

and South Africa do not engage in cooperation or in some sort of dialogue with NATO. The presence of the European Union⁹⁷ among the GCTF members should not be a showstopper given Turkey's cochairmanship of the forum.⁹⁸ Opposition by either of these members to NATO's participation in GCTF activities would be difficult to justify politically. Even the argument, common to all emerging security challenges, that NATO's involvement would imply a *militarization* of the issue is unconvincing when applied to counterterrorism. The militarization of terrorism has long preceded any involvement of national or international armed forces or the global War on Terror. Local terrorists have always borrowed tactics and techniques from asymmetric warfare. Insurgents have often joined forces with international terrorism. From training camps to improvised explosive devices, from recruitment to command and control, and to the use of failed, weak, or rogue states, history tells us that the militarization of terrorism is a tactical reality and that denying it would be a strategic mistake. In other words, NATO's engagement with the GCTF is an opportunity neither party should miss.

On a practical level, NATO could contribute to the GCTF while maintaining a low profile. For example, it could participate in selected activities as an observer in accordance with the GCTF assumption that "regional and sub-regional bodies, and non-government experts, will be invited to participate in the appropriate working group(s) and/or working group activities."⁹⁹ Capacity-building, training and exercises, research and technology, best practices, and lessons learned are all areas where NATO has the potential to add value.

Conclusion

The six initiatives mentioned above are only a few examples of the many areas and activities that the Action Plan will have to cover. From intelligence-sharing to capacity-building, from SOF to training, technology, and capabilities, the new NATO policy guidelines mark the beginning of a new phase of NATO's engagement in countering terrorism. However, these initiatives may well be necessary conditions to place counterterrorism at the center of NATO's post-ISAF agenda and NATO at the forefront of the international counterterrorism effort. This does not mean that NATO seeks a leading counterterrorism role, and the policy guidelines are very clear in this respect. Rather, it means that NATO's contribution should be acknowledged and accepted for the added value it brings to the common endeavors. Eleven years after 9/11 and the commencement of operations in Afghanistan, the Allies have come to accept the notion that NATO cannot be the main player in countering terrorism, but it is a player nonetheless.

By recalling the Alliance's many achievements, the policy guidelines formulate a compelling argument for NATO's continued role in counterterrorism and indicate the way ahead. In

doing so, the guidelines mark a successful milestone in the implementation of NATO's 21st-century vision as defined by the 2010 Strategic Concept.

The guidelines, however, represent only a necessary first step into a new era of NATO counterterrorism engagement. Specifically, they define a process, not an endstate. The challenge ahead for NATO policymakers is to define an Action Plan that is more than just a compilation of relevant but discrete initiatives; to assure executive drive and oversight of the policy implementation; to recognize the importance of bringing into NATO a homeland security constituency to establish a direct link between NATO's broader efforts and the Allies' territories and populations; and finally, to better integrate NATO's contribution into the wider national and international counterterrorism effort.

The importance of succeeding in this effort goes beyond the fight against international terrorism. As a common denominator to counterinsurgency, nonproliferation, cyber-defense, and asymmetric warfare, NATO's policy guidelines in countering terrorism offer a new template for its role in facing emerging security challenges and evolving hybrid threats that define the modern security environment in an increasingly unpredictable world.¹⁰⁰