



## Transcript

# NATO'S New Strategic Concept: Addressing Security Challenges in the Alliance's Proximity

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## **Bogdan Aurescu:**

NATO has the capacity to draw strength from what it has achieved in six decades: ended a Cold War, pulled down an Iron Curtain, unified Europe by ensuring security and peace, promoting values and enlarging from 12 to 28 Allies; built peace in the Western Balkans; reached out to partners in the Euro-Atlantic area and across the globe; projects security out of area while responding to new threats at home, as proven by the first Article 5 enforcement after 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States of America. All along, the North-Atlantic Alliance has not only successfully adapted to changes in the international security environment, but also managed to steer those changes in a positive direction, and to shape the security environment. The enclosure, over the past decade, of Romania and other new members has been an enormous boost for the NATO team – and a great step towards a Europe that is whole and free.

The paper argues that the process of upgrading Alliance's Strategic Concept provides an opportunity for underscoring the profile of NATO's partnerships and for highlighting the need for NATO to contribute more to strengthening security in its neighborhood - the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, the wider Black Sea-Caspian region, Central Asia, Mediterranean and others. Romania advocates constantly the need to develop the dialogue and co-operation with Partners in effective formulas, established on geographical and functional basis, and in agreement with the principles of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. We believe that the problem of 'global NATO *versus* regional NATO' is only a false dilemma. In terms of geography, the main security challenges for NATO originate from its wide neighborhood, from the former Soviet space to the Western Balkans, the Mediterranean and the broader Middle East.

NATO's ability to project coherent demarches and a proper image in the extended neighborhood of the Alliance helps to finding solutions to the 'unfinished business' that still carries potential for generating instability. But a partnership is a two-way street. It has been and remains a demand-driven process, fuelled by partners' capacity of coming out with fresh initiatives, proposals and requests when engaging with NATO to face common security challenges. The partners themselves have an important role in the conceptual development of the Partnership. This should be a tailored process, depending essentially on their interest and readiness to advance the cooperation with NATO.

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative have been very successful in building confidence, security and stability in and around the Euro-Atlantic area. To substantiate the benefits of this partnership policy for both NATO and partners, NATO's partnership frameworks should be made more coherent and more result-oriented. To this end, the Alliance should build upon and expand existing partnership policy, including through flexible formats of dialogue and practical cooperation.

Romania has no interest in remaining the Eastern border of the West. Instead, we are determined to act as a catalyst of regional cooperation and Euro-Atlantic engagement in this region. The Black Sea region is part of the European project of consolidating stability throughout Europe through democracy and cooperation. It is also important in terms of diversification of energy sources and transport routes. Furthermore, it has also an important stake for the new approach on missile defence.

Against this background, major stakes pursued by Romania with respect to the strategic thinking on NATO's wider neighborhood refer *inter alia* to preserving of values, principles and commitments as basis for NATO's cooperation with partners; continuation of the 'open door' policy with emphasis on compliance with membership criteria; strengthening NATO's partnerships and cooperation with the EU, UN, and the OSCE; specific contributions to building defense and security institutions of states and/or organizations.