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

Email: [idavis@natowatch.org](mailto:idavis@natowatch.org)

[www.natowatch.org](http://www.natowatch.org)

*Promoting a more transparent and accountable NATO*

# An Evaluation of the Chicago Summit: Is NATO building on foundations of rock or sand?

Nigel Chamberlain and Ian Davis, NATO Watch



Afghanistan exit strategy unlikely to keep the country secure now or in the years to come

'Smart Defence' package first step in renewed attempt at culture of multinational cooperation – but claims of greater security at lower cost undermined by missile defences and failure to adapt nuclear posture

Alliance partnership blueprint continues slow-cooking evolution towards global network of partners

(Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of NATO Heads of State and Government – photo credit: NATO)



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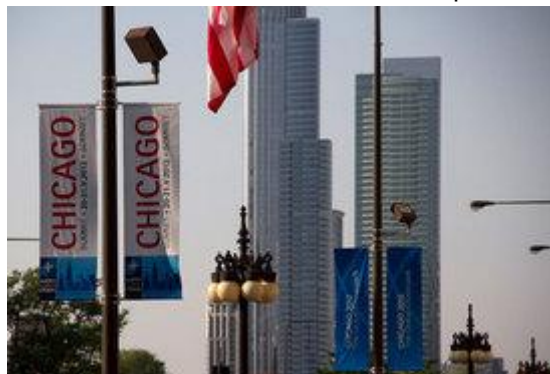
## Official Documents of the Chicago Summit

- ✚ Chicago Summit Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Chicago on 20 May 2012, 20 May. 2012
- ✚ Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan Issued by the Heads of State and Government of Afghanistan and Nations contributing to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), 21 May. 2012
- ✚ Summit Declaration on Defence Capabilities: Toward NATO Forces 2020, 20 May. 2012
- ✚ Deterrence and Defence Posture Review, 20 May. 2012
- ✚ NATO's policy guidelines on counter-terrorism, 21 May. 2012

- ✚ NATO's 'Smart Defence' initiative was launched, a push to encourage joint military projects in order to make up for dwindling budgets at a time of austerity across the alliance. Around 20 relatively small projects were announced, ranging from training helicopter pilots to the joint management of munitions.
- ✚ A \$1.7bn contract was announced for an Alliance Ground Surveillance system – essentially five US Global Hawk drones and supporting infrastructure.
- ✚ The outcome of the Defence and Deterrence Posture Review was published and disappointed most arms control experts by effectively maintaining the nuclear 'status quo' within the alliance.
- ✚ New policy guidelines on counter-terrorism were approved and the development of an Action Plan for Implementation was announced. This will explore ways of enhancing both the political and the military aspects of the alliance's contribution to national and international counter-terrorism efforts.

## Headline Decisions

- ✚ US President Barack Obama and fellow NATO leaders fine-tuned plans to hand security control to Afghan troops and withdraw 130,000 combat troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Post-2014 support will focus on training and other non-combat assistance to Afghan security forces.
- ✚ The size of the Afghan force and the funding it will need after 2014 were discussed. The military and police force will grow to 352,000 this year but (over an, as yet, undecided timeline) will be reduced to a target of around 228,500 with an estimated annual budget of \$4.1 billion. The United States is expected to foot half the bill and the international community is expected to provide the rest.
- ✚ An 'interim ballistic missile defence capability' was declared operational as part of the wider US-led missile shield. This NATO part of the system is designed to protect Europeans from the threat of ballistic missiles from foes such as Iran.



(photo credit: NATO)

## Post-Summit Guide to Key NATO Decisions

This was the first NATO summit on American soil in 13 years and the first held outside Washington DC. It was also the biggest NATO summit in history, with more than 60 countries and organisations represented.

In his '[doorstep statement](#)' at the start of NATO's 25th Summit, Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen declared that the alliance had three key priorities: "Keeping Afghanistan secure now and in the years to come. Keeping NATO strong and capable in the 21st century. And keeping our global network of partners solid". How did the Summit match up to the Secretary General's expectations?

### Keeping Afghanistan secure?

The 50 nations that make up ISAF were joined by Afghan President Karzai and representatives from Russia, Japan, Pakistan, Central Asian states, as well as from the UN and the EU. A NATO Strategic Plan for Afghanistan was endorsed,

which complements a number of earlier bilateral agreements between member states and Afghanistan, including one signed by Presidents Obama and Karzai in Kabul prior to the Summit.

The NATO leaders agreed to an "irreversible" plan to end the war in Afghanistan responsibly, pulling almost all troops out of the country by the end of 2014, but President Obama warned that the danger of Afghanistan sliding into civil war or Taliban control still exists. Newly elected French President Francois Hollande stuck to his campaign promise to pull all 3,400 French troops out of Afghanistan by the end of this year, and said that the French people have done "more than our duty" in Afghanistan.

The size of the Afghan force and the funding it will need after 2014 were discussed. The military and police force will grow to 352,000 this year but (over an, as yet, undecided timeline) will be reduced to a target of around 228,500 with an estimated annual budget of \$4.1 billion. The United States is expected to foot half the bill and the international community is expected to provide the rest. By 2024, Afghanistan is expected to take full financial responsibility for its own security forces.

The Secretary General welcomed, "the financial commitments that some have made, including additional offers I heard today", but gave no detail and called for further contributions from the international community.

Later he said: "We are on the right track to reaching the goal of around \$4bn a year for financing of Afghan security forces - it's a positive story".

In his speech, [David Cameron](#) reiterated the UK's pledge of \$100 million a year and claimed that with other pledges it amounted to almost \$1bn to date. It was reported that Germany offered more than \$200 million, Italy \$120 million, Australia \$100 million and Turkey \$20 million. A French diplomat reportedly said that they had been asked by the US for \$256 million while Canada has reportedly been pressed by the US to extend a military training mission and commit \$125 million a year for three years after 2014.

There will be an international conference in Tokyo on 8 July at which the Afghans will outline their economic and development plans for the next decade and donor nations are expected to pledge support beyond 2014.

Reflecting earlier comments about making real progress in the fight against the Taliban by ISAF Commander [General John Allen](#), there was a

rather optimistic Summit assessment of a declining impact of insurgency and growing strength and confidence of the Afghan forces which are:

*[T]aking an increasing lead for security and by the middle of 2013 will be providing the lead for security across the country, allowing ISAF forces to shift from leading combat operations to a more supporting role. There was broad agreement that the Afghan security forces are well on track to take full security responsibility across the country by the end of 2014. As the Afghan Forces take on more responsibility, ISAF Forces can be drawn down gradually and responsibly.*

In a joint declaration by NATO and ISAF, "the Afghan Government confirmed its commitment to a stable, democratic, society, based on the rule of law, and good governance".

Secretary General Rasmussen faced some difficult questioning during a [BBC HARDtalk](#) interview, just prior to the Chicago Summit, which called into question whether some of this optimism lacked foundation in light of reports of the reality of events on the ground.



Russia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan were mentioned in their facilitation of the transit of ISAF cargo in and out of Afghanistan. There was no more than a "we count on Pakistan's commitment to support the efforts of the international community to promote peace and stability in

Afghanistan" in acknowledgement of the on-going difficult relationship with President Zardari.

According to [BBC's Mark Mardell](#), "the question of the Pakistani supply route has cast a shadow over the summit". President Obama left Pakistan off the list of nations he publicly thanked for helping to get supplies into Afghanistan, a clear indication of the United States' continued annoyance over Pakistan's hesitation to reopen NATO ground supply routes. However, Obama did meet with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari briefly on the sidelines of the Summit, and said later that the two nations were making "diligent progress" on an agreement to lift the blockade on NATO supplies.

There had been much diplomatic activity before the Summit towards just such an end but while agreement was said to be close in principle, a suggested levy of \$5,000 per vehicle was not acceptable. "Considering the financial challenges that we're facing, that's not likely", [Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta](#) reportedly said of the demand.



Speaking anonymously, a senior US official said that, "The invitation was an inducement to get them back into the international fold, but the Pakistanis couldn't get their own act together. The main issue, it seems, is money". Playing down the dispute at a press conference later, Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, Sherry Rehman, said, "we are seeking to narrow differences. I don't think there is a haggle going on with the price". (NATO is prepared to pay \$500, double the previous amount).

Ambassador Rehman also said that Pakistan and the United States were trying to work through their differences and that, "Pakistan's national interest cannot be traded for positive feedback at conferences".

There have been growing concerns that other nations would join those who have already withdrawn troops from Afghanistan, or like France, declared an earlier withdrawal than expected, or agreed initially. This problem may, or may not, have been resolved at the Summit but the General Secretary is sticking to his pre-conference assessment that "There will be no rush for the exits".

But two days later, the top US general in Afghanistan, Gen. John Allen, said that 23,000 of the 88,000 US troops in Afghanistan would be home by the end of September this year. He added that decisions about further troop reductions would be made after the autumn because the United States will still need "significant firepower" in Afghanistan in 2013 and 2014

(Press conference by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen following the meeting on Afghanistan- photo credit: NATO)

**NATO Watch conclusion:** Many Afghans question the promises made by the international community and the significance of the Summit, calling it "just another conference". Despite recognising that the presence of foreign troops makes the situation in Afghanistan worse, Afghans also fear what will happen once they leave. They have good reason to. The insurgents are undefeated, corruption in the Afghan government is rife and the peace process is stuck in the sand. Last year was the worst year for civilian deaths in Afghanistan, with more than 3,000 killed. The NATO exit strategy is unlikely to keep the country secure now or in the years to come.



## Keeping NATO strong and capable?

### 'Smart Defence', Defence and Deterrence Posture Review, Missile Defences and Ground Surveillance

NATO leaders endorsed the much-heralded Smart Defence initiative by agreeing to a package of over 20 multinational projects based on the twin objectives of co-operation and burden sharing for exercises, training and education. Under the banner of 'NATO Forces 2020', the aim is to "remain fit for purpose and fit for the future" said Secretary General Rasmussen.

The major Smart Defence initiative, as expected, was the declaration of an interim missile defence capability, "that will allow the Alliance to respond to missile threats in a coordinated way". The Secretary General said that, "Our system will link together missile defence assets from different Allies satellites, ships, radars and interceptors – under NATO command and control. It will allow us to defend against threats from outside the Euro-Atlantic area".

The missile defence system is being deployed over several years. Poland and Romania have agreed to host US land-based SM-3 missiles while the US Aegis ships are based in a Spanish port. Scheduled to become fully operational in 2018, the system has annoyed Russia, which fears it will undermine its nuclear deterrent and has threatened to deploy weapons to NATO borders in response

To ease Russian concerns, NATO has urged Moscow to cooperate in the system but the two sides have struggled to find a compromise. As a result, there was no NATO-Russia Council meeting at the Summit

On wider 'capabilities' issues, Secretary General Rasmussen said: "I think this summit sent a very clear message that the European allies are committed to acquiring the necessary military capabilities in the future, despite the economic crisis, despite declining defence budgets".

However, a senior US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, probably gave a closer assessment of how co-operation and burden sharing is perceived in Washington:

*The U.S. has been NATO's quarterback since the alliance was founded. That's OK by us, but we're increasingly concerned that - in light of economic pressures in Europe - we're going to have to play*

*quarterback, running back, and wide receiver all at the same time. That's not good for the team.*

NATO leaders also approved the results of the internal review of the Alliance's posture to deter and defend against perceived threats. Seemingly, NATO "currently has the appropriate mix of capabilities to meet the security challenges of an unpredictable world" and the capacity to adapt to changes in the security environment as they arise. [The Deterrence and Defence and Posture Review](#):

*[H]as also demonstrated anew the value of the Alliance's efforts to influence the international security environment in positive ways through cooperative security and the contribution that arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation can play in achieving its security objectives, objectives that are fully in accord with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and the North Atlantic Treaty. NATO will continue to seek security at the lowest possible level of forces.*

Nuclear weapons were confirmed as a "core component of NATO's overall capabilities for deterrence", primarily provided by the United States but acknowledging "the independent strategic nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France, which have a deterrent role of their own, contribute to the overall deterrence and security of the Allies".

Again there is an acknowledgement of the significance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the provisions of Negative Security Assurances but no recognition of the contradictions between the non-proliferation commitments to the UN treaty and the acts of proliferation by NATO member states.

*NAC [North Atlantic Council] will task the appropriate committees to develop concepts for how to ensure the broadest possible participation of Allies concerned [Nuclear Planning Group] in their nuclear sharing arrangements, including in case NATO were to decide to reduce its reliance on non-strategic nuclear weapons based in Europe.*

In reality, [European countries](#), whose pilots are trained to deliver US 'free-fall' B-61s to their targets, are facing expensive decisions to replace their existing aircraft with the US F35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), whose cost has risen to more than \$100m each. The projected expense of turning the B-61s into precision-guided nuclear bombs has risen to \$6 billion. [NATO is undertaking an expensive nuclear escalation by default](#), according to Ted Seay, who until last year was arms control adviser to the US mission at NATO.

The day after the Chicago Summit, it was reported that the [UK would be pressing ahead with its own nuclear deterrent replacement programme](#), which is partly assigned to NATO, and has estimated base costs of over £20 billion. The Ministry of Defence awarded [£328m in contracts to BA Systems](#) to design the next generation of nuclear-armed submarines. Babcock has been awarded £15m and will focus on designing parts of the in-service support. More than £4m has been awarded to Rolls-Royce which will be responsible for the integration of the reactor design. The contracts are part of £3bn already set aside to start work on the replacement of the UK's fleet of four Trident nuclear submarines by 2028.

[UK Defence Secretary Philip Hammond](#) said this was "an important step" towards renewing the UK's nuclear deterrent and that the contracts announced were a step towards ensuring the UK had a nuclear deterrent "into the 2060s".

Neither of these developments could be considered to be in any way consistent with the statement that, "The Alliance is resolved to seek a

safer world for all and to create the *conditions for a world without nuclear weapons* in accordance with the goals of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty".

(Official portrait of NATO Heads of State and Government at Soldier Field – photo credit: NATO)



The DDPR Conventional Forces initiatives are categorised as 'future capability requirements' and referred to as 'NATO Forces 2020' with *transformation and reform* as key concepts. There will be further effort at NATO and EU cooperation in procurement "to avoid unnecessary duplication and maximise cost-effectiveness". [The Summit Declaration on Defence Capabilities](#): Toward NATO Forces 2020 states:

*[W]e have confidently set ourselves the goal of NATO Forces 2020: modern, tightly connected forces equipped, trained, exercised and commanded so that they can operate together and with partners in any environment.*

"Our goal is NATO Forces 2020 – an Alliance that deals with today's economic challenges, and is prepared for the security challenges of the future", [the Secretary General](#) said. In his post-Summit speech, [Prime Minister Cameron](#) called for 'a new mind-set' by member states to actively support the NATO Forces 2020 objectives.

The second of two major Smart Defence-type initiatives illustrated in Chicago was the Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) system. [NATO AGS](#)

**Management Agency** (NAGSMA) signed a \$1.7 billion procurement contract at the Summit on behalf of 13 member states (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the US) which will acquire the planned AGS system.

NATO had already agreed in February to buy a fleet of five US-made unmanned Global Hawk drones, which make up the bulk of the AGS system.

The drone system will be NATO-owned and operated and all 28 alliance members will cover future operating costs. The drones will be based in Italy. AGS will be the major data source for NATO's system for Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (JISR). It is due to become fully operational in 2017. The contract apparently includes provision for

*the purchase and initial operation and maintenance of unmanned aircraft equipped with advanced ground surveillance radar sensors. The system will provide a real-time and long-endurance intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability to NATO forces in a wide range of missions, including protecting ground forces, crisis management, peace support operations, border and maritime security and humanitarian assistance.*

However, it took almost two decades of wrangling over how to share the funding for AGS – a sign of things to come?

**NATO Watch conclusion:** As with all summits, there is an element of window-dressing, with announcements that do not in the end amount to very much. There were several of these at Chicago. One was the announcement that the first phase of the European ballistic missile defence system is in place. While sounding impressive, it amounts to little more than what existed previously: radar stations in Turkey, US ships in the Mediterranean and, the one new element, a command node based in Germany.

But the decision has two wider ramifications. First, it deepens the continuing disagreement with Russia over missile defences, and secondly it undermines the core message that Smart Defence is about being smarter in procurement choices. The United States in close to 30 years has spent nearly \$150 billion on antimissile technology for a *potential* future long-range ballistic missile threat from Iran or North Korea, and foresees spending an additional \$44 billion on

the effort over the next five years. Is this really Smart Defence in action?

In the debates about capabilities and deterrence the alliance continues to confront fundamental questions about how it should define its role and mission in the twenty-first century. In particular, member states are deadlocked on whether the alliance should continue to conduct operations outside the North Atlantic, or limit missions to member nations' borders. National interests, differing threat perceptions and domestic constraints continue to influence the commitments NATO nations are prepared to make when it comes to conducting out-of-area operations, developing new common capabilities and forging partnerships with non-member states.

It is also clear that more resources need to be put into non-military solutions to the security challenges ahead. Many of the most important emerging security challenges do not easily lend themselves to traditional military solutions. Preventive diplomacy, pre-emptive and early-warning technologies, and cooperative transnational partnerships are the most appropriate tools of the trade, and NATO has major capability gaps in such 'soft power'.

Keeping NATO strong, capable and *relevant* remains very much work in progress.

## Keeping NATO's global network of partners solid?

On the second day of the Summit, NATO's leaders met leaders of a group of thirteen partner nations (Australia, Austria, Finland, Georgia, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Morocco, New Zealand, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates) which have contributed politically, operationally and financially to NATO-led operations.



(The Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria, Wolfgang Waldner, the Chancellor of Austria, Werner Faymann and the Minister of Defence of Finland, Stefan Wallin – photo credit: NATO)

“Our meeting showed how much we have already gained by working together in Afghanistan, in Kosovo, and protecting the people of Libya. And it showed how much more we can do”, the Secretary General said. The alliance leaders said they were ready to cooperate with partners in new areas, including cyber defence and energy security and to engage more in joint training and



exercises. There was also an agreement to explore opportunities for capability development.

In a second meeting dedicated to partnerships, Alliance Foreign Ministers met with their counterparts from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. "We share a common set of values, we serve side by side in NATO operations, and we work together on a daily basis to prepare your countries for future membership of our Alliance," Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow said.

In his post-conference speech, [Prime Minister Cameron](#) said that there had been much debate on the future for NATO. Some argued for retrenchment and lowered ambitions but he said that he had argued the opposite, for reasserting NATO's relevance and being ready to tackle threats from outside its territory. [Anders Fogh Rasmussen](#) took the same position in saying that NATO should continue its 'Out of Area' operations because, "In today's world all allies realize that territorial defence of our populations and our countries may very well start beyond our borders".

In an article in the [Chicago Tribune](#), former US Ambassador to NATO R. Nicholas Burns, argued that:

*NATO still matters to Americans. It is the most successful alliance in modern history and binds the U.S., Canada and Europe into the greatest democratic community on the planet. A stronger, more ambitious and more united transatlantic partnership will be essential in shaping a future where the U.S. will still be the indispensable global leader. Americans know we can't act alone in the world. We need friends and allies and are fortunate to have Europe and Canada as global partners.*

And in a pre-Summit [International Herald Tribune](#) article, he and David Manning wrote that, "NATO was 63 in April and will celebrate its birthday at next week's summit meeting in Chicago, no doubt accompanied by much debate about what purpose the alliance now serves and whether it has a future". They invoked the title of the old Beatles song and asked, "Will you still need me when I'm sixty-four?" and answered their own question with "an unequivocal yes". They went on to suggest how:

*The NATO partners must now confront a range of elusive and complex global threats from rogue and failing states to terrorism, piracy and cyberattacks. They must also adapt to global power relationships that are changing rapidly and bringing new challenges. China's economic miracle is fueling a*

*military buildup that may well lead to increased tensions and an accelerating arms race in Asia.*

Two [Reuters](#) journalists pointed out that NATO has reinvented itself several times before and looked at what might be next on the agenda as, according to Jamie Shea, NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges, it could soon be an alliance without a major operation under way.

"[Crises] are likely to be more spaced out and more focused on air and naval operations than on land deployments", Shea wrote in a Carnegie Endowment for International Peace article. "The objectives are more likely to be limited and short-term, involving more intelligence-gathering and special forces, to say nothing of the increased use of robotics and drones in place of soldiers".

Taking Libya as a model, Shea and Clara O'Donnell, visiting scholar at the Brookings Institution, pointed towards 'Coalitions of the Willing' as being the future for NATO operations as NATO solidarity declined as foreign expeditions have become more unpopular in many countries.



(Meeting of the NATO Foreign Ministers with the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro and Macedonia – photo credit: NATO)

NATO's Allied Command Transformation is not based in Brussels or even Europe but in Norfolk, Virginia but it is commanded by [General Stephane Abrial](#) of the

French Air Force who said that, "though the location of its headquarters and the way it works with the U.S. military has changed since its inception, NATO's Allied Command Transformation has forged a stronger relationship with the United States".

**NATO Watch conclusion:** Although NATO wants to strengthen its partnerships around the world, its Achilles heel remains an inability to seriously engage with major emerging powers, especially the so-called BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China). Drawing those countries into a closer relationship would need to be a future priority if the alliance entertains any serious ambition to become a hub for global crisis management and cooperative security.

It would seem likely that NATO is going to have to work hard in its 64th year and rather than take retirement at 65, it is probably, as in the title of that other Beatles song, going to be engaged 'Across the Universe'.