

ISSUE BRIEF

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Eight Essential Issues for the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw

Luke Coffey, Daniel Kochis, and Lisa Curtis

The 2016 NATO Summit will be held on July 8 and 9 in Warsaw. This is a critical time for the Alliance. In 2014, Russia invaded Ukraine, forcefully changing the borders of Europe for the first time since 1945. This invasion jarred many in Western Europe and the U.S. who had viewed Russia through rose-colored glasses even after the invasion of Georgia in 2008.

Today, Russia remains entrenched in the Donbas region of Ukraine and inside Georgia. In occupied Crimea, it is consolidating its position and extending influence far into the Black Sea. Russian submarine activity is reaching Cold War levels, and Russia continues aggressive flights near NATO airspace. Russia is employing every tool in its arsenal, from cyber attacks and propaganda to espionage, energy blackmail, and support for friendly political parties in Europe, in order to undermine NATO's cohesion.

U.S. Leadership Is Essential

Since its creation in 1949, NATO has done more to promote democracy, peace, and security in Europe than any other multilateral organization, including the European Union. In light of Russia's continued aggression against neighboring states, and threats against the Alliance, the Warsaw Summit is a vital opportunity to recommit to robust collective defense

including putting in place a strategy for the Arctic region. Additionally, questions around the future of NATO's open-door policy and mission in Afghanistan underscore the importance of Warsaw. It is essential that the U.S. take an active role in formulating the way forward for NATO, including making important decisions at the summit beginning this week.

The Heritage Foundation has published a series of eight *Issue Briefs* that address the most vital issues that heads of state will encounter at the summit:

1. NATO Summit 2016: Keeping Georgia on the Membership Track

Luke Coffey

Issue Brief No. 4574

June 14, 2016

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/06/nato-summit-2016-keeping-georgia-on-the-membership-track>

The early July NATO summit in Warsaw, Poland, offers an opportunity for the Alliance to thank Georgia for its contribution in Afghanistan, congratulate Georgia on its military reforms, and lay the groundwork for deeper cooperation, paving the way to eventual membership.

The U.S. should continue to support Georgia's NATO aspirations and ensure that the 2016 summit delivers a capabilities package that will enhance the NATO-Georgian relationship while improving Georgia's defensive military capabilities. The Alliance should live up to its 2008 promise and keep Georgia on track for NATO membership. In the long run, this would bring more stability to the South Caucasus and transatlantic regions.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at
<http://report.heritage.org/ib4592>

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2. NATO Summit 2016: Alliance Members Must Commit to Increased Defense Spending

Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis

Issue Brief No. 4576

June 15, 2016

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/06/nato-summit-2016-alliance-members-must-commit-to-increased-defense-spending>

As an intergovernmental security alliance, NATO is only as strong as its member states. Weak defense spending by European NATO members threatens to undermine the collective security guarantee and play into Putin's hands. The Warsaw Summit is a vital time for NATO members to recommit themselves to their treaty obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty, and to meet the challenge of Russian aggression head on with real capabilities, providing lasting deterrence. The U.S. should reverse its own defense cuts and find creative ways to press its allies to invest more in defense.

3. NATO Summit 2016: Time for an Arctic Strategy

Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis

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June 16, 2016

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/06/nato-summit-2016-time-for-an-arctic-strategy>

The upcoming NATO Summit in Warsaw, Poland, offers an opportunity for the Alliance to finally focus on a region it has long ignored: the Arctic. Economic, oil and gas, and shipping opportunities are increasing in the region—as are Russian military capabilities. Even so, NATO does not have an agreed Arctic strategy. In the Arctic, sovereignty equals security. Respecting national sovereignty in the Arctic would ensure that the chances of armed conflict in the region remain low. Since NATO is an intergovernmental alliance of sovereign nation-states built on the consensus of all of its members, it has a role to play in Arctic security.

Ignoring the importance of the Arctic region for collective security is shortsighted. The U.S. should take the lead on rectifying this blank space, and drive forward a greater role for the alliance in the region. In addition, the military coordination and resources that NATO could contribute to the Arctic region would

offer benefits beyond the Alliance, such as increased search-and-rescue capabilities. The U.S. should use the July summit to place the Arctic firmly on NATO's agenda and ensure that the Alliance agrees on a common policy concerning the region's security.

4. NATO Summit 2016: NATO Must Reaffirm Its “Open Door” Policy

Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis

Issue Brief No. 4579

June 17, 2016

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/06/nato-summit-2016-nato-must-reaffirm-its-open-door-policy>

NATO has underpinned Europe and North America's security for more than 67 years, so it is no surprise that many countries in the transatlantic region that are not already members want to join the Alliance. NATO's “open-door” policy is critical to mobilizing Europe and its allies around a collective transatlantic defense. The U.S. should use the 2016 Warsaw Summit in early July to ensure that NATO's open-door policy remains in place, and take measures to help aspirant countries reach eventual membership.

5. The President Should Announce U.S. Troop Extension in Afghanistan Before the 2016 NATO Summit

Luke Coffey and Lisa Curtis

Issue Brief No. 4581

June 20, 2016

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/06/the-president-should-announce-us-troop-extension-in-afghanistan-before-the-2016-nato-summit>

The Warsaw Summit will be the first summit since NATO ended its combat operations in Afghanistan in December 2014 and started its Resolute Support mission to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).

President Barack Obama should announce—before the summit—that he will leave in place the 9,800 U.S. troops currently stationed in Afghanistan through the end of his presidency to show NATO partners that the U.S. remains committed to leading the international effort to stabilize Afghanistan. Reinforcing U.S. commitment to Afghanistan will encourage other NATO countries to redouble their

efforts to help to secure the country at a time when the Taliban is making military advances and ISIS is seeking to make inroads.

6. NATO Summit 2016: The Alliance Must Defend the Baltic States

Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis

Issue Brief No. 4582

June 22, 2016

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/06/nato-summit-2016-the-alliance-must-defend-the-baltic-states>

The upcoming NATO Summit in Warsaw offers an opportunity for the Alliance to focus on one of the most complex regions the Alliance is obligated to defend: the Baltic states. NATO should think strategically and take long-term measures that include the eventual permanent basing of troops in the region, the establishment of a Baltic Air Defense mission, and a commitment to regular training exercises focused on rapidly reinforcing the region.

7. NATO Summit 2016: Why the Alliance Cannot Afford to Ignore Turkey

Luke Coffey

Issue Brief No. 4586

June 24, 2016

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/06/nato-summit-2016-why-the-alliance-cannot-afford-to-ignore-turkey>

The upcoming NATO Summit offers an opportunity for the Alliance to re-focus on another area of recent Russian saber rattling along Turkey's borders.

NATO needs to agree on a strategy that ensures that its southeastern flank is secure, and recognizes that Turkey plays a vital role for the security of the Alliance notwithstanding the many domestic political problems under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

8. NATO Summit 2016: The Alliance Must Deepen the NATO-Ukraine Partnership

Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis

Issue Brief No. 4590

July 5, 2016

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/07/nato-summit-2016-the-alliance-must-deepen-the-natoukraine-partnership>

The upcoming NATO Summit in Warsaw is an opportunity for the Alliance to provide realistic and meaningful support to Ukraine. While Ukraine is not a NATO member, the Alliance continues to have an interest in helping Ukraine defend itself and institute necessary political and economic reforms. Russia's continuing aggression undermines Ukraine's transatlantic aspirations and regional stability.

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