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# Follow-up Qualitative Study: The NATO Parliamentary Transatlantic Forum, Washington D.C.

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## Final Report



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# Executive Summary

As a follow up study to the “Quantitative research among members of the NPA at the General Assembly in Dubrovnik”, NATO has commissioned PwC to carry out a qualitative assessment that evaluates the perceptions of 18 parliamentarians (hereafter “delegates”) of the NATO Parliamentary Transatlantic Forum in Washington, D.C. The results have been presented in two categories: non-Americans (who accounted for 14 interviews) and Americans (who accounted for 4 interviews).

The objective of this study is to obtain an extensive picture of the delegate’s attitudes as well as to complement and complete the findings which have emerged from the Dubrovnik study. In fact, this research aims at ascertaining the:

- Effectiveness of NATO’s communication with delegates and the general public;
- Measures NATO should take to enhance its communication strategy;
- Attitudes of delegates regarding defence spending;
- Perceptions of NATO’s relevance post 2014.

The findings in this study echo those resulting from the previous study conducted with parliamentarians in Dubrovnik, Croatia where delegates suggested NATO should increase the use of the media, raise awareness among the general public and define its priorities for the future. It should be noted that delegates in Croatia were generally more satisfied with NATO.

## Communication

“NATO should explain in more clear terms what the Alliance is doing to enhance security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

## Articulate a Clear Mission

Asked what NATO should do to enhance public awareness of its role and duties on the global stage, particularly at a national level, delegates suggested projecting a clearer and more targeted message as well as making use of local militaries to enhance communication.

When asked to what extent the general public understands what NATO does, only a small minority of non-American delegates reported that the general public in their countries has a basic understanding of the Alliance and its missions. The remaining non-Americans as well as all the American delegates mentioned that the citizens of their countries do not understand NATO. According to the delegates interviewed, in order to improve its communication strategy, NATO should use the media more effectively, target young audiences, enhance its website, increase transparency and connect with local militaries to disseminate messages.

Some of these suggestions emerged previously in the Dubrovnik study in which parliamentarians suggested NATO should make use of the media to articulate its mission and objectives as well as to highlight its achievements in order to raise awareness. The previous study also highlighted a lack in understanding about what NATO does, which has been confirmed in this study. Delegates, in fact, suggested in that first study that NATO should invest more in communication specifically through the use of media, educational programs, youth outreach, social media and local ambassadors. Most of these points, such as the use of general and social media as well as youth outreach, also emerged in this study and, thus, appear to be of particular interest to the delegates.

“NATO could increase willingness to invest more by explaining the purpose and benefits of the Alliance.”

## Justify Defence Spending

Both non-Americans and Americans are sceptical about spending money on defence. The economic crisis has been identified as one of the reasons behind hostility toward defence spending. When asked to describe the general mood in their countries regarding this issue, delegates said citizens believe the faltering economy is one of the reasons member countries do not contribute more. The lack of a perceived threat, the lack of political will and other more pressing fiscal priorities are also behind the reluctance of non-American member countries to increase their burden share. All of the Americans interviewed said financial constraints are the source of most countries' failure to contribute 2% GDP towards defence. In order to rectify the situation, delegates suggest NATO must convince people through its words and actions that the cost is justified.

These results confirm the findings of the Dubrovnik study where the reason cited for low contributions was the economic crisis and the resulting budget reductions which leave fewer funds for defence. Other reasons given by the parliamentarians in that study were the lack of political will, a heavy reliance on the US for protection and negative public opinion toward defence spending. The current study confirms these findings. In order to increase the willingness of countries to invest more in defence, delegates in the previous study suggested NATO should use the media to inform the public about the benefits the Alliance offers. This view has been echoed by the views of the delegates in the current study who report that NATO should present a clearer argument in order to convince countries to invest more in defence.

“NATO must increase capabilities and decrease expenses to remain relevant.”

## NATO will remain relevant after 2014

Both non-American and American delegates think that, while NATO has the capabilities to remain relevant, it will have to make adjustments. Interoperability, deployability and deterrence were listed as areas that should be enhanced in the future. While non-Americans are somewhat cautious in their conviction that the Alliance will remain relevant after 2014, Americans feel very strongly that NATO will play an important role going forward. Reasons given for this include the persistence of international terrorism, cyber issues and the on-going need for global security.

Concerning the end of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), non-Americans are mixed in their outlooks. Some feel that with no clear mission, public support for NATO will wane. Others see this as an opportunity for the Alliance to return to its original mission of pursuing national security. Still others think this will give the Alliance space to engage in civil diplomacy and humanitarian efforts. The American delegates are unanimously supportive of the ISAF mission, declaring it greatly beneficial. The Alliance's priorities for the future, they say, should be to hold on to the ground they have gained, both politically and in terms of internal capabilities, through ISAF. In that way, the mission will have been a success.

In the previous study, delegates considered the end of ISAF to be a positive change for NATO—although most feel NATO should maintain its presence in Afghanistan in order to facilitate a smoother transition and support the country beyond 2014. Although, the previous study suggested that the end of ISAF will allow NATO to “rest and recuperate”, member parliamentarians believed combating terrorism should be the main priority for the Alliance in the future. Cyber security (in conjunction with military operations) is also perceived as a key strategic priority. While these points were also mentioned in this study, the highest priorities for the future, according to the delegates in Washington D.C., are developing specific capabilities, strengthening relationships and cooperating with other partners.

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## Conclusions

Both studies conducted among members of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly raised important points:

- There is a lack of understanding regarding what NATO does: the general public needs to know more about the role of NATO in order to appreciate its value;
- A more efficient use of the media is needed: both General Media and Social Media should be employed as essential communication tools to raise awareness among the general public;
- NATO needs to build personal relationships with the delegates and establish a closer proximity to the “real people” through local representatives in countries.

In conclusion, both studies suggest strong efforts need to be made in terms of communication. In particular, this study found that a clear and targeted message should be communicated in order to reach a broader audience and further increase awareness. Explaining the role, activities and benefits of the Alliance would be helpful to convince the public of its usefulness and could increase the willingness of certain member countries to invest more. NATO continues to be vital to ensuring the collective defence and will continue to be relevant post 2014, especially if it develops specific capabilities. NATO should translate the experience acquired in Afghanistan with ISAF into future missions.

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# Main Findings

## Interviewee Profile

PwC interviewed 18 parliamentarians (delegates), 14 were Non-American and 4 were American<sup>1</sup>. The sample was composed of individuals representing various political parties: there were 6 Conservatives, 1 member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats, 1 Socialist, 1 member of the Freedom and Democracy Party and 5 non-Americans from unidentified political parties. Three of the Americans interviewed identify with the Democratic Party, while one did not state his party allegiance.

Because only two of the delegates interviewed were women, there is an under representation of women in the sample.

The following countries were represented: the US, The Netherlands, France, Denmark, Germany, the UK, Greece, Canada, Croatia, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

For a complete listing of the interviewee demographics, see appendix 1.

## Communication with delegates

### NATO should improve its communication efforts with non-Americans.

**Satisfaction of non-American delegates with NATO's communication efforts is quite low, especially when it comes to the transparency of information provided.**

More than 40% of those surveyed (6/14) said they are satisfied with NATO's frequency of communication toward them. While three said they are "somewhat satisfied", five reported being "dissatisfied" with the frequency of the Alliance's communication. Those who are dissatisfied said they almost never receive information from NATO.

In terms of quality, just under 30% of the delegates interviewed (4/14) said they consider NATO's communication efforts to be of high-quality. An equal number said the quality of communication could afford to be improved, two said they consider NATO's communication to be of low-quality, and four did not comment. Reasons for the criticisms were the impression that NATO "always focuses on the big topics, like ISAF", "the Alliance needs to be more relevant for today—e.g. explain why NATO still matters" and "people only know about NATO because of military operations and invasions."

Impressions concerning the scope of NATO's communication are mixed. Half of the delegates (7/14) are at least somewhat satisfied with the scope of information they receive. Three said they are "not very satisfied", one said he is "not at all satisfied", and three did not register an opinion. The basic criticism offered by those who are dissatisfied with the scope of communication is NATO's overarching focus on issues like Afghanistan and other missions. These individuals suggested NATO should broaden its message.

Concerning the transparency of NATO's communication efforts, delegates were more critical. Only one reported being "very satisfied", while three said they are "somewhat satisfied". Four of the delegates are "not very satisfied", three are "not at

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<sup>1</sup> Of which one is the Secretary of the US delegation



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all satisfied”, and three declined to comment. Those who are satisfied with NATO’s transparency are really satisfied: “Very, very, very good reports—good flow, good quality, good information,” reported one delegate. Others offered a more critical view saying they are unsure where and how NATO formulates decisions, they want to hear more “real stories” and they feel there is little or no transparency.

### All of the American delegates interviewed are satisfied with NATO’s communication efforts.

The four Americans interviewed said they are unanimously pleased with the frequency, quality, scope and transparency of information they receive from NATO. Each answered all four questions with the same response: one said NATO’s efforts in these areas are “excellent”, one said he is “very satisfied”, one said the Alliance does “a good job”, and one said, “I get what I need.”

## Improvements in NATO’s communication strategy have been suggested by the delegates.

### While non-Americans provided suggestions to improve NATO’s communication with them...

Several themes emerged concerning suggestions for improving NATO’s communication strategy:

#### Build personal relationships

Two of the delegates interviewed specifically mentioned building “personal relationships” as a means for improving NATO’s communication strategy—others alluded to this notion, but used different language to express their ideas. “NATO should not be an ‘ivory tower’,” said one delegate. Another added, “With so much content in the mail and email, the most effective [means of communication] is one-to-one relationships.”

#### Use Social Media

Two delegates specifically recommended the use of social media as a means of enhancing communication efforts. “NATO should use all available tools,” said one delegate, who was satisfied with communication. “They have done well at being visible with social media.” Another added, “Using social media more is good. Following [NATO] on Twitter and good links—this might be a good feature to have.”

#### Use the General Media

Two delegates mentioned specific initiatives NATO could take to leverage on the media. “NATO should have public campaigns to explain their purpose and build awareness through media relations,” said one. The other made suggestions concerning content: “Provide more context. Don’t only talk about the Alliance, but talk about events around the world. Find a way through the media—we want knowledgeable and authentic communication.”

#### Connect with Members of Parliament

Two delegates took issue with the flow of NATO’s communication, suggesting that direct contact with MPs will improve things. “There is no easy way of doing it. They have to identify MPs and develop relationships with them,” said one delegate. Another expanded on this idea, “Communication should go to the MP, not the Secretary of NATO’s association.”

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... most of the Americans interviewed said NATO does not need to improve its communication efforts with them.

All of the Americans interviewed are satisfied with NATO's communication efforts and three of them have no suggestions for improving it. One delegate, however, offered this insight: "NATO should help us to better understand what the purpose of their engagements is. Also, they could improve the transition between members of the Delegation."

## NATO's communication efforts in the delegates' countries are somewhat effective, but could be further improved.

Half of non-Americans say NATO's communication efforts are not effective and the Alliance should improve its communication to the general public in terms of frequency and definition of its role.

When asked to comment on how effective NATO's communication efforts are in their countries, half of the delegates said "not very effective." Two consider NATO's communication to be "effective", three said it is "not at all effective", and one remained neutral.

The primary criticism is that the general public does not receive communications from NATO. Next is the perceived lack of a defined role. The following comments encapsulate the spirit of opinions offered by delegates:

- "NATO needs to reach more young people (schools, universities and other groups) to clear up what are NATO's missions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."
- "NATO has lost trust with people. They need to hold events to engage the people. It's essential to reach these groups in East Germany."
- "It's not good. 50% of the population doesn't know what NATO does –99% don't know what the NPA does. It's a relic from the Cold War. The 'strategic concept' hasn't been well communicated."
- "They are doing the best that they can. The public is just not interested in NATO. NGOs are the best way to convey messages. Peers are better than military officers."
- "It's quite effective, but the Secretary General is Danish, which means that the Danes are paying more attention. Denmark is also making a significant contribution to ISAF, which gets attention."

Although half of the American delegates interviewed are satisfied with NATO's communication to the general public in the US, NATO should consider increasing its visibility and communication effectiveness.

While two of the American delegates interviewed said NATO's communication efforts in the US are "fine", the other two offered suggestions for improvement:

- "NATO needs to be more visible with people other than immediate stakeholders. Members of Defence & Foreign Affairs committees understand the importance of NATO, but not every Congressman or Senator does."
- "They could be more effective with Key Leader Engagements, Congressman and other congressional committees (that are relevant, Foreign Affairs/Defence etc.)."

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## Only few understand what NATO actually does

### Only a minority of non-Americans understand what NATO does.

When asked to what extent people in delegates' countries understand what NATO does, responses were evenly mixed. About 20% of the respondents (3/14) said that people in their country had at least a basic understanding of the Alliance and its mission—two were effusive in their praise. This is the case among Eastern European States as these countries still consider Russia to be a risk and citizens have memories of the Soviet occupation. On the other hand, the remaining 80% (11/14) said that the people in their countries do not understand NATO—four insisted that people actually have no idea what the Alliance does.

Those who responded positively to the question offered the following insights:

- “People understand what NATO does. The referendum in Spain was recent so the new generation is clear on why we joined NATO—the referendum had the effect of educating the Spanish about NATO's activities.”
- “They understand the threat of Russia, which has exercises to attack NATO. The communication is working and Estonians know that they are being heard. Estonia's priority is Article Five.”
- “Six out of 10 will say that NATO is a collective defence organization.”

The remainder suggested the general lack of understanding can be attributed to the impression that the Alliance is a Cold War relic, assumptions that NATO is solely a military entity and limited knowledge.

- “People understand NATO's role during the Cold War and its ties to the West. But the East Germans need to understand why NATO is important to them.”
- “Perceptions of NATO are old! NATO doesn't explain what it does now (other than Afghanistan).”
- “Not many understand—especially young people. They understand NATO only as a military or political organization, but not about [its involvement in] natural disasters, floods and emergency response.”
- “They understand more of the fundamental philosophy behind NATO and international security, but they don't understand the military alliance's importance and why they have to pay the price—that they can't take security for granted.”
- “Greeks believe NATO interferes with countries. They do not understand NATO beyond that.”
- “Croats understand NATO through tanks, bombs and missions. They do not hear about civil missions or other initiatives.”
- “They understand that NATO will protect them from Russia. Outside of that, there are no threats.”

### The same trend is noticeable among Americans.

The four Americans agreed that people in the United States do not have a clear understanding of what NATO does. They offered the following comments:

- “NATO is not good with the general population, which doesn't understand and doesn't really seem to care.”
- “It's not high on the list of priorities for most Americans. The Summit in Chicago brought it to attention briefly.”
- “It's hard to say. There's a generational divide. Baby boomers and their parents are acutely aware. But today's young adults: not as much.”
- “I think people have forgotten what NATO stands for outside ISAF.”

## Suggestions for improving public awareness of NATO's role and duties

According to non-Americans, NATO should have a more precise message and intermediary to be used in its communication.

Asked what NATO should do to enhance public awareness of its role and duties on the global stage, particularly on a national level, delegates suggested:

Projecting a clearer and more targeted message

- “Try to have a clear concept of what kind of security they are providing: What global role does instability play and what would the consequences be for the work without NATO? Why is it important today? Who is the enemy? Once they had the USSR on the rise, but now what? How does it look today? Will the alliance be able to deal with major conflicts around the world? NATO is a ‘stronger alliance’ than ‘a coalition of the willing.’”
- “Go to the younger people and open discussions. Explain why it's still relevant.”
- “Make a bigger effort to communicate in the traditional media. Answer the question, ‘What does NATO stand for?’ NATO relies too much on its existing supporters without looking for new ones.”
- “Establish a program for youth in schools. The youth in Lithuania understands what the EU is, but not what NATO is.”
- “Countries need to see that doors are open and to know what they must do to enter. NATO membership must be available to the Middle East and Africa. Libya was not a great example in terms of unity. NATO needs to better coordinate its strategy.”

Making use of local militaries to enhance its communication

- “NATO should collaborate with the Greek military and politicians to enhance public awareness on a national level.”
- “NATO should speak through the Spanish military forces, which is highly regarded by the population. Don't send messages via politicians who are loathed!”
- “Try to use spokespersons in those countries, people who are local and will advocate on NATO's behalf. This is better than the use of social media—military officials engaging the public.”

Finally, one delegate suggested that NATO could enhance public awareness by using the Parliamentary Assembly more effectively.

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Americans also believe NATO should improve its communication and outreach.

The four Americans pointed to improved communication and broader outreach as measures the Alliance could take to enhance public awareness of its role and duties on the global stage.

- “Better communication, including more outreach and stories in the media, and news that reports the progress of the Alliance through stories.”
- “More outreach on the part of national stakeholders.”
- “NATO should have more public outreach to institutions like universities. Perhaps host a speaker series of NATO officials at schools with international relations programs.”

## Suggestions for improving NATO’s communication strategy towards the general public

Non-Americans say NATO should focus on five key areas to increase public awareness.

Suggestions for improving communication towards the general public focused on five areas:

### Making use of traditional media

- “Use the [traditional] media more; be more direct and precise in communications.”
- “More coverage in the traditional media; more energy creating own stories beyond the regular news channels; become more open; emphasize the political alliance and its core values.”

### Targeting young generations

- “Focus on the young people—older people already understand NATO.”

### Enhancing the NATO website

- “A better website would be a good start—with a clear purpose and easy access to facts and figures.”

### Increasing transparency

- “More transparency and focus on expenses across all NATO states.

### Connecting with local militaries to disseminate messages

- “Increased and better relationships with local military and politicians.”

Americans believe NATO should clarify and increase their message in order to heighten awareness among the general public.

The Americans had little to say in the way of improving the Alliance’s communication strategy towards the general public. One delegate said NATO should simply “communicate more.” Another said NATO needs to “explain in clearer terms what NATO is doing to enhance security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

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## Defence Spending

### The general public is sceptical about spending money on defence

Most non-Americans are wary of defence spending due to the down economy.

When asked to describe the general mood in their countries toward defence spending, delegates offered four basic assessments, the most common related to the scepticism resulting from the economic crisis.

General attitudes toward defence spending listed according to the frequency with which they were mentioned

No. of iterations	General mood in the country towards defence spending
9	People are opposed to defence spending due to budget constraints.
4	People are uninformed about the issue.
2	People remain neutral on the issue.
2	People are supportive of defence spending.

Answers do not add up to 14 as some respondents have given multiple answers.

Examples of statements made by the interviewees include:

#### Budget constraints

- “People are generally sceptical of defence spending. This may be because they don't understand the importance of defence/security—the current economic climate affects this. People don't understand why you would spend money on defence when you are cutting social programs. The public is very sceptical about the aircraft purchases to replace the F-16.”
- “There’s a general disquiet when defence cuts are announced, but when [fiscal] waste is uncovered at the Ministry of Defence, there is a lot of resentment about those kind of ‘domestic mistakes’.”
- “The Cold War is over and they’re always asking for more money that we don’t have—they have to be more accountable, more responsible [stop making] false investments and wasteful spending.”

#### Lack of understanding

- “The transatlantic link is the most important, and it’s under threat because of defence cuts. People don't understand globalised threat—they only want to be part of things that impact their own nation.”
- “There is a mixture of thinking in Western Europe—talk about social security issues vs. hard security. People don’t understand why we are in Afghanistan—countries closer to Russia think about this differently. The Economic crisis also affects their ability to pay.”

#### Supportive of defence spending

- “People understand the need for defence expenditures—they're not against defence. But in France the choice is always presented as Defence vs. Education.”

- “Greeks want to keep the status quo on defence spending. But Greeks would understand if defence spending increased because Turkey is a neighbour, and there are still concerns about Turkey.”

### The Americans interviewed say the US public does not support defence spending due to lack of understanding and an obvious threat.

All of the Americans interviewed indicated that the mood in the US towards defence spending is not favourable. However, it’s worth noting that at least three of these delegates are Democrats.

- “It’s an uphill battle. Most people only see big dollar signs and not the value or what spending means to them and our allies.”
- “It’s difficult. Most Americans don’t understand the need for defence spending since there’s no immediate threat. 2001 was a long time ago in the minds of many Americans.”
- “It’s terrible. People have forgotten the point of defence spending. Iraq and Afghanistan [soured] people on the need for defence spending.”
- “The mood is very poor. The public doesn’t understand the need. They ask, where does the money go? They understand the budget cuts, but not the effect of those cuts.”

### The economic crisis is, according to the delegates, one of the main reasons for not reaching the contribution level of 2% of the GDP

For non-Americans, the economic crisis exacerbates issues of diverse priorities and threat perception.

The issue of financing NATO is a complicated one. There are four main reasons why member countries don’t contribute 2% of their GDP to defence, according to the non-American delegates interviewed. While the economic crisis is frequently cited as an explanation for lack of contributions, we must look beyond a mere financial shortfall to understand the issue more clearly. The stress created by limited resources only highlights member countries’ priorities.

Reasons member countries do not contribute 2% of their GDP listed according to the frequency with which they were mentioned

No. of iterations	Main reasons for member countries do not contribute 2% of their GDP
4	Lack of perceived threat
4	Distribution of funds
3	The economic crisis
3	Lack of political will

Examples of quotations mentioned by the interviewees include:

#### Lack of perceived threat

- “Croatians believe that they have enough security. They do not currently feel endangered. The ‘NATO umbrella’ [the existing protection from NATO] is the main reason that they don’t contribute 2%.”
- “The Spanish believe that ‘freedom is free’. They already have it, so there’s no need to spend more.”



- “People don’t see that there’s a threat, so they don’t want to spend money on no threat.”
- “NATO doesn’t provide enough [written] evidence on the need for defence expenditures...but peace dividends expire and it's too soon for that to happen.”

#### Distribution of funds

- “The burden sharing system in NATO is wrong. [NATO] should use a system closer to the UN burden sharing system. For example, operational costs should be divided equally.”
- “It is different from country to country. The social cost in Denmark is not reflected in the defence budget (Veteran Care). Contribution to security is not the only contribution that affects security abroad. Humanitarian spending is part of it. If we spend more on humanitarian affairs then we can spend less on defence.”

#### The economic crisis

- “It is unpopular to give more money during the economic crisis. There is a reason not to give, so politicians want to be sensitive—they are concerned that they might be voted out if they give away money.”
- “In the economic crises, budget cuts, salaries, pensions and healthcare are priorities. Military is a luxury.”
- “Our economy dropped 17-18% last year. This is drastic. Unfortunately, it is hard to determine where the money should be sent.”

#### Lack of political will

- “The countries don’t uniformly hold defence spending at the same level. Why should it be higher? NATO hasn’t sufficiently explained why it needs more.”
- “There is no political will. The purpose of having the Army, Air Force and Navy becomes pointless—there is no rationale.”
- “There is too much reliance on ‘other nations’ to step up and fulfil their obligations. Politicians blame public opinion, but it's a convenient excuse. There is a lot of resentment of other NATO nations.”

#### Americans point to fiscal limitations for the lack of adequate defence spending.

All of the Americans interviewed said financial constraints are the source of most countries’ failure to contribute 2% of GDP towards defence.

- “Each nation has its own fiscal priorities.”
- “They are facing the same fiscal crises that are faced by the United States.”
- “The US carries the burden. The non-2% countries may have to step-up because [the US] is stepping back due to domestic politics.”



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## NATO must convince Non-American member countries to invest in defence

Non-American countries think NATO should present a clearer argument in favour of defence investing.

More than half of the delegates (8/14) interviewed said that in order to persuade member countries to contribute 2% of their GDP, the Alliance has to articulate a more compelling message. Three delegates took this a step further suggesting NATO should convince member countries to contribute through its actions—if these governments see a visible benefit, they will be more likely to support funding. Finally, one delegate said the Alliance is “too nice” to nations who don’t contribute their burden share. In his opinion, NATO should be a bit more forceful. Two delegates did not offer comments on this issue.

### Convince countries to invest by presenting a clearer argument

Five delegates mentioned persuasion as a means of garnering financial support for NATO’s missions.

- “NATO could increase willingness to invest more by explaining the purpose and benefits of the Alliance.”
- “NATO faces the challenges as to why it exists: What if Iran cooperates? What is NATO doing to protect us? What can NATO do aside from fighting wars? We need success stories (focus more on Afghanistan).”
- “This requires good politics after 2014. They have to convince us why it’s still important to fund those missions, convince the public that it’s worth it.”

### Show countries why investment matters

Three delegates suggest the Alliance demonstrate the benefit of investment through its actions.

- “This is done through procurement—how do you get more bang for the buck? Focus on interoperability.”
- “They could do more of what they already do: smart defence, pooling, facilitating more multi-national cooperation, training, exercises and joint multi-national units. Invest in relevant projects over the improvements of the security alliance.”
- “More equal burden sharing across all NATO operations. Nations aren’t willing to support an NATO Response Force because of the increased associated commitments if they’re called into action.”

### Pressure countries to invest

Two delegates took a harder line, suggesting the Alliance step up pressure on countries who don’t contribute their burden share.

- “NATO needs to be more outspoken about countries that don’t fulfil their commitments. NATO is too polite when it comes to member nations not fulfilling their obligations.”

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### Americans are unsure about how NATO could increase member countries' willingness to invest more in defence.

American delegates are aware that the US carries an unbalanced share of the financial burden for supporting NATO, but are unsure about how to motivate other countries to step up and do their part.

One delegate suggested that if the Alliance articulates “a better value proposition”, member countries may be incited to give. Another surmised, “The US has been threatening to reduce our spending in Europe and on NATO, but we can't do that and then expect to set an example and still want European nations to contribute to defence.”

## NATO Post 2014

### NATO has the capabilities to remain relevant

Non-American delegates think that, while NATO has the capabilities to remain relevant, it will have to make adjustments in the future.

NATO should keep pace with the changing world.

The majority of the delegates (10/14) said NATO has strong capabilities to go forward.

- “NATO was initially created to deal with issues other than what we are now facing,” said one delegate. “Are issues like piracy, energy and others to be discussed in NATO? Perhaps we need to reconsider.”

Opinions of the remaining non-American delegates are mixed: two of the delegates said that NATO currently has the necessary capabilities to remain relevant in the future while other two believe the opposite.

The notion that NATO has “great potential” and is becoming more relevant is shared by at least four of the delegates interviewed.

- “After the Cold War, after the Balkans, after ISAF, we still need an organization to bring in military alliance,” said one delegate, adding, “They have a role in developing countries.”

Cybercrime was mentioned twice as a paramount issue the Alliance will face in the future. Also, more rapid response capabilities (such as Operation Unified Protector) are needed.

- “It is a field and all the people in the world are victims,” said one delegate. Thus an increased engagement in cyber-security should be considered.

The issue of future funding for the Alliance was also mentioned by two delegates.

- “NATO must increase capabilities and decrease expenses to remain relevant”
- “Increase the participation of current members—it should be less about Washington and Brussels and more about member countries.”

Another was concerned about logistics.

- “Transformation is needed,” he insisted, citing the “necessity for transportation capabilities to deal with issues in the Middle East, Africa and the Far East”.

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Other nations mentioned by delegates were China and Iran—these were mentioned as countries that will “test NATO’s non-combat capabilities.”

That said, most agree that “a lot of work remains to be done.” A complete review of Alliance capabilities was suggested: “Especially in Europe, NATO needs to conduct a capabilities review to determine the differences between what they have and what they can actually use.” Finally, one delegate suggested that, “NATO would be more relevant if EU countries could fulfil some of the US capabilities in order to ensure complete interoperability.”

### American delegates put forward three areas NATO should focus on.

Three facilities were put forth by the American delegates as areas NATO should focus on in order to maintain relevant capabilities in the future:

- Interoperability: Coordination between NATO nations, as seen with ISAF;
- Deployability: NATO members must develop more flexible and easily deployable capabilities;
- Deterrence: NATO needs to remain committed to deterrence and security.

## The end of ISAF: How will it affect NATO?

### Non-American delegates have mixed feelings with regards to the end of the ISAF mission.

While some delegates are critical, most feel engagement in ISAF has actually improved NATO in terms of strength, communications and interoperability between contributing nations. The end of ISAF is perceived by delegates in four ways:

With no clear mission, public support will wane

- “Once ISAF has wound down, what will be the point of NATO? There’s no sense of urgency, and people will say, ‘we shouldn’t have to pay money since there’s no operation.’”
- “What does NATO do now? Is it always useful? Where’s the evidence?”
- “It will affect NATO because we have a huge, common, on-the-ground mission. NATO will need to find a joint project to maintain the experience in Afghanistan.”
- “When NATO no longer has Afghanistan to justify itself, people won’t understand why it was there. How do we continue to stay involved there?”

Disengaging from Afghanistan will allow NATO to build relationships with other nations and focus on other missions

- “It will save money in the short term however we don’t know if we’ll be going back in the future.”
- “The end of ISAF is not the end of NATO. It will make people think of the Alliance less through the lens of military ops.”
- “NATO needs to build better relationships with other international organizations and each nation state to better exercise their elements of power.”

- “It won’t affect NATO as much as it could affect individual forces. They need more training and more participation in counter-piracy. The military should be active in the field.”
- “The change will be from ‘NATO engage’ to ‘NATO prepare’—the Alliance will have to practice and change its political mission.”

The end of ISAF puts NATO in a tenuous position. The affect will be determined by how things in Afghanistan play out

- “There is a reputational risk—a risk of roll-back. The general public will question NATO’s abilities to achieve missions.”
- “Afghanistan helped to strengthen NATO. If there is no war to fight, the Alliance becomes too excessive. If Afghanistan collapses, it could hurt NATO’s image.”
- “The end of ISAF could affect NATO’s coordination with military operations, including modernization (preparation is linked to the Spanish military’s ISAF mission).”
- “It will depend a lot on what events occur after the end of ISAF. No one wants another Afghan-like war, but too much tranquillity could cause NATO to wallow and become complacent.”

NATO should stay in Afghanistan

- “NATO should stay involved in Afghanistan beyond 2014 or loose operational capabilities.”

### American delegates have a high opinion of the ISAF mission.

From the American point of view, ISAF has been a very successful mission for NATO. Asked how ending it will affect the Alliance, all four delegates suggested NATO should parlay the valuable lessons learned through this initiative into future endeavours. The mission has left NATO in a better and stronger position. Going forward, the Alliance will have to ensure that it does not lose the ground it has gained through ISAF.

- “With the end of ISAF, NATO will return to its original focus: deterrence.”
- “ISAF has improved the Alliance. Now let’s see how we can capitalize on those improvements.”
- “ISAF has been very good for coordination and communication across the Alliance. We must not let those gains slip away.”

## Both non-American and American delegates agree that NATO will remain relevant post 2014

### More than half of the Non-American delegates think NATO will remain relevant after 2014...

More than half of the delegates interviewed (8/14) are convinced that NATO will continue to remain relevant after 2014. Reasons given included the persistence of international terrorism, instability in Africa, cyber issues and a need for more intelligence. “The global security environment is a multipolar world—this will allow NATO to remain relevant,” said one delegate, who also mentioned China, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and capability building by member countries.

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The others feel the Alliance will remain relevant if it takes certain measures to do so. Among the actions the Alliance should take to ensure its relevance are communication, reformation and discovering a new mission.

- “NATO needs to actively work at it...the Parliamentary Assembly is very necessary and keeps the Alliance relevant.”
- “NATO needs to communicate its value to the nations’ populations—the value of the transatlantic link. It must also reorganize to EU-ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum).”
- “NATO should be more forceful as an organization. It must transform its Fast Action capabilities (like Libya) and Quick Response Force.”
- “NATO needs an active role in global affairs or its influence will decline.”

... and so do all of the American delegates interviewed.

All the American delegates interviewed said that NATO will continue to be relevant post 2014.

Two of the American delegates said NATO will remain “very relevant” post 2014, and the other two agreed, although not as effusively.

- “It will remain very relevant. Threats to the US, her allies and NATO member nations are not going away. NATO may not be at the forefront of people’s minds, but it is still important to maintain.”
- “NATO must remain committed to deterrence and the defence of member nations. NATO must complement actions taken by other international organizations.”
- “ISAF has increased NATO’s credibility, so that will help it to remain relevant.”

## NATO’s priority should be to focus on developing its capabilities

Non-American delegates listed numerous priorities for the Alliance post 2014.

Suggestions for NATO’s priorities post 2014 were myriad and varied depending on the demographics of the individual being interviewed. The most prevalent suggestion offered was development of capabilities (mentioned 11 times). Relationship building (mentioned 6 times) and enhancing civil solutions (mentioned 5 times) were also common themes that emerged.

Top priorities parliamentarians think NATO should have for the future are shown below in order of importance

Rank	NATO Priority
1	Developing capabilities
2	Building relationships
3	Civil solutions
4	Terrorism
5	Cyber security
6	Humanitarian efforts
7	Nation building
8	Collective security
9	Middle East, Asia, Africa
10	British Military Doctrine

In particular, more details related to the first three priorities are listed below:

#### NATO should focus on developing capabilities

- Expeditionary capabilities
- C<sup>4</sup>ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance)
- Interoperability
- High readiness
- Rapid Response
- Flexibility to respond
- Strategic mobility
- Tactical mobility
- Identification of future threats

#### NATO should strengthen its relationships

- “Develop relationships that would allow NATO to exercise soft power within the EU, UN and national governments.”
- “Liaise with UN/EU/AU to create mobile training teams.”
- “Strengthening relationships between members will make a stronger Alliance.”
- “Continue to improve relations with the EU.”

#### NATO should pursue civil solutions

- “Priorities should be more of a civil dimension – nation building - conscious of the strength of states - to counter terrorism.”
- “Develop a new kind of security concept that the public can understand (post-Balkans, post-Afghanistan). NATO should try to uphold international law in conflict situations.”
- “Beyond war, what can NATO do? Natural disasters? Humanitarian disasters? Maybe help with disasters to keep in front of people. The Alliance needs to find diplomatic situations.”

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**American delegates said the Alliance should focus on training, enlargement and interoperability post 2014.**

While both Non-American and American delegates suggested the development of specific capabilities as a priority for the Alliance going forward, they seem to focus on different areas.

Both Non-American and American delegates listed interoperability as an important priority for NATO. In addition, the Americans stressed more training exercises, enlargement and defence investment as priorities. One delegate suggested that NATO's priority should be to support enlargement by including the admission of Bosnia and other Balkans countries in the Alliance.

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# Conclusions & Recommendations

## Communication

While Americans are generally satisfied with NATO's communication towards them, NATO should improve its communication efforts with non-Americans. In particular it should consider making better use of the General Media, launching a Social Media campaign and building one-to-one relationships with the delegates. They should also connect more regularly with Members of Parliament.

Only a minority of the general public (both non-American and American) understands what NATO does. To enhance public awareness, NATO should project a clearer and more targeted message, in particular, by making use of local militaries to enhance communication. NATO should consider improving its use of traditional media; targeting young generations and enhancing the NATO website in order to ramp up its communication strategy and reach a broader audience.

## Defence Spending

Both Non-American and American delegates say their countries are sceptical about spending money on defence. Most are wary of defence spending due to the down economy, which has motivated them to direct funds toward more pressing needs. The general lack of a perceived threat has exacerbated this problem.

In keeping with this opinion, delegates said the economic crisis is also one of the main reasons for the failure of many nations to contribute 2% of their GDP to defence. In order to bolster contributions, NATO must convince member countries that their investment is valuable. This can be done through articulating a clearer message and demonstrating inherent value through action.

## NATO Post 2014

The large majority of non-American and American delegates interviewed think NATO will remain relevant post 2014, with Americans unanimously and strongly supporting this notion. Both non-Americans and Americans also think NATO currently possesses the basic capabilities to remain relevant. That said, numerous suggestions were offered pertaining to adjustments the Alliance will have to make to ensure relevancy—most apply to further developing specific capabilities.

The end of ISAF is viewed with mixed emotions by non-Americans. Some say that, with no clear mission, public support will wane. Others believe disengaging from Afghanistan will allow NATO to build relationships with other international organisations and focus on other missions. Finally, one respondent thinks that leaving Afghanistan is a mistake.

Americans, on the other hand, are very clear in their belief that the ISAF mission was a success that puts NATO in a better position to move forward. The Alliance, they say, should parlay the valuable lessons learned through this initiative into future endeavours. NATO's priority now should be to ensure that it does not lose the ground it gained through ISAF and to further develop its capabilities with the knowledge and experience it has developed through the mission.



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# Appendix I

## Methodology

### Qualitative study

We have conducted a qualitative assessment by carrying out in-depth interviews with 18 parliamentarians (delegates) of the Parliamentary Transatlantic Forum in Washington, D.C. on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013.

The questionnaire for the interviews was a follow-up to the research study conducted during the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Dubrovnik. The three areas of focus were:

- NATO's Communication
- Defence Spending
- NATO' Post 2014

The interviewers asked open ended questions to capture as much information as possible from the interviewees and give them the opportunity to provide in-depth answers to the questions asked.

The final list of questions was also aligned with NATO's specifications in order to guarantee that all of the required topics were covered.

Interviews were conducted in face-to-face meetings in Washington D.C. during the NATO Parliamentary Transatlantic Forum with the non-American delegates as well as with the Secretary of the US delegation. The interviews with the three other US delegates have been conducted over the telephone to facilitate the recruitment process.

For this study, we put forth considerable effort to connect with as many US congressmen as possible (members of the NPA), however only two attended the Washington Transatlantic Forum. We interviewed both and secured interviews with two others who agreed to be interviewed separately. Concerning the non-American participants, we intentionally reached out to parliamentarians from countries with low or no representation in the Dubrovnik study in order to expand our findings.

Note: It has been particularly challenging to interview American delegates as most of them refused to participate to this research project. Each American delegate, preselected by the NPA, was called or emailed at least twice, and in some cases up to four times during the two weeks following the NATO Parliamentary Transatlantic Forum. It should be taken into consideration for future studies that this exercise has proven that most US Congressional offices have a "we do not participate in any surveys/questionnaires for any reason" policy in place which increases the difficulty to recruit such high-level targets in market research studies.

## Analysis

- Each question has been analysed both separately and within the overall context of the questionnaire.
- We present the results per type of country (non-American vs. American) and political party, when relevant. These findings are not generalizable to the whole population of parliamentarians as the sample is not representative.
- Answers from the in-depth interviews provide more insight on distinct topics, but they cannot be understood as generalisations. Our findings explicitly identify answers that came from the interviews.
- As all questions were open-ended, they required the interviewee to use his/her own words to explain the answers. In this case, we classified the answers by key messages, measured the iteration of similar answers and put the key messages into context in order to infer the main findings.

## Interviewee profile

In order to expand the findings of the Dubrovnik study, we have intentionally reached out to parliamentarians from countries with low or no representation in the previous study. Additionally, our team spent two weeks reaching out to US Members of Congress before the Washington Transatlantic Forum and after the event in order to have a sufficient representation of US delegates in the sample.

The sample interviewed is composed as follows:

Country	
United States	4
United Kingdom	2
Germany	2
Canada	1
Croatia	1
Denmark	1
Estonia	1
France	1
Greece	1
Latvia	1
Lithuania	1
Spain	1
The Netherlands	1
Total	18

Political Group Affiliation	
Conservatives, Christian Democrats and Associates	6
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats	1
Socialist	1
Freedom and Democracy	1
American Democrat	3
Other	6
Total	18

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Gender	
Female	2
Male	16
Total	18

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# Appendix II

## Discussion guide

Respondent name (optional):

Gender:  Female  
 Male

Country:

Political Group Affiliation:  Conservatives, Christian Democrats and Associates  
 Alliance of Liberals and Democrats  
 Socialist  
 Other

### I. COMMUNICATION

Q1. How satisfied are you with NATO's communication towards you in terms of:

Frequency:  
Quality:  
Scope:  
Transparency:

Q2. What should NATO do to improve its communication strategy with you?

Q3. How effective do you think NATO's communication efforts are in your country?

Q4. To what extent do you think people in your country understand what NATO does?

Q5. What should NATO do to enhance public awareness of its role and duties on the global stage, particularly on a national level?

Q6. What should NATO do to improve its communication strategy towards the general public?

### II. DEFENCE SPENDING & NATO POST 2014

Q7. How would you describe the general mood in your country toward defence spending?

Q8. Why do you believe that most member countries do not contribute 2% of their GDP to defence?

Q9. What could NATO do in order to increase member countries' willingness to invest more in defence?

Q10. To what extent do you think NATO has the right capabilities to remain relevant in the future?

Q11. In your opinion, how will the end of ISAF affect NATO?

Q12. To what extent do you believe NATO will remain relevant post 2014?

Q13. What should NATO's priorities be post 2014?

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