

Young Leaders Forum
BUILDING BRIDGES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION
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COMMON PROPOSALS OF THE YOUNG LEADERS

Challenges in Afghanistan: Bringing Stability and Building Democracy?

After five years of facilitating Afghan reconstruction through the establishment and support of a central government, we are at a critical juncture and risk failure unless all Allies commit themselves to the mission. We recommend the following:

- ***Respect for local ownership, traditions, and values should be fully taken into account in all military and civilian operations*** in order to enhance long-term results. This includes ensuring local participation and consultation with a particular emphasis on improved communication with local communities.
- ***There needs to be a joint effort on all levels without geographical and functional restrictions.*** The mission in Afghanistan is perceived by many as a test of the political will and military capability of the Alliance. While recognising the legitimate domestic political constraints and their consequences, all NATO member states must aim to fulfil their obligations and provide the required operational capabilities to the mission in Afghanistan.
- ***There is a need for an overall reconstruction strategy in Afghanistan*** that also includes other international organisations and stakeholders. The military approach has to be complemented by intensified and coordinated civilian reconstruction efforts and the engagement of neighbouring countries to increase regional and cross-border cooperation.

NATO and its Partners: How to Improve Cooperation?

Within a new strategic concept, we recommend that the Alliance consider the following:

- ***NATO and the EU must agree to revamp their relationship*** by removing national blocks to the agenda of NAC-PSC meetings, rethinking communication strategies and coordinating strategic planning and operations in advance.
- ***Members of the Alliance need to publicly reaffirm their commitment to the UN*** and make a concerted effort to share information between the two organisations by creating a formal NATO mission to the UN which is particularly focused on working with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.
- ***NATO must reassess its relationships with non-member states.*** Its partnership mechanisms should reflect the distinctions between those who seek improved interoperability and those who seek membership. In addition, NATO must reach out to key regional and strategic players and cooperate with them where appropriate.
- ***NATO should seek continuous dialogue with key NGOs in order to coordinate relief, rescue, and stabilization efforts in advance.*** In order to improve public awareness, NATO should also promote dialogue with NGOs about a holistic concept of security and NATO's role in providing such security.

Western Policy Towards Russia: We Need a Coherent Policy.

NATO's existing institutional ties should be used to implement a more coherent and pragmatic policy towards Russia, focusing on the following recommendations:

- ***Raise public awareness in Russia and the West about the necessity and prospect of a strong partnership.*** It is crucial that Russia overcome lingering popular resentment concerning NATO. The success of the NATO-Russia Rally should serve as example for future initiatives.
- ***Extend security cooperation with Russia.*** Successful cooperation in the Balkans, Afghanistan and in *Operation Active Endeavour* should be expanded upon by further trust-building measures between Russia and the West. The next major step should be a more coherent approach towards Iran and a more vigorous Russian engagement in non-proliferation efforts.
- ***Enhance political dialogue with Russia while insisting on basic prerequisites for cooperation.*** It is the responsibility of the West to engage Russia and develop a common solution to the pressing challenges of energy security, democratic reform, and economic development. Russia has to establish and maintain a free press, civil society and other components of an open society which follow a good neighbour policy. Undermining the independence of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, in particular, is unacceptable.

NATO Enlargement in the Future: Who Will Open the Doors?

We recommend proceeding with the following actions:

- ***South East Europe.*** NATO should invite Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania to accession talks with prospective NATO membership no later than 2008. PfP should be granted to Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Riga Summit and, if not there, as soon as possible thereafter.
- ***Ukraine.*** NATO should work with the Ukrainian government to conduct a public diplomacy campaign on the benefits of NATO membership and offer MAP to Ukraine as soon as feasible. NATO should also emphasize that its door remains open to Ukrainian membership.
- ***Georgia.*** At the Riga Summit, NATO should strongly reaffirm its support for Georgian sovereignty and territorial integrity; no third party should be allowed to hinder or hold up a country's path to NATO membership. NATO should support Georgia in its efforts to peacefully resolve territorial conflicts, including support for efforts to internationalize the existing peacekeeping and negotiating formats. MAP should be offered to Georgia at the Riga Summit and, if not there, as soon as possible thereafter.

Energy Security: A New Challenge for NATO?

We recommend that the Alliance incorporate the following issues in its attempt to design a NATO strategy towards energy security:

- ***Provide security for energy supply routes and crucial infrastructure*** by security assistance to the Allies under Article IV, contingency planning for the use of NRF in the event of an energy security crisis and military operations to protect sea lanes based on the model of existing operations such as OAE.

- ***Enhance the political dialogue among the Allies and coordinate policies with the European Union*** in order to raise awareness of energy security issues and make it a permanent part of the dialogue. The NRC should also emphasize the energy security dimension.

- ***Intensify the energy security dimension of the Alliance*** by deepening cooperation on the issues of energy security and reform efforts with existing partners and establish a Partnership for Energy Security, which would reach out to energy producing and transit countries that are currently outside the existing dialogue frameworks.