



Press Release

For Immediate Release: 28 September 2010

Contact: Dr. Ian Davis | +44 (0)7887 782389

Email: idavis@natowatch.org
www.natowatch.org

Promoting a more transparent and accountable NATO

Call for draft of future NATO strategy to be made public on International Right to Know Day

A first draft of NATO's new [strategic concept](#) has been transmitted to ambassadors of NATO's 28 member states ahead of their initial debate with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen later today. As NATO unveils this early version of its new strategy, does anybody in the Brussels security HQ know that today is [International Right to Know Day](#)?

First celebrated by access to information advocates from around the globe on 28 September 2003, the annual Right to Know Day aims to raise awareness of every individual's right of access to government-held information: the right to know how elected officials are exercising power and how tax-payers' money is being spent. NATO Watch is marking the occasion by calling on the Alliance to make the draft strategy document available to the public and parliamentarians.

In April 2009, NATO leaders requested that the strategic concept be revised to make the Alliance more flexible and better able to deal with modern threats such as terrorism, cyber warfare and piracy. It is the first such strategic look at NATO's role since 1999, when the Alliance had just begun to take in eastern European nations that formerly had been in the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact.

A draft of the new document will be discussed behind closed doors in Brussels by NATO ambassadors today and then again by foreign and defence ministers on 14 October. Finally, a more complete version will be analyzed and agreed by heads of state and government at a November summit in Lisbon.

An experts group led by former US secretary of state Madeleine Albright released a 46-page report in May with [suggestions](#) for NATO's new strategic concept. One of the less-noticed recommendations was for the Alliance to strive to attract and maintain public and legislative backing for its operations through "*transparency and effective public communications*". Ian Davis, director of NATO Watch said, that "*while NATO generally surpassed expectations in the consultation phase, the transparency door has slammed shut during the drafting and negotiation phase*". He added "*there may be a case for allowing governments to discuss finer points in private, not least to enable consensus building around some of the more contentious issues, but by not making a draft publicly available it undermines the whole transparency exercise*".

Parliamentary oversight of the strategic concept review process has also been woefully inadequate. Only in Germany has a parliamentary hearing been scheduled (by the Committee on Foreign Affairs on 6 October) to review progress. "*Relevant parliamentary committees across the Alliance should be meeting in advance of the Lisbon Summit to review progress on the strategic concept*", said Dr. Davis, "*and if NATO is unwilling to publish a working draft, perhaps, for example, after the mid-October NATO Council meeting, it should instead be ratified by the parliaments of all 28 member states before it comes into effect*".

NATO Watch is an independent, not-for-profit 'virtual' think-tank which examines the role of NATO in public life and advocates for more openness, transparency and accountability within the Alliance. See our detailed [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and our [Vision and Mission](#).

NATO Watch and partners will be holding a Shadow NATO Summit in Brussels on 15-16 November to discuss and share ideas on the future of NATO, including the new strategic concept, Afghanistan, nuclear policy, missile defence and NATO-Russian relations. For further details [contact](#) NATO Watch.

[Sign up](#) to receive Press Releases and other content from NATO Watch