# Lisbon and the Evolution of NATO's New Partnership Policy

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## Abstract

*NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept identifies cooperative security as one of "three essential core tasks" to be achieved in part "through a wide network of partner relationships with countries and organizations around the globe". To facilitate the construction of this broader network of partners, the Alliance adopted a new partnership policy in April 2011, designed to facilitate "more efficient and flexible" partnership arrangements. The policy offers a number of new tools to foster the cooperative security efforts deemed so critical under the new strategic concept and permits potential and existing partners an opportunity to shape their own relationships with NATO. In so doing, however, it moves the Alliance toward less differentiation between partners and fails to clarify the role of like-minded partners in preserving and extending the liberal security order that NATO's initial partnerships were designed to enlarge.*

## Key Words

NATO, strategic concept, partnership policy, Partnership for Peace, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, Mediterranean Dialogue, Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

## Introduction

Meeting in Berlin in April 2011, NATO foreign ministers adopted a new partnership policy designed to facilitate "more efficient and flexible" partnership arrangements with NATO's growing and increasingly diverse assortment of partners. The new policy served to fulfill a pledge taken at the Lisbon summit in 2010 to enhance NATO's partnerships further by "develop[ing] political dialogue and practical cooperation with any nations and relevant organisations across the globe that share [the Allies'] interest in peaceful international relations."[1] Although NATO has since the early 1990s maintained multiple partnership frameworks (e.g. Partnership for Peace (PfP) Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), and the Istanbul

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Cooperation Initiative (ICI)), the 2010 Strategic Concept issued at Lisbon makes partnership a key component of NATO's new strategy, by identifying "cooperative security" as one of "three essential core tasks" to be achieved in part "through a wide network of partner relationships with countries and organisations around the globe".[2] This heightened emphasis on partnership reflected a growing realization that partners are essential to addressing the increasingly global security challenges NATO currently confronts, as well as the emergence of a broad consensus within the Alliance that both existing and prospective partnerships must become more functional. Indeed, the new policy was designed, not only to facilitate greater dialogue among partners outside and across existing partnership frameworks; it also opens to all partners opportunities for practical cooperation with NATO that may previously have been available in only one of NATO's partnership structures.

Somewhat unexpectedly, NATO found itself with an opportunity to implement the new policy even before its final approval by NATO foreign ministers in April 2011. On March 27, 2011, just prior to the Berlin meeting, NATO had agreed to assume responsibility for Operation Unified Protector in Libya, a mission that necessitated immediate dialogue with regional actors participating in two of NATO's partnership frameworks;

namely, the Mediterranean Dialogue, which dated back to 1994 and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, created in 2004. NATO's ability to engage these states in dialogue under the new policy affirmed the importance of the Berlin agreement and the flexibility that it offered for engaging partners across existing frameworks.

At the same time, however, the Arab Spring movements of 2011 highlighted one of the key challenges that has plagued many of NATO's partnership efforts; namely, that of undemocratic partners whose domestic political practices are deeply at odd with the liberal democratic values that NATO has pledged to defend and which remain at the core of its identity. Although the partnership policy adopted in Berlin affirms that a commitment to the values of "individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law" remains "fundamental" to NATO's partnership initiatives, the reality is that many of NATO's existing as well as potential partners, in the Middle East and beyond, are not liberal democracies. Indeed, non-democratic partners have proved problematic in the past, including in Central Asia where the success of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has depended to a considerable degree on regional partners which- despite their participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace and Euro-Atlantic Cooperation Council- remain repressive authoritarian

regimes. As NATO continues to reach out to an increasingly diverse group of partners under the new policy, it will be forced to wrestle with the reality that many of those NATO has deemed it necessary to engage- such as China, for example- are not enthusiastic supporters of the liberal security order that NATO has sought to enlarge since the early 1990s.

Ultimately, the issue that NATO has yet to resolve revolves around the fundamental purpose of its partnerships. While the 2010 Strategic Concept identifies cooperative security as a core task to be fulfilled in part through the broadening and deepening of NATO's partnerships, cooperation cannot be an end in and of itself. Rather, NATO will first have to clarify the longer-term function that partnerships are intended to serve. Indeed, to some degree, disagreements within the Alliance in recent years over the form and function of NATO's partnerships reflect an absence of consensus regarding NATO's core function, including the extent to which its focus should be global rather than regional in nature.

## The Beginnings of Partnership

The scope and function of NATO's partnerships has changed enormously since the early 1990s when the Allies first invited their former Warsaw Pact adversaries to establish diplomatic liaisons to NATO and later established institutional frameworks for dialogue and military cooperation in the form of PfP and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which later became the EAPC. At the time of their inception, these institutions were designed to serve largely as political instruments for encouraging the growth of liberal democratic values beyond NATO's borders and building a new, integrated and democratic Europe. Although PfP began as a means of engaging the states of Central and Eastern Europe, short of permitting them full entry into the Alliance, once the enlargement decision had been taken, it quickly became clear that both PfP and the EACP would serve as instruments for assisting prospective members in implementing the liberal democratic practices expected of NATO members. Moreover, active participation in PfP and EAPC activities became an important consideration in membership decisions.

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With Macedonia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Georgia still in the pipeline as possible NATO members, partnership remains an important tool for completing the unfinished process of European integration and partnership. Indeed, while all of these states are PfP/EAPC members, NATO maintains special partnership arrangements with both Georgia and Ukraine in the form the NATO-Georgia and NATO-Ukraine Commissions, created in part to assist these states in fulfilling their membership aspirations. Ukraine's interest in NATO, however, has faded under the current regime, and Georgia is also unlikely to accede to NATO anytime soon, given concerns about antagonizing Russia, which NATO also counts as a partner through the vehicle of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC).[3]

## The Impact of September 11

The focus of NATO's partnership initiatives has also shifted since the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. Indeed, NATO's efforts to equip itself for the post-September 11 era prompted a new phase in the evolution of NATO's partnerships as the Allies recognized that, in an increasingly globalised world the threats facing them would now stem from well beyond Europe's borders, especially from areas to the south and east of NATO. As then NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson

observed at the time, the Alliance would have to shift from a "geographic" to "functional" approach if it was to respond effectively to new challenges.[4] Accordingly, NATO's partnerships also took on a new dimension. Although partnership would remain an important tool in the European integration project, it also came to be understood as a means by which NATO could "project stability" outside of Europe, in part by encouraging partners- both those with and those without membership aspirations- to contribute in some capacity to NATO's military missions in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and even Iraq. This new partnership function overlapped with the earlier integrative mission in so far as prospective member states were put on notice that they would be evaluated in part based on their demonstrated ability to act as security producers and not simply as consumers of NATO assistance. From NATO's perspective, partnership was no longer simply about what NATO could do for partners but rather what partners could do to enhance security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

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As NATO's attention shifted to Afghanistan, the relative importance of existing and potential partners in

Central Asia, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East also grew. Given a dramatic increase in the strategic significance of these regions, NATO moved during its 2002 Prague summit to enhance both the political and practical dimensions of its existing Mediterranean Dialogue by making available to MD states (Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia, Jordan, and Algeria) participation in select PfP activities. Although the MD had been established in 1994, it was not initially considered to be a full-fledged partnership on a par with PfP. Two years later during its Istanbul summit, however, the Alliance took steps to elevate the MD to a more formal partnership framework, accompanied by efforts to develop further dialogue and practical cooperation. The perceived success of the MD also prompted in 2004 the launching of the Istanbul Cooperative Initiative (ICI), a new program aimed at developing practical bilateral security cooperation between NATO and the states of the Greater Middle East in such areas as defense reform, defense planning, civil-military relations, information-sharing and maritime cooperation. ICI, which was initially directed toward, but not limited to, members of the Gulf Cooperation Council currently counts among its participants Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates."[5]

September 11 also had a dramatic impact on NATO's relationships further north and to the east. Russia's expressed desire for a more cooperative relationship with NATO led to the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), permitting Russia to discuss identified areas of mutual interest with the Alliance in a "NATO at 20" format rather than the 19+1 format that characterised the previous NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC). Improved relations between NATO and Russia also made it possible for Ukraine to move closer to NATO, even before the 2004 Orange Revolution.

NATO's assumption of responsibility for the ISAF mission in Afghanistan in 2003 also prompted the Alliance to devote greater attention to the five Central Asian members of PfP (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan) all of which provided various forms of assistance critical to NATO's ability to operate effectively in Afghanistan, including military bases, transit routes, re-fueling facilities and cooperation on border security.[6] To a significant degree this cooperation was facilitated by political and military ties developed through PfP, which all of the Central Asian states had joined in 1994, with the exception of Tajikistan, which was admitted in 2002. Not surprisingly then, NATO's 2004 summit in Istanbul, the theme of which was the renewal and expansion of NATO's partnerships, began with a "special focus" on partners "in the strategically important regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia."[7] As

part of the effort to expand and deepen cooperation with these states, NATO designated a special representative for the region and launched a Partnership Action Plan (PAP) aimed at facilitating defence reform.[8] Indeed, the absence of democratic political reform throughout the region had made the Central Asian states problematic partners for an Alliance whose identity in the aftermath of the Cold War was all the more grounded on liberal democratic values.

In an effort to encourage domestic political reform in states not yet deemed eligible or not interested in participating in NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP)- the program NATO has used since the late 1990s to evaluate and provide guidance to prospective member states- NATO introduced a new initiative during its 2002 Prague Summit. Known as the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), the new programme offered partners the opportunity to draft national plans detailing specific reforms that were to be implemented and then receive country-specific advice and assistance from NATO on meeting these reform objectives.[9] Although the Allies hoped that its Central Asian partners would embrace this opportunity, to date

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the only Central Asian state participating in the programme is Kazakhstan.[10]

The impact of the ISAF mission on NATO's partnership initiatives in recent years is also evident in a decision taken in 2010 to offer both Pakistan and Afghanistan additional access to NATO's partnership activities or "toolbox," just as it has done with its MD and ICI partners. Prompted by Pakistan's considerable appetite for NATO assistance, the Alliance has allowed Pakistani officers to participate in select NATO training and education courses in the areas of peace support operations, civil-military cooperation and defence against terrorism.[11] NATO's relations with Pakistan have recently been strained, however, by various developments linked to the ISAF mission, including a friendly fire incident in November 2011 that resulted in the death of 24 Pakistan soldiers from a NATO airstrike.[12]

As for Afghanistan, NATO has established a framework for long-term engagement in the form of a Declaration on an Enduring Partnership signed during the 2010 Lisbon summit, which includes a series of agreed programmes and partnership activities in such areas as capacity-building and professional military education, civil emergency

planning, and disaster preparedness. NATO foreign ministers endorsed an initial list of activities at their 2011 meeting in Berlin at which time they also agreed that NATO and Afghanistan would "pursue a partnership dialogue" aimed at determining the scope and content of their co-operation beyond 2012.[13]

Although NATO has continued to identify liberal democratic values as central to all of its partnership efforts, its partnerships in the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Central Asia are fundamentally different from those established in Central and Eastern Europe during the 1990s. Few of these states have aspired to NATO membership, leaving NATO with far less leverage over domestic reforms than it enjoyed with the states of Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed, the extension of the partnership concept beyond Europe has been driven primarily by the events of September 11 and a subsequent recognition that partners play a critical role in equipping NATO for the global challenges of the post-September 11 world.

That said, the demands of NATO's ISAF mission have also prompted the Alliance to count among its partners a number of non-European allies who do share its liberal democratic values. Indeed, the most significant partner contributions to the Afghanistan mission have come, not from NATO's formal partnership structures (e.g. PfP, EAPC,

MD, ICI), but from non-European allies such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea. These states emerged as key players in Afghanistan at a time when many NATO members were reluctant to provide the troops or other resources deemed critical to the success of the ISAF mission by NATO commanders. Australia, in particular, has contributed troops to the ISAF mission at roughly the same level as the principal NATO member contributors.

Given their importance to the ISAF mission, NATO has actively sought to enhance its relations with these non-NATO, non-EU states, which have been variously labeled, along with others, as "contact countries," and "other partners across the globe," but which are more commonly known as "global partners." Partly in response to the expressed desire of Australia, in particular, for a greater voice in NATO's decision-shaping and operational planning for the ISAF mission, the Alliance moved during its 2006 summit in Riga to "increase the operational relevance of relations" with its global partners in two particular ways. First, the Allies established that NATO could call for "ad-hoc meetings as events arise" with contributors or potential contributors to NATO's missions, utilizing "flexible formats". They also agreed to make established partnership tools more widely available to global partners as well as MD and ICI members.[14] The goal

was to open up established partnership tools and activities to a broader range of partners and to give partners a greater voice in NATO's operational decision-making and planning by providing new opportunities for dialogue and practical cooperation across the various partnership frameworks as well as between NATO and those partners not participating in any formal partnership framework. In preparation for its 2008 summit in Bucharest, NATO sought to further facilitate practical cooperation through the introduction of Tailored Cooperation Packages (TCPs) with Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea. Similar to the Individual Cooperation Programmes (ICPs) offered to MD and ICI partners, TCPs were essentially lists of cooperation activities tailored to serve both the interests of partner states and NATO's priorities.[15]

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While each of NATO's global partners has its own particular incentives for cooperation with the Alliance, they all share in common with the Allies, a significant number of security challenges, including terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and the dangers of failed states. Not insignificantly the above-mentioned states also share NATO's liberal democratic values, making them more attractive partners than some others as well as potential participants in any effort to enlarge further the liberal democratic security order that NATO committed itself to extending during the early 1990s. Although the Allies have exhibited varying degrees of enthusiasm for further formalization of NATO's relations with these global partners, they generally agree- as reflected in both the Riga initiatives and the 2010 Strategic Concept- that if NATO is operate effectively in a security environment that is now global rather than regional in nature, it must maintain a worldwide network of security partnerships to facilitate consultation on global security issues. Indeed, issues such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, cyber warfare, piracy, and energy mandate that this network also include emerging powers such as China and India.[16]

Although NATO currently maintains an unofficial dialogue with both states, neither state participates in any of NATO's formal partnership structures.[17] NATO, however, has been working to develop a relationship with both, based on common interests. For example, through the NATO-China dialogue, NATO and China have exchanged both high and working-level visits on a range of security issues, including the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, North Korea, proliferation, counter-piracy operations

in the Gulf of Aden, and other emerging security threats. China also maintains a military liaison to NATO in Brussels and has sent military delegations for meetings at both NATO Headquarters in Brussels and SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe), NATO's military headquarters near Mons, Belgium.[18]

Indeed, while China's interest in genuine partnership with NATO, is still difficult to discern, China does have significant interests at stake in the relationship. Among them is the deployment of NATO forces, not only in Afghanistan, but also in Central Asia- quite literally in China's backyard. China and NATO are also crossing paths in Afghanistan as a result of significant Chinese investments aimed at securing access to natural resources needed to fuel China's booming economy. China's investments and resource interests on the African continent have also prompted its participation in anti-piracy efforts and limited cooperation with the Alliance off the Horn of Africa and in the Gulf of Aden, where NATO maintains an anti-piracy mission known as Operation Ocean Shield.[19]

The virtue of NATO's new partnership policy is that it has the potential to facilitate dialogue and practical cooperation with a broad and diverse assortment of partners, including China, by blurring the line or differentiating less between the states that participate in NATO's formal partnership structures and those who are not members of these frameworks. This development constitutes important progress in moving NATO beyond intra-alliance disagreements regarding the form and function of NATO's partnerships, dating back to the 2006 Riga Summit.

At Riga, the United States and Britain had advanced a proposal calling for the creation of a new political framework designed to draw allies such as Australia, Japan, and South Korea closer to NATO, as a means of enhancing NATO's ability to operate effectively in Afghanistan and beyond. The proposal, however, generated significant opposition. Some allies viewed it as a unilateral effort by the United States to undermine the EAPC, largely because the U.S. Ambassador to NATO at the time had identified as likely members of such a framework, Sweden and Finland, two states that were already PfP/EAPC members.[20] Many allies were also uneasy with the prospect of deepening political ties between NATO and states well beyond the transatlantic area. Indeed, the proposed framework represented a significant departure from NATO's existing partnership structures in so far as it followed a functional rather than geographical approach.

## A New Partnership Policy

Yet, as the 2010 Strategic Concept suggests, not only do the Allies now generally agree that enhancing NATO's

partnerships with non-European allies is essential if NATO is to respond effectively to global threats, a broad consensus has also emerged in favor of more functional partnerships. Indeed, the goal of the new partnership policy adopted in Berlin in April 2011 was "to substantially deepen and broaden NATO's partnerships, and increase their effectiveness and flexibility."[21] Ultimately, the policy reflects a recognition that the EAPC has been significantly challenged by the fact that so many of its initial members have acceded to the Alliance, leaving two disparate groups of partners with very different interests; namely, the non-NATO, European Union states and the far less democratic and less developed former Soviet republics. Additionally, while Afghanistan was clearly pivotal in terms of the evolution of the new policy, many Allies also recognized that the demands of the mission had prevented NATO from devoting sufficient attention to the role of partners outside the context of Afghanistan.

Although both the 2010 Strategic Concept and the new partnership policy state that the "specificity" of NATO's existing partnership frameworks will be preserved- meaning that the Alliance currently has no plans to eliminate or merge any of its existing partnership structures (e.g. PfP, EAPC, MD, ICI)- the new policy states that the Alliance, will, as determined by the North Atlantic Council (NAC), engage and

encourage dialogue with "key global actors and other new interlocutors beyond the Euro-Atlantic area with which NATO does not have a formal partnership arrangement."[22] The new policy also broadens the definition of partner to include, not only states but also international organisations such as the European Union and the United Nations, as well as non-governmental organisations- all of which NATO has come to recognize as possessing the civilian expertise and resources so critical to the processes of stabilisation and reconstruction in contexts such as Afghanistan.

> The evolution of NATO's partnership policy offers both existing and potential partners an opportunity to define their own relationship with NATO based on the degree to which they wish to partake of partnership activities or engage in dialogue with the Alliance.

In the interest of promoting dialogue with a broader range of partners, the new policy offers additional opportunities for all partners to consult on issues of common concern with NATO as well as with other partners "across and beyond existing frameworks," utilizing

what the Alliance refers to as its "28+n" format (the "28" being the 28 NATO members).[23] In the interest of fostering greater practical cooperation, the policy also commits NATO to consolidating and harmonizing the various partnership activities (e.g. military-to-military cooperation and exercises, defence policy and planning, training and education, and civil-military relations) comprising what the Allies refer to as NATO's "toolbox," through the creation of a single Partnership Cooperation Menu. As a result, partnership tools that may previously have been available to members of only one of NATO's formal partnership frameworks are now potentially available to all partners. Additionally, the Alliance agreed to harmonize the process through which partner states identify the various partnership activities in which they wish to participate, by creating a single Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) to replace cooperation programmes that had been unique to individual partnership frameworks, including the Individual Partnership Programme (IPP), established for PfP/EAPC members; the Individual Cooperation Programme (ICP) extended to NATO's MD and ICI partners; and the Tailored Cooperation Packages (TCP's) made available to NATO's global partners.[24] NATO is also considering extending "on a case by case basis," its IPAP and PARP (Planning

and Review Process) programmes to partners outside of PfP/EAPC, thereby offering the Alliance further opportunity to influence political and military reforms in states not aspiring to NATO membership.

These changes have the potential to assist NATO in expanding and deepening dialogue with emerging powers such as China and India, utilizing the 28+n formula. The consolidation of NATO's partnership tools into one menu will also permit states which presently have no formal connection to NATO to participate in certain unclassified partnership activities should they choose to do so. In short, the evolution of NATO's partnership policy offers both existing and potential partners an opportunity to define their own relationship with NATO based on the degree to which they wish to partake of partnership activities or engage in dialogue with the Alliance.

Finally, the Berlin Agreement fulfills the pledge made in Lisbon to review and update NATO's 1999 Political Military Framework for Partner Involvement in NATO- Led Operations (PMF). The revised framework establishes a more structured role for non-NATO contributors to NATO-led missions or "operational partners" such as Australia and New Zealand by enhancing and formalising their decision-shaping and operational planning roles in NATO-led missions.[25] The new document also

specifies both the process for recognizing a non-NATO state as an operational partner, and the process by which operational partners will be consulted and involved in "shaping" operational decisions.[26]

Although the attention to creating a more formal role for operational partners in NATO-led missions was largely a product of the ISAF mission, the utility of offering such partners a more structured role in NATO missions has now been further affirmed by Operation Unified Protector in Libya. In fact, NATO's partner states of Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Jordan all participated in the operation, prompting NATO foreign ministers, meeting in Berlin in April 2011, to acknowledge and express appreciation for the contributions of regional partners to the mission.[27]

## Libya and the Arab Spring

Indeed, NATO's unanticipated mission in Libya, which began just prior to the Berlin meeting, reinforced the importance of having partners around the globe and offered the Alliance an opportunity to implement portions of the new partnership policy. NATO relied on its existing MD and ICI partnership mechanisms to facilitate contributions and support for the Libya mission from partners in the region, but it also utilized the new flexible format mechanism to facilitate immediate dialogue with these partners.[28] NATO's success in rapidly establishing high-level contacts with the UN, EU, Arab League, African Union, and Gulf Cooperation Council also bore out the utility of engaging other international institutions as partners.[29]

> The Alliance also sees an opportunity to build on the success of the Libya mission by reaching out, on a case-by-case basis, to potential new partners throughout the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Persian Gulf region, including Libya.

Notably, the Libya mission, coupled with the new partnership policy, has also created opportunities to reinvigorate NATO's MD and ICI partnerships, which in the past have been criticized as lacking focus and producing little in the realm of practical cooperation. To a significant degree the problem stems from the fact that most of NATO's partners in the region are not liberal democracies. Indeed, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton alluded to the difficulties inherent in partnering with these states in her remarks to the Munich Security Conference in February 2011. Noting that the United States had built "strong security partnerships" across the Middle East, she also acknowledged that

security and democratic development had yet to "converge in the same way."[30]

> The Middle East is a region in which, historically, there has been significant suspicion and mistrust of NATO.

As NATO foreign ministers observed during a meeting in Brussels in December 2011, however, developments associated with the Arab Spring, including the dramatic popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt- both members of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue- offer new opportunities for NATO to utilize its partnership mechanisms to encourage reform throughout the region[31] The Alliance also sees an opportunity to build on the success of the Libya mission by reaching out, on a case-by-case basis, to potential new partners throughout the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Persian Gulf region, including Libya.[32] Looking ahead to NATO's upcoming Chicago summit, where there is expected to be a significant focus on partnership, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, in fact, expressed hope that, by the time of the summit, a new, democratic Libya will be among [NATO's] partners in the region."[33]

NATO recognises a particular opportunity to build on its experience in promoting democratic control of the militaries of Central and Eastern Europe by focusing on encouraging "security and defence sector reform" in the Middle East.[34] The Alliance also has the option under the new partnership policy of utilizing its PARP process as a vehicle for defence reform. Similarly, NATO could push for domestic political reform by extending to interested states the opportunity to engage in the IPAP process.[35]

Yet, as Isabelle François observes, while NATO has the potential to help African and Arab partners "build their own capacities," the "countries of North Africa and the Gulf region…are not Central and Eastern Europe. They are not bound by a common objective to join the Alliance." Indeed, the absence of a link between partnership and enlargement in this region means that NATO's influence is likely to be much more limited than it was in Central and Eastern Europe.[36] Moreover, the Middle East is a region in which, historically, there has been significant suspicion and mistrust of NATO. Indeed, François suggests that, in the aftermath of its Libya intervention, NATO will have to reach out beyond its MD and ICI partners if it is to influence regional security developments. As she puts it, "one does not win many hearts through air strikes even in the case of a successful outcome."[37]

## Implications of the New Partnership Policy

Arguably events linked to the Arab Spring, including the dramatic developments in Libya, highlighted the importance of NATO's partnership efforts, but they also served to draw attention to NATO's associations with non-democratic regimes, possibly lending support to an argument that NATO has been focused on "stability" rather than democratic reform as the key to security. Indeed, the conundrum of how to broaden NATO's partners beyond Europe while at the same time remaining true to its own identity as an Alliance grounded on liberal democratic values is one that has plagued NATO for some time, in Central Asia as well as in the Middle East. As suggested earlier, even though all of NATO's various partnership documents identify liberal democratic values as central to NATO's partnership initiatives, the need to equip NATO to combat terrorism and other new threats has been the primary impetus behind NATO's efforts to develop cooperative relationships with the states of Central Asia and the Middle East in the post-September 11 era.

Non- democratic states have frequently proved problematic partners, however, because their domestic political practices are deeply at odds with the values underpinning the liberal security order to which NATO committed itself during the 1990s. NATO's relations with partners in Central Asia, for example, have in the past prompted critics to charge the United States and NATO with shoring up repressive regimes by providing them with economic and military assistance in exchange for their cooperation in anti-terrorism efforts.[38] NATO has typically responded to such criticism by arguing that all of its partnership tools are in one way or another imbued with liberal democratic values, offering the Alliance at least some opportunity to encourage political and military reform. However, as NATO's looks to broaden the scope of its partnerships, it is likely to confront this dilemma more rather than less frequently. Developing closer relations with China, for example, will inevitably force the Alliance to grapple with the fact that China, not only eschews the liberal values at the core of NATO; as a rising power, it also has far greater potential than other non-democratic partners to shape the international order in a decidedly less liberal direction.

NATO's partnerships serve multiple functions, including supporting NATO's operations, and enhancing international security, in addition to preparing states for membership and defending liberal democratic values.

For that very reason, though, it is imperative that the Alliance engage China and others that do not necessarily share its values. Indeed, as the 2010 Strategic Concept observes, NATO's partnerships serve multiple functions, including supporting NATO's operations, and enhancing international security, in addition to preparing states for membership and defending liberal democratic values.[39] If NATO is to be relevant in shaping the larger international order well into the future, it has little choice but to engage a broader group of partners, including both those that do not share its values as well as those that do. Previewing the upcoming Chicago summit, Rasmussen, in fact, affirmed that NATO has an interest in a "strategic partnership" with Russia as well as a "strong partnership with Pakistan."[40]

At the same time, global partners such as Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, among others, do share NATO's interest in a liberal security order. Unfortunately, though, NATO has yet to elaborate on a role for these like-minded global partners in shaping a global order grounded on the values of individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Rather, the trend at NATO since September 11, 2001 has been to focus on the operational value of new partners rather than their potential role in shaping rather than merely responding to the emerging security order. Moreover, the new partnership policy seemingly moves the Alliance toward less differentiation between partners. Indeed, one could potentially argue that the enhanced commitment to cooperative security under the new Strategic Concept reflects, not the values-based conception of security that prevailed during the 1990s, but rather a more realist orientation, in which shared interests rather than shared values constitute the foundation for cooperation. There may also be a danger in defining cooperative security as a core task as the new Strategic Concept does. Indeed, NATO risks elevating the concept to the level of a strategic end rather than a means of achieving some larger goal. Partnership cannot be an end in and of itself, and NATO has yet to articulate clearly the larger strategic objectives it is intended to serve.

> Global partners such as Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, among others, do share NATO's interest in a liberal security order.

The new partnership policy offers NATO an opportunity to consider more fully how it might utilize its partnerships with other liberal democratic states, especially those outside of Europe, as a means of defending and extending the liberal security order most conducive to

both the defence of NATO territory and the long-term flourishing of the Allies' way of life. As John Ikenberry suggests in *Liberal Leviathan*, in a world in which new powers are rising and threats are increasingly diffuse and uncertain, the security of the United States and others is best served by a milieu-oriented grand strategy aimed at "planting the roots of a reformed liberal international order as deeply as possible".[41]

## NATO has in effect redefined what it means to be a partner.

The pursuit of cooperative relationships with non-liberal democratic states is not necessarily inconsistent with such an approach. Indeed, given that the vast majority of contemporary security challenges will now emanate from outside of Europe, NATO must engage a broad and diverse group of partners if it is to address these challenges effectively. Utilizing partnership as a means of securing and strengthening the foundation for a liberal security order, however, will require that NATO engage in some differentiation between partners.

Given that NATO will be forced to confront the implications of economic challenges and limited resources during its Chicago summit, the Allies will also need to think seriously about how limited partnership resources should be allocated. Although the new partnership policy suggests that NATO will consider a number of factors in determining how to allocate its resources, including whether the partner aspires to join the Alliance, whether it shares NATO's values, and whether it is "engaged in defence and larger reforms based on these values," the list of priorities also includes considerations such as "whether the partner is of special strategic importance for NATO." The challenge of distributing partnership resources therefore offers NATO an opportunity to identify priorities, speak with greater clarity about the purpose of partnership, and reconnect it to some larger vision of NATO's core purpose.

The virtue of the new partnership policy is that it moves NATO beyond the disagreements over the form and function of NATO's partnerships that have troubled it in recent years and offers a number of new tools to facilitate the cooperative security efforts deemed so critical under the new strategic concept. Under the new framework, partnership is no longer limited by geography or constrained by outdated structures. NATO has in effect redefined what it means to be a partner. Although the Alliance will continue to reach out to those with whom it wishes to establish closer relations, the new policy also opens the door for potential partners to shape their relationships with NATO, by expressing interest in dialogue or participation in the Alliance's menu of

practical cooperation activities. The policy remains vague, however, as to the larger vision that partnerships are intended to serve. NATO's earliest partnership efforts aimed at extending eastward the liberal security order established in Western Europe during the Cold War. In the wake of September 11, the focus shifted to equipping NATO politically and militarily for the war on terror. More recently, NATO's assumption of new missions beyond Europe has created new ties to like-minded allies well beyond Europe. The Alliance should not waste the opportunity to identify a role for these partners in furthering the liberal values that have always been NATO's core mission. Indeed, the fate of these values outside the Euro- Atlantic area will inevitably have significant implications for the Allies' own security.

> NATO's assumption of new missions beyond Europe has created new ties to like-minded allies well beyond Europe.

# Endnotes

1   "Active Engagement, Modern Defence, Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation", Lisbon, November 2010, at http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf [last visited 12 January 2012].

2   Ibid.

3   The Alliance has not yet agreed to extend invitations to either Georgia or Ukraine to join NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP). Europe's continued dependence on Russia for energy resources and fears of provoking a hostile Russian reaction have prevented some Allies from supporting such a step.

4   Lord Robertson, "NATO: A Vision for 2012", Speech at GMFUS Conference, Brussels, 3 October 2002.

5   "NATO Elevates Mediterranean Dialogue to a Genuine Partnership, Launches Istanbul Cooperation Initiative", at http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2004/06-june/e0629d.htm [last visited 10 January 2012].

6   See, for example, A. Elizabeth Jones, "Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Testimony before the subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia", House International Relations Committee, Washington, DC, 29 October 2003 at http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2003/25798.htm. [last visited 15 January 2006]; See also U.S. Department of State Fact Sheet, "Frequently Asked Questions about U.S. Policy in Central Asia", Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Washington, DC, at http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/15562.htm [last visited 15 January 2006].

7   "Istanbul Summit Communique", PR/CP (2004) 096, 28 June 2004 at http://www.nato/into/docu/pr/2004/po4-096e.htm [last visited 12 January 2012].

8   "Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building (PAP-DIB)", Brussels, 7 June 2004 at http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/b040607e.htm [last visited 10 January 2012].

9   IPAPS are drafted every two years rather than annually as is required under MAP.

10  See NATO, "Individual Partnership Action Plans", at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49290.htm [last visited 10 January 2012].

11  "First visit by Top Pakistani Officer to NATO", *NATO Update*, 17 November 2006 at http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2006/11-november/e1117a.htm [last visited 12 January 2012]; Author telephone interviews with NATO International Staff members, August 2009.

12  Pakistan responded to the friendly fire incident by shutting down NATO's supply routes to Afghanistan and removing the U.S. from an air base used to facilitate drone attacks. Anne Gearan, "Pakistan, U.S. Assume Less Cooperation in Future", *Associated Press* at http://hosted2.ap.org/APDEFAULT/3d281c11a96b4ad082fe88aa0db04305/Article_2012-01-02-US-Pakistan-US/id-3734a5528d454a6db26974bc2093d4ae [last visited 10 January 2012].

13  "Afghanistan and NATO's Enduring Partnership", at http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_04/20110414_110414-AfghanPartnership.pdf [last visited 12 January 2012].

14  "Riga Summit Declaration, Press Release (2006) 150", 29 November 2006 at http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-150e.htm [last visited 12 January 2012]; author telephone interview with U.S. Department of State official, January 2007.

15  "Bucharest Summit Declaration, Press Release (2008) 049", 3 April 2008, at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm [last visited 12 January 2012]; author e-mail interview with NATO International Staff Member, 20 January 2009.

16  Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "Secretary General's Monthly Press Conference", 24 January 2011, at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_69914.htm [last visited 12 January 2012].

17  In the months preceding the Lisbon summit, Rasmussen appealed very explicitly for a NATO "security dialogue" with both China and India. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "NATO in the 21st Century: Towards Global Connectivity", speech at the Munich Security Conference, 7 February 2010 at http://www.voltairenet.org/Speech-by-Anders-Fogh-Rasmussen-at [last visited 12 January 2012]; See also "NATO-Managing Security in a Globalised World", Speech by Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Catholic University of Lisbon, Portugal, 2 July 2010, at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_64814.htm [last visited 12 January 2012]; "The New Strategic Concept: Active Engagement, Modern Defence", speech by Rasmussen at the German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels, Belgium, 8 October 2010, at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_66727.htm [last visited 12 January 2012].

18  Author interviews with U.S. Department of State official and NATO International Staff, February 2011.

19  NATO, "Counter-piracy Operations", at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48815.htm [last visited 13 January 2012]; See also Nathan G.D. Garrett and Ryan C. Hendrickson, "NATO's Anti-piracy Operations: Strategic and Political Implications", *Atlantisch Perspectief*, No.8 (2009), p. 4.

20  R. Nicholas Burns, "Briefing on NATO Issues Prior to Riga Summit", Washington, D.C., 21 November 2006.

21  "Active Engagement in Cooperative Security: A More Efficient and Flexible Partnership Policy", 15 April 2011, at http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_04/20110415_110415-Partnership-Policy.pdf [last visited April 2011].

22  Ibid.

23  Ibid.

24  Ibid; author telephone interviews with U.S. Department of State official, February and August 2011.

25  "Political Military Framework for Partners Involvement in NATO-Led Operations", 15 April 2011, at http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_04/20110415_110415-PMF.pdf [last visited 13 January 2012]; author telephone interviews with U.S. Department of State official in February, March, and August 2011, and with NATO's International Staff in February and March 2011.

26  "Political Military Framework for Partner Involvement in NATO-Led Operations"; "NATO insists that the "NAC retains the ultimate responsibility for decision-making".

27  "Final Statement", Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the Level of Foreign Ministers, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 7 December 2011, at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-559613D4-7D4E1306/natolive/official_texts_81943.htm?mode=pressrelease [last visited 13 January 2012].

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29  Ibid, p. 7

30   Hillary Clinton, "Remarks to the Munich Security Conference", 5 February 2011 at http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/02/156044.htm [last visited 13 January 2012].

31   "Final Statement", Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the Level of Foreign Ministers, 7 December 2011, at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-59B2CA11-8BE393DF/natolive/official_texts_81943.htm?mode=pressrelease [last visited 7 January 2012].

32   Ibid.

33   Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "Towards NATO's Chicago Summit", Speech at the European Policy Centre, Brussels, 30 September 2011, at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_78600.htm [last visited 13 January 2012].

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35   Author telephone interview with U.S. Department of State official, August 2011.

36   Isabelle François, "NATO Partnerships and the Arab Spring", p. 11.

37   Ibid.

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39   "Active Engagement, Modern Defence".

40   Rasmussen, "Toward NATO's Chicago Summit".

41   G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan,* Princeton, NY, Princeton University Press, 2011, pp. 348-352.