NATO’s Strategic Concept:  The Opportunity for a Stronger Transatlantic Vision

WASHINGTON D.C. — As the NATO Alliance enters its seventh decade, it finds itself involved in an array of military missions ranging from Afghanistan to Kosovo to Sudan. It also stands at the center of a host of regional and global partnerships. Obstacles to continued expansion, the sometimes strained relations between the U.S. and other member countries, lagging military capabilities among many members, and a host of other issues cloud the future of the alliance. In addition, NATO has still to articulate a grand strategic vision designed to determine how, when, and where its capabilities should be used, the values underpinning its new missions, and its relationship to other international actors such as the European Union and the United Nations.

NATO in Search of a Vision—a reflection on NATO’s past, present, and future—brings together scholars and policy experts from both sides of the Atlantic to examine the key issues that NATO must address in formulating a new strategic vision. The volume asserts that the drafting of a new strategic concept, begun during NATO’s 60th anniversary summit in 2009, presents an opportunity to shape a new transatlantic vision that is anchored in the liberal democratic principles so crucial to NATO’s successes during its Cold War years. Furthermore, that vision should not be reactive but instead be focused on equipping the Alliance to anticipate and address the increasingly global and less predictable threats of the post-9/11 world.

“NATO’s celebration of its first sixty years has spawned a number of books seeking to explain its past and to project its future. There is no better volume to serve these purposes than NATO in Search of a Vision. As the Alliance constructs its new strategic concept in 2010, it should look to this book for guidance in weighing the role of globalization, managing internal divisions in an enlarged organization, and coping with external challenges” says Lawrence Kaplan, emeritus director of the Lyman L. Lemnitzer Center for NATO and European Union Studies.

With thoughtful and reasoned analysis, NATO in Search of Vision offers both an assessment of NATO’s recent evolution and an analysis of where the Alliance must go if it is to remain relevant in the twenty-first century.

Gülnur Aybet is a lecturer in international relations at the University of Kent at Canterbury and a senior associate member of St. Antony’s College, Oxford. She is the author of The Dynamics of European Security Cooperation 1945–1991 and A European Security Architecture after the Cold War: Questions of Legitimacy. Rebecca R. Moore is a professor of political science at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. She held a NATO-EAPC Fellowship from 2001 to 2003 and is the author of NATO’s New Mission: Projecting Stability in a Post-Cold War World.

CONTACT: Jacqueline Beilhart, Publicist, (202) 687-9298, jb594@georgetown.edu

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