

**IPI analysis:**  
**Background Elements on NATO's New Strategic Concept**

NATO's new Strategic Concept was adopted at the Lisbon summit on November 20th, 2010. It replaces the precedent Strategic Concept adopted at the NATO summit in Washington DC, in April 1999, at the time of the crisis in Kosovo. The document serves as the mission statement of the Alliance.

The Strategic Concept reaffirms NATO's three "essential core tasks": collective defense of the Allies (Article 5 of the Washington Treaty), crisis management (i.e. political tools and military operations to prevent, stop conflict or consolidate stability in crises which can affect the security of the Alliance), and cooperative security (to engage countries or international organizations beyond NATO's borders).

The Concept proposes several innovations in NATO's core tasks to adapt to its evolving security environment.

**Security environment**

The document presents NATO's assessment of its security environment. In addition to the traditional challenges (the conventional threat and the risks posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction), the Concept also puts the emphasis on new risks to the security of the allies, in particular: terrorism (the previous version of the Strategic Concept had been adopted before 9/11), instability or conflict beyond NATO's borders, cyber attacks, security of transit routes for trade and energy, technology-related trends (laser, electronic warfare, etc.), and key environmental and resource constraints (climate change, health, etc.).

**Collective defense**

The Concept reaffirms the collective defense commitment of the allies (Article 5 of the Washington Treaty) and the fact that the "Alliance does not consider any country to be its adversary."

It commits NATO to the "goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons." But it reconfirms that "as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance."

On the issue of the withdrawal of US tactical nuclear arms from Europe, the Concept notes that the allies have "dramatically reduced" the number of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe and NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons. It indicates that the allies "will seek to create the conditions of further reductions in the future" and will aim "to

seek Russian agreement to increase transparency on its nuclear weapons in Europe and relocate these weapons away from the territory of NATO members.”

The Concept announces the intention of the allies to develop a missile defense capability to cover all NATO European territory as well as the US. NATO also intends to cooperate with Russia on missile defense.

The document mentions NATO’s defense against terrorism and its role in training local forces to fight terrorism. It also notes the need for the allies to develop their ability to prevent cyber-attacks and defend against them.

### **Crisis management**

The Strategic Concept stresses the need for a “comprehensive political, civilian and military approach for effective crisis management” and it reiterates NATO’s “unparalleled capability to deploy and sustain robust military forces in the field.”

The main innovations are the announcement of the creation by NATO of an “appropriate but modest civilian crisis management capability” to interface with civilian partners, and the emphasis on the need for NATO to enhance integrated civilian-military planning, train and develop local forces, and train civilian specialists from member states for selected missions.

### **Cooperative security**

The concept reaffirms NATO’s open door policy to new European members and its intention to cooperate with the UN as set out in the UN-NATO Declaration signed in 2008, the EU, Russia and other partners.

There are currently several circles of cooperation between NATO and external partners: the NATO-Russia Council, the Euro-Atlantic partnership (Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union countries), the Mediterranean dialogue, and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (Gulf countries).

The Concept innovates by stressing NATO’s intention to promote a “wide network” of partner relationships “around the globe,” to develop political dialogue and practical cooperation “with any nations and relevant organizations across the globe,” and to give to its partners a “structural role in shaping the strategy and decisions on NATO-led missions to which they contribute.”