like all NATO nations faces more threats than just terrorism. These include the threat of ballistic missiles, which must be countered with modern interoperable defenses on both land and sea. Turkey also must contend with cyber threats, which also defy borders and threaten all countries. Experts in cyber security from across NATO countries travel regularly to share best practices on protecting our networks, as seen during a recent conference in Ankara.

The consistent factor that cuts across all of these threats is the enhanced security each nation receives from being a member of the Alliance. And Turkey has been a stalwart ally. Supporting every major NATO operation over the last 20 years –including IFOR/SFOR in Bosnia KFOR in Kosovo, Operation Active Endeavor (NATO’s Article 5 counter-terrorism operation), Operation Ocean Shield (NATO Counter Piracy), ISAF in Afghanistan, and Operation Unified Protector– there is no question of Turkey’s commitment to the security interests of the Alliance.

There is also no question of the Alliance’s commitment to the security of Turkey, perhaps most clearly demonstrated along Turkey’s southern border with Syria. Exhibiting the essence of collective security and deterrence, NATO responded to Turkey’s request for a Patriot antimissile capability to augment its air defense systems in December 2012. Since that time, the U.S., Germany, and the Netherlands have provided support in protecting Turkish citizens from the threat of Syrian ballistic missiles.

With its rich history of strength and commitment, Turkey will continue to emerge as a leader in NATO as we move into the future. But just as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk understood the importance to society of embracing change in his principle of reformism, so too does NATO understand the need for adaptability to stay strong and relevant well into the 21st century.

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terrain is change. We have not forgotten that the Alliance was formed because our whole was greater than the sum of our parts.

Our environment will change, but our bedrock of democracy, shared values, dedication to securing our Allies, and commitment to defend our liberty will remain solidly in place as we look toward the horizon.