

**N**ATO is redefining itself for the third time in its history.

Forged in 1949 to protect Western Europe from Soviet attack, the Alliance began taking on security issues outside of its immediate area and accepted new members to the east following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and end of the Soviet Union some two years later.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, member nations recognized that non-state violent extremists and the failure of nation states threatened global, and thus their own, security. The Alliance decided to use its organization to promote the stability of democratic nations.

Now, with NATO's combat mission ending in Afghanistan in 14 months, the 64-year-old Alliance again faces "a major inflection point," said Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow in a speech in Paris in late June.

"This time, however, the challenge is very different, because the next adjustment will require that the Alliance achieve a new balance in the contributions made on the two sides of the Atlantic," he said. "To put it bluntly, it will require the Europeans to do more—both individually and collectively—at a time

when financial conditions are bleak on both sides of the Atlantic."

NATO is preparing for Resolute Support, its post-2014 training, advising, and assisting mission in Afghanistan. Plus, it will still have a rump force providing stability in Kosovo and air and naval forces countering piracy off Africa's east coast.

However, barring an unforeseen conflagration, the Alliance's operational tempo will sharply decrease after some 20 years of major peacekeeping and stability activities that started in the Balkans in 1995 and continued in Afghanistan in 2001 and Libya in 2011. At the same time, the United States is refocusing attention on the Pacific, and some see US and European interests diverging, perhaps to an unprecedented degree.

"The big question is: What is NATO for, now that it is drawing down from operations?" said an Alliance official during an interview at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, in late June. "There is an imperative for NATO to remain visible, to remain credible post-2014."

Ballistic missile defense—in the form of protecting European member states' territory and population centers—is taking on greater importance within the Alliance, as is the protection of the Alliance's cyber networks. NATO is also

considering taking on the role of training Libyan security forces as part of its work fostering democratic states.

To preserve the 28-member organization's relevance, NATO officials intend to focus on operational readiness via expanded training and exercising.

"To have people out there demonstrably training, practicing, and doing things together is the thing which we believe will maintain the credibility of NATO," said the official. "So there is that imperative to get out there and train."

### Connected Forces, Ready Forces

Achieving greater interoperability among member states is crucial to keeping the Alliance capable and poised to engage on a large scale. To support this, NATO announced the Smart Defense initiative in Munich in 2011. It seeks to foster greater harmonization of defense priorities among the allies so they individually procure modern capabilities—or pool resources to jointly field new systems—that best serve the Alliance.

The goal is to address capability shortfalls in areas such as strategic airlift, electronic attack, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance while focusing on operational readiness. NATO adopted the Connected Forces Initiative



# NATO, v. 4

The Atlantic Alliance aims to keep relevant by embracing change.



in February 2012 to support the concept of “NATO Forces 2020.” These will be modern, tightly connected forces properly equipped, trained, exercised, led, and ready to go if called upon.

In a blog posting in early August, USAF Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, said Alliance members had “achieved an unprecedented level of cohesiveness” after fighting together in Afghanistan for more than 10 years. “We are operating as a seamless integrated team right now, and we aim to maintain this level of cohesion ... by intensifying our education, training, and exercises across the air, land, and sea domains,” he said.

The Alliance has said the NATO Response Force—the high-readiness, technologically advanced, multinational force that can rapidly deploy, if needed—will become even more important post-2014 to help demonstrate the Alliance’s operational readiness and to serve as a test bed for NATO transformation.

Training costs money, however, and there isn’t much around. As a result, CFI and Smart Defense, originally seen as progressing on dual tracks, are looking more like they will evolve more sequentially in nature, with the concentration on CFI in the short term.

“That doesn’t mean there will be no procurement, but I think we have to acknowledge that it is going to be less than perhaps we would like,” said the NATO official.

### Same Old B.S.

Tight fiscal times also agitate the Alliance’s old itch: NATO’s burden-sharing debate, as old as the Alliance itself, with peaks and valleys over the years. There is now a peak. The United States bears nearly three-quarters of the Alliance’s costs today, up from about 63 percent in 2000. This is despite having nine more Alliance members now than back in 2000—and 12 more compared to 1998.

“It is grossly unfair [to] America,” said the NATO official.

A great burden-sharing divide, however, also exists among European members, with Britain, France, and Germany providing 88 percent of non-US Alliance defense spending.

With the euro crisis showing no signs of abating in the near term, more and more European nations are slipping below NATO’s hoped-for level of defense outlays. This calls for each member state to spend at least two percent of gross domestic product on defense. Only four NATO members are now at, or above,

that level: the United States, Britain, Estonia, and Greece. That’s down from nine in 2003.

Further, the US is the only NATO member with wide-ranging capabilities. “America could go to war tomorrow and have all the capabilities required in her arsenal to win,” said the NATO official. Meanwhile, “there are a number of broad-spectrum nations in Europe left, but there are no full-spectrum nations.”

For example, France, one of those broad-spectrum allies, required help from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom in the form of airlift, aerial refueling, and overhead intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance for its military intervention into Mali earlier this year.

European Alliance members have mulled over the creation of a European full-spectrum capability. There is no consensus, however, on whether that would help the Alliance or be politically divisive. In fact, recognizing the potential corrosive effect of delineating a European NATO and a US NATO, talk is now shifting to creating “coherent forces” within the Alliance, without specifying the centering on Europe. Some refer to this idea as “burden pooling.”

The Alliance would develop these coherent forces “in a coordinated way,

*Maryland Air National Guard A-10s are readied on the ramp at Amari AB, Estonia, before a sortie for Saber Strike, a multilateral command post and field exercise. Saber Strike aims to improve interoperability between the US and partner nations.*



By Michael C. Sirak, Executive Editor

DOD photo by SSgt. Benjamin Hughes





**US and Spanish soldiers in 2008 prepare to board a CH-47 in Afghanistan for an International Security Assistance Force mission.**

among them, the Alliance Ground Surveillance system will revolutionize NATO's ability to monitor developments on the ground from overhead, vastly improving the Alliance's situational awareness during operations.

[For more on NATO's AGS, see airforcemag.com](http://airforcemag.com), search "NATO's New Eyes in the Sky."

In addition, 10 NATO members and two Alliance partners came together in a Strategic Airlift Capability consortium to procure three C-17s. This group now operates them to meet partner, international relief, and national needs.

"This is a perfect example of smart cooperation: nations working together to provide a capability which they could not afford on their own," said NATO Secretary



based on framework nations that have a broad spectrum of capability," said the NATO official. For example, Estonia and Denmark could build on the experience they have in operating closely with Britain in Afghanistan to provide certain capabilities.

Alliance officials presented this idea to NATO Defense Ministers at their June meeting in Brussels. "There was enough enthusiasm for it to be taken forward and developed as another track to look at this problem" of burden sharing, the NATO official said. Germany has agreed to take the lead in determining what a framework nation might do in this regard.

Looking forward, NATO members are already pursuing joint acquisitions. Chief

**NATO's new headquarters complex, shown here in March 2013 under construction, is right across the street from its current HQ.**



General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, in July during a trip to Papa AB, Hungary, to visit the Heavy Airlift Wing that operates the SAC C-17s.

Further, the Alliance has already identified some 30 other Smart Defense joint projects, such as pooling maritime patrol aircraft, establishing a multinational rotorcraft aviation training center, and jointly procuring remotely controlled robots to clear roadside bombs.

Smart Defense also seeks to get Alliance members to avoid overinvesting in capabilities that the Alliance doesn't need. For example, NATO has been providing fighter aircraft to protect the airspace of Alliance members Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania under the Baltic Air Policing mission. "We still don't want those states to spend their limited funds on fighter aircraft, of which we have a surplus already in the Alliance," said the NATO official. Thus far, the

ber has been on the radar screen, but not ... where they would actually discuss [it] as a separate item," one NATO official said.

That event reflected the growing significance cyber defense is assuming within the Alliance. The aim is now to protect NATO's networks, today spanning the globe. NATO has been defending its networks for years, but as the Alliance has branched out into places like Afghanistan, they have become more exposed and therefore potentially more vulnerable. Thus, the current push is "to centralize the protection," said the official.

The Alliance intends to complete by the end of October an upgrade to its NATO Computer Incident Response Capability Technical Center, located at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe, in Casteau, Belgium. The new software and equipment will enable the center's staff to be "better aware of what is going on with our networks, meaning able to detect

everybody has to figure out their solutions themselves."

NATO is contemplating what role it should have in coming to the defense of a member state that requests assistance when under cyber attack. At the June session, the Alliance's Defense Ministers agreed that cyber defense is a matter of collective defense. They intend to take up the issue again at their next meeting in October.

"The question might sound simplistic, but it is actually quite difficult. What is NATO's role in assisting allies?" asked the official. Already, there is the recognition that it is infeasible to attempt to build the cyber expertise within NATO headquarters to help protect members. "Allies have said, 'Forget about building a NATO cyber army.' This is not going to happen," said the official. Instead, "you have to do it differently. You have to find a way to connect the dots where allies help allies."



USAF photo by SSgt. Austin M. May

payoff to the Alliance is that those nations have been able to provide funds for NATO operations.

### Cyber on the Radar Screen

NATO members have the potential to build on existing constructs, such as the European Air Transport Command—in Eindhoven, Netherlands—which brings together Belgian, Dutch, French, German, and Luxembourgian airmen to fly airlifters and tankers under a common operational umbrella. "A logical step forward would be others coming in to this, possibly including the SAC," said the NATO official. "There are plenty of options for things that ought to be acceptable because [they involve] support rather than combat functions."

During their June meetings in Brussels, NATO Defense Ministers devoted, for the first time in the Alliance's history, a formal session to discussing cyber defense. "Cy-

anomalous activity" and "respond to it," said the official. The center has a staff of some 70 personnel and is expected to grow, including the addition of two newly forming rapid-reaction teams to respond to cyber incidents.

NATO's 2011 cyber policy recognized that member states have a responsibility to take care of their own networks but that the Alliance has a role in helping them increase their national cyber resiliency. The Alliance plans to do this by advocating certain cyber practices through its defense planning process to ensure a minimum level of cyber defense where national and NATO networks interconnect.

"We need allies to do their share" by properly monitoring their networks and having a strategy in place, including a cyber "fire brigade" to respond to attempted intrusions and vulnerabilities, said the NATO official. However, "ev-

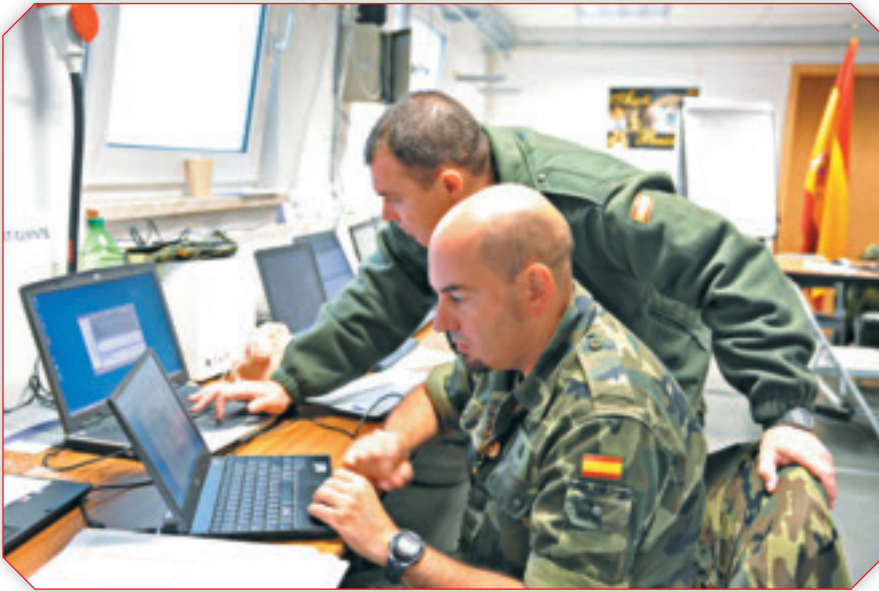
**A British Typhoon flies off the tail of an RAF TriStar tanker during a formation flight.**

### European Missile Umbrella

That model would be similar to how the United States, Germany, and the Netherlands stepped up with Patriot missile defense batteries when NATO partner Turkey requested help in bolstering its defenses to protect against Syrian missiles. "We didn't need to have a core NATO army or NATO Patriots," said one Alliance official.

Along with cyber defense, protecting NATO territory against ballistic missile attack is a mission of growing importance. Already, NATO has invested to shield its deployed forces from ballistic missile threats during out-of-area operations. Now, it is working to defend its civilian populations at home in Europe from mis-





**Spanish military members monitor and maintain network access during Combined Endeavor 2011, a multilateral communications exercise. It involved nearly 40 NATO, Partnership for Peace, and strategic security partner nations.**

Navy BMD-capable Aegis ships at Rota by 2015.

As those contributions take shape, the United States is beefing up EPAA, working toward Phase 2. It will add a land-based SM-3 interceptor site in Romania in 2015 and incorporate a new iteration of the interceptor, the SM-3 Block 1B. Plans then call for another land-based SM-3 site in 2018, this time in Poland, and introduction of the more sophisticated SM-3 Block 2A interceptor for EPAA Phase 3. Unclear is whether NATO will tie any phase of EPAA to the IOC milestone. “You could argue that this is what we should do, but this point has not been made yet,” said the official.

The BMD realm is one area where NATO officials have sought to engage Russia in substantive cooperation as a means

siles emanating, as Vershow said in June, “from outside the Euro-Atlantic area, not from Russia.”

At its Chicago summit in May 2012, NATO declared an interim capability for ballistic missile defense. This meant the Alliance had installed and tested the command and control element at Allied Air Command headquarters at Ramstein AB, Germany, and this system is able to provide commanders with a comprehensive, real-time operational air picture so they could employ missile defense assets effectively.

Member states will voluntarily supply those assets: sensors and anti-missile interceptors. Today, they are in the form of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) Phase 1 system, the US contribution to protecting NATO’s European territory. Phase 1 comprises a Navy Aegis ship available in the Mediterranean, equipped with Standard Missile-3 interceptors, as well as an AN/TPY-2 surveillance radar based in Turkey.

With the C2 and EPAA elements in place, the Alliance declared it has the ability to protect “southern NATO Europe against a ballistic missile attack.” Since the ultimate goal is to protect the entire NATO territory from increasingly complex threats, the Alliance intends over the next several years to mature the interim capability into an initial operational capability that features an enhanced C2 element, along with more sensors and anti-missile

missiles. Further down the road, early next decade, NATO expects to declare a full operational capability when an even more robust shield is in place.

At this point, however, it is not clear what specifically has to happen to reach IOC. “We are still in a discussion on these issues,” said another NATO official during an interview in Brussels. “We have not yet defined what should be part of the package that would allow us to move to that next step.”

EPAA is not synonymous with NATO missile defense, even though it is the primary component right now—and may be for some time. Some European members have announced plans to contribute. The Netherlands, for example, is modifying four air-defense frigates with missile defense radars. France plans to develop an early warning capability and long-range radar. Spain has agreed to host four US

Photo by Andrea Hohenforst



NATO photo

**US Marine Corps Gen. Joseph Dunford, ISAF commander, greets NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in Afghanistan. Rasmussen is a fan of “smart cooperation”—nations pooling resources to gain capabilities they couldn’t afford on their own.**

of transforming the NATO-Russia security relationship. However, so far, Russian rhetoric hasn't advanced much beyond regarding NATO's defensive shield as a threat to Russia's strategic nuclear missile force, thereby stymieing real progress beyond activities such as computer-based missile defense simulations.

"We still have a lot to do to build up trust and confidence and to get over our shadows of the Cold War," said the NATO official. "This is much more difficult than everyone thought and it is also frustrating as far as I am concerned because I would like to see much more progress, and it is not happening right now."

At NATO's May 2012 Chicago summit, Alliance members called for establishment of a NATO-Russia data fusion center, where the two parties would share early warning data and other information on missile threats, and a NATO-Russia planning and operations center, where they would plan and coordinate missile defense operations together. So far, Russia has not embraced these proposals.



"If Russia doesn't want to cooperate, then it will be a huge missed opportunity," said NATO's Vershbow in a June missile defense speech in London. "But life will go on. We will move ahead with NATO missile defense as planned, because it is critical to the collective defense of our people and our territories in this 21st century."

### **Resolute Support**

When NATO's International Security Assistance Force completes its combat mission in Afghanistan at the end of 2014, the Alliance will lead a follow-on mission called Resolute Support to help Afghan National Security Forces sustain their capability to handle internal threats and also become stronger.

"The new mission will not be ISAF by another name," NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen told reporters in early June, following meetings of the Alliance's Defense Ministers in Brussels. It was there that the Alliance adopted the detailed concept for Resolute Support.

This endeavor "will be different and be significantly smaller," said Rasmussen. "Its aim will be to train, advise, and assist the Afghan forces—not substitute for them."

Resolute Support calls for a force of between 8,000 and 12,000 personnel; a regional approach; and the training, advisory, and assistance activities generally taking place at the corps level, not at tactical echelons.

Planning for Resolute Support, now some 15 months away from start, is underway.

NATO members, perhaps not all, will contribute manpower to the Resolute Support force, as will some non-Alliance partner nations. Already some 10 non-NATO countries are involved

***The NATO AWACS program is an example of successful pooling of resources.***

with NATO in the planning process for generating the troops, said the official. The Resolute Support coalition will be smaller in number than the 51-member ISAF coalition since the need for ground forces is much less.

The Resolute Support force will include teams of trainers, advisors, and mentors; elements to protect and logistically sustain them; and administrative support and "other bits and pieces," said the NATO official in an interview at Alliance headquarters in late June. The actual training, advising, and assisting presence will comprise "less than 25 percent" of the total force.

"Close air support may still be necessary," as part of force protection, but "in a much more limited way than now" and "absolutely and solely in support of our own forces," said the official.

Similar to ISAF, Resolute Support's regional approach will include a hub in Kabul and one in the country's north, south, east, and west. In each region, one NATO member will serve as the "framework nation," playing the lead role for coordinating activities in that area. Germany will lead in the north, Italy in the west, and the United States in the south and east.

Resolute Support training will occur at the Afghans' national-level security academies and institutions, with NATO instructors teaching at them. Britain is taking the lead in helping the Afghans establish a new officer academy.

The advising work will entail placing mentors in Afghan security ministries to work alongside senior local officials to provide advice on topics such as force planning. There will also be mentors working at the operational level with Afghan senior staffs.

The assisting activities will involve providing technical help to Afghan special forces. In some cases, this "may drop down to the tactical level," said the official. It could include airlift and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support "in certain, very controlled and limited circumstances."

Since the development of the Afghan Air Force will not be complete by the end of 2014, the United States will continue to lead efforts to train Afghan airmen in parallel to the Resolute Support activities. NATO expects the AAF to be fully operational around 2017.

NATO's coalition has been working to bring Afghan security forces up to a point of self-sufficiency. "While they are capable of dealing with all security threats within the country, their sustainability is not quite so certain," said the official. With Resolute Support, "what we need to do is to build a little bit more robustness ... such that they become very quickly completely self-sustaining."

"We are still at quite an early stage," but "a lot of the detailed work is going on," said the NATO official. The Alliance is proceeding in a measured way and does not intend to make decisions too far in advance. "We need to retain the flexibility to adjust the mission right to the point of execution," said the official. With so much still to change in Afghanistan over the next 15 months, the measured approach seems the logical way to go. ■