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The NATO Riga Summit: A Renewed Commitment to Transformation

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For the past decade, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as we came to know it during the Cold War, has been transformed beyond recognition. Many fear that the Alliance itself has gone astray. In Europe and in the United States citizens are ambivalent about the Alliance because they neglect what it has achieved, question what it now does, and differ over what they want out of it next. To restore the public's commitment to the Alliance will require a re-founding of the Atlantic idea, not only as a matter of facts (including a strategy that gives it coherence, as well as capabilities that give it efficacy) but also as a matter of feelings (which reinforce the will to endorse that strategy, as well as contribute to and use those capabilities).

The next NATO Summit, which will be held in Riga, Latvia, later this year, cannot be merely a transition or even a consolidation summit, designed to await the next wave of political leaders on either side of the Atlantic. Indeed, the Summit will be about more than NATO: it will be about the best ways to reassert publicly the terms of Euro-Atlantic engagement. For that effort to succeed will demand a public display of collegial civility and policy coordination that were missing the last time these 26 Heads of State and Government met in Istanbul, Turkey, two years ago. Publics should get a message that NATO is relevant, and that message will not be heard if it emanates from political leaders who often do not seem to trust or even like each other. Following the Summit, it will be important that NATO leaders make a point of carrying back to their publics a discourse highlighting the continued significance of NATO to their respective countries' security interests. That discourse will be easier to convey if the Summit helps NATO move in the following directions.

First, the Summit should provide a much-needed opportunity for President George W. Bush to explain to, and discuss with, his NATO counterparts how he intends to address, in the aftermath of the Congressional elections, the daunting agenda of real-time issues he will face during the balance of his administration—especially as regards Iraq, Iran, and the Palestinian issue, but also over the other issues that populate the multipolar environment that has been emerging over the past three years. Equally important, the U.S. president should listen carefully to what his counterparts have to say on how they will approach the same issues. This discussion should conclude with a commitment to developing a new Strategic Concept that will recognize that NATO can have a role to play on these types of issues and on others discussed below—often complementary though occasionally in the lead since the Western countries and institutions that will deal with these problems generally consist of NATO members. The new Strategic Concept ought to be adopted by a date certain—say, the spring of 2009 for the 60th anniversary of the Washington Treaty, which should also be the date for the next NATO summit, notwithstanding President Bush's understandable interest in holding one more summit before his departure. That decision alone would suffice to assert the Riga Summit as President Bush's Legacy Summit as a new Strategic Concept will contribute decisively to the post-9/11 transformation of NATO launched at the Prague Summit of November 2002. Indeed, the very commitment to launching the process that might lead to the development of a new Strategic Concept will be no less significant than the document itself.

Second, it should be clear that NATO's future will not be ensured or defined by what is said at meetings, but by what is done on the ground. As a

down payment for the collective commitment to the resolution of current issues, it is especially imperative for the NATO allies to reassert, firmly and specifically, their intention to give NATO whatever forces are needed in Afghanistan. NATO will not be taken seriously if its military leaders are not given the tools needed to fulfill the missions for which they are given responsibility. A war that started with the first-ever invocation of NATO's Article 5, which pledges its members to collective defense, cannot be lost: This is the most serious test faced by NATO since the 1999 Kosovo war, and it has potentially greater long-term implications.

Third, Afghanistan is the most urgent example of the need to give NATO the tools needed to fulfill its obligations to the member states that define its missions. The widening imbalance between NATO goals and purposes, on the one hand, and its capabilities, on the other, must be bridged, within NATO, as well as between its members, and between NATO and the EU. More specifically, the NATO Response Force (NRF), which was launched in Prague four years ago, should be declared operational, and additional commitments to its development should be made if it is deemed to be under-resourced. In particular, the United States should agree to contribute combat units, as well as the support elements already pledged. Additional commitments should also be made for a better coordination of Special Operations Forces, to improve their interoperability for future NATO missions. Shortfalls in high-end capabilities needed for NATO to respond to its new global vocation must be redressed, including strategic airlift, sealift, and air-to-air refueling aircraft. With calls for increases in European defense budgets unlikely to be borne out, Europe must remain focused on spending more wisely and effectively, including finding ways to pool resources through mechanisms such as the European Defense Agency (EDA). The allies cannot complain of America's leadership if they do not show a willingness to accept a larger share of the burdens associated with leadership, or complain of American reluctance to rely on NATO if the NATO allies are unable to produce necessary forces for NATO action.

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Fourth, the non-Article 5 crisis response missions should be framed by a new Stabilization and Reconstruction Initiative (SRI) that should be developed and adopted by the time of the next NATO Summit at the latest. The nature of the emerging security normalcy is unmistakable: however necessary the military dimension of any mission may be, it is not sufficient—which is to say that stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) is no less important than military coercion. Indeed, the failure of S&R missions points to a failure of NATO as well. Given NATO's limitations in these areas, however, and given, too, the reluctance of some allies to see NATO assume direct non-military operational functions, such an SRI will be best pursued in cooperation with the EU and, whenever possible, other multilateral institutions too, including especially the United Nations for larger peacekeeping and peacemaking contingencies that demand contributions by a larger number of non-EU, non-NATO countries for legitimacy as well as for capabilities and relevant resources. In this context, the 2005 UN Draft Outcome Document calling for enhanced peacekeeping partner-

ships with regional organizations is a constructive step that should be examined at the Riga Summit and effectively be put into practice. For the near-term, fielding EU-NATO crisis action teams ought to be a top priority. In addition, cooperation with civilians is a key element of these types of missions, and the NATO Secretary General should be explicitly authorized to develop a civilian capacity for NATO, which would keep the NRF separate from any S&R force because of a clear need to maintain the NRF's high intensity capability. There as elsewhere, the point is not to give NATO a lead role but to ensure that the supplemental capabilities it can bring are neither neglected nor wasted.

Fifth, NATO (and EU) enlargement to the East has been a significant dimension of Europe's transformation since the Cold War. NATO should hold open the door on further enlargement, thereby recognizing the needs and aspirations of a large number of European countries in the former Soviet Union and in the Balkans that have genuine security concerns either because of the lingering threat raised by Russia's post-colonial temptation for territorial

revisions, or because of the unfinished business left by the wars of Yugoslav succession, as well as genuine desires to establish themselves as unequivocally part of the Euro-Atlantic family. Enlargement to the Balkans is about completing Europe's unfinished security business, and the prospect of impending membership invitations should be credibly signaled to such countries as Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia—all NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) participants. Elsewhere there are potential or even likely members that either do not appear politically ready to assert their bid, or to which NATO may not be strategically prepared to acknowledge their readiness. In such cases—including the likes of Ukraine and Georgia, which are already engaged in Intensified Dialogues, and even Serbia, which is not yet—it should be made clear that membership is open to them, and that their own declarations, interest, and action remain a decisive dimension of NATO's final decision. In 2006, the Riga Summit will not be an enlargement summit but its decisions should pave the way for future rounds of NATO enlargement in 2009.

Sixth, the idea of global NATO partnerships has certain advantages in terms of facilitating future political consultation and military cooperation with nations, like Japan, Australia, South Korea, and New Zealand, that share many of the values and interests of NATO members and have shown themselves willing to contribute to NATO operations.

However, formal partnership arrangements make some Europeans very uneasy, because it could lessen the collective defense focus of the alliance and even create a misleading perception that NATO has become so global it has little local relevance. In addition, formal partnership arrangements of the type that has been mentioned would likely raise unhelpful concerns about an alleged encirclement by NATO—in China, Russia, and elsewhere—and lead to difficult political questions about what other nations might reasonably claim a place in such partnership arrangements—including, for example, Israel or Pakistan. The time may come for formalizing partnerships of this nature, but for the present, it would be wise to expand informal contacts, consultation, and military exchange rather than set up a new institutional structure at or after the Riga Summit.

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Seventh, past and likely future enlargement will admittedly reinforce the need for some changes of NATO's procedures, not only in decision-making, but also in budgetary and other terms. The consensus rule remains desirable, however, and should not be touched, recognizing that "consensus" means a good faith effort to reach agreement and attend to the interest and concerns of others. As a legacy of the debate over Iraq, a new NATO civility should be understood as a shared expectation of deeper consultation as decisions are made by the U.S., balanced by the understanding that NATO members willing and able to participate in new missions would face a loyal opposition in the North Atlantic Council that would make room for constructive abstention but would not extend to disruptive obstruction.

Eighth, the NATO Riga Summit should acknowledge a new maturity in NATO-EU relations with a commitment to developing mechanisms that will settle both institutions into the Euro-Atlantic community they help define. NATO must take the EU seriously, as well as, conversely, the EU NATO. For example, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer should hold bi-monthly meetings with his EU counterpart, Javier Solana, to share information and co-ordinate policy on issues such as counter-terrorism. At a time of considerable volatility,

joint contingency planning on a wide range of issues is essential—major terrorist attacks, natural disasters, severe energy shortages, territorial conflicts, and more (or worse)—and NATO's military capabilities in strengthening homeland security should be integrated into a wider strategy as a valuable complement to the civilian assets of the EU. Their conclusions and findings could be communicated to their "Situation Centers" to assess and discuss follow up action and operations.

Ninth, unlike some of the earlier post-Cold War NATO Summits, the Riga Summit will be limited to the 26 NATO members alone. The absence of Russia from the Summit means that NATO leaders need to think hard on how to create an interaction with

Russia that avoids encouraging paranoia, while also making clear concerns about Russia's course in its relations with its neighbors and its internal course. NATO will continue to be the body that protects the security of all its members but doing so includes seeking to lead Russia toward a constructive course that accommodates its needs and preferences without doing damage to those of its neighbors and partners. NATO (and EU) membership for Russia is not an option, so the G-8 is the body best suited for an "integrated" Euro-Atlantic approach to this country—meaning one that involves both Americans and Canadians, together with key European nations and Japan. In this context, it is not the NATO Riga Summit but the next G-8 meeting, to be presided by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in mid-2007, which may emerge as an important moment in Russia's relations with its European neighbors and the United States, one year before Russia's presidential election.

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Tenth, and finally, reflective of the urgency they fear and the unity they feel, the 26 Heads of State and Government who will gather in Riga on behalf of NATO should urge a follow-on Summit that would also include all EU Heads of State and Government that are not members of NATO to discuss and adopt a

new Euro-Atlantic Partnership Agreement to which would also be associated all NATO allies as well. This Summit could be held in 2007, when the 25 EU members will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Rome Treaty.

"Causes," said President Bush in May 2005, during his first visit to Riga, "can be judged by the monuments they leave behind." The postwar Founding Fathers that embraced the causes on whose behalf the Cold War was waged and won, left us with an awesome institutional structure within which it proved possible to start building a Europe that would be, at last, whole and free. Now, in Riga, will be the time to move on with the final refashioning

and refurbishing of NATO and its sister institutions, in and beyond Europe, for the monument that other generations will visit after the challenges of the 21st century have been equally met and successfully overcome.

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This paper pursues a discussion previously started with Simon Serfaty's EU paper, "Moment of Reflection, Commitment to Action," released by CSIS on August 1, 2006. It is based on a two-day seminar that took place in Riga, Latvia on September 15-17, 2006 with a group of leading experts on NATO, representing the United States and 13 other NATO and EU countries. We are especially grateful to Zaneta Ozolina and Latvia's Strategic Analysis Commission for their contributions to and support of the meeting in Riga; we are indebted to the European Commission for its support of the broader project on "The European Union, the United States, and NATO" which served as a framework for the Riga seminar. We greatly appreciate the many substantive contributions made by the members of the working group, which includes Hans Binnendijk, Sven Biscop, Ian Brzezinski, Benoit d'Aboville, Rob de Wijk, Michael Emerson, Ettore Greco, Robert Hunter, Markus Kaim, Ojars Kalnins, Daniel Keohane, Frank Kramer, Ivan Krastev, Atis Lejins, Julian Lindley-French, Hryhoriy Nemyria, Kori Schake, Jiri Schneider, Walter Slocombe, Tomas Valasek, Jukka Valtasaari, and Alexandre Vulic.

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