



Looking Beyond Chicago: How to Revitalize NATO

The NATO Summit in Chicago left many observers disappointed over the lack of concrete policy proposals for strengthening the Alliance. In this context, Atlantic Memo #41 offers recommendations that would help NATO in three critical areas: Values and Community, Partnerships after the Arab Spring, and Smart Defense. Atlantic-community.org's "Your Ideas, Your NATO" competition already produced Atlantic Memos addressing these areas. However, we received many good ideas that could not be used in those memos. Here we incorporate those ideas to create a comprehensive Memo aimed at forging a reinvigorated Alliance.

1. Values and Community

A recurring theme from our members was the need for youth and student programs. This calls attention to the fact that NATO should not only expand such programs, but also better promote the existing opportunities. The Alliance could offer summer youth camps and summer schools for adolescents. These youth programs could be extended to non-NATO countries like Russia and Arab countries to counter anti-NATO feelings. Also, the existing structure of NATO internships limits the number of participants. The current internship framework should be geared toward graduate students, and a new internship program would be focused solely on undergraduate students. (Hatter, Ness, Peschau)

NATO should amplify its ties with universities and museums. This would entail the creation of NATO centers modeled on the EU Jean Monnet Program. NATO centers at universities would have scholars-in-resident who teach about transatlantic issues. The Alliance should work with museums to produce traveling or permanent exhibitions related to Alliance history. NATO could even set up its own museum to display shared history and values. (Altunkaya, Greene, Kostadinova, Whyte)

2. Partnerships after the Arab Spring

The Alliance must help build civil-military relations in Arab Spring countries. In Libya, NATO needs to implement a post-conflict disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program accompanied by Security Sector Reform (SSR). The Alliance could complement this initiative by reaching out to Arab youth through cultural dialogue. To augment NATO's Arabic YouTube channel, NATO could create official accounts in Arabic for other social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. (Anuta, Mallia, Mattox)

NATO must offer advice on post-conflict constitution drafting, democratic governance and methods to address the role of the military in the country's political structure. In addition, rule of law initiatives led by NATO, similar to the Rule of Law Field Support Mission in Afghanistan, should provide the essential technical assistance needed to strengthen the capacity and ability of criminal justice authorities. NATO could also provide the possibility for current or next-generation leaders of regional partner countries to train in NATO capitals and learn about democratic governance. (Harriger, Hurd, Schill)

3. Smart Defense

Such a pooling of defense resources requires Members to set aside some concerns over a loss of sovereignty. Overcoming such fears will only occur when Members truly agree on NATO's overall purpose and strategic goals. Only with widespread strategic agreement will Smart Defense become a reality. (Eckert, Shah, Toal)

Gradualism is a critical part of Smart Defense. Limited cooperation amongst smaller groups of nations would make Smart Defense flexible and more likely to be implemented. NATO should build on existing co-management military mechanisms that have proven their worth in recent years. The strongest model for this is the multilateral European Air Transport Command (EATC). Operational since 2010, the EATC comprises four NATO Members (Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands) pooling and co-managing a fleet of over 200 logistics and transport aircraft. (Dowdall, Minzarari, Pannier)

Atlantic Memos showcase the best ideas and arguments from debates in the Open Think Tank on atlantic-community.org. All policy recommendations in this document were made by registered members of the Atlantic Community.

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