



ATLANTIC VOICES
2016 TOPICS
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Atlantic Voices is the ATA's monthly publication. Every month, a specific topic relating to transatlantic security and defense is put in focus. Two to three articles analyze the topic from different angles, thus offering an overview of the theme in question.

Atlantic Voices is always seeking new material. If you are a young researcher, subject expert or professional and feel you have a valuable contribution to make to the debate, please get in touch with us at program.assistant@ata-sec.org

Scroll down to see which topics will be covered in 2016.

Month	Topic	Description
January	Montenegro in NATO: Implications for the Balkans	NATO Foreign Ministers decided on Wednesday 2 December 2015 to invite Montenegro to start accession talks to become the 29th member of the Alliance, thus realizing years of negotiation and reforms in the country. The invitation is, however, only the first step of a long process before Montenegro officially joins NATO. This issue thus aims to explore the implications of accepting Montenegro as NATO's 29th member, both for the country as well as for the Balkans.
February	Environmental Security	Environmental degradation and global warming impact most sectors including geopolitics, migrations and above all, security. This issue thus aims at addressing the several folds comprised in environmental security, and how the changes our planet is faced with affects our activities and threatens our security. The COP21 conference in Paris in December 2015 and its implications for the activities of NATO will be explored, as well as other phenomena which derive from the degradation of environmental security, such as the rise of tensions in the Arctic and in regions subject to extreme climate conditions.
March	On the Way to Warsaw	In early July, NATO heads of state and government will reconvene in Warsaw, Poland, two years after the Wales Summit. It will be time to evaluate the efforts which have been made since July 2014, as well to take stock on which countries abided to the pledge to increase their defense spending. Since Wales, the European landscape has changed in respect to a heightened security threat on NATO's Eastern and Southern flanks. This issue will thus explore the results which have been realized following the Wales Summit and what priorities will have to be highlighted in Poland.
April	NATO Military Exercises and the role of deterrence	Deterrence was a key principle to avoid direct confrontation during the Cold War. Today, deterrence is still very much in use and demonstration of force still prevents the recourse to arms. At the end of 2015, NATO launched its biggest military exercise since 10 years, hoping that it would push for interoperability and cooperation among NATO members as well as showcase NATO's military strength. This issue will analyze the outcome of NATO's recent exercises and highlight the significance that NATO's exercises for 2016 will play.

May	Enhancing capacities, building capabilities	During the Wales Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government restated the centrality of collective defense and the relevance of the cooperative approach to security. In this framework, the security of the member countries more affected by the fallouts of the crisis in Ukraine have been strengthened, including with the set-up of the NRF "Spearhead Force" the VTJF and an effective ballistic missile defense system. New programs for partner countries have also been launched such as the Defense Capacity Building Initiative. The exercise Trident Juncture, in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, reflects NATO's determination to successfully face the current security challenges and threats. However, the commitment of the European NATO members to meet the 2% threshold of their GDP for defense spending, even in a time of financial constraints and growing technology costs, is essential to guarantee the interoperability in crisis management operations both among Allies and with Partners.
June	One Year After the Nuclear Deal with Iran	On the 14th of July, 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was signed by the P5+1 and Iran, thus putting an end to years of harsh negotiations. A year later, it is crucial to evaluate the effects the deal has had on regional and international security, as well as the efforts Iran has put into respecting the agreement and what this means for NATO member countries.
July	NATO in the Caucasus	Located at the crossroad between Asia and Europe, the Caucasus represents a constant source of tension between Russia and NATO. Traditionally in Russia's sphere of influence, NATO has built stronger relationships in the region in recent years, notably through the Open Door Policy and the EAPC framework. Frozen conflicts and unstable governments, however, still keep the Caucasus in a situation of instability and subjugated to foreign influences. This issue will analyze future options NATO has to engage in the region.
August	The Warsaw Summit: Results and Perspectives	In light of the topics discussed at the Warsaw summit, this issue aims to bring to light testimonies from various actors present in Poland, including a journalist, a decision-maker, and a young professional who participated in the Future Leader's Summit.

September	Focus on the Mediterranean: Threats to the Southern Flank	Today, NATO's Southern Flank is a key source of instability, threatening the security of the Euro-Atlantic. Despite the missions in place, such as Mission Active Endeavour to safeguard Europe and disrupt the terrorist activity in the Mediterranean, threats from Africa and the Middle East still manage to reach NATO member territory. The involvement of regional actors in partnerships (ICI and Mediterranean Dialogue) with NATO seem to have brought the two sides of the Mediterranean a little closer. However, bilateral agreements between countries appeared to be the preferred option for many nations. This issue will thus explore the strengths and weaknesses of NATO's response to the problems emerging from the South.
October	Partners across the Globe: Stretching the Transatlantic Bond	Although the original scope of the Alliance is the Euro-Atlantic region, NATO has built a partnership encompassing countries in the Asia-Pacific, South East Asia and the Middle East. This issue will thus explore the scope of NATO's bilateral agreements with countries in the Asia-Pacific region as well as in the Middle East, namely with Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan.
November	Yemen: a Regional Problem with International Consequences	Although the object of strong political instability and continuous fighting, Yemen is the object of an international coalition aiming at stabilizing the country and preventing an over-spill of jihadist activity in the country. Led by Saudi Arabia, this coalition involves the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab League and other partners such as Egypt and Morocco. Although Yemen's neighboring countries have taken charge of the crisis, Yemen's instability has international consequences. This issue will analyze the coalition's efforts and what this means for Euro-Atlantic Security.
December	Progress of UNSCR 1325	More than 15 years after the passing of the UNSCR 1325, aimed at empowering women and reducing the gender gap, it is time to assess the successes and failures of the initiative in the defense and security sector. NATO in particular has launched several campaigns supporting the resolution. In light of this effort, this issue will explore the results as well as the road that lies ahead for fully implementing UNSCR 1325.