



ATLANTIC MEMO #38

One NATO: Strengthening Unity through Transparency and Engagement

INTRODUCTION

If NATO is to remain relevant, it must foster cohesion and unity based on Allies' commitment to mutual values and interests. The following policy proposals focus on forging this unity by closing the gap between Member states' perceptions of each other within the Alliance.

The idea is twofold. First, increasing transparency will ameliorate many of the debates and arguments over burden sharing, and better demonstrate how each member of the Alliance is important. Second, greater involvement in NATO by both military personnel and civilians will form deeper, more personal bonds between members. For instance, instead of seeing NATO primarily as the American presence in Europe, Europeans will be able to relate to other people (from European and non-European countries) they have worked with through NATO programs. In essence, NATO will stop being a "they" and become a "we".

The establishment of an Alliance-wide system of quantifying state contributions, institutionalizing the declassification of information, and improving transparency in the decision-making process would enhance the democratic legitimacy of NATO by offering Allied citizens a clearer idea of how NATO works, thus encouraging citizens to actively create and support a future within the Alliance. Unity among Member states can also be fortified by multiplying multinational exchanges for military and civilian personnel, by creating "NATO Academies", augmenting NATO's online engagement with citizens, and enhancing cyber-security awareness. Indeed, as the connectedness within the Alliance grows stronger, NATO as a whole becomes more capable and effective.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase Transparency

The Alliance must consistently work toward increasing the transparency of its actions and democratic deliberations. Transparency is the key requirement of all value-oriented organizations, and a necessary condition for creating trust among their peoples. Civilians in NATO States should be assured that their common values are represented and, in the same instance, that their individual interests are protected as well.

1.1. Quantify member participation.

The following recommendations will bolster a sense of community by measuring Member states' involvement in NATO:

- **Develop a point system to quantify member participation in arenas beyond economic contribution, including contributing the use of military bases, manpower, infrastructure, diplomacy, etc., to be determined, administered and audited by a multilateral commission.**
- **Create a database to make the point system available to the public.**
- **Encourage states to meet their contribution goal through specific actions and their corresponding point determinations, allowing states that have fallen behind the 2% GDP spending goal to make up the difference.**

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- **Elucidate the "other factors" involved with determining the cost-sharing formula to increase NATO's transparency, including the National Material Capabilities data set and other relevant data.**

The current economic contribution requirements of NATO Members are based on an individual member's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and "other factors" through a cost-sharing formula. The "other factors" of this formula should be revealed to increase the transparency of the central organization, but a more salient policy is necessary to address the larger issues in the disparities of capacity and power. Such disparities in organizational capacities also impacts the influence Members exert over each other, affecting the perceived equality of Members and creating a substantial roadblock in bridging the "they-we" gap. As such, Member participation should be quantified to avoid the ambiguities of measuring commitment to the Alliance.

A Member participation point system would detail each level of contribution from NATO Members, ranging from military and diplomatic involvement, arms production and contribution, infrastructural contributions, aid distribution, as well as participation in NATO public diplomacy campaigns. A state that is having difficulty contributing 2% of its GDP on defense spending can engage in other Alliance activities to reach the goal through points. Point structures would be weighted against the country's capacity to contribute.

Some current programs could be the foundation for an accountability mechanism – specifically benchmarking Allied capabilities development (NATO Defense Planning Process) or monitoring Allied contribution to operations, defense expenditures or deployable forces. However, these initiatives need to be integrated into an overarching system open to the public. An online database would publicly display the points. The system should also act as a catalyst, a motivational tool for states to reliably and traceably contribute to NATO.

NATO is an alliance, and Members may choose (beyond their yearly contribution to the basic NATO budget) how they will be involved; this flexibility must be maintained. Any points system must ensure that it does not turn NATO into a transaction-based partnership. A point system is an effort to limit the divisions between states with varying abilities to contribute to the Alliance. By quantifying involvement and making participation "points" proportional to states' abilities to contribute, all states will have avenues to participate to the best of their abilities, leading to a more unified NATO.

A multilateral commission of Member states should administer the point system. This commission will be tasked with creating the framework for the system with Member input; those Members wishing to expand upon or alter the system (in terms of point totals or types of quantified actions) can suggest the change to NATO as a whole. The commission would then regularly review the system and recommend modifications as needed.

1.2. Increase decision-making and archive transparency.

The following recommendations will improve transparency of NATO decision-making and the classification and release of archival information:

- **Broadcast regular live sessions of Council meetings on natochannel.tv and have NATO experts respond to the concerns raised by the live sessions through online conversation with the public.**
- **Convey the Policy on the Public Disclosure of NATO Information to the public in a simpler manner so citizens can understand how and why NATO documents are classified.**

- **Maintain a system whereby the public can trace the documents classified in a given period together with their release timeline.**

NATO should adopt regular live sessions of Council meetings, broadcast on natochannel.tv. Live sessions will increase the transparency of the organization, show citizens that decisions are made collectively, and inform constituents and journalists. A live feedback mechanism in which a NATO expert answers questions online after meetings would make governments more aware of the attitudes and opinions their constituencies hold regarding specific NATO policies.

During the televised meetings, controversial issues must be dealt with in a sensitive manner or risk losing their substance. However, a wide enough range of discussion would be viewable by the public that would allow NATO citizens to see first-hand the importance of community, collaboration and coalition in NATO policy-making. Live sessions would thus emphasize Members' mutual contribution and increase identification with NATO, which would foster of a feeling of togetherness.

The Policy on the Public Disclosure of NATO Information and other official procedures by which the Alliance releases classified and sensitive documents must be improved in order to better inform citizens. Guidelines for the release of documents after an agreed upon number of years could be correlated with a transparent tracing system, in order to provide the public with a release calendar to address its concerns and requests. The tracing system would encompass a database containing document titles (whenever possible, according to their sensitivity) and their release date. The system could be updated by the team already involved in maintaining the NATO website.

Such a system would not change or review the current classification system or the judgments on which documents to release; it would simply organize and clarify the current process and allow people to find declassified documents more easily. This in turn would provide the public with a more complete understanding of NATO.

1.3. Increase NATO's strategic communication transparency.

The following recommendations will improve strategic communication of national and Alliance interests:

- **Emphasize during the Chicago Summit and through other diplomatic efforts the security and economic benefits of the Alliance.**
- **Strike the proper balance between values-based and interest-based language in NATO's public diplomacy pronouncements.**
- **Acknowledge all available data in conveying non-classified information to the public. Assume that the public will know about available negative information and that withholding the information could decrease the legitimacy of the Alliance.**

NATO's core values of liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law already echo with the democratic peoples of NATO. Unity among its peoples can be enhanced and fostered by increasing the emphasis on the communication of the transnational commonality of these values through the Public Diplomacy Division, to engage people on both sides of the Atlantic in fostering and protecting their common values and purpose. These efforts should be measured through polling by assessing whether or not citizens associate NATO with the above-mentioned values.

The strategic interests of individual Member states drive NATO. Frank discussions of key interests of each state should be on the list of topics for discussion at diplomatic venues of NATO, especially within the Council and behind closed doors during the summit meetings of NATO heads of state and government. In concurrence with values

information, citizens deserve to receive accurate and prompt information from NATO, including on negative issues. Only through transparent dissemination of information will citizens have confidence that NATO is a legitimate organization rooted in democratic values.

2. Promote Engagement

NATO's existence is predicated upon its members' willingness to contribute through contacts, programs, trainings, maneuvers, etc. In order to encourage increased engagement, NATO must enhance its existing institutions and operations, focusing its efforts on enriching opportunities for multinational exchanges and fostering social responsibility toward its citizens. Such cross-cultural exchanges and social responsibility initiatives will enable the public to better perceive and identify with the Alliance's common values.

2.1. Develop more comprehensive multinational military exchange programs.

The following recommendations will foster increased contact between military and civilian personnel, building unity on the individual level:

- **Establish NATO Academies so that almost all Alliance soldiers, not just officers, can experience living and training in another NATO country.**
- **Bring soldiers of all ranks together to work and train in a multinational environment, immersed into the society and culture of Allied countries.**

Soldiers are the blood running through the veins of the NATO body. They carry out missions and bear risks while on deployment; they also are members of civil society within NATO states. NATO must aim to foster a feeling of identity among soldiers who will spread this "NATO spirit" among the populace.

Participating in training at a NATO Academy would occur early in military training, potentially after basic training. Such a military exchange would not only allow for the establishment of camaraderie and personal trust between our soldiers, but also encourage faith in the Alliance's core values and foster bonds among the next generation of military leaders and impart a truly transatlantic education. The transfer of knowledge through the academies is a sustainable investment in the future of the Alliance and its ability to improve inter-operability.

Potential contents of the NATO Academies' schedules might be tactics, physical training, politics, law and weapons. Surely these programs will have to be individually tailored for the different groups of ranks in order to offer the proper degree of mental as well as physical challenge for all soldiers.

A large number of countries being involved is a necessary part of any military exchange. Prototypes of academies should be established to assess the success and sustainability, as well as the costs and benefits, of a scaled up program. Possible and reasonable places for such academies might be abandoned caserns now available due to budget cuts in defense spending. In addition, the classes can be taught by soldiers and already employed language teachers, thus excess costs will be avoided.

Since a fully multinational approach is desirable, soldiers of all Member countries should be given the chance to take part in these cross-cultural exchange programs. Besides improving inter-military relations, the academies would also employ civilian personnel, allowing soldiers greater contact with foreign civilians. This contact would help the Alliance create greater connections between soldiers and civilians.

2.2. Improve cyber security by fostering social responsibility.

The following recommendations will increase citizen awareness toward cyber security and strengthen NATO through a framework of social responsibility:

- **Emphasize the role that all Members must play in securing cyberspace and the Alliance's responsibility, as a whole, in promoting cyber-solidarity amongst its citizens.**
- **Ensure a baseline of cyber protection to users across the Alliance through education, dialogue and support in keeping personal computers safe.**
- **Collaborate, whenever possible, with other international bodies like the EU to coordinate and expand efforts to educate and protect against cyber threats. Harmonize practical proposals in this field.**

While communication is important, the ability to actually connect with the populace is more important than ever. As such, NATO should adopt and implement social responsibility programs similar to the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts used in business.

CSR programs are initiatives to voluntarily contribute to the community's general good. As such, under the aegis of CSR, NATO should use Cause Promotion (bringing a cause to the public's attention to mobilize support) to increase awareness of cyber security amongst the general population.

NATO engages in dialogue over complex issues regarding cyber attacks and secures its own infrastructure but fails to ensure a minimum protection to users across the Alliance. Personal computers of unknowing, uninformed, and thus vulnerable individuals can be used as multipliers for malicious cyber attacks. As such, NATO's role in cyberspace should include a component educating Alliance citizens about protection for personal computers by promoting the issue through competitions, interaction and basic support. Dissemination of basic rules, as well as effective safety practices, would limit the effectiveness of cyber attacks such as botnets and Distributed Denial-of-Service. Such measures might also include free early warning bulletins.

By adopting this approach, NATO would create a sense of cyber-solidarity amongst allied publics. The Alliance will fight shoulder-to-shoulder with individual users beyond simply promoting its concept of "cyber-defense", which appears quite strange for a person unacquainted with IT issues.

At the same time, by increasing individual users' awareness of the risks posed by the cyber environment, a cyber attack would require much more sophisticated methods and implicitly a greater investment of resources by an adversary (a kind of deterrence in terms of costs).

The main advantage of a Cause Promotion campaign geared towards responsibility and solidarity in cyberspace is that NATO already has some capabilities in place for performing such a task. The NATO Consultation, Command and Control Agency (NC3A), NATO Computer Incident Response Capability (NCIRC), and NATO Information Assurance Technical Centre (NIATC) could partner with the Public Diplomacy Division in spreading the Alliance's efforts in the cyber domain.

CONCLUSION

A successful and strong alliance lives by the contribution of its members and the support of their citizens. The more the public knows about NATO operations and how individual Member states contribute to the Alliance, the better equipped citizens are to make judgments on and encourage their government to maintain high levels of involvement. Additionally, through increased military and civilian cultural exchanges possible through the creation of "NATO Academies," as well as by augmenting NATO's existing web presence with value-centric initiatives and collaborative efforts in cyber-security awareness, unity among Member states can be fortified.

Our people will solidify the Alliance through new ways of recognizing, respecting and experiencing NATO, since our future operations will be borne by our multinational cooperative achievements. The presented recommendations lay a path to ensure that our commonly shared values will be more widely known and understood. By implementing them, NATO could encourage greater identification with NATO, increase the feeling of togetherness, and make mutually shared values more tangible.

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