

Prospects for the NATO Warsaw Summit

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NATO is anything but obsolete. It is needed more now than at any point since the end of the Cold War. Threats and challenges to the transatlantic partners have multiplied rapidly. But there is growing insularity and division on both sides of the Atlantic. European defense capabilities are inadequate for the tasks. Risks are growing in Asia as well which deflect attention from Europe.

NATO's leaders are trying to manage these centrifugal forces. NATO has demonstrated its historic ability to adapt to geo-strategic change. NATO is adapting again today but the pace of institutional change is lagging behind the pace of those new challenges. The 2014 Wales summit began to close that gap by reassuring Allies with regard to mutual defense.

We have an opportunity at the Warsaw summit to close that gap further by enhancing full spectrum deterrence. Planning for the summit seems to be going well. There are seven important areas in which the Warsaw summit needs to make progress.

1. Maintaining Alliance unity.

- The EU is facing an existential crisis; nationalistic populist movements are growing everywhere, there are widely different threat perceptions; Europeans do not spend nearly enough on defense.
- The summit must maximize unity of purpose. Threats need to be clearly recognized. Spending pledges need to be honored. Full spectrum defense and deterrence needs to be stressed.
- The EU decision to continue sanctions on Russia will help to maintain unity.

2. Moving from reassurance to deterrence in the East.

- At the Wales summit, the focus was on reassurance and on the development of small rapidly deployable forces. The so-called Readiness Action Plan (RAP) was agreed. At Warsaw the RAP will be declared fully implemented. This include creation of the Very High Ready Joint Task Force (VJTf) or spearhead force, an expanded NATO Response Force (NRF), enhanced exercises, and some prepositioning

of equipment. The American European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) is one of America's contributions to this effort, and its budget has quadrupled.

- At Warsaw, the focus will be on forward deployment to deter more effectively. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has already announced that four multinational battalions will be deployed one each in the Baltic States and Poland. The lead nations will be Germany, the UK, the US, and hopefully Canada.
- In addition, the US will have a third Brigade Combat Team (heavy armored) deployed to Europe on a heel-to-toe rotational basis. A fourth US BCT will have its equipment prepositioned in Europe. Some of our Eastern allies would like to have these forces and equipment deployed even further forward than current plans call for.
- Additional efforts are expected to enhance deterrence. The Romanians will develop a new framework-nation NATO brigade. Baltic Air Policing will be strengthened. A new maritime focus will be placed on the Baltic and Black Seas.
- Efforts are also underway to reduce the obstacles to the rapid deployment of forces from Western Europe to the east and to find the right balance of authorities for SACEUR in time of crisis.
- Modest forward deployed forces and a rapid reaction capability will strengthen deterrence without being provocative.
- But more will be needed. NATO's follow on forces are inadequate. The summit needs to address force readiness and sustainability on both sides of the Atlantic.
- As these steps are taken, we also need to maintain a steady dialogue with Russia to make sure that they do not miscalculate.

3. *Assuring a credible nuclear deterrence against Russia and missile defense against Middle East threats.* Russia is strengthening its non-strategic nuclear weapons posture in Europe and modifying its nuclear doctrine in dangerous ways (escalate to deescalate).

- Discussing nuclear deterrence publicly in Europe is still very sensitive. But the summit needs to criticize Russian nuclear developments and reaffirm NATO's nuclear deterrence.
- Some positive steps will be taken at the summit to strengthen the readiness and reliability of NATO's dual capable aircraft.
- Efforts are also needed to consider nuclear policies during conventional military exercises.
- A serious dialogue with Russia on nuclear doctrine is now imperative.

- NATO missile defense is on track. At the summit, initial operating capability for the current phase of NATO missile defense is likely to be declared.

4. *Creating a new Southern Strategy for NATO.*

- NATO leaders talk about “projecting stability” into the southern region. Our recent report, Alliance Revitalized, suggested a strategy of “comprehensive support.”
- NATO has had significant involvement to its south, for example: ISAF in Afghanistan, Operation Unified Protector in Libya, Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean, Operation Ocean Shield off the coast of Somalia, Iraq training missions, missile defense for Turkey and other southern allies, etc. But it still does not have an agreed coherent southern strategy.
- The migration crisis and ISIS-stimulated terrorist attacks are of primary concern to most southern and western European allies.
- The Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts have created a lack of willingness to once again involve large numbers of ground forces in Middle East stabilization operations.
- To the extent that nations are willing to be involved, they tend to support lead nation operations rather than NATO led operations.
- So often NATO finds itself in a supporting rather than lead role. The Alliance is not used to this.
- Nonetheless, some progress should be made at the Warsaw summit.
- Four bases in Afghanistan will likely remain to sustain Operation Resolute Support. Europe is likely to sustain adequate troop contributions.
- NATO training for Iraqi forces will be expanded and moved from Jordan to Iraq.
- NATO AWACS will fly in support of counter-ISIS operations.
- NATO is considering ways to support Italian led coalition operations in Libya, though modestly.
- American ships will support NATO maritime operations in the Aegean.
- NATO will support the EU Operation Sophia in the central Mediterranean Sea.
- Developing a coherent strategy to recognize the multiple challenges coming from the south and to knit together a consistent approach would be a significant step forward.

5. *Maximizing societal and defense resilience.*

- NATO faces different types of hybrid warfare on its eastern and southern fronts.
- Enhancing societal and defense resilience is the antidote to hybrid warfare. NATO has a key role to play in maximizing resilience.
- The Warsaw summit is expected to focus on enhancing the resilience of allied nations. The starting point is Article 3 of the Washington Treaty which stresses self help and individual capacity.
- The summit is likely to pledge commitments from the NATO nations to strengthen their resilience.
- The summit is also likely to endorse the creation of what might be called resilience support teams that could be deployed to NATO countries in need.
- Cyber security is also an important aspect of resilience.
- The summit is likely to declare that cyber operations are a separate military domain and to seek cyber security pledges from all members states. This could result in a separate NATO cyber headquarters and in more effective NATO cyber operations.

6. *Maintaining the open door and enhancing partnerships.*

- Montenegro will be invited to join NATO at the summit. This will underline the fact that NATO's door remains open. But four aspirants still seek membership (Ukraine, Georgia, Macedonia and Bosnia) and they may need to wait a while longer.
- New measures to support defense reform in Ukraine will be agreed.
- Closer cooperation between NATO and the EU will be encouraged, especially in areas like maritime operations and societal resilience.
- Additional steps should be taken to bring Sweden and Finland even closer to the alliance. This could be done by increasing the privileges of Enhanced Opportunity Partners (EOP). Sweden and Finland should have access to all NATO meetings and exercises that they want to participate in.
- Japan is quite interested in becoming a NATO Enhanced Opportunity Partner, and this should be agreed at the summit. Then South Korea should be given equal status so that all three of America's key Asian allies have closer ties to NATO. Australia already enjoys EOP status. That would tie European and Asian security closer together.
- Finally, NATO needs to better organize itself to build the defense capacities of key vulnerable partners in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

7. Increasing European defense spending and creating greater defense efficiencies.

- The renewed burden-sharing debate in the US has taken on monumental importance and the summit needs to take steps to recognize this.
- The slide in European defense spending of the last few years has been reversed. Twenty allies are planning to increase defense spending in real terms in 2016.
- But progress towards the 2% of GDP defense spending goal remains slow. The pledge needs to be reinforced and specific plans need to be created to implement that pledge.
- The summit should also further encourage the so-called framework nation concept which creates greater European defense efficiencies.
- Finally, defense innovation also needs to be encouraged. Allied Command Transformation is taking specific steps to work more closely with the Pentagon in an effort to stimulate transatlantic innovation.

Significant progress is expected at the Warsaw summit. But more needs to be accomplished in the years to come. This is not the time for complacency in the most successful alliance that the world has ever seen. It is time for nations on both sides of the Atlantic to double down on NATO and strengthen what has become the most important international institution for global stability.