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GENERAL REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION1

II. OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN1

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SUPPORT.....4

IV. NATO’S GEOGRAPHIC REACH AND PARTNERSHIPS.....5

V. CAPABILITIES OF NATO MEMBER COUNTRIES7

VI. ENLARGEMENT OF THE ALLIANCE8

VII. RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA.....9

VIII. THE WAY AHEAD10

IX. CONCLUSIONS.....12

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In recent years NATO Allies had to tackle a number of issues that have challenged the cohesion of the Alliance. The new Strategic Concept of the Alliance which is currently being updated will be an important document that will map out NATO's strategic direction for the future and reaffirm the commitment of the Allies to each others security. However, it remains a document that reflects the least common denominator among the Allies. Thus, how NATO, as an alliance, will develop will depend to a large degree on how the member States will interpret and implement the Strategic Concept in an operational context. This report presents a compilation of the issues of the last five years that have tested the Alliance. A good part of the shortcomings in Afghanistan are now being addressed and Alliance cohesion has considerably improved. Nonetheless, other issues have meanwhile arisen. Taking stock of the lessons learned allows NATO Allies to look forward and enable the Alliance to meet current and future security threats.

II. OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

2. Afghanistan is NATO's most important operation. Afghanistan remains a considerable military, as well as political, challenge for the Allies and for NATO as an organisation. It is the litmus test for Alliance cohesion and for the ability of NATO Allies to generate the political will to counter threats to their security that emanate from beyond the Euro-Atlantic region.

3. Afghanistan has highlighted the issue of Alliance solidarity, as manifested in discussions about risk sharing among NATO member States. In the early days certain NATO Members felt they were in the more volatile and dangerous regions. They have repeatedly pointed out that other Allies are failing to carry their "fair share" of burdens and risks insofar as they have not been forthcoming in the provision of forces in southern Afghanistan while continuing to resist calls by NATO to do so. Only after repeated appeals have other Allies deployed combat forces to assist the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

4. In contrast, countries reluctant to deploy troops in the more insecure parts of Afghanistan have rejected such criticisms, pointing out that the deployment of national contingents is the result of an earlier (political) agreement among NATO Allies. The issue has somewhat subsided, as the security situation has become more fragile in the previously more secure parts of Afghanistan and as Allies have increased their military contributions. Other Allies which have already withdrawn or have announced to withdraw their troops in the near future have signaled that they will continue their assistance by other means, including increased assistance in reconstruction and development. However, that reconstruction and development efforts can only succeed if there is security on the ground.

5. As national military contingents have been operating under different rules of engagement, the effectiveness of ISAF in Afghanistan has been severely constrained by 'national caveats' – operational restrictions imposed by individual member States on their armed forces deployed in the country. These caveats have limited the ability of NATO commanders to deal with the broadest spectrum of operations, from peacekeeping to counter-insurgency operations. Though some progress has been made over time in persuading NATO members to reduce or abandon existing national caveats and adopt more flexible rules of engagement, they continue to limit the effectiveness of NATO forces in Afghanistan.

6. Allies have also differed about the nature of the engagement in Afghanistan and as to the right mix of military and non-military instruments required for the country's successful transformation. There are ongoing debates over the proper balance between combat and reconstruction missions among Allies and within Allied nations. Some governments, especially the US, emphasise the need for NATO forces to be prepared for combat operations and have

considered that ISAF must be able and willing to undertake the full gamut of operations, ranging from peacekeeping to combat operations against the Taliban and other armed groups. Other Allies had originally considered the mission in Afghanistan as predominantly a non-military one. Thus, they saw ISAF primarily as a peacekeeping operation with no, or only very little combat operations and have been reluctant to commit their troops to counter-insurgency operations.

7. These different approaches to the mission in Afghanistan have weakened the cohesion among NATO Allies. One independent commentator suggested to the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships Members in October 2009 that European militaries have become “de facto peacekeeping forces and have only limited war fighting capabilities”. A former senior US military commander bemoaned that a number of mid-level American officers no longer regard their Allied comrades as equal and the acronym “ISAF” is now dubbed “I saw Americans Fight”. While this view is clearly exaggerated, it nonetheless points to a crisis of confidence among NATO forces, which can have a serious negative impact on the Alliance as a whole.

8. With approximately 41,500 ISAF troops, in addition to US troops serving independently of the Alliance, the US remains by far the most important troop contributor. The UK and Germany, the second and third largest troop providers, account for slightly under 10,000 troops and 4,500 troops on the ground, respectively. Moreover, not all troops deployed to Afghanistan have been trained for combat operations and most of the troops provided by non-US countries are non-combatant training units.

9. More generally, although NATO member nations continue the transformation of their armies into leaner, more flexible and more mobile forces, the process of modernising the “static” armies of the Cold War is time consuming and still continuing. Budgetary constraints and different political priorities in NATO member nations have also slowed down the process. What is more, some NATO member nations also lack the historic experience of expeditionary forces.

10. Indeed, NATO’s greatest and continuing challenge in Afghanistan has been obtaining commitments — mostly in the form of troops, but also logistics, equipment, and financial contributions — from the member States. Commitments have all too often been provided in a piecemeal manner. When US President Barack Obama asked the Allies to provide 10,000 additional troops to supplement the American troop increase of 30,000 only a few NATO member countries followed suit, and those who did provided only limited increases.

11. In addition to not providing the necessary military forces, NATO nations have also fallen short on new commitments of troops to train the Afghan army and police force, as well as civilian experts to help the establishment of fledgling institutions. Efforts to train the Afghan National Police (ANP) have been underfinanced and understaffed. Likewise, the legal system remains very weak because few capable lawyers and attorneys have been trained. Overall, the development of a professional judicial system has lagged because of insufficient financial assistance and technical expertise. Furthermore, there has been very little progress towards a consensus on how to address the growth of poppy production in Afghanistan. NATO Allies could not agree upon whether or not ISAF forces should play a role in poppy destruction. The ANP, which is responsible for destroying poppy fields and opium laboratories, remains riddled with problems. In contrast, the training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) has been far more successful; however, problems remain, including drug abuse, a lack of discipline and military know-how and a disregard for the protection of the population. In addition, there is still a shortage of trainers. According to General William Caldwell, Commander of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, who addressed NATO’s Military Committee in late September 2010 approximately 1,000 specialised trainers are needed for the mission in Afghanistan to be a success.

12. It is regrettable that it has taken almost nine years - and several revisions of the Alliance’s strategy in Afghanistan - before real, tangible progress started to be made. From the outset,

NATO's military footprint had been too small to secure Afghanistan. The situation in Afghanistan and the intensity of the current insurgency is the direct consequence of the failure of the US-led coalition to seize the opportunity to secure and stabilise Afghanistan after the quick victory over the Taliban in late 2001. The lack of a firm and shared international commitment to Afghanistan, the limited number of troops on the ground, as well as insufficient financial resources and delays in distributing them left a political vacuum which allowed the Taliban to regroup.

13. This early failure can partly be traced back to the Iraq war, which diluted the focus on Afghanistan. The preoccupation with the war in Iraq prevented Afghanistan from receiving the attention and resources that were needed to rebuild the country's infrastructure and society. Failing to take advantage of a sweeping desire among Afghans for help from outside, the US and its Allies deployed only 8,000 troops, primarily US troops, in a combat role in early 2002. During the first 18 months of the intervention, the US-led coalition deployed no peacekeepers outside Kabul, leaving the security of provinces like Helmand to local Afghans.

14. In 2003, the Iraq war was the most divisive issue in the NATO Alliance in recent history. In the public's perception at least, the rift among NATO Allies over the war in Iraq threatened to undermine the unity of NATO itself as reflected by former US Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld's remark that the 'mission determines the coalition'. On the political level, the Iraq war complicated policy co-ordination among the Allies, as some governments were reluctant to follow the leadership of the Bush Administration. Moreover, the detention policy came under intense criticism, which was heightened by the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. The negative impact on the reputation of the US administration increased the general scepticism regarding the rationale for the "War on Terror".

15. The January 2010 Afghanistan conference in London managed to establish a clear strategy for operations in Afghanistan. This strategy draws on three main points. The first is *military transition*: the US and other Allies and partners have agreed to transfer control of the first provinces to Afghan national authorities by the end of 2010, and of the whole country within five years. The Afghan army and police will thus be expanded to reach, respectively, 171,600 and 134,000 personnel by October 2011. The second point is *civilian transition*, as reflected in the appointment of Mark Sedwill, previously the British Ambassador to Afghanistan, as NATO's Senior Civilian Representative. The *civilian transition* will draw upon a "civilian surge", i.e. an increase of civilian experts on the ground in Afghanistan who will support governance and economic development. The *civilian transition* will also allow development assistance to be increasingly channelled through the Afghan government as well. Measures shall be taken to tackle corruption, including the creation of an independent Office of High Oversight and an international Monitoring and Evaluating Mission. The third point is *reconciliation and reintegration*. Money from an international fund will be used to provide former militants, who have renounced violence and given up links with al Qaeda, with alternative careers and land¹.

16. NATO and its partners are on the right track after the London Conference. It is now crucial to implement the ambitious policies presented in late January 2010. Only then will it be possible to pass on leadership to the Afghan people, via military and civilian transition, as well as through reconciliation and reintegration.

¹ "Afghanistan : the London Conference", UK Government website, <http://afghanistan.hmg.gov.uk/en/conference/>

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SUPPORT

17. NATO's commitment to the Afghanistan operation has been affected by dwindling political support throughout the member countries.

18. In the Netherlands, the government collapsed in February 2010 after the ruling coalition failed to reconcile deep divisions within the cabinet that had emerged over the demand to again extend military operations in Afghanistan. While the Dutch pullout from Afghanistan may not have an imminent effect on the commitments of other Allies, it is likely to increase the debate in many countries about timetables and exit strategies. Although most NATO members have renewed their current commitments to Afghanistan, the medium and long-term commitment is unclear. In some countries, calls for the withdrawal of troops are becoming louder.

19. According to the "Transatlantic Trends" survey, published by the German Marshall Fund (GMF) in September 2010, European countries are less optimistic about the possibility of success in Afghanistan than the US. In the US 51% of the population is optimistic about stabilising the situation in Afghanistan while only 23% of Europeans feel the same way. Both of these percentages are decreasing. US optimism is down by 5% and EU optimism has decreased by 9% since 2009. As the GMF survey revealed, more than half of West Europeans want to see their troops being withdrawn from or reduced in Afghanistan with Poland being highest on the scale (77%) and Turkey lowest (with 47%). Support for NATO's operation in Afghanistan has also started to decrease in the United States where 41% wish their troops to come home or to be substantially reduced. "Transatlantic Trends" survey also showed that majorities (59%) in 11 European countries and the United States (60%) still believe that NATO is essential for their security. The exception is Turkey, where only 30% believe NATO is essential. Pluralities in both the US and other NATO countries believe that they should continue to be active in international affairs and they support the Alliance. Sixty-two percent of the 11 European nations would also support a NATO role outside Europe, whereas 32% prefer NATO to focus on Europe itself. In the US, support is much larger with 77% saying that NATO should act outside Europe, if necessary. However, while the general appreciation of NATO is encouraging, continued public support for NATO cannot be taken for granted. NATO Member governments must better explain NATO's relevancy in the 21st century to their citizens. National and international surveys demonstrate clearly that the public at large, and particularly the post-Cold-War generation, has only a very vague, if any, knowledge of NATO and its missions. Others question the need to invest in defence after the end of the Cold War or view NATO primarily as a protector against Russia. Many people have difficulties relating NATO to the new global security threats (particularly as other actors, such as the EU, have become engaged in the security field. Structures are complicated and it is difficult for the layman to understand the differences between, for example, the efforts of the EU, NATO, and the UN in Afghanistan.

20. It would appear that Allied governments have not explained well enough the compelling national security reasons to remain in Afghanistan. Many citizens do not believe that Afghanistan poses a direct threat to their security and they therefore increasingly question the rationale for NATO's military engagement. Also, government narratives have changed over time and differed among Member countries. Over the last nine years, publics in some NATO countries have believed that they are in Afghanistan to fight al Qaeda, others believed that it was to develop or rebuild the country, some believed that it was a stability operation. Some NATO countries viewed engagement in Afghanistan as full combat, and others still believe that it is to institute Western values in the society. Public diplomacy was not made easier when the strategy on the ground - and the role of ISAF - has been continually changing since 2001. Moreover, the swift collapse of Taliban rule over Afghanistan and the lack of knowledge of the country's complexities led to overoptimistic expectations of what can be achieved. Governments, international organisations and NGOs thought that it was possible to rebuild the country in a relatively short term. As

progress has been piecemeal and the international community's engagement in Afghanistan experienced setbacks, criticism of the mission has increased.

21. The opposition in NATO member countries also stems in part from budget realities recently magnified by the global financial and economic crisis which has had a severe impact on all member governments' budgets. The additional costs of the recently expanded operations also play a role in generating resistance against the continuation of the mission. The financial costs of the engagement are increasingly questioned, particularly as stories about waste and corruption by the Afghan government increase. The proliferation of new international actors, including NGOs, corporations, and the arrival of global digital and real-time technologies has made public diplomacy more difficult for governments and organisations such as NATO. Governments are competing with other information sources; in the digital age, top-down communication patterns are increasingly being replaced by people-to-people and peer-to-peer relationships and networks. NATO Headquarters in Brussels has responded to the challenge by increasingly using new media tools, the internet, and social networks, but its resources are very limited.

IV. NATO'S GEOGRAPHIC REACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

22. NATO's engagement in Afghanistan is also both a catalyst and a test for NATO's adaptation to a changing security environment. There is broad agreement that NATO needs to be ready to meet today's security challenges emanating from internationally active terrorist groups, maritime piracy, cyber security and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery. There is also an understanding that NATO needs to address security challenges which emanate from outside the Euro-Atlantic region. The Strategic Concept which is currently being discussed is expected to address these issues. However, whether NATO will be willing to engage in future operations like Afghanistan remains uncertain. Some Allies are more cautious about advocating a more global approach for the Alliance. They argue that NATO is already stretched beyond its capabilities and do not want the Alliance run the risk of becoming a "global intervention force". Rather than engaging in operations far outside the Euro-Atlantic region the Alliance should focus on its core function, that is, providing security and stability in the geographic Euro-Atlantic region.

23. Some argue that only the UN has the mandate to address global security issues and that a more globally active role for NATO would risk deteriorating relations, or even generate new conflicts with other international actors.

24. As security is today defined in broader terms that include non-military security issues, NATO Allies agree that there is a need for closer co-operation with other international actors, particularly with the European Union. Closer co-operation between NATO and the EU is essential for developing a "comprehensive approach" to crisis management and operations, which requires the effective application of both military and civilian means.

25. The European Union is increasingly a credible and relevant actor in crisis management: it is now engaged in the Balkans as well as in Afghanistan, the South Caucasus and off the Somali coast to prevent piracy. As well, the EU may use NATO command capabilities under the Berlin Plus framework. Operation *Concordia* in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia² and EUFOR-Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina are both European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) missions that have taken over NATO operations. The success of these missions prove that the Berlin Plus mechanism works well.

² Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

26. Nevertheless, there is significant room for enhanced co-operation in these regions. Non-EU NATO member states have criticised the belated engagement of the EU in Afghanistan and questioned its performance in the country, particularly the work of EUPOL-Afghanistan (the EU's police mission, which started in 2007). Although on-the-ground co-ordination between the two organisations has improved, as the anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia have demonstrated, there is still no overarching framework that allows for true strategic dialogue and co-operation as such. Countries which are both members of NATO and the EU continue to face the dilemma of devoting sufficient attention and resources to both organisations.

27. What is more, despite the progress in developing a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the new Lisbon Treaty, EU member states differ on some of the most important foreign and security policy issues, including Russia, energy and Afghanistan. Therefore, the Lisbon Treaty, which has introduced some structural and procedural changes within the EU, may not significantly improve Europe's ability to act as a coherent player that is able to make full use of its substantial political, economic and security resources.

28. In addition to co-operating more with international organisations, Allies recognise that partnerships are an increasingly important part of NATO's approach to complex challenges in regions on the periphery of Europe and beyond. Therefore, NATO is working with countries outside the Euro-Atlantic area through multilayered military-to-military co-operation programmes (i.e. Partnership for Peace - PfP - programme) and to enhance the civilian contribution to international security. These formal partnerships have been extended countries from Northern Africa and the Middle East (Mediterranean Dialogue - MD) and the Gulf region (Istanbul Co-operation Initiative - ICI). The partnerships comprise a large spectrum of co-operative activities that engage partner states in interoperability, security governance, defence reforms, defence education, the fight against small arms and light weapons proliferation as well as a range of other activities in the civil-military domain.

29. The broadening and deepening of NATO's partnerships promotes co-operation, confidence and stability, as well as enlarging the capacities of members and partners to address new security challenges. Not all partners aspire to NATO membership, but they often make significant contributions to NATO missions. Non-NATO Troop Contributing Nations are well outside the bounds of the potential enlargement of the Alliance as defined in Article 10 of its Treaty, and are not involved in NATO's formal partnership programmes. Formal mechanisms have meanwhile been put in place to ensure that their voice is heard in NATO's political deliberations on operations in Afghanistan. ISAF meetings, including at Ministerial level, now involve all troop contributing nations. However, NATO should look beyond the operation in Afghanistan and should further develop its mechanisms for consultation and co-operation with Non-NATO Troop Contributing Nations

30. Some Allies prefer that NATO's new tasks should be reflected in its structures, e.g., by the formalisation of its relations with "partners across the globe", or "contact countries", such as Australia and Japan, which make significant contributions to NATO missions. Other Allies, however, are not in favour of engaging in formal partnerships with "contact countries", among others, because they are concerned that NATO could develop into a global security organisation. Some also fear that formal engagements with countries outside the Euro-Atlantic area may risk drawing NATO Allies into possible conflicts outside the Euro-Atlantic region that do not directly impinge on the security of the Allies.

V. CAPABILITIES OF NATO MEMBER COUNTRIES

31. The Allies must ensure that their armed forces have the capabilities necessary to achieve the Alliance's objectives in Afghanistan and Kosovo, defend NATO's territory from both conventional and non-conventional threats, and continue to ensure that the Article 5 guarantee is an executable deterrent. Despite the emphasis on the need to make Allied forces more expeditionary, flexible, and deployable, and despite the targets agreed to by member states, significant shortfalls remain in the capabilities required by the Alliance to fulfil its commitments.

32. Allied defence budgets were already constrained before the economic crisis. Over the past decade, the average non-US NATO member defence budget was approximately 1.4% of GDP. In 2008, only Bulgaria, France, Greece, Turkey, the UK and the US spent over the informal NATO guideline of 2% of their GDP on defence. Some member states use two-thirds of their defence budgets for personnel costs, leaving only limited resources for the necessary modernisation of the military, including the overdue improvements of (strategic) airlift capabilities and modern telecommunications systems.

33. The huge difference in defence spending and the limitations this has put on NATO capabilities has generated criticism among some Allies. A prime example of continuing difficulties in force generation is the fate of the NATO Response Force (NRF), a driving engine of NATO's military transformation. The NRF is a highly-ready and technologically advanced force comprised of land, air, sea and special forces components that the Alliance can quickly deploy wherever needed. The NRF was originally planned to comprise 30,000 soldiers. However, because NATO Allies did not meet their financial commitments, the NRF had to be rearranged so that it now consists of a core element, the Immediate Reaction Force (IRF) consisting of 13,000 military personnel, and a response force pool to which member nations can commit troops on a voluntary basis. NATO Allies also disagreed on whether the NRF should only be used for high-intensity operations or whether it could be used for lower-intensity operations as well.

34. Frequent pleas, especially from the US, that the Allies spend the recommended 2% of GDP on defence have all too often been ignored. There is a question from the US as to whether the Allies are willing to commit the necessary resources for their common security. From a US perspective, the Allies are falling short of their promises and Europe in particular is seen to be divided and inward-looking, making only grudging contributions to the common effort. For example, US Defense Secretary Robert Gates warned in early April 2010 that NATO is facing "very serious, long-term, systemic problems" and that "under-funded defence budgets are undermining shared security goals". In this context, Mr Gates criticised Europe for "demilitarizing too much since the end of the Cold War" and commented that European countries have "grown averse to military force" and have failed to invest in weapons and equipment.

35. Defence spending among NATO Allies has been declining over the past decade, and the global financial and economic crisis will not allow for much room, if any, to increase defence spending. To the contrary, a number of NATO Allies have already announced further, in some cases drastic, cuts in their defence budgets. This includes some of the larger Allies, like the UK. RUSI, the London-based security think-tank, forecasts a decrease in defence spending in the UK of 10-15% between 2010 and 2016, as recommended by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) report on UK defence spending³. These trends have already slowed down the transformation of NATO's military forces.

36. Even when the current economic downturn will be overcome, longer term demographic trends will put pressure on NATO Allies to muster the necessary financial resources, as well as

³ IPPR, 'Shared responsibilities, A national security strategy for the UK', 30 June 2009 <http://www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=676>

military personnel, for the Allies common security. Additional financial resources for military procurement are not likely to be forthcoming as this demographic shift and its financial implications intensify. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen considers that 'managing the effects of the financial crisis (...) will be one of the defining issues of the next few years for all our governments'. He stressed that 'we must prioritise on what we really need – in a nutshell, on what we can actually deploy, where and when we need it (...) we need to approach this as an Alliance. If we have a coherent approach, we can retain the essential capabilities we need, avoid pointless duplication, and buy together what we couldn't afford individually.¹¹ This means renewed emphasis on spending wisely. The global financial and economic crisis and the longer-term demographic trends also constitute an opportunity for restructuring. It will be crucial to eliminate duplication and to create synergies.

37. More military spending is not always needed, but a more comprehensive approach including civilian components is indispensable. Moreover, burden-sharing between NATO Allies appears even more relevant in the context of an economic crisis. The current principle applied is that 'costs lie where they fall', meaning that countries that intervene on the ground bear all costs during the operations. There has been a lot of discussion on the need to replace the current financing agreement by a more effective, fairer one but no progress has been made thus far. While it appears likely that the text of new Strategic Concept will also mention the issue of common financing, the Allies still need to reach political agreement on it and implement it.

VI. ENLARGEMENT OF THE ALLIANCE

38. The new Strategic Concept is scheduled to be agreed upon at the next NATO Summit in Lisbon in November 2010 and is likely to endorse the continuation of NATO's Open Door policy. Membership is open to any European country able and willing to fulfil the commitments and obligations of membership, and contribute to security in the Euro-Atlantic area. There is unanimity that the prospect of NATO - and EU - membership is particularly significant for promoting stability in Europe. Allies share a general view that the realisation of a "Europe whole and free" requires the inclusion of – or at least association with - all European countries into Euro-Atlantic structures, namely into NATO and the EU. The NATO accession process typically goes through four main pre-stages: Partnership for Peace (PfP), Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), Intensified Dialogue (ID) and Membership Action Plan (MAP). At the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia were invited to the Intensified Dialogue stage. As of today, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro are part of the MAP. In April 2010, NATO Foreign Ministers decided that Bosnia and Herzegovina will join the MAP once it achieves the necessary progress in its reform efforts.

39. While there is a general agreement on the continuation of NATO's Open Door policy, Allies have differed over the accession of individual applicant countries. At present, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are countries that have applied for membership. However, the lack of consensus amongst the Allies was evident at the NATO Summit in Bucharest. During the Summit Alliance leaders invited Albania and Croatia to join the Alliance, and extended the promise of membership to Georgia and Ukraine but could not agree on opening the MAP to these two countries. Separately, the Heads of State and Government also agreed to invite the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to become a member as soon as a mutually acceptable solution to the issue over the country's name is reached with Greece. The new Ukrainian government has decided that it will not pursue further integration with NATO, preferring to focus on its immediate foreign relations with the Russian Federation and the EU. On 15 July 2010, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich has signed a law on the fundamental principles of the country's domestic and foreign policy stipulating the country's non-aligned status as a basic principle of foreign policy. The document says Ukraine will not join military and political alliances, but will participate in the improvement and development of a

European system of collective security and will continue constructive co-operation with NATO and other military and political blocks in matters of mutual interest. However, military-to-military co-operation between NATO and Ukraine continues on a high level. Serbia, Moldova and Belarus have not indicated the wish to apply for NATO membership in the near future.

40. Some NATO and EU member countries currently suffer from “enlargement fatigue” primarily due to the fact that the inclusion of new Member countries has been more cumbersome, time-consuming and expensive than generally anticipated. Moreover, one of the applicant countries, Georgia, faces significant domestic challenges which it needs to address before joining. Georgia, which remains one of the front-runners among Partner countries in reforming its military, civilian, and economic systems, is hampered by domestic concerns, including the instability linked to its inability to successfully address the ‘frozen conflicts’ over Ossetia and Abkhazia. While NATO’s Open Door policy remains unchanged, applicant countries need to make progress on meeting the criteria for future membership. That said, relations with Russia prove to be a main concern for some member countries regarding Georgia and Ukraine’s potential NATO membership.

VII. RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

41. Russia is a crucial, if sometimes difficult, partner for the Alliance. There is general agreement that NATO and Russia share a host of common security concerns, including stability in the Euro-Atlantic region, the stabilisation of Afghanistan, the prevention of WMD proliferation and their means of delivery, terrorism, as well as maritime piracy.

42. While there is unanimity that there can be no lasting stability in Europe without Russia, Allies differ with regard to the conduct of NATO policy toward Russia. New NATO Member states, many of which were once under Soviet rule, and some other Allies have been more vocal in expressing criticism of Russia’s heavy-handed approach to its immediate neighbours, including interference in domestic issues through economic, political and other means of coercion. These Allies have also been more concerned about Russia’s foreign policy which they perceive as increasingly assertive, and at times provocative. A case in point is the increasing number of reports of Russian aircraft flying across the Barents Sea over to the North Sea and violating NATO Allies’ airspace.

43. Further, the war between Russia and Georgia in 2008 accentuated some of the differences among NATO Allies. All Allies strongly condemned the Russian military incursion as a “disproportionate” response to Tbilisi’s attempt to regain control over South Ossetia by military force. NATO members also condemned the decision of the Russian Federation to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as a contravention of fundamental OSCE principles and United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The Georgia war raised concerns among NATO member states that a direct military confrontation is still possible in Europe. As a result, NATO’s commitment to the territorial defence of member states received increased attention. Critics in new Member states questioned whether NATO still has the capability to defend against a direct military attack. They also suggested that NATO focuses too much on Afghanistan and risks ignoring other, more important, tasks, particularly territorial defence.

44. Some of the new Member States also felt that after the Georgia conflict, other Member states moved too quickly in normalising relations with Moscow. They wondered if other Allies were more interested in securing their own economic (and energy) benefits from a good bilateral relation with Russia at the possible expense of the Allies’ shared security and economic well-being. Most recently, Moscow’s purchase of sophisticated warships from one Ally has been criticised by other NATO member nations as they fear that it could enable Moscow to mount more aggressive actions against its neighbour states. New Member states also tend to have more critical views of Russia’s domestic developments than other Allies. New Allies, particularly those

who are geographically close to Russia, are also more vocal in their criticism of Moscow's approach to declare regions surrounding Russia as its "sphere of influence", thereby diminishing the sovereignty and the security interests of its immediate neighbours. Due to the US-Russia reset and the prioritisation of NATO-Russia relations under Secretary General Rasmussen NATO-Russia relations have improved lately, at least on the rhetorical level. Moscow has also shown increased co-operation on Iran and NATO Allies have signalled their willingness to co-operate with Russia on missile defence. Other issues will, however, remain contentious between Russia and the Alliance, including the occupation of parts of Georgia proper as well as Moscow's recognition of the so-called independence of the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. A strong, closer NATO-Russia relationship is of key importance for both sides. The Allies therefore need to seek further engagement and pragmatic collaboration in areas of common interest, whilst reassuring that their security will be defended.

VIII. THE WAY AHEAD

45. The new Strategic Concept of the Alliance that is currently being prepared is an important document that will shape NATO's future policy. Your Rapporteur hopes that the updated concept will also reflect the lessons learned from Afghanistan. Afghanistan has taught the Allies, as well as the international community, some very important lessons. The Alliance has learned that while the military aspect is critical to conduct operations successfully, the application of military means alone is insufficient to solve crisis and conflicts. Engagements like Afghanistan need a comprehensive approach where military, political and civilian as well as economic efforts are co-ordinated. In Afghanistan and elsewhere, NATO needs to work more closely with civilian partners on the ground and at the political level, and it especially needs to work more closely with the EU and the UN.

46. NATO and the EU have gradually developed their relationship. There is co-operation in the field, in the Balkans, in Afghanistan, as well as off the Horn of Africa. Moreover, NATO and EU officials meet regularly at different levels to discuss issues of common interest, such as Capabilities (in the NATO-EU Capability Group), terrorism and WMD proliferation. However, there is little, if any, policy co-ordination between NATO and the EU. Most meetings are a mere exchange of information and produce only marginal results. Co-ordination now largely relies on informal mechanisms. Informal staff-to-staff dialogue works reasonably well and the informal contacts should be enhanced as much as possible.

47. As long as formal NATO-EU relations are limited to "Berlin-Plus" real progress can only be co-ordinated through capitals of NATO and EU member states. Therefore, NATO-EU relations must be expanded on the political level. The EU and NATO need regular discussions, at all levels, on the entire spectrum of common security interests and not only Bosnia and Herzegovina as it is the case today. Close co-operation between NATO and the European Union is an important element in the development of an international "Comprehensive Approach".

48. Eventually, NATO and the EU will need a new security agreement that maps out the areas of responsibilities and co-operation. While a new, comprehensive NATO-EU agreement may not be reached in the short term, both organisations should improve their co-operation with regard to operations. NATO and the EU need to develop a real two-way street. All EU Member States should be able to participate in NATO-EU co-operation. The EU should better involve non-EU Allies in CSDP activities. Therefore, as the NATO Secretary General has suggested, the EU should sign a new security agreement with Turkey which would also include arrangements between Turkey and the European Defence Agency (EDA). To that end, NATO Parliamentarians

should encourage their governments to initiate steps which would allow member states of both organisations to make progress in these areas.

49. The comprehensive approach requires close co-operation with other organisations involved in civilian reconstruction. To avoid friction in continuing and future operations, the Allies should establish a small civilian capacity at NATO Headquarters to interface effectively with these partners.

50. Training is an area, where NATO has a lot to offer and where its capabilities should be strengthened. A number of joint training centres already exist, such as the Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) in Stavanger (Norway) or the Joint Force Training Centre (JFTC) in Bydgoszcz (Poland). Expanding NATO's training capabilities would be cost-effective; expanding joint training capabilities would also help to improve NATO's relationships with other partners, including the United Nations with which it has gradually developed co-operation after the Cold War. There has been close co-operation between the two organisations in Kosovo and Afghanistan, but also in disaster response, for example during the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. NATO has become a key partner for the UN in peacekeeping. Moreover, training of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) has become a key element for the stabilisation of the country. Afghanistan has demonstrated that training is crucial. The sooner local forces can provide security, the higher the chances of stabilisation will be successful and the earlier NATO Allies and partners can disengage. Training needs to be included from the beginning – but the NATO training efforts in Afghanistan only begun in 2008. The NATO Secretary General has recently expressed the hope that the Alliance will set up a “standing training capacity”ⁱⁱⁱ. Your Rapporteur fully supports such a development.

51. The comprehensive approach requires close co-operation with other organisations involved in civilian reconstruction. To avoid friction in continuing and future operations, the Allies should establish a small civilian capacity at NATO Headquarters to interface effectively with these partners.

52. The Strategic Concept should send out a clear vision for Allies to guide the reform of their armed forces to make them more effective and more deployable. The issue of a fair sharing of the burdens has been a continuous issue among the Allies in the past and is likely to remain one in the future. The global financial and economic crisis has the potential to exacerbate existing differences and slow down the transformation of NATO's military forces. To achieve more efficiency in defence spending requires improved co-operation among Allies and particularly between NATO and the EU. By reducing duplication and improving transparency both organisations, and their member states, will be better able to address shortfalls in a co-ordinated manner. As a concrete measure, NATO and the EU should co-ordinate their capability development processes. While significant differences of the defence planning processes of NATO and the EU may limit possible gains, there are certain steps that can be undertaken to narrow the gap. For a start, co-ordination between NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT) and the EU's European Defence Agency (EDA) could be improved. ACT has begun to develop an informal relationship with the EDA, but the dialogue is limited.

53. Moreover, the Allies should strive to make improvements in transatlantic defence industrial co-operation. To this end, it will be necessary to reform existing export control regimes. Providing greater transparency can often be the first step towards an open market. EDA is a welcome development which can also have a positive effect on the Alliance. The financial constraints that NATO Member states are experiencing can produce political impetus for more co-operation on the defence markets.

54. Another way to strengthen Allied capability is increased pooling of capabilities. Pooling provides an organisational and legal framework to organise training, maintenance, logistics but

also the operation of the aircrafts, in a more efficient and effective way. The current Multinational Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC) and Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS) serve as useful examples for this type of co-operation. Another example for pooling among NATO member states could be a creation of multinational helicopter wing. There may also be room for possible co-operation with the EU, which has recently established a European Air Transport Command and is planning to create a European Air Transport Fleet.

55. The update of the Strategic Concept will not change the fundamentals of the Alliance and the commitment to collective defence is the most powerful signal of solidarity among NATO member states. Another fundamental is NATO's consultation process: maintaining the transatlantic security dialogue and joint decision making remain essential. This applies to particularly to Afghanistan, which has put Alliance cohesion to the test. It is unclear, how the situation will develop; there has been progress, but there are also increasing calls for an end to the mission in Afghanistan. US President Obama has announced another policy review at the end of the year. NATO Allies share a general view that the slow, conditions-based, phasing out of US and Allied troops from Afghanistan can begin in mid-2011. It is unclear, however, against which benchmarks, or criteria, "success" will be measured. The Allies must make clear that they have a long-term interest in the region. Therefore, NATO Allies should continue, and where possible, strengthen their commitments to Pakistan. Moreover, the Allies need to pursue a consistent policy and co-ordinate their activities towards Afghanistan as well as towards Pakistan.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

56. This report has addressed topics that have tested the Alliance over the last years. While Alliance cohesion has meanwhile improved, reviewing these issues is a necessary and important step towards enabling the Alliance to meet future security challenges and avoid costly repetitions of past mistakes

57. Taking stock of NATO's policies and engagements is also necessary as Alliance cohesion is likely to be tested again in the future. In particular, some of the previously contested issues may reappear on NATO's agenda in a different context. In Afghanistan, the international community is now more "in sync" and the training of ANSF forces is making progress. However, though the focus is now strongly on building up Afghan institutions and capabilities it is obvious that neither the government in Kabul nor the ANSF will be able to provide the level of security that is necessary for the stabilisation of the country. Will the Allies and the international community provide sufficient military and non-military assistance until the Afghans can take over? As some Allies plan to substitute their military engagement by non-military assistance, will Afghans gradually be able to fill the gap and, if not, will other Allies step in? The question of securing non-military assistance needs to be discussed. Moreover, even though there is agreement for the need of a political solution, there are conflicting, if not contradictory, views on whether and how to negotiate with Taliban forces. Finally, corruption remains a serious challenge; Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perception Index identifies Afghanistan the third country perceived to be most corrupt (176 out of 178 countries). Will Allies – and their publics – be willing to continue footing the bill for building up government structures that do not meet our standards?

58. In addition, the economic and financial crisis will put additional strain on the Allies. The report suggests that closer NATO-EU co-operation is absolutely necessary to avoid duplication. It is, however, unclear at this point if the two organisations and their Member states will be able to overcome the continuing political impasse. Moreover, the emergence of new powers will also have an impact on global and regional security issues. It would be in the interest of all Allies to co-ordinate their policies so that these new global players can proactively engage in meeting today's and tomorrow's security challenges. It is likely to take considerable time and effort for the Allies to co-ordinate their policies towards these emerging powers.

59. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has successfully adapted to a constantly changing security environment. The Alliance has been crucial in consolidating peace and democracy across Europe and in managing crises both in the Balkans and “out-of-area”. The new Strategic Concept will be an important document that will give a clear view of NATO’s future evolution. However, it is important to note that the cohesion among Allies will eventually depend on the political will of Member states to co-ordinate their security policies through NATO and on their ability to ensure that the resources match NATO missions. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly can make a meaningful contribution to help prepare the Alliance for a constantly changing security environment. It plays a significant role in linking NATO with the public and in bringing its experience into national parliamentary debates. NATO and the NATO PA should therefore continue to deepen their co-operation to better communicate with the general public to enhance their understanding of the Alliance’s policies and missions.

i NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in a Press Conference following the Meeting of NATO Defence Ministers on 10 June 2010: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_64277.htm

ii Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), Brussels on 8 October 2010: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_66663.htm