



## ATLANTIC MEMO #17

**NATO: Striking Bargains with Member States and Russia**

Atlantic Community members recognize that compromises and negotiations will play a critical role in NATO's future. Improving internal cooperation among member states and external relations with global actors, such as Russia, require increased diplomacy. Atlantic Community members suggest that NATO take the following specific steps to achieve these ends:

**1. NATO must maintain an open-door policy and open relations with Russia.**

While [Andrey Chubyk](#) and other Atlantic Community members warn that granting Membership Action Plans (MAPs) to Ukraine and Georgia will create more barriers between Russia and the West, ultimately the majority of our members agree that disregarding countries in Russia's "near abroad" for diplomatic reasons is unacceptable, as the risk of terrorism, rogue WMDs and narcotics trafficking could increase. Rather, the Alliance should sustain its enlargement program by maintaining an open-door policy towards countries interested in joining ([Lieschke](#)).

Extending MAPs to Ukraine and Georgia would go a long way in securing stability and peace in the East ([Lieschke](#)). This process should be undertaken immediately, and while extending MAPs does not mean automatic accession, it is the preliminary step before a long road of negotiation and adjustment ([Lipstaite](#)).

Any partnership between NATO and Russia must acknowledge that Russia remains separate from the West, but nonetheless shares a range of common interests such as preventing nuclear proliferation, combating climate change, and fighting terrorism ([Mankoff](#)). Compromising on the American missile defense shield in Eastern Europe ([Lieschke](#)) or conducting earnest negotiations with President Medvedev on his proposed European Security Architecture ([Voigt](#)) could significantly improve relations with Russia. NATO operations in Afghanistan and efforts to curb Iran's nuclear program would be significantly bolstered with Russian support ([Voigt](#)).

**2. Increased burden-sharing results from shared decisions.**

NATO's foundering military engagement in Afghanistan has revealed deep-seated operational weaknesses and shown that the strategic concept needs considerable revision. In the past a culture of European free-loading has left NATO utterly dependent on the American defense budget ([Toje & Kunz](#)). However, France's recent re-integration into the military command structure of NATO is an important first step in addressing the current imbalances within the Alliance ([Mazzucelli](#)).

The Afghanistan mission must serve as a case study for modifying NATO's internal structure and improving future operations. A new strategic concept cannot be seen as a binding military action plan but rather a framework for later missions ([Thuysbaert](#)). Granting all NATO member states more power in the internal decision-making process will increase their willingness to contribute to Alliance operations ([Lucke](#)). In any new system, newer member states must accept more responsibility for NATO missions and for their own territorial defense ([Swierczynski, Kalburow](#)). Collaboration and contributions on the part of all members is an important symbol of solidarity and critical for NATO's future ([Theiler](#)).

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