



# ATLANTIC CHARTER 2025

## A NEW NATO DEAL FOR AMERICA



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### Executive Summary

NATO nations face three converging challenges that together require renewed European resource commitments to defense: 1) extreme Russian military aggressiveness and revanchism as displayed in Ukraine, and which if unchecked could extend beyond Ukraine, 2) rising Chinese military power and China's 'no limits' partnership with Russia, and 3) the need to rapidly rebalance and redistribute NATO defense responsibilities in light of America's growing global defense commitments.

Faced with this alarming situation, we, the undersigned members of The Alphen Group recommend adoption of a new Atlantic Charter 2025. While the Charter contains recommendations for detailed benchmarks, metrics, roadmaps, and force structure; its principal focus is to accelerate significantly Europe's ability to execute SACEUR's new Family of Defense Plans and reduce today's excessive dependence on the United States. This is consistent with President-elect Trump's notion that European defense contributions are wholly inadequate to meet current and future needs.

Implemented properly, the recommendations in this Charter would significantly strengthen European defense capabilities and reduce worldwide pressures on American forces. Global security and transatlantic solidarity would be enhanced as a result. The implicit deal would be that America's strong commitment to NATO's Article 5 would be sustained in return for a European defense buildup leading to a more capable and balanced Alliance.

Resourcing the recommendations contained in this Charter will be difficult given European economic problems, so the Charter endorses creation of a Defense, Security and Resilience (DSR) Bank designed to expedite and expand financing for NATO's defense requirements going well beyond Allies' 2024 defense investment pledge.

In addition, the Allies must commit themselves to helping Ukraine defeat Russian aggression as a critical requirement for the future of transatlantic security and preservation of the rules-based international order.

We the undersigned urge NATO leaders at the June 2025 Summit in The Hague to: 1) commit to rapidly building European and Canadian capabilities to execute SACEUR's new Family of Defense Plans, and 2) consider creation of a new Defense, Security and Resilience Bank to help finance this effort.

### The Mission

*In August 1941, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued the **Atlantic Charter** which established a politico-military relationship which in time became the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and endures to this day. The Charter was made credible by the March 1941 **Lend-Lease Act** which established the United States as the Arsenal of Democracy*

*and enabled the British to maintain the fight against Nazism. The Charter was built on American potential – both economic and military. Today, a new Atlantic Charter is needed built on European potential and **greater European strategic responsibility within the broad framework of NATO.***

*Atlantic Charter 2025 builds on TAG Transatlantic Compact 2024 by looking beyond the debate over spending 2%, 3% or even 4% of GDP on defense by the European Allies. To that end, the Charter focuses on the **minimum military capabilities, capacities and structures NATO will need to do the job both implicit and explicit in SACEUR's Family of Plans adopted at the 2023 Vilnius Summit.** The Charter is based on a worst-case analysis of the contingencies and assumptions with which NATO's defense and deterrence posture could have to contend.*

*The Charter also constitutes a **New Deal for America in NATO built on strengthened European and Canadian forces and much greater interoperability with US forces in all contingencies.** If adopted and implemented by America's NATO Allies, with the support and encouragement of the United States, it would ease growing world-wide pressure on US forces and resources through a much-strengthened NATO European Pillar that would by 2030 be able to act as a high-end, first responder force in and around the European Theater of Operations and in all circumstances. The reinforced European pillar would be balanced by a reconceived NATO North American pillar in which **strengthened Canadian forces** focus on high-end interoperability with their US counterparts with a particular focus on the Arctic and the North Atlantic.*

*What minimum military capabilities and capacities do the European Allies need to provide and by when to ensure better transatlantic burden-sharing given the growing pressures on US forces world-wide and the shared threat array? **Atlantic Charter 2025** is a reconfirmation of the Alliance's critical importance to the security of all the Allies, including the United States, guiding the way for NATO transformation. The Charter thus offers a **substantive roadmap with specific capacity benchmarks and metrics** that calls upon the Allies to focus on the requirements necessitated by the new Russian threat and to reinforce and accelerate implementation of the Strategic Concept and the decisions of the Madrid, Vilnius and Washington Summits, via more balanced and effective Alliance defense and deterrence. **Key deliverables**, benchmarks, and metrics together with recommended actions are identified.*

*How can European allies that struggle to realize the 2% GDP target meet a defense investment challenge that implies an even greater financial commitment? The answer is a form of reverse Lend-Lease Deal. A Defense, Security and Resilience (DSR) Bank would provide demand-side financing for Nations by offering Collective Debt Issuance. The DSR Bank concept has been championed by the Atlantic Council and has been studied by NATO's International Staff for five years.<sup>1</sup> This Charter endorses the concept of a DSR Bank and urges NATO leaders to consider it at the June 2025 NATO summit. The DSR Bank would pool the creditworthiness of participating nations to raise funds in global financial markets. This collective debt would provide nations and defense industries with access to the cheapest possible financing (AAA credit rating) for long term, predictable and reliable defense procurement. A DSR Bank would also offer Loan Programs. Funds raised would enable nations to purchase armaments, modernize defense systems, and invest in dual-use technologies without significantly increasing their direct public debt. This money would further complement existing defense budgets and any national contributions to the bank would support defense investment policy goals such*

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<sup>1</sup> see Rob Murray "How a new global defense bank - the 'Defense, Security and Resilience Bank - can solve US and allied funding problems,' The Atlantic Council, December 13, 2024.

*as defense spending targets.*

### Three Converging Challenges

As a new Administration begins its term of office in Washington DC, the **Allies must reflect on the monumental contribution to European peace and security** made by the United States since 1941. Considering today's threats, challenges, and opportunities, the Allies must rededicate the Alliance to its enduring purpose to serve the defense interests of all its nations and the necessary response to a more dangerous threat environment.

Three converging challenges require extraordinary responses. The first challenge is the **indisputable new threat posed by a revanchist Russia** as demonstrated by its aggression against Ukraine and President Putin's assertion that this war is against the West, not just Ukraine. To meet that challenge the Allies must recommit to the Harmel Principles that call for Alliance policies that ensure defense and deterrence, whilst also leaving room for confidence-building and cooperation when Russia demonstrates a willingness to engage constructively. Such a commitment is necessary for international peace and internal Alliance consensus. However, the Allies must also indefinitely suspend the NATO-Russia Founding Act (NRFA), which Moscow's belligerence has made obsolete. A new basis for cooperation can always be reestablished with a future Russian leadership that seeks a more collaborative relationship based on respect for international law.

The second challenge is the **rise of Chinese military power** and its impact on US policy and strategy world-wide. The worst case is that China will seek common cause with Russia, Iran, and North Korea to impose maximum pressure on US forces across multiple theaters simultaneously from the Arctic to the South China Sea. Non-US NATO allies must ease pressure on US forces by developing sufficient forces and resources to deter any threat to the European Theater of Operations under any circumstances.

The third challenge is an internal one that has confronted the Allies for many decades: **the need to better redistribute both contributions and leadership responsibilities between the United States and its European and Canadian Allies** in line with the NATO 2022 Strategic Concept and subsequent Summit decisions to rebalance the Alliance and help ensure, in a lasting way, that it can successfully meet urgent present and future security demands. Failing to respond effectively to these two challenges will invite further Russian belligerence and, possibly aggression against which the Allies will have no sufficient response and will thus risk deepening Euro-Atlantic divisions over burden and responsibility sharing.

**More equitable burden sharing, if managed properly, should not lead to an autonomous European 'pillar' outside NATO**, but rather promote greater European strategic responsibility inside the framework of the transatlantic Alliance more broadly. This approach would involve North American as well as European Allies and, among the latter, both EU and non-EU Allies, working together toward the goal of a more balanced Alliance, while preserving the unity and diversity of Allies. It would reflect the continuing necessity of American contributions to deterrence and defense and the transatlantic link. It will not, nor should it, inhibit the members of the European Union from developing security cooperation among themselves, particularly in defense industrial areas, which will enhance European capabilities and cooperation in NATO.

The Alliance consensus is that, barring a dramatic reversal in Moscow's current policies, Russia

will remain a strategic adversary for the long-term. This compels the Alliance to seek a post-Ukraine war world that reflects contemporary Euro-strategic reality. **Maintaining and strengthening Alliance unity, including a strong transatlantic link, thus will remain essential.** The Allies must commit themselves to helping Ukraine defeat Russian aggression as a critical requirement for the future of transatlantic security and preservation of the rules-based international order. They must also set a clear path to Ukraine's NATO membership and commit to helping Ukraine manage the requirements that lie ahead on that path.

Given that challenging strategic environment what specifically must Europeans do to establish a new security and defense 'contract' with America? For the time being, **the United States remains for NATO the indispensable Ally**, and there is NO prospect that this will change anytime soon in the absence of a major rebalancing effort by the European Allies. For example, European Allies on paper might be able to generate 100,000 or 200,000 troops, but in the absence of a genuine effort to build up these corps, such figures are operationally meaningless. This is particularly so given the mobility and sustainment challenges involved in moving these corps from peacetime locations in Western and Southern Europe to wartime defensive locations in Eastern Europe. Moreover, if Russia were to appear in any way to gain from its aggression against Ukraine, by means of a favorable peace settlement that also places, in effect, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Moldova behind a new Iron Curtain, then whether those figures of troops above are attainable or not ceases to be an academic issue.

Importantly, **NATO's Force Structure**, its pool of **High Readiness Force (HRF)** air, land and maritime headquarters demonstrate that the European Allies already have many of the command and force structures that they need to assume a much greater role in the defense of Europe. These critical headquarters are certified periodically by NATO in terms of their manning, readiness and responsiveness, in accordance with agreed **NATO Force Standards**. Moreover, HRF land headquarters generally have a signals brigade, and a logistics brigade assigned to them. However, unlike the practice during the Cold War, they currently lack organic field artillery, air defense artillery, engineers, transportation and medical brigades. If the headquarters were activated, they might get those missing brigades from their parent army, with the British Army providing such enablers in support of the **Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC)**, the Bundeswehr in support of the **1<sup>st</sup> German-Netherlands Corps**, etc.

A specific problem, which is informative of a wider European malaise, and which imposes opportunity and resource costs on US forces, is that there are not enough such enabling brigades for the eight HRF corps, plus the two Multinational Corps Northeast in Poland and Southeast in Romania, as well as Eurocorps. Atlantic Charter 2025 thus recommends that the eight HRF corps partner up in groups of two to form **four Warfighting Corps** fully equipped with those missing enabling brigades (see below).

## PART ONE: ATLANTIC CHARTER 2025

Atlantic Charter 2025 calls for:

- Use of the Allied Reaction Force (ARF) and the consolidation of all Allied rapid response forces into one **single pool of forces** to lead in time to the creation of a European-led Allied heavy mobile force supported by the requisite force structure.
- Much more **intense cooperation between NATO and the European Union to better**

**enable a pan- spectrum response to the challenges** posed by Russian aggression against Ukraine and the consequent threat to the West. The two organizations working together reinforce deterrence and Euro-Atlantic security.

- Enhancing the Alliance's capacity to contribute to the prevention of crises and the resolution of conflicts, as well as to the strengthening of international security, through maintaining a **credible rapid intervention capacity** and strengthening its partnerships and other cooperative security instruments.
- **Further strengthening NATO's operational capacity** by combining credible and effective multi-domain conventional forces, missile defenses, nuclear deterrence, space support, cyber defenses, and protection against multi-form hybrid threats. The credibility and effectiveness of this comprehensive posture will depend, in part, on the commitments and efforts of every Ally and on achieving a high degree of unity across the Alliance.
- **European Allies assuming a significantly greater responsibility, financially, militarily, and politically**, for delivering a contemporaneously credible composite, combined capacity, with the United States assisting in these endeavors, while Washington continues to play its enduring and irreplaceable leadership role in and through NATO.

## The Roadmap

The proposed roadmap offers a way forward to **reinforce and accelerate implementation of the Strategic Concept and other Madrid, Vilnius and Washington Summit decisions**:

- Establish a larger, stronger European role and contribution in Allied defense and deterrence, alongside and in partnership with the essential, enduring role and contributions of North American Allies.
- Use the Allied Reaction Force (ARF) to fully implement the Plan for Defense and Deterrence of the Euro-Atlantic Area (DDA), the NATO Military Strategy and the NATO Force Model, thus strengthening NATO's conventional deterrence posture and operational capacity.
- Further enable European conventional forces and capabilities through enhanced sustainment of forces and improved infrastructure, including enhanced military mobility, in the direction of a much stronger European collective operational capacity for all NATO core tasks.
- Set new input and output goals for Allied defense efforts by strengthening the Vilnius and Washington Summit defense spending commitments.
- Promote greater complementarity between European and US security assistance contributions to Ukraine as part of a rebalanced Alliance effort.
- Improve standardization and interoperability from the low to high ends of the conflict spectrum, particularly among the European members of the Alliance, but also with North American forces.
- Develop, share, and integrate modern technology into NATO defense and deterrence systems, and better exploit and develop the impact of the NATO Innovation Fund (NIF) and the Defense Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA).
- Revitalize defense and technological industrial bases on both sides of the Atlantic to better



respond to current and future defense and deterrence requirements by expanding the European Defense Technological Industrial Base (EDTIB) and creating a shadow factory scheme with companies that can reinforce the defense supply chain. This will make it easier and cheaper for Allies to buy capabilities off the shelf (COTS).

- Broaden and modernize NATO's ability to defend against hybrid threats by developing information and cyber capabilities that strengthen conventional and nuclear deterrence through their threat to Russian resources, forces, and capabilities.
- Improve the capacity of Allies to share actionable intelligence so that a common picture is established early in a crisis.
- Further enable European nuclear forces, missile defenses, cyber and space capabilities, and begin broader and deeper nuclear consultation and cooperation between France, UK, and US, on the one hand, and non-nuclear Allies, on the other.

## PART TWO: THE DEAL

### Critically Reinforcing NATO's Conventional Deterrent

*"The premise upon which all future NATO military strategy must be established is that European members of NATO should **AS THEIR MINIMUM CAPABILITY REQUIREMENT** be able to defend Europe at any time and in any circumstances even when the bulk of US forces could be engaged globally."*

Reinforcing NATO's conventional deterrent must be a dynamic and continuous process of adaptation because Russia will continue to present a direct and increasing threat to NATO Allies, possibly capable of launching another full-scale invasion within 3-5 years. NATO must immediately strengthen forward defenses with force packages that are more robust than brigades. Indefinitely suspending the NATO-Russia Founding Act, as suggested above, would also have the benefit of removing the self-imposed restrictions on deploying larger formations permanently to the East.

Today's **NATO Force Model** is driving the development of the new standing **Allied Reaction Force (ARF)**. This is a vital goal if NATO is to balance the ends, ways and means for which it was created. The strengthening of deterrence must take place across the conventional and nuclear domains. While respecting the clear separation between them NATO's long-standing nuclear sharing arrangements must be extended to the conventional domain to better share both the political risks and operational burdens across the Alliance. Such a change of posture would enable the creation of an **airborne conventional deep strike capability**. What is equally clear is that each of the improvements noted herein and which have been agreed will also require additional investment in capabilities and capacity by non-US Allies. Only the Alliance can provide the necessary balance between capability, capacity and affordability through efficiency and enhanced effectiveness.

Such demands should come as no surprise. Fulfilling the commitments to defense investment and force levels that Allies made at the Madrid, Vilnius and Washington summits are simply the latest iteration of a process that is as old as NATO. The truism at the heart of Atlantic Charter 2025 is that going forward NATO will only be credible if a strong America is reinforced by Canada in a strengthened North American Pillar and a stronger European Pillar inside a NATO credibly strong in the minds of its adversaries. That is why the Allied Response Force will be at NATO's future

core and provide the framework for a European-led high-end, first responder force in an era in which Allies must expect that territorial aggression in Europe will coincide with aggression elsewhere in the world that will also demand immediate US attention and significant forces. It is true that US forces are still sufficiently capable of meeting several high-end contingencies simultaneously. However, the premise upon which all future NATO military strategy must be built is that European members of NATO should **AS THEIR MINIMUM CAPABILITY REQUIREMENT** be able to defend Europe at any time and in any circumstances, even when the bulk of US forces could be engaged globally.

What is needed is a **European-led, division-strength, air, sea, and land force** that by 2030 takes the Allied Response Force to a new level of capability to underpin deterrence by denial in all circumstances. Such a force would not just ease pressure on US forces and resources, an essential goal of this Atlantic Charter, but also crucially raise the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons in Europe. It would also provide a high-end focal point for the transformative NATO Force Model and future readiness initiatives. To balance the conventional and nuclear deterrent postures of the Alliances the Allied Response Force must rapidly develop into an **Allied Heavy Mobile Force (AHMF)**, a high-end, first responder force dedicated to conventional deep strike with capability shared among Allies, and which is the natural consequence of current force planning. Critically, the AHMF would ensure interoperability with US forces at the highest and most devastating level of conflict when both are under the most extreme of pressures.

The AHMF would be drawn from the **Warfighting Corps** proposed herein at be at the pivot of a **future NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept**. It would be critical to the establishment of a clear link between NATO's conventional deterrence posture and operational capacity by harnessing additional European conventional forces. However, such a capability will only be realized through deeper reform of the NATO Force Structure; the strengthening of European operational enablers including deep fires, air defenses; and the realization of substantially improved military mobility capabilities, sustainability, survivability, and resilience.

### **Recommended specific steps:**

**Minimum Enabling Capability:** Whereas the US Army's V Corps has the enablers it would need to fight a high intensity war, none of the European corps do, with the partial exception of the **Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC)**. Europeans and Canadians must actively work with the US to overcome the critical shortfall in enablers by establishing a Minimum Enabling Capability for the Alliance. The NATO Response Force was an otherwise brilliant concept, but it had the unintended consequence in that the rotational leadership principle encouraged a division of already limited capabilities among European Allies. And, while the United States has been building up the US Army's V Corps stationed in Germany and Poland, European Allies have exhausted themselves trying to build up ten army corps concurrently.

**Redeploy the ARRC:** To accelerate the process of force transformation, re-deploy **HQ ARRC** from the UK to Poland to become **HQ Allied Reaction Force to reinforce HQ Multinational Division (Northeast)** to work alongside Polish forces and US V Corps. This would give credence to the idea of an 'unblinking eye' on the northern, eastern, south-eastern and southern flanks, help further integrate Finnish and Swedish forces into the **NATO Force Structure**, and reinforce the credibility of both **Article 3 and Article 5 contingencies**. Combining mass and Maneuver into effectiveness and efficiency this British-led headquarters would be able to move rapidly anywhere



in SACEUR's Area of Responsibility.

**Multifunctional HQ:** This strengthened HQ ARF would be multifunctional and would also act as a command hub for a **rapid reaction force** that could move rapidly from a low-end to a high-end conflict, undertake the full spectrum of missions, act as a rapid deployable strategic reserve, and reinforce deterrence with its presence in Central Europe (not in western England). With a focus on NATO's northern, eastern, and south-eastern flanks it would also offer support to Allies on the southern flank if called upon.

**Multi-Domain Operations (MDO):** If high-end interoperability between US and Allied forces is to be realized the Allied Reaction Force must also act as a development vehicle for NATO multi-domain operations from seabed to space and across the multi-domains of air, sea, land, cyber, space, information, and knowledge. Therefore, the ARF must also become sufficiently robust and responsive, and held at a sufficient level of readiness, to meet all threats to the territory of the Euro-Atlantic Area in the first instance and have sufficient capacity to support those front-line nations facing transnational threats, such as terrorism.

**Critical Minimum Requirement 1:** Critical requirements are deep fires, battlefield air defense, combat engineers, wet gap bridging, movement control, medical support, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR) and electronic warfare. Similarly, instead of having six half-empty Joint Force Air Components (JFAC), European Allies must commit to building three, fully structured, fully capable Composite Air Strike Forces, each with the full complement of fighters, fighter-bombers, tactical reconnaissance, electronic combat, airlift, tanker, early warning and Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) aircraft. These three multinational CASFs would work together with USEUCOM's 3rd Air Force, thereby providing the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) with four potent, full spectrum air packages.

**Critical Minimum Requirement 2:** The same template must also apply to navies with the activation of European Standing Fleets in the Atlantic and Mediterranean operating alongside and together with the US Navy's 2nd and 6th Fleets. This will include NATO cross-attachment of European surface ships, submarines, amphibious forces, and maritime patrol aircraft to United States Navy (USN) naval task groups and similar USN assets being cross-attached to European naval task groups.

**Critical Minimum Requirement 3:** NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) must be extended to allow earlier intercepts, including "left of launch", as well as the possible deployment of the OTH-R system to NATO's eastern flank. The war in Ukraine has shown that, however capable Patriot, SAMP-T, and other air defense systems, relying on point defenses alone will not protect critical permanent (non-mobile) headquarters, facilities, and assets when confronted with swarms of incoming ballistic and cruise missiles and drones. NATO's premier Aegis-based ballistic missile defense (BMD) system, currently focused on Iranian missile threats, should thus be optimized to create a "360 degree" capability against Russian ballistic and cruise missiles. This would require not only a policy decision, but also deployment of a TPY-2 advanced mobile radar in Poland or Romania.

### **The 67%/50% Rules**

*Having worked hard to secure implementation of the 2% GDP defense investment pledge, Allies*

*should now put the planning in place to realize an increase in spending of at least 3% of GDP on traditional defense in an emergency, whilst enhancing security in all its forms. By 2035, European Allies must deliver two thirds (67%) of NATO's combined operational capacity for collective defense, as measured in rapidly usable forces, enablers, and other capabilities to execute advance plans across SACEUR's Area of Responsibility.*

Many European Allies have consistently failed to meet the criteria of the North Atlantic Treaty's Article 3 which specifies that "...separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, [Allies] will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack." The recommendations in this Charter, if implemented, will bring noncompliant Allies back in line with their commitments in the Treaty.

**To realize their minimum capability requirements, non-US NATO Allies must collectively provide at least 50% of all NATO Defense Planning Process (NDPP) designated capabilities by 2030.** The NDPP is established on a cardinal rule that no single ally should provide more than 50% of any agreed Capability Target. Compliance with that rule has failed, particularly in "strategic enabler" domains, with the United States providing 70, 80 or even 90% in various categories.

In addition to the 50% rule, the Charter must include new and elevated input objectives. Most Allies have met the current objective of spending at least 2% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defense and some have exceeded that goal, but given the nature and scope of emerging threats to themselves and others they must do more. Measures must also be included that enhance security in addition to defense spending as part of the new set of goals, with systems in place that would enable them to increase both investment and output rapidly in an emergency. Allies must also now begin planning for 3% GDP defense investment and more, if necessary, in an emergency.

When the European Allies accomplish the objectives described in this proposal, NATO civilian and military leadership roles and structure can then be reorganized to reflect the greater share of burdens that they carry, and the greater influence within the Alliance they will generate.

### **Improving standardization and interoperability**

*European Union NATO members, along with the United Kingdom, must re-think co-production and sharing arrangements to better produce and field rapidly on a multi-national basis equipment for multiple Allies that would enhance both interoperability and affordability. Whilst the NATO Standardization Organization promotes interoperability, national and commercial interests too often take precedent.*

Greater affordability and interoperability will only be realized through enhanced unity of purpose, greater efficiency of effort, and thus standardization wherever possible. The European Allies must overcome long-standing political and financial obstacles to standardization and interoperability. When multiple Allies buy the same equipment, even if it is from a non-EU source, interoperability can be enhanced.

**The NATO Standardization Organization (NSO) must be strengthened to improve its ability to influence and facilitate national decisions that affect interoperability.** Unfortunately, NATO has abdicated its unique role in promoting interoperability, notably through standardization. The various NATO military headquarters routinely circumvent persistent materiel standardization

shortfalls by encouraging Allies to standardize tactics, techniques, and procedures. Military and defense procurement executives also frequently talk past each other, and industry.

To improve the prospects for better standardization and interoperability, European and North American Allies must agree that before decisions on major equipment purchases are made, they will pose and answer a seminal question for the Alliance: “How will this choice affect NATO standardization and interoperability?”

## **Nuclear NATO**

*NATO will continue to be a nuclear Alliance, and the enduring U.S. extended deterrent will be the core of NATO deterrence. NATO's nuclear deterrent posture must also reflect and forge stronger complementarity between conventional and nuclear forces, promote greater conventional deep strike capabilities on a multinational basis, and favor greater British and French nuclear cooperation.*

The contributing role of other Allies, particularly in hosting and supporting nuclear capabilities, should be acknowledged, and updated to reflect new strategic realities. NATO also needs a new consensus on the means and ways to adapt nuclear deterrence to new requirements, particularly Next Generation Dual Capable Aircraft (DCA).

With Russia expanding and diversifying its theater and tactical nuclear capabilities, including moving some systems into Belarus, NATO nuclear sharing, including stationing of nuclear delivery systems, must be broadened to include Allies that have joined NATO since 1999. Indefinite suspension of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, recommended above, will also remove NATO's self-imposed three “no's”. In December 1996 NATO stated that it has “no intention, no plan and no reason” to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, including nuclear weapons storage sites, even though NATO nations have since 2014 repeatedly agreed in their Summit communiques that Russia is in violation of its obligations under the Founding Act.

## **More Robust Resilience**

*In future war corrosion of open societies will be as dangerous as coercion of Allied governments because it is easier for authoritarian regimes, like Russia, to control information and messaging. If Allies cannot protect their own people, it will be hard for them to project power. Looking to the future the Alliance needs to get ‘Quantum-ready’. Modern conflicts are not simply fought with military systems on the battlefield but increasingly in the algorithms matrix. Allies must also enhance their cooperation in countering disinformation, cyber and other hybrid threats and prepare to take advantage of the coming revolution in computer technology.*

**One of NATO's many vital roles across the hybrid-cyber-hyperwar spectrum will be to coordinate Allied efforts to deal with and develop hybrid capabilities that add up to more than the sum of their parts.** All NATO democracies must be alert to threats adversaries pose to democratic cohesion using modern means of communication, disinformation, and malicious applications of cyber weapons and artificial intelligence. At the very least, the Allies must further enhance their cooperation in dealing with the hybrid threats posed by their adversaries.

The Allies must also fortify the resilience of their military forces and societies. Use and protection

of space-based assets must be much more robust, including through expanded cooperation among Allies and within NATO. Greater effort must also be devoted to protecting NATO and nationally owned and operated communications networks and information services, as well as the hardening of critical military and civilian infrastructures against cyber and physical threats.

### **Better Protected Innovation**

Greater effort must also be devoted to enhancing the survivability and endurance of Allied forces and the resilience of Allied societies, against lethal and non-lethal threats by strengthening the dispersal and hardening of military infrastructure, logistical sustainability, defense and technological industrial innovation, mobilization and production, wartime supply chains, and civil-military cooperation.

To that end, **technological innovation must be better protected and the sharing of scientific research limited to like-minded states**, notably in the fields of artificial intelligence, quantum computing, machine-learning, Big Data, Nanotechnologies, industrial development, production and cooperation, and the pursuit of standardization of materiel to attain higher level of interoperability among Allied forces, are vital to NATO defense and deterrence and must be protected.

## **PART THREE: THE NATO FUTURE FORCE**

1. The European component of NATO's combined operational capacity will be **four fully-capable, fully-enabled, fully-ready War Fighting Corps (WFC)** from which the division-strength Allied Heavy Mobile Force will be drawn: These four WFCs will be sourced from the eight Rapid Reaction Corps Headquarters currently in the NATO Force Structure with eight corps partnering together, in four pairs of two, with one each from northern Europe and southern Europe. The current eight corps HQs can continue but must be fully prepared to generate the four WFCs on short notice in times of tension or war.
2. Each of the four corps pairings will work with the corps framework and contributing nations to source all the required combat, combat support and combat service support units. In due course, SACEUR will certify to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) that this is indeed the case. **No shortfalls or gaps will be tolerated.**
3. **Two fully capable, fully enabled, fully ready "Shield" Corps** (Multi-National Corps, Northeast in Poland, and Multi- National Corps, Southeast in Romania) will be supported by the Allied Reaction Force and its successors.
4. **First Line of Land Defense:** In a major pre-war emergency these two corps would constitute NATO's first line of land defense and would play a key role in protecting forward-located Allies, delivering on NATO's commitment not to yield Allied territory, and buy time and maneuver space for the four Warfighting Corps. A special effort will also be made by non-US Allies, with the assistance of the United States, to strengthen the operational capacity and credibility of these two fighting formations, including the provision of combat support and combat service support units, to ensure that they can deter by denial incursions into and respond in full to major aggression against the Alliance and thus defend successfully.
5. **First Line of Air Defense:** Non-US Allies will also field three fully capable, fully-enabled,

fully-ready Composite Air Strike Forces (CASF). These three CASFs will be available at short notice and sourced from the current six European JFAC Headquarters in the NATO Force Structure working together, in pairs, to source the three non-US CASFs at short notice. Each CASF will include the full complement of defensive and offensive aircraft. At the proper time, SACEUR will certify to the NAC that this is indeed the case. No shortfalls or gaps will be tolerated.

6. **First Line of Maritime Defense:** Non-US Allies will provide two fully capable, fully enabled, fully-ready Non-US Standing Fleets, Atlantic (ECSFLant) and Mediterranean (ECSFMed). The two fleets will be sourced from the current six European Maritime Force (MARFOR) Headquarters. MARFORs will source the naval task groups in such a way that the two Standing Fleets will always have a minimum operational capacity that can be augmented at short notice. The core of the two Fleets will be the aircraft and helicopter carriers operated by France, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom, with their complement of surface escorts (Anti-Air Warfare destroyers and Anti- Submarine Warfare frigates), attack submarines and maritime patrol aircraft contributed by these Allies or by other European Allies. At the right time, SACEUR would certify to the NAC that the two Standing Fleets are up and running. No gaps or shortfalls would be permitted.
7. **The American Offer:** The United States will commit to NATO permanently stationed in Europe, under the command of the United States European Command (USEUCOM), a fully-capable, fully-enabled and fully-ready WFC (US Army's V Corps); a fully-capable, fully-enabled and fully-ready CASF (US Air Force's 3rd Air Force); and a fully-capable, fully-enabled and fully-ready US Navy 6th Fleet and its NATO component (STRIKFORNATO) for Allied multi-carrier operations, and complemented by US Marine Corps and Special Operations Forces. These forces will at the very least meet the same NATO standards as their European counterparts to ensure critical interoperability at the high end of warfighting when both command and forces are under intense pressure.
8. **Command and Control:** The four European Warfighting Corps, two "Shield Corps", three CASFs and two ESFs will work together with USEUCOM's V Corps, 3rd Air Force and 6th Fleet. For example, in the maritime domain, the foreseen Non-US Standing Fleets, Atlantic, and Mediterranean, will operate alongside and together with the 6th Fleet, including through cross-attachment, but under NATO command and control, all tasked surface ships, submarines, amphibious forces and maritime patrol aircraft. This new level of complementarity between European and US forces in a rebalanced Alliance would help ensure the required level of compatibility and interoperability in tactics, materiel, and procedures, and provide SACEUR with five fully capable war fighting corps, four CASF air packages and three fleets.
9. **Canada:** The unique contribution of Canada to the Alliance is self-evident. In certain respects, Canada makes the Alliance an alliance rather than merely an American European protectorate. With its forces contributing to NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia Canada also makes a practical contribution to defense and deterrence. However, given the pressures on US forces, the paucity of deployable European forces and the emerging threats in Canada's three oceans Ottawa simply does not spend enough nor well enough to act as anything more than a tripwire for the Americans. Consequently, Ottawa faces hard choices which as yet it has shown little sign of making. Euro-Atlantic solidarity notwithstanding



Canada must first and foremost commit forces to the defense of continental North America, the Arctic and North Atlantic, which includes reinforcing European forces alongside those of the US in an emergency. Therefore, Canadian forces will be certified to meet the same standards as other Allied forces and that represent an equitable contribution to a rebalanced Alliance, alongside the contributions of European Allies and the United States.

10. **The Force Hub:** The Allied Reaction Force (ARF) will be the force hub and an important component of further Allied force development and the strengthening and rebalancing of the Alliance's conventional forces. The ARF, which will at some point emerge from the NATO Response Force, will be a high readiness, highly mobile and responsive force capable of deploying rapidly throughout SACEUR's Area of Responsibility to reinforce forward defenses, prevent a *fait accompli* by an adversary, and demonstrate unity. The baseline and enabling mechanism to reform the NATO Force Structure will be the new NATO Force Model agreed at the Madrid and Vilnius Summits, updated, and adapted over time, as necessary, to attain the outcome being sought through this Charter.
11. **Multi-Domain Operations:** The rebalancing of the Alliance will include Allied steps to enhance capability and capacity in every other domain of Allied military power (missile defenses; nuclear; space and cyber domains) and supporting civil measures (resilience; civil-military cooperation). To this end, the Allies shall stand up joint commands and organizations that have the mandate and skill set to plan and conduct multi-domain operations.
12. **Integrated Air and Missile Defenses:** NATO's missile defenses will be reoriented and strengthened to address 360 degrees of missile threats to the territories and populations of European Allies, including early warning, tracking and interception capabilities. Strong consideration will be given to deploying a second TPY-2 radar in NATO Europe, in addition to the one already operational in Turkey, as well as to advance planning for the use of NATO's Airborne Early Warning (AEW) and Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) Forces in a missile defense role, both to help identify adversary launch sites and to vector Allied deep-strike fighters. Further consideration should also be given to deploying the Over the Horizon Relocatable (OTH-R) early warning system to NATO's eastern flank.
13. **Nuclear Deterrence:** NATO's nuclear deterrence posture will be strengthened and expanded, including by facilitating broad participation by all nuclear and non-nuclear Allies. This will involve expanding NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements to include Allies which joined NATO since 1999, as well as a deepening of nuclear cooperation between France and the United Kingdom, around the British and French ballistic missile submarine components, as well as France's airborne component, based on the 2010 Lancaster House treaties.
14. **Stronger Deterrence:** The strengthening of deterrence must include replicating NATO's long-standing nuclear sharing arrangements in the conventional domain, by procuring a dedicated airborne conventional deep strike capability in addition to aircraft assigned to the dual-use role that will be widely shared among Allies. This airborne conventional deep strike capability will be associated with specially trained fighter squadrons associated with the foreseen Composite Air Strike Forces.
15. **Better Indicators:** As part of comprehensive improvements to shared intelligence Allies will



strengthen access to, use and protection of space-based assets, including through expanded cooperation among Allies and within NATO in the sharing of early warning, communications, and navigation information and in the development of space technologies and protection techniques. Allies will also devote greater effort to protecting NATO and nationally owned and operated communications networks and information services, as well as critical military and civilian infrastructure, against cyber and physical threats, notably through enhanced survivability measures, including hardening and dispersal.

16. **Assure, Deter and Defend:** A strengthened ability by the Alliance to assure, deter and defend credibly and effectively will also require a greater effort to enhance the endurance of Allied forces and the resilience of Allied societies against lethal and non-lethal threats, including through the implementation of measures aimed at strengthening the logistical sustainability of forces; defense industrial Technological innovation and the sharing of scientific research, notably in the fields of artificial intelligence, Big Data and machine learning, and quantum computing, industrial development, production and cooperation, the pursuit of standardization of materiel to attain higher level of interoperability among Allied forces, are all important tools to attain the objectives outlined above and rebalance the Alliance.
17. **Common Responsibilities:** Greater reliance shall be placed on well-proven NATO institutional arrangements, revised as necessary to reflect the assumption collectively by European Allies of a greater share of common responsibilities, including the NATO Command Structure, the NATO Defense Planning Process, NATO common budgets, the NATO Science and Technology Strategy, the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept, and other such processes. Where applicable, multilateral, and regional groupings of Allies, as well as NATO-EU cooperation, shall be pursued actively to enhance the contribution of European Allies collectively to Euro-Atlantic security. European Allies shall deliver on the objectives and undertakings as part of reinforcing and accelerating the implementation of the Strategic Concept and the decisions of Madrid, Vilnius and Washington summits and the 2025 Hague Summit.

#### PART FOUR: THE MONEY

***Powering Growth, Strengthening Security: The Defense Funding Solution**<sup>2</sup>. A new form of Lend-Lease Deal is needed. A pledge to spend a minimum of 2% of GDP on defense annually within ten years was agreed formally at the NATO Wales Summit in September 2014. Faced with debt-laden economies, many Allies have struggled to reach that goal. However, the scope and scale of crises suggest that preserving peace in an emergency will require new thinking on financing. Atlantic Charter 2025 would bring together the European Defence Agency, the European Defence Fund, governments across the Euro-Atlantic area (and beyond), and banks and financial institutions on both sides of the Atlantic to fund the tools needed to keep the peace. To that end, a new **Defense, Security and Resilience Bank** would be established.*

18. **The Affordability-Capability-Capacity Crunch:** The reason for the detaching of defense ends, ways and means in Europe are manifold but the facts speak for themselves: Europeans in 2024 represented 9.3% of the world population but 60% of global social welfare expenditure

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<sup>2</sup> Incorporated from a paper by Rob Murray, Rebecca Harding, Stuart Peach and Rob Boyd.

with much of those disbursements made by debt-laden Western European states. In the past, European states have maintained some semblance of defense credibility by affording a significantly higher proportion of GDP to defence investment and/or increasing taxes. Achieving 2% GDP on defense has thus proved politically challenging, achieving 3% GDP or above on defense will probably see European governments preferring to live with increased risk than an increased tax burden.

19. **Lend-Lease 2025:** The specific problem today is that to maintain credible forces levels pertinent to preserving peace in all circumstances **Europeans must not only increase the size and quality of their forces, but also reverse the profound hollowing out of their respective defense establishments and the vital defense, technological and industrial base.** To do that, and given the economic and financial circumstances, will require new thinking. The Euro-Atlantic Community has one ‘strategic reserve’ which is rarely considered as such, but which relies completely on the state and the preservation of peace to do business – the financial sector. Lend-Lease 1941 helped re-capitalize the US defense, technological and industrial base and thus equip the British to maintain the fight against the Nazis once London had exhausted its gold reserves. The key to the deal was US loans at a very low rate of interest over a very long period (the last UK Lend-Lease payment to the US was 2006). Something similar is needed to recapitalize the European Defense Technological and Industrial Base and thus affordably re-equip European armed forces.
20. **Demand-side financing** for nations and **supply-side financing** for industry are thus vital and whilst the Alliance has moved in this direction with the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) far more needs to be done far more quickly if ends, ways and means are to be aligned once more. Demand-Side Financing is vital because nations urgently need affordable and sustainable financing to purchase armaments, modernize defence capabilities, and meet national and collective security goals. However, fiscal constraints and concerns over sovereign debt often limit their ability to fund these efforts.
21. **Supply-Side Financing:** the defense supply network-particularly smaller suppliers (Tiers 2–4)—is experiencing a targeted credit crunch, as commercial banks restrict their access to financing. Compliance risks (e.g., Anti Money Laundering, Know Your Customer, and Environmental Social Governance standards) make banks hesitant to lend, creating a liquidity crisis that threatens the resilience of the supply network. Without financing, these suppliers cannot produce critical components or innovate to meet defence needs, and thus a nation’s ability to ramp up defence production becomes stalled.
22. **The Defense, Security and Resilience (DSR) Bank: A Multilateral Lending Institution (MLI)** to address both the demand and supply sides of defence financing – A Defence, Security and Resilience (DSR) Bank. DSR would provide demand-side financing for Nations by offering **Collective Debt Issuance.** To that end, the DSR Bank would be a form of reverse Lend-Lease by pooling the creditworthiness of participating nations to raise funds in global financial markets. This collective debt would provide nations with access to the cheapest possible financing (AAA credit rating) for long term, predictable and reliable defence procurement. DSR would also offer **Loan Programs.** Funds raised would enable nations to purchase armaments, modernize defense systems, and invest in dual-use technologies without significantly increasing their direct public debt. This money would further complement existing defense budgets and any national

contributions to the bank would support defense investment policy goals such as defence spending targets.

23. **DSR and the Supply Side:** DSR would also trade in Supply Chain Financing Guarantees by helping to underwrite the risk for commercial banks and encouraging them to lend to defence supply chain firms, thus ameliorating the credit crunch problem, and ensuring liquidity for all tiers of the supply chain from Tier 1 primes (large contractors), to Tier 2–3 component manufacturers and mid-sized firms and Tier 4 start-ups and innovators and thus boost defense production growth, scale and resilience.
24. **Private Sector Participation:** Pension funds, family offices, and other private/institutional investors could co-invest or provide additional guarantees, backed by government tax incentives.

### **Atlantic Charter 2025: Looking to the Future**

*Atlantic Charter 2025 provides the pathway toward a future in which the NATO Allies will demonstrably and affordably sustain the solemn commitment they made in the North Atlantic Treaty to “safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.”*

For too long the American taxpayer has had to bear a disproportionate burden for the defense of Europe. That must end. The Alliance is composed of democratic, sovereign nations, each of which can decide what resources to commit and how and when their forces engage. While honoring the sovereign decision rights of all Allies, the security of the collective depends on a transformed and rebalanced NATO, not only to address cogent and pressing threats to the North Atlantic Treaty area, but beyond, including in the Indo-Pacific region. Capable and skilled Allied forces and capabilities will not only help protect and promote transatlantic security worldwide but make the world a safer place. Above all, they will be living proof to Americans that NATO is in the American interest.

Time is pressing. The convergence of the renewed threat from Russia, the military rise of China and the rapid advance of emerging and disruptive technologies reinforces the urgent requirement for Canadians and the European Allies to re-think their respective roles and responsibilities in NATO. Canadians must reinforce the US-led security and defense on an increasingly vulnerable North America, Arctic and North Atlantic. Europeans must take on far more responsibility for the defense of Europe. Today’s choices will determine tomorrow’s security and well-being of ALL the Allies!

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