Active Engagement, Modern Defence

Strategic Concept

for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Adopted by Heads of State and Government
at the NATO Summit in Lisbon
19-20 November 2010

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Preface

We, the Heads of State and Government of the NATO nations, are determined that NATO will continue to play its unique and essential role in ensuring our common defence and security. This Strategic Concept will guide the next phase in NATO's evolution, so that it continues to be effective in a changing world, against new threats, with new capabilities and new partners:

- It reconfirms the bond between our nations to defend one another against attack, including against new threats to the safety of our citizens.
- It commits the Alliance to prevent crises, manage conflicts and stabilize post-conflict situations, including by working more closely with our international partners, most importantly the United Nations and the European Union.
- It offers our partners around the globe more political engagement with the Alliance, and a substantial role in shaping the NATO-led operations to which they contribute.

- It commits NATO to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons – but reconfirms that, as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance.
- It restates our firm commitment to keep the door to NATO open to all European democracies that meet the standards of membership, because enlargement contributes to our goal of a Europe whole, free and at peace.
- It commits NATO to continuous reform towards a more effective, efficient and flexible Alliance, so that our taxpayers get the most security for the money they invest in defence.

The citizens of our countries rely on NATO to defend Allied nations, to deploy robust military forces where and when required for our security, and to help promote common security with our partners around the globe. While the world is changing, NATO's essential mission will remain the same: to ensure that the Alliance remains an unparalleled community of freedom, peace, security and shared values.

Core Tasks and Principles

1. NATO's fundamental and enduring purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means. Today, the Alliance remains an essential source of stability in an unpredictable world.

2. NATO member states form a unique community of values, committed to the principles of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Alliance is firmly committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to the Washington Treaty, which affirms the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

3. The political and military bonds between Europe and North America have been forged in NATO since the Alliance was founded in 1949; the transatlantic link remains as strong, and as important to the preservation of Euro-Atlantic peace and security, as ever. The security of NATO members on both sides of the Atlantic is indivisible. We will continue

to defend it together, on the basis of solidarity, shared purpose and fair burden-sharing.

4. The modern security environment contains a broad and evolving set of challenges to the security of NATO's territory and populations. In order to assure their security, the Alliance must and will continue fulfilling effectively three essential core tasks, all of which contribute to safeguarding Alliance members, and always in accordance with international law:

   a. **Collective defence**. NATO members will always assist each other against attack, in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. That commitment remains firm and binding. NATO will deter and defend against any threat of aggression, and against emerging security challenges where they threaten the fundamental security of individual Allies or the Alliance as a whole.

   b. **Crisis management**. NATO has a unique and robust set of political and military capabilities to address the full spectrum of crises – before, during and after conflicts. NATO will actively

employ an appropriate mix of those political and military tools to help manage developing crises that have the potential to affect Alliance security, before they escalate into conflicts; to stop ongoing conflicts where they affect Alliance security; and to help consolidate stability in post-conflict situations where that contributes to Euro-Atlantic security.

c. **Cooperative security**. The Alliance is affected by, and can affect, political and security developments beyond its borders. The Alliance will engage actively to enhance international security, through partnership with relevant countries and other international organisations; by contributing actively to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament; and by keeping the door to membership in the Alliance open to all European democracies that meet NATO's standards.

5. NATO remains the unique and essential transatlantic forum for consultations on all matters that affect the territorial integrity, political independence and security of its members, as set out in Article 4 of the Washington Treaty. Any security issue of interest to any Ally can be brought to the NATO table, to share information, exchange views and, where appropriate, forge common approaches.

6. In order to carry out the full range of NATO missions as effectively and efficiently as possible, Allies will engage in a continuous process of reform, modernisation and transformation.

The Security Environment

7. Today, the Euro-Atlantic area is at peace and the threat of a conventional attack against NATO territory is low. That is an historic success for the policies of robust defence, Euro-Atlantic integration and active partnership that have guided NATO for more than half a century.

8. However, the conventional threat cannot be ignored. Many regions and countries around the world are witnessing the acquisition of substantial, modern military capabilities with consequences for international stability and Euro-Atlantic security that are difficult to predict. This includes the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which poses a real and growing threat to the Euro-Atlantic area.

9. The proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery, threatens incalculable consequences for global stability and prosperity. During the next decade, proliferation will be most acute in some of the world's most volatile regions.

10. Terrorism poses a direct threat to the security of the citizens of NATO countries, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly. Extremist groups continue to spread to, and in, areas of strategic importance to the Alliance, and modern technology increases the threat and potential impact of terrorist attacks, in particular if terrorists were to acquire nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological capabilities.

11. Instability or conflict beyond NATO borders can directly threaten Alliance security, including by fostering extremism, terrorism, and trans-national illegal activities such as trafficking in arms, narcotics and people.

12. Cyber attacks are becoming more frequent, more organised and more costly in the damage that they inflict on government administrations, businesses, economies and potentially also transportation and supply networks and other critical infrastructure; they can reach a threshold that threatens national and Euro-Atlantic prosperity, security and stability. Foreign militaries and intelligence services, organised criminals, terrorist and/or extremist groups can each be the source of such attacks.

13. All countries are increasingly reliant on the vital communication, transport and transit routes on which international trade, energy security and prosperity depend. They require greater international efforts to ensure their resilience against attack or disruption. Some NATO countries will become more dependent on foreign energy suppliers and in some cases, on foreign energy supply and distribution networks for their energy needs. As a larger share of world consumption is transported across the globe, energy supplies are increasingly exposed to disruption.

14. A number of significant technology-related trends – including the development of laser weapons, electronic warfare and technologies that impede access to space – appear poised to have major global effects that will impact on NATO military planning and operations.

15. Key environmental and resource constraints, including health risks, climate change, water scarcity and increasing energy needs will further shape the future security environment in areas of concern to NATO and have the potential to significantly affect NATO planning and operations.

Defence and Deterrence

16. The greatest responsibility of the Alliance is to protect and defend our territory and our populations against attack, as set out in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The Alliance does not consider any country to be its adversary. However, no one should doubt NATO's resolve if the security of any of its members were to be threatened.

17. Deterrence, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities, remains a core element of our overall strategy. The circumstances in which any use of nuclear weapons might have to be contemplated are extremely remote. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance.

18. The supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States; the independent strategic nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France, which have a deterrent role of their own, contribute to the overall deterrence and security of the Allies.

19. We will ensure that NATO has the full range of capabilities necessary to deter and defend against any threat to the safety and security of our populations. Therefore, we will:

    - maintain an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces;
    - maintain the ability to sustain concurrent major joint operations and several smaller operations for collective defence and crisis response, including at strategic distance;
    - develop and maintain robust, mobile and deployable conventional forces to carry out both our Article 5 responsibilities and the Alliance's expeditionary operations, including with the NATO Response Force;
    - carry out the necessary training, exercises, contingency planning and information exchange for assuring our defence against the full range of conventional and emerging security challenges, and provide appropriate visible assurance and reinforcement for all Allies;

- ensure the broadest possible participation of Allies in collective defence planning on nuclear roles, in peacetime basing of nuclear forces, and in command, control and consultation arrangements;
- develop the capability to defend our populations and territories against ballistic missile attack as a core element of our collective defence, which contributes to the indivisible security of the Alliance. We will actively seek cooperation on missile defence with Russia and other Euro-Atlantic partners;
- further develop NATO's capacity to defend against the threat of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction;
- develop further our ability to prevent, detect, defend against and recover from cyber-attacks, including by using the NATO planning process to enhance and coordinate national cyber-defence capabilities, bringing all NATO bodies under centralized cyber protection,

and better integrating NATO cyber awareness, warning and response with member nations;

- enhance the capacity to detect and defend against international terrorism, including through enhanced analysis of the threat, more consultations with our partners, and the development of appropriate military capabilities, including to help train local forces to fight terrorism themselves;
- develop the capacity to contribute to energy security, including protection of critical energy infrastructure and transit areas and lines, cooperation with partners, and consultations among Allies on the basis of strategic assessments and contingency planning;
- ensure that the Alliance is at the front edge in assessing the security impact of emerging technologies, and that military planning takes the potential threats into account;
- sustain the necessary levels of defence spending, so that our armed forces are sufficiently resourced;

- continue to review NATO's overall posture in deterring and defending against the full range of threats to the Alliance, taking into account changes to the evolving international security environment.

Security through Crisis Management

20. Crises and conflicts beyond NATO's borders can pose a direct threat to the security of Alliance territory and populations. NATO will therefore engage, where possible and when necessary, to prevent crises, manage crises, stabilize post-conflict situations and support reconstruction.

21. The lessons learned from NATO operations, in particular in Afghanistan and the Western Balkans, make it clear that a comprehensive political, civilian and military approach is necessary for effective crisis management. The Alliance will engage actively with other international actors before, during and after crises to encourage collaborative analysis, planning and conduct of activities on the ground, in order to maximise coherence and effectiveness of the overall international effort.

22. The best way to manage conflicts is to prevent them from happening. NATO will continually monitor and analyse the international environment

to anticipate crises and, where appropriate, take active steps to prevent them from becoming larger conflicts.

23. Where conflict prevention proves unsuccessful, NATO will be prepared and capable to manage ongoing hostilities. NATO has unique conflict management capacities, including the unparalleled capability to deploy and sustain robust military forces in the field. NATO-led operations have demonstrated the indispensable contribution the Alliance can make to international conflict management efforts.

24. Even when conflict comes to an end, the international community must often provide continued support, to create the conditions for lasting stability. NATO will be prepared and capable to contribute to stabilisation and reconstruction, in close cooperation and consultation wherever possible with other relevant international actors.

25. To be effective across the crisis management spectrum, we will:

- enhance intelligence sharing within NATO, to better predict when crises might occur, and how they can best be prevented;
- further develop doctrine and military capabilities for expeditionary operations, including counterinsurgency, stabilization and reconstruction operations;
- form an appropriate but modest civilian crisis management capability to interface more effectively with civilian partners, building on the lessons learned from NATO-led operations. This capability may also be used to plan, employ and coordinate civilian activities until conditions allow for the transfer of those responsibilities and tasks to other actors;
- enhance integrated civilian-military planning throughout the crisis spectrum,
- develop the capability to train and develop local forces in crisis zones, so that local authorities are able, as quickly as possible, to maintain

security without international assistance;

- identify and train civilian specialists from member states, made available for rapid deployment by Allies for selected missions, able to work alongside our military personnel and civilian specialists from partner countries and institutions;
- broaden and intensify the political consultations among Allies, and with partners, both on a regular basis and in dealing with all stages of a crisis – before, during and after.

Promoting International Security through Cooperation

Arms Control, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation

26. NATO seeks its security at the lowest possible level of forces. Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation contribute to peace, security and stability, and should ensure undiminished security for all Alliance members. We will continue to play our part in reinforcing arms control and in promoting disarmament of both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction, as well as non-proliferation efforts:

    - We are resolved to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, in a way that promotes international stability, and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

- With the changes in the security environment since the end of the Cold War, we have dramatically reduced the number of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe and our reliance on nuclear weapons in NATO strategy. We will seek to create the conditions for further reductions in the future.
- In any future reductions, our aim should be to seek Russian agreement to increase transparency on its nuclear weapons in Europe and relocate these weapons away from the territory of NATO members. Any further steps must take into account the disparity with the greater Russian stockpiles of short-range nuclear weapons.
- We are committed to conventional arms control, which provides predictability, transparency and a means to keep armaments at the lowest possible level for stability. We will work to strengthen the conventional arms control regime in Europe on the basis of reciprocity, transparency and host-nation consent.

- We will explore ways for our political means and military capabilities to contribute to international efforts to fight proliferation.
- National decisions regarding arms control and disarmament may have an impact on the security of all Alliance members. We are committed to maintain, and develop as necessary, appropriate consultations among Allies on these issues.

Open Door

27. NATO's enlargement has contributed substantially to the security of Allies; the prospect of further enlargement and the spirit of cooperative security have advanced stability in Europe more broadly. Our goal of a Europe whole and free, and sharing common values, would be best served by the eventual integration of all European countries that so desire into Euro-Atlantic structures.

    - The door to NATO membership remains fully open to all European democracies which share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities

and obligations of membership, and whose inclusion can contribute to common security and stability.

Partnerships

28. The promotion of Euro-Atlantic security is best assured through a wide network of partner relationships with countries and organisations around the globe. These partnerships make a concrete and valued contribution to the success of NATO's fundamental tasks.

29. Dialogue and cooperation with partners can make a concrete contribution to enhancing international security, to defending the values on which our Alliance is based, to NATO's operations, and to preparing interested nations for membership of NATO. These relationships will be based on reciprocity, mutual benefit and mutual respect.

30. We will enhance our partnerships through flexible formats that bring NATO and partners together – across and beyond existing frameworks:

    - We are prepared to develop political dialogue and practical cooperation with any nations

and relevant organisations across the globe that share our interest in peaceful international relations.

- We will be open to consultation with any partner country on security issues of common concern.
- We will give our operational partners a structural role in shaping strategy and decisions on NATO-led missions to which they contribute.
- We will further develop our existing partnerships while preserving their specificity.

31. Cooperation between NATO and the United Nations continues to make a substantial contribution to security in operations around the world. The Alliance aims to deepen political dialogue and practical cooperation with the UN, as set out in the UN-NATO Declaration signed in 2008, including through:
    - enhanced liaison between the two Headquarters;
    - more regular political consultation; and
    - enhanced practical cooperation in managing crises where both organisations are engaged.

32. An active and effective European Union contributes to the overall security of the Euro-Atlantic area. Therefore the EU is a unique and essential partner for NATO. The two organisations share a majority of members, and all members of both organisations share common values. NATO recognizes the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence. We welcome the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which provides a framework for strengthening the EU's capacities to address common security challenges. Non-EU Allies make a significant contribution to these efforts. For the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU, their fullest involvement in these efforts is essential. NATO and the EU can and should play complementary and mutually reinforcing roles in supporting international peace and security. We are determined to make our contribution to create more favourable circumstances through which we will:

    - fully strengthen the strategic partnership with the EU, in the spirit of full mutual openness, transparency, complementarity and respect for

the autonomy and institutional integrity of both organisations;

- enhance our practical cooperation in operations throughout the crisis spectrum, from coordinated planning to mutual support in the field;
- broaden our political consultations to include all issues of common concern, in order to share assessments and perspectives;
- cooperate more fully in capability development, to minimise duplication and maximise cost-effectiveness.

33. NATO-Russia cooperation is of strategic importance as it contributes to creating a common space of peace, stability and security. NATO poses no threat to Russia. On the contrary: we want to see a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia, and we will act accordingly, with the expectation of reciprocity from Russia.

34. The NATO-Russia relationship is based upon the goals, principles and commitments of the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the Rome Declaration, especially regarding the respect of democratic principles and the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all states in the Euro-Atlantic area. Notwithstanding differences on particular issues, we remain convinced that the security of NATO and Russia is intertwined and that a strong and constructive partnership based on mutual confidence, transparency and predictability can best serve our security. We are determined to:

    - enhance the political consultations and practical cooperation with Russia in areas of shared interests, including missile defence, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, counter-piracy and the promotion of wider international security;
    - use the full potential of the NATO-Russia Council for dialogue and joint action with Russia.

35. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and Partnership for Peace are central to our vision of Europe whole, free and in peace. We are firmly

committed to the development of friendly and cooperative relations with all countries of the Mediterranean, and we intend to further develop the Mediterranean Dialogue in the coming years. We attach great importance to peace and stability in the Gulf region, and we intend to strengthen our cooperation in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. We will aim to:

- enhance consultations and practical military cooperation with our partners in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council;
- continue and develop the partnerships with Ukraine and Georgia within the NATO-Ukraine and NATO-Georgia Commissions, based on the NATO decision at the Bucharest summit 2008, and taking into account the Euro-Atlantic orientation or aspiration of each of the countries;
- facilitate the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans, with the aim to ensure lasting peace and stability based on democratic values, regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations;

- deepen the cooperation with current members of the Mediterranean Dialogue and be open to the inclusion in the Mediterranean Dialogue of other countries of the region;
- develop a deeper security partnership with our Gulf partners and remain ready to welcome new partners in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

Reform and Transformation

36. Unique in history, NATO is a security Alliance that fields military forces able to operate together in any environment; that can control operations anywhere through its integrated military command structure; and that has at its disposal core capabilities that few Allies could afford individually.

37. NATO must have sufficient resources – financial, military and human – to carry out its missions, which are essential to the security of Alliance populations and territory. Those resources must, however, be used in the most efficient and effective way possible. We will:

    - maximise the deployability of our forces, and their capacity to sustain operations in the field, including by undertaking focused efforts to meet NATO's usability targets;

    - ensure the maximum coherence in defence planning, to reduce unnecessary duplication, and to focus our capability development on modern requirements;

- develop and operate capabilities jointly, for reasons of cost-effectiveness and as a manifestation of solidarity;
- preserve and strengthen the common capabilities, standards, structures and funding that bind us together;
- engage in a process of continual reform, to streamline structures, improve working methods and maximise efficiency.

An Alliance for the 21st Century

38. We, the political leaders of NATO, are determined to continue renewal of our Alliance so that it is fit for purpose in addressing the 21st Century security challenges. We are firmly committed to preserve its effectiveness as the globe's most successful political-military Alliance. Our Alliance thrives as a source of hope because it is based on common values of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and because our common essential and enduring purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of its members. These values and objectives are universal and perpetual, and we are determined to defend them through unity, solidarity, strength and resolve.

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