



# THE FUTURE OF NATO'S PARTNERSHIPS



Spring 2014

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# THE FUTURE OF NATO'S PARTNERSHIPS

by the Security & Defence Agenda

with the support of

the US Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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# Table of contents

Introduction	6
Background and development of NATO's partnerships	6
Partnerships: What advantages for NATO?	7
Perspectives from partner countries: Why partner with NATO?	8
Looking ahead to the 2014 Summit: Considerations on the future of NATO's partnerships	13
ANNEX I - Programme	17
ANNEX II - List of participants	19

## Introduction

The NATO Summit in September 2014 in Wales will focus on the future shape of the Alliance including the role of its diverse partnerships. This event hosted by the Security & Defence Agenda centered on the variety of roles that NATO's partnerships currently play in the Alliance, and what advantages they hold for both NATO and partner countries. The speakers also explored key issues confronting NATO as it considers the future of its partnerships.

## Background and development of NATO's partnerships

2014 is an important year for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It marks the 65th anniversary of the Alliance as well as the 20th anniversary of two key partnership formats: The Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the Mediterranean Dialogue. In addition, the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, NATO's largest operation to date and involving 49 countries, will officially come to a close by the end of this year.

With these milestones in mind, **Douglas Lute**, Ambassador of the US Mission to NATO, reviewed the development of NATO's partnerships within the historical framework of the Alliance. He identified three distinct phases in NATO's history: The first forty years, from 1949-1989, focused on collective defence and deterrence during the Cold War. Starting in 1989, with the end of the Soviet Union, NATO underwent five years of quick transition, and began to face new realities on the periphery. The most recent phase, beginning in 1994, is NATO's operational phase.

During these last twenty years, NATO has been engaged in non-stop operations on the periphery: First in Bosnia and Kosovo; followed by the invocation of Article 5 for the first time in 2001 after the September 11 terrorist attacks; and finally, the deployment of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. There have also been various smaller maritime operations and, most recently, the 2011 air campaign in Libya.

Lute pointed out that these past twenty years of operations coincide exactly with twenty years of growing NATO partnerships. Noting that the importance of NATO partnerships is often overlooked, he said: "It strikes me that NATO partnerships are the least well-known and least-appreciated dimensions of the alliance."

**"It strikes me that NATO's partnerships are the least well-known and least-appreciated dimensions of the alliance."**



Douglas Lute, Ambassador of the US Mission to NATO

## Partnerships: What advantages for NATO?

The US Ambassador stated unequivocally that NATO had benefitted greatly from the two decades of partnership experience, and pointed out that twelve current NATO allies began as partners. He underscored the critical contributions of NATO partners with regards to military capabilities, citing the mission in Afghanistan as an example.

With fifty countries involved and twelve years into the ISAF mission, important gains have been made in Afghanistan with the help of NATO partners. All of these countries remain committed to seeing these gains preserved as the mission comes to an end in 2014. This demonstrates the power of successful partnerships, said Lute.

He emphasised, however, that NATO partners contribute much more than just hard military power. “Although partnerships provide important military capabilities, these compete in importance with the political value from exposure to these partners,” he said, adding that partners broaden and diversify NATO’s political dialogues and provide a perspective on issues, as well as the regional context and political texture on challenges.

Lute used the partnership with the Mediterranean Dialogue<sup>1</sup> countries to illustrate his point: Through dialogue with these partners “we gain diversity, we gain understanding... appreciation for local conditions, which if we just sat in that round room of twenty-eight, we frankly would not have,” he said.



**“We gain diversity, we gain understanding...appreciation for local conditions, which if we just sat in that round room of twenty-eight, we frankly would not have.”**

Douglas Lute, Ambassador of the US Mission to NATO

## Perspectives from partner countries: Why partner with NATO?

**Veronika Wand-Danielsson**, Ambassador of the Mission of Sweden to NATO, explained how Sweden’s partnership with NATO, as well its membership in the European Union (EU), constitute a break with Sweden’s historic legacy of neutrality and

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<sup>1</sup> Mediterranean Dialogue Partners: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

its policy of non-alignment throughout the Cold War. Sweden joined the EU in 1995, thus signing on to its political and military ambitions, and became a NATO partner when the Partnership for Peace was created in 1994.

Wand-Danielsson explained that Sweden's partnership so far mainly centered on its support of NATO in its role as a crisis management organisation, saying: "The partnership has mainly been defined by our relationship as a troop-contributing country to an alliance which is the major most capable crisis management organisation there is." She pointed out that Sweden has contributed to most NATO missions: From the Balkans to Afghanistan, to the Operation Unified Protector (OUP) mission in Libya in 2011.

**"The partnership has mainly been defined by our relationship as a troop-contributing country to an alliance which is the major most capable crisis management organisation there is."**



**Veronika Wand-Danielsson, Ambassador of the Mission of Sweden to NATO**

This practical military experience and exposure to NATO standards and capabilities are an important benefit for NATO partners. Ambassador Lute explained that military personnel from partner countries attend NATO schools, operate and practice alongside NATO, and gain practical on-the-ground experience. Wand-Danielsson echoed this and pointed to Sweden's experience with NATO as a positive factor





which is influencing the country's ongoing defence reform. The focus on territorial defence posture with traditional forces is shifting to developing rapidly deployable and expeditionary forces within a fully interoperable alliance. This means that Sweden will also be able to contribute to EU or UN missions, and can become a better EU member in the military field.

NATO also offers high-level political consultations with its partners, all the way up to summit level, and both Lute and Wand-Danielsson cited this format as another major advantage that NATO offers to its partners. Wand-Danielsson especially commended this practice and observed that when Sweden contributed to missions in Afghanistan and Libya, "NATO integrated us, as troop contributing country, in even political discussions. We sat at the table and participated in decision-shaping of NATO's actions. NATO has done a great effort to fully integrate troop-contributing partners as far as possible to missions to which they contribute."



**“A sign that Japan wants to contribute to and learn from NATO.”**

**Mitsuo Sakaba**, Ambassador of Japan to Belgium and Representative of the Government of Japan to NATO

Other important reasons for countries to partner with NATO include shared strategic interests and common security challenges. **Mitsuo Sakaba**, Ambassador of Japan to Belgium and Representative of the Government of Japan to NATO, mentioned these factors when discussing Japan's recent steps to develop closer relations with NATO. Since World War II, Japan has faced much reluctance and many taboos in expressing its security concerns and establishing a security policy. Sakaba said that Japan no longer felt it could afford to be so reluctant. In 2013, NATO and Japan adopted a Joint Political Declaration, which clearly states that their security issues are closely interlinked. Sakaba sees Japan's growing cooperation with NATO as "a sign that Japan wants to contribute to and learn from NATO."

## Looking ahead to the 2014 Summit: Considerations on the future of NATO's partnerships

**Giles Merritt**, Chairman of the Security & Defence Agenda, who moderated the event, pointed out that the main topic of the September summit would certainly be the future of NATO. He identified NATO's partnerships as a priority when considering the larger issue of NATO's future, and asked the panelists to share their views and concerns for the future of NATO's partnerships.



Ambassador Lute identified a critical question: Are these partnerships truly a two-way street? Does NATO provide its partners with something that is worthy of their investment?

As NATO considers the future structure of partnerships, Wand-Danielsson urged NATO to continue its course on two main components. First, NATO should preserve the political connectivity and structures that are vital and that ensure regular and predictable dialogue. She pointed out that Sweden as a partner country is involved in more than 130 working groups, all the way up to summit level.

**“We should clearly share common strategic interests to work together. Identification of these is very important when we engage in joint operations and activities.”**

Mitsuo Sakaba, Ambassador of Japan to Belgium and Representative of the Government of Japan to NATO



The other area in which NATO should continue to excel, according to Wand-Danielsson, is obviously as regards military capabilities. NATO must preserve its role as the global centre of excellence. NATO sets the gold standard and certifications for other militaries, including for Swedish armed forces, she said, adding that NATO's work on improving military capabilities should also be maintained. Smart defence, or pooling and sharing of capabilities, should be continued and expanded.

Wand-Danielsson argued in favour of differentiation among NATO partners. Not all partner countries possess the same military capabilities and political will to participate in different operations with NATO. She therefore suggested at least two different formats for cooperation: Those that are interest-based and broader in regard to common global challenges; and others that are more value-based.

All speakers emphasised the importance of deepening value-based cooperation. Ambassador Sakaba called for NATO to work with its partners on the basis of common universal values such as democracy and human rights. NATO was not formed merely as a military alliance, Lute pointed out, but rather values such as freedom and democracy underpin the Alliance. Although not all partners share these values, he insisted that partners' political bodies and militaries would profit from exposure to these values.

**“How can NATO fashion these partnerships with both of these difficult regions without getting drawn into problem areas as a result of an enlarging partnership strategy?.”**

**Giles Merritt, Chairman of the Security & Defence Agenda**



Ambassador Sakaba identified three additional aspects that NATO should keep in mind while debating its partnerships. First, the necessity of a global perspective, as new emerging security challenges are truly global. Secondly, “we should clearly share common strategic interests to work together. Identification of these is very important when we engage in joint operations and activities,” he said. Finally, NATO should consider geopolitical factors in its partnerships. Japan is far away from the theaters in

which NATO has other partners, such as the Mediterranean, and it is eager to see how these will develop.

Merritt raised the issue of the risks to which NATO is exposed due to its partnerships, notably in two regions. Despite the Mediterranean Dialogue, the situation in the Arab world remains very unstable. In the Far East, he pointed to an emerging arms race between India and China, and a surge in security concerns for Japan. Merritt pointed out that NATO's expanded partnerships contain the danger of drawing it into possible conflicts within these regions. He asked: "How can NATO fashion these partnerships with both of these difficult regions without getting drawn into problem areas as a result of an enlarging partnership strategy?"

EU-NATO cooperation remains a difficult and complicated issue. Ambassador Wand-Danielsson explained that although summit conclusions have clear language stating the need for more coherence in areas where both organisations are active, including the financial crisis and its consequences, there was still much to be done in improving EU-NATO relations. She called for more cooperation in the areas in which there is common interest, and urged more pooling and sharing of resources, also known as smart defence. At the end of the day, she concluded, capitals have to decide which organisation has the comparative advantage and is therefore more credible in what area. Ambassador Lute pointed out that NATO recognises the EU as a partner organisation, and called for more cooperation between the two.



# ANNEX I – Programme

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## THE FUTURE OF NATO'S PARTNERSHIPS

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NATO's September 2014 summit will focus on issues critical to its future in light of developments in Afghanistan and ISAF's transition to a 'Train, Advise and Assist mission'. Key elements of the NATO summit will be the Alliance's capabilities and the benefits to NATO operations of its network of partnerships.

NATO's partnerships have in recent years come to the forefront of the Alliance's agenda, reflecting the contributions of forty-one partners around the world. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Partnership for Peace and the Mediterranean Dialogue, and the 10th anniversary of the Istanbul Cooperative Initiative.

In today's volatile international climate, NATO's partnerships have an increasingly crucial security role to play. Their effectiveness to date and how they could be further developed will be the subject of this evening debate, with opening remarks by:

<b>Douglas Lute</b>	Ambassador of the US Mission to NATO
<b>Veronika Wand-Danielsson</b>	Ambassador of the Mission of Sweden to NATO
<b>Mitsuo Sakaba</b>	Ambassador of Japan to Belgium and Representative of the Government of Japan to NATO

Moderated by **Giles Merritt**, Chairman of the Security & Defence Agenda



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**Mohamed-Raja I Barakat**, Independent Economic Expert

**Steven Barraclough**, Political Counsellor, Mission of Australia to the EU

**Gregory Baumans**, Independent Researcher and Writer

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**Zane Berzina**, Third Secretary, Delegation of Latvia to NATO

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