

# NATO AFTER THE WALES SUMMIT CONFERENCE REPORT

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## NATO AR ÔL UWCHGYNHADLEDD CYMRU ADRODDIAD CYNHADLEDD



NEW HORIZONS, NEW CHALLENGES  
AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

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# INTRODUCTION:

## A PRODUCTIVE DEBATE TWO DAYS AHEAD OF THE WALES SUMMIT

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On the 4 and 5 September, Heads of States and Governments from NATO's 28 member states and Alliance partners converged for a NATO Summit in Newport, Wales. The Wales Summit took place at a crucial point in time. With the rise of new global players the world's security landscape is changing rapidly, not only presenting the transatlantic community with pressing challenges, but also igniting considerable debate over the role and influence of NATO. The conflict in Ukraine, the prospect of an irredentist post-Soviet Russia, compounded with a transition in Afghanistan, sees NATO confronted with an increasingly uncertain world.

To seek answers to a testing geopolitical landscape, Cardiff University in cooperation with NATO's Public Diplomacy Division organized a conference in the Welsh Capital on the eve of the Wales Summit. On the 2 September, leading thinkers and decision makers in the international security and defence community from Europe and North America came together to discuss the objectives and functions of the Alliance. The one-day high-level conference considered what NATO's future challenges will be; what new means and mechanisms of cooperation these challenges will require; and how NATO should prepare for future emerging challenges.

Key themes of the conference were:

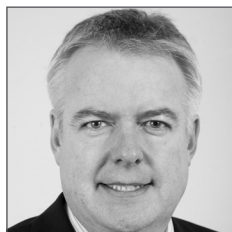
- Preparing for threats in emergent spaces, including cyber space and maritime security
- Smart Defence and planning for the future in times of austerity
- Cooperation in the transatlantic community in a post-Afghanistan age
- NATO's role as a global security actor

Conference discussions also reflected what was debated and decided upon a few days later at the NATO Wales Summit, in particular Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the threat posed by the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). These threats loomed large in discussion on defence planning, cyber space, maritime security and NATO's future role and tasks. The NATO after the Wales Summit conference provided an excellent opportunity for NATO officials and academics to reflect upon these and other threats and how they shape the strategic priorities and defence practices of the transatlantic community.

The conference was attended by around 150 guests from NATO, Welsh Universities and the GW4 University Alliance, Welsh and UK Government, international and local media, and Cardiff University. Among others, the programme featured presentations by Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, the Deputy Secretary General of NATO, Ambassador Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy, and Professor Stephen Krasner, a distinguished professor at Stanford University.

## WELCOMING NATO TO WALES AND CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

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**The Rt. Hon. Carwyn Jones AM**, First Minister of Wales, Welsh Government, welcomed NATO and the transatlantic community to Wales on behalf of the Welsh people. As a member of the United Kingdom, Wales is also part of NATO and is proud to host the 2014 NATO Summit in Newport. Wales shares the democratic norms and values of the transatlantic community and its commitment to the rule of law. The Welsh Government and people are deeply committed to NATO and to the success of the Wales summit.



**Professor Colin Riordan**, Cardiff University's President and Vice-Chancellor, expressed his gratitude to the Welsh Government and to NATO for supporting the NATO after the Wales Summit conference. Through the conference, Cardiff University intends to contribute to the success of the Wales Summit by facilitating an open discussion between experts and policy makers on the future of NATO.

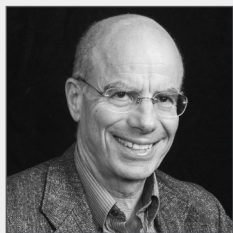


**Ambassador Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović**, NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy, thanked Wales for generously hosting the NATO Summit in Newport and for the hospitality of the Welsh people and its government. She also welcomed the initiative of Cardiff University to organise a conference on NATO's current and future challenges. Providing a forum for joint discussions and the sharing of expertise, the high-level conference contributes valuable perspectives as NATO addresses issues of global concern and shapes its future course of action.

# KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

## WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR NATO AFTER THE WALES SUMMIT?

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**Professor Stephen Krasner**, a former Director of Policy Planning at the Department of State and distinguished professor of International Relations at Stanford University, set the stage for the conference discussion. He argued that the greatest challenge facing NATO is “contested sovereignty”. Failed states such as Iraq and Syria as well as Russia’s territorial annexation and undermining of Ukraine’s authority over the eastern part of the country threaten world peace and security. NATO needs to make unambiguous commitments to its own member-states, especially the Baltic countries, while at the same time recognizing the limits of what it can accomplish in other areas. The right balance between ambition and credibility is essential.

The international community needs to recognize that it does not know how to put weak and failed states on the path to consolidated democracy. It has sought to reproduce functioning democratic states in places such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq through development aid and institutional capacity building efforts. These efforts have failed, as continued violence in Afghanistan and the rise of ISIL in the Middle East have demonstrated. An alternative approach would be to try to form domestic coalitions among political elites that can provide political stability, some opportunities for economic growth, and security. This means that the international community has to abandon overambitious state-building efforts. Instead, it has to engage and work better with domestic political groups that are often corrupt and that do not share western values of democracy and the rule of law. In badly governed states the objective of NATO and the west in general should be good enough governance, a political system in which there is adequate if not perfect security, opportunities for some economic growth even if many of the benefits fall to rent-seeking leaders, and the protection of basic human rights associated with physical integrity.

In its dealings with Russia, Krasner urged NATO to make a sharp distinction between Ukraine and NATO member states. NATO should support requests for assistance to the Ukrainian armed forces, but should avoid statements suggesting that any such support would have a decisive impact on outcomes. Developments in Ukraine, regardless of the final outcome, will not bring NATO’s credibility into question unless NATO gives the impression, through talk or action, that it can contain Putin’s ambitions. Instead, NATO should concentrate on defending the political integrity of the Baltic NATO member states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which have large Russian populations. Russia will not invade the Baltics, but undermining the domestic authority and control of the central governments of the Baltic states would be a stunning success for Russia and a severe blow to the NATO alliance. The rapid deployment force that is now being discussed is not a strong enough signal. NATO should put troops on the Russian borders of the Baltic states, if only on a rotating basis, and should provide these states with whatever support they might ask for to combat Russian subversion.

The discussion that followed touched on issues such as Guantanamo Bay, the financial crisis, the Israel-Palestine conflict, sanctions, state-building and NATO’s role in Europe. Krasner pointed out that studies have shown that sanctions against entrenched autocratic regimes such as Russia’s usually do not work. Sanctions will not reverse the outcome in Ukraine, nor discourage Putin from looking for further opportunities to weaken domestic sovereignty in the states of the former Soviet Union. NATO can deter Putin in the Baltics only by sending unambiguous signals, such as stationing troops on a quasi-permanent basis, and providing assistance to combat Moscow’s subversive activities. Another issue raised was how in Iraq the US government actually tried but failed to work out a settlement among the country’s political elites. Developments in Iraq suggest that admittedly imperfect solutions may be better than unattainable ideal ones. Iraq might function better for its own citizens, and cause fewer problems for the international community if it had a confederal structure with good enough governance in each of its parts. Aiming for a unified liberal democratic Iraq will undermine rather than strengthen international security.

# PANEL 1:

## MARITIME SECURITY

### AN IMPORTANT TOPIC, TOO OFTEN NEGLECTED

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In his introduction to the panel, **Commodore Neil Brown**, currently assigned to the UK Cabinet Office, pointed out that due to the lack of capacity in most of the world's coastal states to govern their exclusive economic zones, the world's oceans (including many of the vital global chokepoints) are a largely neglected security terrain. This is despite the importance of the sea not only to power projection, but to global economic prosperity, through trade and access to increasingly important marine and sub-sea resources. He contrasted the successful cooperation in the Indian ocean between navies, and between navies and regional states, with the challenges currently faced by NATO partners in the Mediterranean (NATO's Southern Flank), and the increasing importance of preserving freedom of navigation in the Arctic Ocean. He warmly welcomed the opportunity to discuss maritime security at this high-level NATO conference organized by Cardiff University.



In the first presentation, **Dr Brooke Smith-Windsor**, Deputy Head of Research at NATO's Defense College, talked about "The Arctic Challenge" and options for future NATO engagement in the region. The melting of Arctic ice has economic, security and geostrategic implications. The region could soon become a major maritime transportation route, and it is estimated that up to 13 percent of the world's undiscovered oil reserves and 30 per cent of the gas resources are found in the region. There are competing claims over continental shelves. While peaceful to date, the Arctic holds the potential to be a space for geopolitical rivalry. Since the Ukraine crisis, NATO member states with Arctic geography have expressed increased concern about Russian military and espionage activities in the region. The Arctic falls under NATO's collective defence mandate, and Norway in particular has called for increased Alliance vigilance in the region.



**Christian Bueger**, a Reader in International Relations of Cardiff University's Department of Politics and International Relations, discussed "Lessons from Counter-Piracy Operations" in the Gulf of Aden. Fighting alongside the EU, China, Russia and the US, NATO's Ocean Shield mission has contributed significantly to the dramatic decline of piracy in recent years. Counter-piracy is hence a 'success story' and shows clearly how NATO can get operations right. The fight against piracy is, however, not over yet. More efforts are needed to strengthen regional maritime security capacities and to enhance regional cooperation on maritime security and related matters in East Africa. Bueger stressed the importance of coordinated action by different security actors, the role of informal coordination in contact groups and technical agreements, and the vitality of public-private partnerships. By putting emphasis on concerted actions, NATO can respond to emerging threats, defend member state interests, safeguard maritime shipping and commerce, and contribute to peace, security and stability around the world. NATO has also shown that it can work effectively as part of broad coalitions of actors tackling joint security challenges.



**Richard Froh**, NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Operations, talked about "Seapower Today: Planning NATO's Future Maritime Operations". He pointed out that the Alliance has reformed its maritime strategies and operations since the end of the Cold War. In 2011, NATO adopted the Alliance Maritime Strategy, its first maritime strategy since 1984. The strategy focuses on deterrence and collective defence, but also includes maritime security tasks more broadly defined as protecting freedom of navigation and maritime transportation, as well as countering threats such as terrorism, piracy and criminal activity. NATO's Maritime Command, Northwood, UK, is currently directing two naval missions in the Gulf of Aden and in the Mediterranean. At the Wales Summit a few days later, member states committed to further the implementation of the Alliance Maritime Strategy, especially its expeditionary capabilities, and to strengthen NATO's maritime capabilities and its role as a credible force on the world's oceans.

The following discussion focussed on NATO's future strategic priorities in the maritime domain. While most NATO states no longer have a significant merchant marine (and it is not for NATO to seek to reverse this trend), Indian Ocean operations disclosed the interconnected character of the maritime domain; and how interests of states are threatened in ungoverned maritime spaces. The future character of security threats at sea will span state on state conflict, complex asymmetric threats, and broader security tasks, and it is in broader security that the capacity of developing countries (not just in ships but in surveillance, information sharing and basic interdiction capability) will be key. The importance of regional capacity and situational awareness suggests a future direction for NATO's maritime security missions, including in the Gulf of Aden after 2016. When looking at larger trends, the expansion and upgrading of naval capacity from Russia to South East Asia is striking, but poor maritime governance not only by fragile states will continue to throw up security challenges. In the Arctic, new sea routes will require littoral states including Russia to invest in surveillance and search and rescue capability, but NATO must take a close interest of where militarization threatens trade routes and military manoeuvre. Recent operations, from Iraq to Afghanistan, and even NATO's intervention in Libya in 2011, demonstrate the ongoing importance of maritime expeditionary capability.

# PANEL 2:

## CYBER SECURITY

### ENHANCING CAPABILITIES IN A COMPLEX AND UNCERTAIN WORLD

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The panel was opened by **Professor Richard Sambrook**, from the School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies at Cardiff University. He pointed to the importance of cyber security in a world based on digital and internet based communication.



**Dr Jamie Shea**, NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges, gave a presentation on "Cyberspace and emerging security challenges". Cyber-attacks are becoming more intense and sophisticated, thus posing a serious threat to allied infrastructures. To counter this evolving threat, NATO has updated its 2011 cyber-defence strategy, which was also presented at the 2014 Wales Summit a few days later. A cyber-attack could indeed reach a threshold where it threatens the Alliance, thereby leaving open the possibility that such an attack could trigger a collective response under Article 5. Member states therefore need to agree on minimum standards for cyber security. They also need to upgrade their networks and methodologies to ensure that their own capabilities match NATO standards. NATO can support this process by acting as a hub for the sharing of expertise and the exchange of information on cyber security.



**Professor Michael Levi**, Professor of Criminology in the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University and an advisor to law enforcement agencies and international organizations, gave a presentation entitled "Protecting Cyberspace: Criminals or Enemies?" He mainly talked about the conceptual ambiguity of cyber security and implications for counter-strategies. Cyber-attacks are an ambiguous threat that questions and challenges institutional boundaries. It forces NATO and its member states to rethink the concept of national and international security, and how far NATO involvement is needed given that cyber-security is already a national priority. Furthermore, the distinction between private and state actors is often blurry, in particular when one deals with countries such as Russia or China, where the economy is heavily controlled by the state. Cyber-crime might be state-sponsored or state-tolerated, and a conflict between corporations may therefore escalate into an inter-state conflict. This again raises the question of when (other than in purely operational security terms) NATO should get involved in cyber-security matters, and what level and longevity of intentional/ongoing harm against members should trigger NATO intervention in an era when countries can be seriously attacked without being physically invaded.



The last talk on "Addressing Insecurity in Cyber Space: Social and Technological Options" was given by **Professor Omer F Rana**, Professor of Performance Engineering at the School of Computer Science and Informatics at Cardiff University. The cyberspace is a rapidly changing environment driven by private and public investments. An essential communication tool of modern societies, it is also the source of many security risks and threats. Most countries have released cyber-security strategies, but review mechanisms are often missing. There is therefore the danger of a widening mismatch between security policies on the one hand and technological developments on the other hand. Many cyber technologies used by the public sector are in fact invented and operated by private businesses, which raises the question of how this relationship between public and private actors should be organised and secured. A case in point is the risk of data breaches in cloud computing technologies used in mobile phones and other devices.

The discussion focused on whether smartphones and other technologies have made it easier for criminal and terrorist groups, such as ISIL, to launder money, that more public investment into cyber security research is needed, and that there needs to be more collaboration between universities, governments and businesses on this issue. Furthermore, the problem of international regulations in cyberspace was raised, and how such regulations can increase the transparency and efficiency of cyber-security practices. Finally, the discussion touched on how the internet is being used by terrorist organisations in Iraq and elsewhere to recruit young men and women in Europe and Northern America.



# PANEL 3:

## SMART DEFENCE PLANNING

### HOW TO IMPROVE CAPABILITIES IN TIMES OF AUSTERITY

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The panel was chaired by **Professor Tim Edmunds**, Director of the Global Insecurities Centre at the University of Bristol and Editor in Chief of the European Journal of International Security forthcoming with Cambridge University Press. He introduced the topic by pointing out that financial austerity has led to a reduction of military spending in most NATO member states. Against this background, the Alliance needs smarter defence planning.



**Professor Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen** from Copenhagen University, who recently became the Head of Security and Defence Policy at the Danish Ministry of Defence, talked about “How to design Military Power in Times of Austerity”. The “business model” of modern militaries, which was invented during the First World War, needs to be reformed and adapted. It relies on a large logistical apparatus capable of moving large numbers of troops and material. The public is no longer willing to finance large armies, and such large apparatuses are not necessarily suitable for contemporary warfare. What is needed to fight threats such as ISIL in the Middle East are Special Forces, intelligence and the ability to manipulate local politics and to work with local partners, rather than high end capabilities such as tanks and destroyers. NATO members hence need to be more innovative and adapt their military practices and investments. They need to bundle their capabilities, coordinate defence planning and spending, and better cooperate against ambiguous threats.



**Dr Sergio Catignani**, a Senior Lecturer in Security and Strategic Studies at the University of Exeter, presented a paper on “Lessons from Counter-insurgency: Future Planning, Education and Capability Needs”. Counter-insurgency operations are complex and include development, security, governance and service delivery, among others. They are part of many peacebuilding and crisis management operations against non-traditional security threats such as irregular combatants and terrorists. NATO and its members have had many experiences in this field over the past years. Yet very often lessons have been identified rather than learned. Organizational forgetfulness is a major problem that hampers the effectiveness of counter-insurgency operations. Instability and ambiguous or hybrid warfare around the world, including Iraq and Ukraine, are a reminder of the relevance of counter-insurgency as a military tool. NATO needs to increase efforts to spread best management practice. There is no need to relearn what has already been learned.



The last presentation, “Planning Defence Today”, was delivered by **Jonathan Parish**, NATO’s Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Defence Policy and Planning. He pointed out that NATO’s Defence Planning Process (NDPP) is the “glue” that holds NATO together. The process consists of several steps, including the setting of overall political aims and objectives, the establishment of minimum capability requirements to fulfil these objectives, the apportion of those requirements among member states, and the review of results to identify gaps and shortcomings. Difficulties in the process include conflicting prioritization among member states, the different time frames of national planning cycles, and the apportionment of capability targets according to the principle of fair burden sharing. For the future, NATO member states need to spend on what is really needed, consider greater role specialization, strengthen multinational cooperation, and further improve joint capability development processes.

The following discussion was about the extent to which the US is going to shift troops and military capacities from Europe to South East Asia, and how this is going to affect European security and NATO in general. NATO does not see this as a significant problem, as the US will deal with security threats in the Asia Pacific region that could also impact on Europe, and it will remain committed to the defence of Europe. However, European countries will need to make more efforts to build up their military capacities and to demonstrate the political will to use those capabilities in order to take a fairer share of the defence responsibility from the US.

# PANEL 4:

## NATO AND THE TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP



**Baroness Manningham-Buller**, introduced the panel by raising the core question, namely whether this is the most important summit since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and what NATO has to do to remain a relevant security actor in the future.



**Dr Robin Niblett**, Director of Chatham House, gave a presentation on “NATO in the Post-Afghanistan Age: The Road Ahead”. Basing his presentation on Chatham House’s NATO: The Way Forward report, Niblett highlighted that it is the principles that NATO stands for - democracy, liberal economies and the rule of law - that are important. Russia does not share these values and perceives the west as a threat; the Middle East is in chaos and weak states and militant groups such as ISIL are proliferating and getting stronger; and in South East Asia tensions are rising due to China’s hegemonic and territorial ambitions. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council is ever more gridlocked due to sovereign mentalities. NATO leaders have to communicate to their publics that a collective defence mechanism remains vital, and make sure that NATO continues to be a capable and credible military deterrence and intervention force. NATO needs to think globally and better cooperate with other actors, even those that might not share its values. It has to work better with the EU and other partners on issues such as crisis management and security sector reform.



**Dr Nina Graeger**, a Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, discussed “NATO and the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy – partnership on parallel tracks?” Relations between the EU and NATO evolved as a result of the Balkan operations in the 1990s and the adoption of the European Security and Defence Policy. They were formalized in the Berlin Plus Agreement in 2002, which created permanent meeting formats and focal points between the two organizations. Yet a political gridlock continues to hamper EU-NATO cooperation. Cooperation is largely informal and limited to personal relationships based on shared experiences in other missions and overlapping professional cultures among military and civilian personnel. Drivers that could potentially strengthen EU-NATO cooperation in the future are financial austerity, a new division of labour between the two organizations, especially in view of the US pivot to Asia, or new external threats such as the crisis in Ukraine. Formal cooperation will remain limited as long as the political gridlock persists. Well-functioning informal modes of cooperation might indeed reduce political incentives to strengthen formal relations between the two organizations.



**Etienne de Durand**, a Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Security Studies Center at the Institut Français des Relations Internationales, talked about “NATO after Mali: The New Face of Interventionism?” Recent interventions have shown that the best strategy to deal with emerging threats is a mixture of light and heavy military engagement (air strikes but also ground forces like in Mali). Between a standoff intervention like Libya and a decade-long COIN commitment like in Afghanistan, there should be room for a practical middle ground. Indeed, a mid-term military commitment is always needed to ensure space for a political solution among domestic actors. Yet NATO faces far deeper problems than finding the right intervention kit. First among them is the fact that European countries have different priorities. Eastern and Northern Europeans see Russia as the greatest threat, while many Southern European countries are much more concerned about ISIL and the threat of terrorism – not to mention Central European countries that are for the most part free-riding on their allies. Furthermore, cuts in defence spending have demilitarized Europe, precisely at a time when the US is disengaging from the region. Therefore, a new deal on defence objectives and priorities is needed: European countries need to first raise military expenditures, and then make sure they maintain both capable forces for overseas interventions and credible deterrence capabilities in Eastern Europe.

Issues raised during the discussion concerned European defence politics, for instance the degree of solidarity with the Ukraine against Russia, whether Europe can still rely on the US for its security, how a stronger cooperation between Britain and France could help overcome Europe’s defence problem, and that, either way, Europe needs to increase its defence spending. It was also pointed out that sanctions against Russia might have unintended consequences. Sanctions could, for instance, lead to a fall of the Russian government and increase instability in the region, or they could further isolate Russia and prevent a negotiated solution to the problem.

# KEYNOTE SPEECH:

## THE OUTCOMES OF THE SUMMIT AND THE FUTURE OF NATO

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The final keynote was given by **Ambassador Alexander Vershbow**, Deputy Secretary General of NATO. Speaking on “NATO and Russia: a new strategic reality”, he described how Russia’s aggression against Ukraine calls into question assumptions about the post-Cold War order and impacts not only NATO’s relations with Russia but its future strategic priorities. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO viewed and treated Russia as a partner. Based on shared common interests, NATO and Russia cooperated well on a number of important security issues, such as the conflict in the Balkans and counter-terrorism. Yet despite efforts to build a “lasting and inclusive peace” Russia’s recent action, in particular its aggression against Ukraine, has reversed this positive trend. Russia is waging an undeclared war in Ukraine that challenges the post-Cold War order in Europe and the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity upon which peace, security and the international system are built. Defending its member states and bolstering deterrence are therefore strategic priorities of NATO.

However, NATO does not want a return to the Cold War. NATO’s long-term objective is to encourage Russia to reconsider its behaviour, to stop its aggression and to cooperate with its partners to address the common problems of the international community. Nevertheless, until Russia changes its course of action, NATO needs to bolster its military deterrence. Ambassador Vershbow used the conference as a platform to announce that Allies would adopt a Readiness Action Plan in Wales. This plan will enhance the readiness and responsiveness of the NATO Response Force to counter any threat within days rather than weeks. Furthermore, member states are expected to modernize their militaries and to increase defence spending to move toward the agreed two per cent of GDP guideline. NATO is also reviewing defence plans, threat assessments, intelligence-sharing arrangements and early-warning procedures. Chaos, instability and terrorism have spread and threaten international peace and security around the world. NATO is working to ensure that it is prepared for the many challenges that may come.



Following this presentation, Ambassador Alexander Vershbow was interviewed on NATO’s future role and tasks by **Professor Ian Hargreaves** from Cardiff University’s School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies. Ambassador Alexander Vershbow explained that he expects, as an outcome of the Summit, that member states will stand united and committed to their vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. He also emphasised that the threat posed by Russia needs to be tackled through a comprehensive strategy that involves a range of international actors such as the G7 and the EU. Ambassador Alexander Vershbow admitted that the financial crisis in Europe has made increases in defence spending difficult but noted improving economic trends that might allow countries to halt the decline in defence spending and begin to increase investment. He argued that this is necessary and that European countries need to stand together behind a common strategy.

During the discussion, the Deputy Secretary General further explained that it is primarily up to member states and other international organizations to respond to crises such as those in Iraq, Mali, or Libya. NATO is more specialized in high-end capabilities, but if asked it could provide assistance to other actors, for instance, in capacity building and intelligence.



# CONCLUSION:

## A REFLEXIVE SPACE FOR THINKING AHEAD

The *NATO after the Wales Summit* conference provided an opportunity for NATO officials to discuss strategic priorities and decisions formulated at the Summit with analysts from academia, policy communities and think tanks.

It provided the first opportunity to discuss the Summit's expected decisions and what the consequences will be for NATO and the global security architecture at large. The most important issue was Russia's aggression against Ukraine, how NATO should respond to Russian ambitions in the region, and how this shapes the future strategic orientation of the Alliance. Conference participants reflected on NATO's commitment to defend its members, and deliberated about the Readiness Action Plan and NATO's decision to enhance the responsiveness of the NATO Response Force.

Another important issue that came up repeatedly was the threat posed by ISIL and what can be done to counter it. In particular, participants discussed what NATO can do to support such efforts, for instance by providing assistance to the Iraqi government to build more effective security forces, as well as by coordinating efforts with other member states.

The conference also served to highlight the vital role universities play in actively engaging in policy debates and how they can take a leading role in contributing to informed discussions by providing a reflexive space for key international issues. For Cardiff University, this was an exciting start to the new academic year, in which the university will continue this mission in the field of international security and elsewhere.

## KEY OUTCOME OF THE WALES SUMMIT

Outcomes of the Wales Summit, which took place on 4 and 5 September in Newport, Wales, include a number of elements that were discussed during the conference. In addition to agreement on the Readiness Action Plan, NATO adopted an Enhanced Cyber Defence Policy to strengthen the security of allied cyber infrastructure. NATO also emphasised its commitment to its counter-piracy engagement off the Horn of Africa until the end of 2016, to intensify and expand implementation of the Alliance Maritime Strategy, and to cooperate with its partners to secure the world's oceans.

NATO member states pledged to reverse the trend of declining defence budgets, an issue that was discussed on the conference's smart defence panel, as well as to make the most effective use of existing funds and to strive for a more balanced sharing of defence costs and responsibilities.

Alliance members and partners also used the Wales Summit as an opportunity to form a coalition of willing countries prepared to fight ISIL and to provide support to Iraqi and Kurdish forces.

The conference was jointly organised by the Department of Politics and International Relations in association with the Vice Chancellor's Office, Communication and Marketing Department and NATO's Public Diplomacy Division. Contributions from Cambridge University Press, Higher Education Wales, the Wales Governance Centre and the Welsh Centre for International Affairs are gratefully acknowledged. The conference took place in Cardiff at the historic Pierhead building on September the 2nd, 2014.

Further documentation of the conference is available at [www.cardiff.ac.uk/wales-summit](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/wales-summit)

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