



**MOBILIZING NATO FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN:
AN ASSESSMENT OF ALLIANCE CAPABILITIES**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NATO mission in Afghanistan represents a crucial test of the Alliance in the post-Cold War world. Despite the significant threat posed by radical extremists to all NATO members and to the region's stability, efforts by both NATO and Alliance members regarding Afghanistan have been hindered by differing levels of commitment, domestic politics, caveats regarding troop actions, and NATO's own processes and procedures. NATO's internal processes are too slow for what is required, and any agreed systemic reform resulting from a new NATO Strategic Concept will not come until at least early 2011. The alternative—further Americanization of the war—would shake political and public confidence in transatlantic security and potentially unravel the Alliance itself. While the current situation is challenging, NATO has changed course in the past and can do so again.

The assessment delivered by General Stanley McChrystal, the commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), outlines a new strategy for Afghanistan and was generally endorsed by the NATO Defense Ministers in October of 2009. This counterinsurgency strategy is resource-intensive. Currently, the NATO forces in Afghanistan are inadequate to effectively implement this strategy. **NATO members can and should do more.** This assessment highlights critical areas where NATO countries can make additional contributions. The assessment covers Canada and all European members of the Alliance and identifies how each country can positively contribute to the Afghan mission.

Along with increased combat troops, European nations are capable of providing additional:

- **Training capabilities, including military and police trainers (23 countries)**
- **Combat enablers (20 countries)**
- **Special forces (9 countries)**
- **Helicopters (8 countries)**

Training capacity is the most immediate need. Developing Afghan military and police forces to provide security is the only meaningful transition strategy for NATO forces. The NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) currently lacks the necessary resources to operate effectively. European nations have the capacity to do more in this vital area.

Combat enablers and support forces, the second priority for increased European contribution, are the means that provide the support necessary for frontline troops to be fully capable. These “enablers” range from ground and air tactical mobility units and convoy security to intelligence and surveillance detachments and medical support facilities. These forces will be vital to ensuring the efficacy of any additional combat troops. These enablers also include vital engineering units to develop and sustain the infrastructure for increased troop levels, while also assisting with aid and reconstruction efforts.

The European members of NATO and the European Union (EU) must also better address the civilian side of counterinsurgency. Whether these capacities are applied through NATO, the EU, or another mechanism to be determined, their necessity remains:

- **Increased economic aid**

- **Civilian mentors**

Civilian mentoring, which is desperately needed in Afghanistan, must become a priority. Similar to the military and police training missions operating in Afghanistan, this would involve civilian bureaucrats and technocrats partnering with Afghan counterparts at the national and sub-national levels. This area will help to improve the legitimacy and efficacy of the Afghan government, while also combating corruption. In this area, cooperation between NATO and the EU will be vital.

Beyond the priority areas, NATO member s will need to address other areas regarding its operations in Afghanistan. These include:

- **Operational funding**
- **Removing operational restrictions (caveats)**
- **Decision-making processes (consensus rule)**
- **Additional Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)**
- **A wide-scale public information campaign regarding the importance of the war in Afghanistan**
- **Deployment timeline**
- **NATO-EU cooperation**

NATO also must adjust its strategy to reflect the dynamic, ever-changing situation in Afghanistan. NATO must encourage and support better coordination of civilian and military efforts and encourage stronger cooperation among ISAF participatory nations. NATO must also shift its strategy to understand that the enemy it faces is not based solely in Afghanistan. While the military effort will remain confined to Afghanistan, NATO must adopt a regional strategy that includes Pakistan. Doing so will allow for increased coordination between ISAF and the Pakistani army, along with training efforts to improve the capability of Pakistani forces fighting the Taliban. **NATO should adopt a training effort for Pakistan in the mold of the NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTM-I) where Iraqi personnel were trained outside of Iraq. A similar approach would allow NATO to train Pakistani forces without raising concerns about NATO personnel operating on Pakistani soil.**

NATO and its heads of state and government must address these areas for the Alliance to be successful in Afghanistan. Failure is not an option. Should the Taliban retake Afghanistan, it would enable sympathetic radical groups to destabilize Pakistan, potentially gain control of nuclear weapons, provoke action from India, and plunge the whole region into chaos. Radical groups around the world would be emboldened, leading to terrorist attacks in Europe and North America.

After President Obama unveiled his plan to send 30,000 more American troops to Afghanistan in an effort to turn the tide against the Taliban insurgency, many European leaders immediately praised the new strategy. Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen pledged that NATO countries would raise at least 5,000 non-U.S. troops for the war effort, and several countries have already announced new pledges. Although this commitment of new troops certainly constitutes a welcome development, most leaders have not begun to tap the Alliance's impressive resource base.

NATO must not focus solely on the number of new resources, but must also ensure that those resources are applicable to a broad strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan and are capable of active, timely, and flexible participation in vital ISAF operations. To ensure their future security and prosperity, NATO nations must marshal all of their extensive capacities to achieve success in Afghanistan.