



Youth Atlantic Treaty Association  
Jeunesse de l'Association du Traité Atlantique

## Youth Atlantic Treaty Association Newsletter

March 2008

Dear ATA Chapters,

It is my great pleasure to open this first edition of the YATA newsletter.

First of all, I would like to thank Hugo de Melo Palma for having dedicated so much energy in making this newsletter real.

When we first had the idea to create a YATA Newsletter, in Ottawa, we wanted it to be a tool for communicating between the YATA Board and YATA Chapter, but also a public diplomacy tool. An instrument to make YATA more visible and concrete, to spread our values and ideas and to strengthen the network.

Our newsletter will have comments and articles from ATA and YATA Chapters and from external experts that will be called upon to contribute to our debates. There will also be room for activities, book reviews and photos. Next issue will be released in the following months, on a quarterly base.

The Board hopes you will find this first edition interesting and we will welcome your suggestions and inputs to improve the next one.

Enjoy the reading!

Giuseppe Belardetti

President of The YATA Board

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NATO's  
photo of the  
week:  
Sunset over  
Afghanistan



## New Youth Atlantic Treaty Association Executive Board

Dear YATA Friends,

The Youth Atlantic Treaty Association (YATA) has, in the last five years, risen to become an international organization of considerable size. Today, there are 38 national YATA chapters - from Toronto, in the West, to Vladivostok, in the East.

Within the last 12 months, the different national YATA chapters and the international YATA board have organized over 100 different events! YATA members have participated in discussions with world leaders such as George W. Bush, Angela Merkel, and Jaap de Hoop Scheffer.

The philosophy behind YATA is that the development of world politics should not only be in the hands of Governments, but that it should engage the young members

### YATA Executive Board



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## New Youth Atlantic Treaty Association Executive Board

with very different cultures and backgrounds. The organization is not politically affiliated with any party or ideology, and hence we have some members that are active in politics and others that are not. What we all have in common, is that we have an interest in international relations and matters relating to the future of the relationship between North America and Europe.

Today, current and former members of YATA are working at different organizations and institutions the world over, including: the UN, NATO, the EU, the World Bank, embassies, parliaments, multinational companies and a whole range of NGOs. The network that one establishes as an active member of YATA is quite unique, and will undoubtedly be very important for those who wish to pursue a career in international affairs.

My two years as YATA President have been a great learning experience. I would not exchange it for anything in the world, and I know that my predecessor, Troels Egeskov Sorensen, would agree. I would like to wish Giuseppe Belardetti and his new YATA team the best of luck in all of their future endeavors. I am convinced that they will do an exceptional job in furthering the goals of this organization.

Best regards

Harald Thørud



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## Book review - Al Qaeda in Europe: the new battleground of international jihad

*Al Qaeda in Europe: the new battleground of international jihad - Lorenzo Vidino*  
*Prometheus Books - New York - 2006*

Lorenzo Vidino's "Al Qaeda in Europe: the new battleground of international jihad" represents a valuable insight on the structure, functioning and dynamics of the Islamic terror network Al Qaeda in Europe. Vidino, a terrorist expert at the Investigative Project, a famous American research centre on Islamic terrorism, wrote this comprehensive study in 2006 after many lethal attacks were conducted on European soil and the connection between the international jihad and Islamic terrorism linkages in Europe were proven.

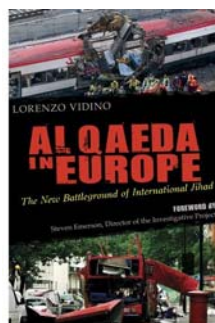
Vidino provides the reader with an incredibly valuable source of official information regarding the role that jihadists cells in Europe played not only in organizing 9/11, but also in supporting, by financial and operational means, the fight of other adepts around the world. In this regard, the role of the European network appears of vital importance for the terrorist network around the globe, given the room for manoeuvre represented by European liberal governments.

The book is divided into four parts: the first analyze the background of the terrorists operating in Europe, demonstrating that the majority of them are home-grown Europeans that represent a by-product of the inability of European Countries to integrate their native Muslim

The second part analyze the recruitment campaign that Al Qaeda is suppose to made in Europe to fill its ranks in Iraq, after the lost on Afghanistan in 2002. Many of them are former Christians converted to Islam for the sense of community it provides.

The last two parts examines the Algerian and Morocco networks: the first one is considered as the first Al Qaeda network in Europe and it trace its origins back to the 90's. The latter is held responsible for the Madrid Bombing and for the killing of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh.

In this book, Vidino provide information and data taken from original documentation of European intelligence agencies in countries such as United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium and Italy. The book contains also the testimony of Mr. Vidino before the USA House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats.



Giuseppe Belardetti

## Bulgaria's Youth Project

"Young generations and NATO" project's purpose was to increase the common understanding and awareness of NATO's role in the international community. In particular it was addressed to the young students' generations in Bulgaria, the one who have a crucial role in the process of transformation of the Alliance through inventive ideas, by encouraging political actions and bringing the messages to the general public in their respective country.

Young people had been involved in a national competition, in order to foster critical thinking, cooperation among them and their active participation in the discussion process about the new roles of NATO in response to future challenges.

The competition was announced among all Bulgarian universities nationwide and it encouraged the participants to write an essay on the following main issues:

- Future security challenges which next generation of young people from Euroasia and America have to cope with;
- The relevance of NATO as a modern and adequate international security provider for the community of democratic nations;
- Future public dimensions of NATO in national and international context;
- NATO as an instrument and environment for effective multiple partnership and
- co-operation;
- NATO's dynamics and future as a subject of study and teaching.

Students were invited to work alone or in cooperation with other fellow colleagues and they were given two and a half months term to write and submit their ideas. An organizational and assessment committee was assigned to recognize the most prominent essays and their authors. The committee gathered in Sofia to examine and assess the received analytical works and awarded eight best authors, students at different Bulgarian Universities.

The selected authors had the possibility to present their works at a specially organized inter-university two-day national student conference: *Successors' generation view on NATO's future*. The event gathered among 110 students, academics, lecturers and media representatives and was held in the city of Rousse - academic centre at the border between Bulgaria and Romania. All applicants in the national competition were also present. In this way, the project achieved the goal of improving the collaboration among students and academic communities in the field as a basis for ensuring public support and participation in security issues and NATO missions.

As a follow up the project team will organize a visit to the NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium for the awarded eight authors in March 2008, in order to encourage them as analyzers of the issues and increase their interest and knowledge of the topic by gaining direct experience and

## LOBSEC Express Communiqué



The project managed to be the first relevant step in stimulating the analytic potential of young people, provoking their pursuit to compete, develop and establish themselves professionally and encouraging them to develop as capable

The young leaders of the 12 countries of the Balkans and the wider region who have participated on a unique youth project LOBSEC Express train "Sending message to the Balkans" from Bratislava to Zagreb on 26th – 27th November 2007 have agreed on the following:

1. The gathering of the LOBSEC Express participants clearly shows the readiness of the young generation to take over responsibility for the common future of their region and their commitment to communicate openly and discuss with each other the way forward.
2. The young generation sees the Balkans as not only a vital part of the Euro-Atlantic security and that is why it cannot be left behind. The idea of "Europe whole and free" cannot be fully realized without the Balkan region included.
3. NATO and EU enlargement is a driver of internal reforms and changes in the Balkans, therefore possible enlargement will have a positive impact on the candidate countries, as well as the whole region.
4. The young generation appeals to the officials of their countries to look ahead for their future and leave the past behind and to step up to the challenges they have to face in their process of Euro-Atlantic integration.
5. The message of the project of the LOBSEC Express is clear - the young generation calls for the Euro-Atlantic integration and cooperation of the whole Balkan region to promote the prosperity, peace and stability of this region.
6. The LOBSEC Express train should not stop in Zagreb, but continue on its route to all Balkan countries.

Video conference with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer



Morning Session at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Slovak Republic

## 2007 Snap Seminars Conclusions

### **Come back to the General Assembly with the conclusion of snap seminars**

Prior to the 2007 General Assembly, the Executive Board initiated snap seminars on the subject "NATO's Near Future". Conducted by Dr. Grant Dawson, this initiative was opened to all YATA Chapters. The Danish, Italian, Hungarian and Portuguese Chapters contributed conclusions, which were presented and used as the substance for discussion at the General Assembly.

There was no specific way in which to consider the topic. For example, the Danish delegation had a typical approach by taking advantage of the call from the Executive Board to discuss this topic with the Danish Ministry of Defence.

For this first YATA newsletter, it is time to review what transpired in Ottawa in 2007.

### ***Afghanistan: Strengths and weaknesses of ISAF***

NATO's engagement in Afghanistan was prominent in most of the discussions. As their Italian counterparts, Danish participants pointed out the unjust distribution of military burdens and the problem of caveats. A glimmer of hope has been underlined by the Danish Chapter with the recent movement towards the Alliance by President Nicolas Sarkozy. It should bring new momentum to the Alliance.

The Italian Chapter highlighted progress made by ISAF. Reconstruction of the country with PRTs and the good cooperation between NATO troops and NGOs. This is a positive sign of civilian – military cooperation (CIMIC).

However, many problems remain such as the instability of President Karzai's government and the problem of poppy cultivation which have been raised respectively by the Italian and Hungarian committees.

### ***Improving cooperation and partnerships***

The European Union is highlighted as being a key partner for the Alliance. Co-operation between the EU and NATO in Bosnia Herzegovina is a key example of a fruitful partnership, as pointed out by the Hungarian and Italian Chapters. The Italian chapter also noted the need for an official and common strategy for all organisations involved in troubled countries. It strengthens the need of such a strategy for Kosovo and especially one not only focused on political issues but also on other sources of instability like drug trafficking, human smuggling etc. Lastly, as mentioned by the Italian chapter, is the establishment of liaison offices at SHAPE and at the Commission of the EU which would benefit both organisations in terms of defence and security policy.

Co-operation between EU and NATO has been recommended as beneficial in the Comprehensive Approach

together with the UN and OSCE.

Improving partnerships and partnership tools are also two important issues for YATA participants. The countries Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative are key NATO partners. These two specific Partnerships should have more visibility, funds and flexibility, according to the Italian representatives, who also pointed out the need to have more official contacts with Contact countries such as Brazil, South Africa or Taiwan and the four countries contributing towards ISAF. The Danish Chapter also highlighted another specific NATO Partnership, NATO-Russia relations. Difficulties in relations with Russia were noted but, on the other hand, it was recognised that the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) is a good forum for political dialogue and joint exercises regularly take place.

A specific point made by the Italian and Portuguese Chapters is that efforts should be made in Public Diplomacy, especially in the countries mentioned above, in order to inform the public of progress made within NATO on military cooperation and political dialogue.

### ***New threats and challenges***

YATA delegates also considered the emergence of new threats, the need to go further with the transformation of the Alliance and the necessity to focus on the environment as pointed out by the Italian and Hungarian Chapters. The NRF was given a special mention by the Portuguese Chapter especially with regard to its aim to conduct relief operations or to operate in armed conflicts.

As a conclusion, NATO should step out to the international stage and should make more efforts to build better partnerships with other international organisations and should be the transatlantic link. Top priorities of the Alliance are the focus of discussions which highlighted difficulties of current operations but the willingness of NATO Allies to succeed.

The outcome of these snap seminars is very interesting and opens the door to fruitful and rich discussions at the General Assembly among participants. This first session of snap seminars should pave the way to other sessions.

Bénédicte Borel

## Article - NATO: Winning on all fronts?

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates met with colleagues from the seven countries with troops in insurgent-hit southern Afghanistan in Scotland in December to discuss the development and future of the region. Defence ministers from Great Britain, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia and Romania could hear the US Secretary call for greater involvement and contributions from the allies in NATO in order to counter the latest rise in attacks on ISAF and Afghan security forces.

One of the key phrases, being said over and over again by both US, NATO and European leaders, is the importance of helping the Afghan Government in reaching the goals it has set for the development of security in the country. However, the same government is facing stronger and stronger criticism from its own. The confidence shown to President Karzai in the Afghan elections is beginning to fade; the public, being concerned with the government's ongoing problems of providing security and services throughout the country, is discovering that corruption is a major problem for the government and the security forces. If not Karzai controls this problem the public will – on an even larger scale than earlier – turn to the Taliban to provide security and cover basic everyday needs.

This year, as more and more of the security responsibilities has been turned over to Afghan security forces, following the withdrawal of many allied troops, the security situation in Afghanistan has only worsened. The intense effort from the European Union to train and educate Afghan police in order to make them capable of providing the necessary security in the countries many troubled regions has by NATO been described as a success. But speaking to the US House of Representatives just before leaving for Scotland Secretary Gates said: "*The European effort on the police training has been, to be diplomatic . . . disappointing.*"

The United States is calling on the European allies to step up and deliver the necessary forces to the mission in Afghanistan. Defence Secretary Gates pointed out that so far the US had filled out the gaps with American forces and holding over a helicopter unit. In January this unit will be called home, and then it is time for NATO to meet the commitments made last year at the Riga-summit. The mission in Afghanistan requires a well-coordinated counterinsurgency strategy, fully supported by security

improvements. But, Gates said, the NATO-led ISAF command is "plagued by shortfalls in capability and capacity, and constrained by a host of caveats that limit its ability."

NATO, as the leader of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, has been caught between two struggling allies. On the one hand the US, trying to relieve its military from too many burdens in Afghanistan in order to prevail in Iraq, and on the other hand the European Union with many countries distancing itself from the United States. The political landscape of many of these European countries makes it hard to gain the necessary support for the mission in Afghanistan and most of the contributions to the mission are severely handicapped by a long list of caveats. NATO has managed, so far, to fulfil the mission given to them by the Afghan government and continues to work hard – under the given conditions – to further the development of security and welfare in Afghanistan.

As a first time leader of an Out of Area Operation NATO has shown is potential as an international security provider and will continue to do so in the years to come. Concerning Afghanistan, Secretary Gates said, NATO needs to step back and reassess where it wants to take Afghanistan over the next three to five years. The US would like the ISAF mission to focus on three tasks in the years to come; improving security, economic development and governance. Gates continued that he hoped the vision statement "will also help people here in Europe understand why we're in Afghanistan, make a better case for being in Afghanistan, and perhaps that will be an enabler for some of the (NATO) governments to do more."

For NATO to continue the positive development in Afghanistan and of the Alliance itself will be a question of balancing between two – for the moment – competing partners, the United States and the European Union. NATO must take the high ground in this battle, strongly stating what the alliance wants from its members and what it can deliver as a security provider, enabling the national governments and the public to get a clear idea of the possibilities that is embedded in the Alliance. The mission in Afghanistan has focused a lot on "winning the hearts and minds" of the Afghan people, now it is time for NATO to win the hearts and minds of its own members.

*Mads Søndergaard Thomsen  
YATA Secretary General*

## Young Atlanticist Summit - April 2-4 2008, Bucharest, Romania [www.youngatlanticist.org](http://www.youngatlanticist.org)

The Young Atlanticist Summit will be organized in Bucharest, in conjunction with NATO Summit. Alliance leaders and experts will debate with us about the topics of the Summit. Furthermore, we will have the unique opportunity to share our views with NATO officials and to debate among ourselves about future perspective. The Young Atlanticist Summit will offer future leaders an extraordinary opportunity to meet directly with Alliance decision-makers and build consensus on critical issues facing the Atlantic community. The Young Atlanticist Summit will feature speeches by world leaders, briefings from leading security experts, a discussion with Afghan youth, and a crisis simulation exercise in which participants will take on the role of decision-makers. Delegates will learn about new challenges that are shaping the security of the Euro-Atlantic region and have an opportunity to share their own perspectives on the future directly with Alliance and national leaders. They will chronicle their experiences through blogs and on-line discussions, and use digital media to reach out to youth far beyond Bucharest. For more information visit [www.youngatlanticist.org](http://www.youngatlanticist.org)

## The Best Way to Commemorate NATO's 60th Birthday, Admiral Reis Rodrigues

In less than a year and a half, on April 4 2009, NATO completes 60 years. The occasion calls for an appropriate commemoration, which nevertheless must not focus exclusively on past successes, however deserved. Most importantly, the occasion must be seized to clarify and, if need be, to rectify the path the Alliance must follow, if it wants to remain relevant for peace, in a continually unstable and unpredictable security context. I am thinking of a new strategic concept which would replace the one approved in Washington, on April 24 1999, at the Summit commemorating NATO's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

This idea does not seem to give rise to much political interest. Some argue that the moment is not right, that now is not the time to raise questions for which there are no consensual answers and that it is inconvenient to bring about a debate that may widen the differences of opinion regarding the threats and risks facing us and the way we must deal with them.

I believe the opposite: if there are questions that need to be answered or simply aspects that await clarification – and many believe there are – it is unwise to hope that time will solve them. In fact, that has never been NATO's policy. And if this type of policy is now adopted, letting the dynamics that this occasion may bring about to solve these issues pass by, then we risk celebrating the Alliance only over past glories with no idea how its future must be.

It is true that the current strategic concept refers the main threats we face nowadays, but not with the acuteness required by later events, such as 9/11 and the London, Madrid and Bali attacks. Likewise, the concept does not place due emphasis on the need of a multidimensional strategy, closely linking the military process with the political and stabilisation processes, as shown indispensable by the experience of the Iraq and Afghanistan interventions. It is important to note that both the US and the European Union have more updated strategies that were prepared after the above mentioned events took place, and that these strategies will soon undergo a new revision.

In fact, several circumstances render necessary the writing of a new strategic concept. For example, the suggestion of NATO's evolution towards a more global and political organisation, even though not wishing to become a sort of global cop, as Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer repeatedly warns, is not in the least mentioned in the current concept. Is it necessary to further explain how this idea is to be put into practice; I believe we are not simply talking about a forum open to the debate of the most pressing security and defence issues.

Furthermore, I fear that this suggestion, as it is made, does not take into account that NATO has always asserted itself in military terms, and that its success in the past was due to the fact that it concentrated on that role in the face of a very concrete and well defined menace on its doorstep. The more diversified the political scope of the themes it intends to get involved in, the greater the difficulty to achieve consensus and the danger of becoming a talk shop of dubious influence.

The careful management of a certain degree of obsession that persists since the end of the Cold War regarding a fear of irrelevance is needed. This fear of irrelevance tends to make the Alliance try to be present everywhere in the world, and Africa is the latest development in this domain. It is true that the Alliance cannot remain exclusively focused on its obligations under Article 5, while in the current scenario a conventional threat to the territorial integrity of the member countries is practically non-existing. The Alliance must be available to contribute to peacekeeping in the world, but it is necessary to previously clarify the geographic and functional rationale on which that attitude must be based upon.

NATO must have all the military tools to deal with situations that may have an effect on the member countries' interests, or whenever its contribution is requested by the UN or other international organisations, but the Alliance is not required to have all types of tools of non military nature, which become essential to the subsequent stabilisation process. Thus, it needs to institutionalise links with other international organisations with capacities in those areas, not only the UN and the OSCE, but also other regional organisations. The comprehensive approach concept NATO has already adopted must be incorporated and framed in a new strategic concept.

The NATO/EU relationship also needs to be set out anew, preferable in a more flexible formula taking into account the European Union's evolution. It will be very difficult to keep the precept foreseen in the current concept that the development of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy must be exclusively made within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty.

These ideas summarise some of the issues that press for a short term review of NATO's current strategic concept. To have this task finished by the NATO's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary would be the best way to commemorate.

Vice-Admiral Alexandre Reis Rodrigues  
Secretary-General  
Portuguese Atlantic Committee

## Charlie Chaplin—The Great Dictator (Final Speech)

### The Jewish Barber (Charlie Chaplin):

*I'm sorry but I don't want to be an emperor. That's not my business. I don't want to rule or conquer anyone. I should like to help everyone if possible; Jew, Gentile, black men, white. We all want to help one another. Human beings are like that. We want to live by each others' happiness, not by each other's misery. We don't want to hate and despise one another. In this world there is room for everyone. And the good earth is rich and can provide for everyone. The way of life can be free and beautiful, but we have lost the way.*

*Greed has poisoned men's souls; has barricaded the world with hate; has goose-stepped us into misery and bloodshed. We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in. Machinery that gives abundance has left us in want. Our knowledge has made us cynical; our cleverness, hard and unkind. We think too much and feel too little. More than machinery we need humanity. More than cleverness, we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost. The aeroplane and the radio have brought us closer together. The very nature of these inventions cries out for the goodness in man; cries out for universal brotherhood; for the unity of us all.*

*Even now my voice is reaching millions throughout the world, millions of despairing men, women, and little children, victims of a system that makes men torture and imprison innocent people. To those who can hear me, I say "Do not despair." The misery that is now upon us is but the passing of greed, the bitterness of men who fear the way of human progress. The hate of men will pass, and dictators die, and the power they took from the people will return to the people. And so long as men die, liberty will never perish.*

*Soldiers! Don't give yourselves to brutes, men who despise you and enslave you; who regiment your lives, tell you what to do, what to think and what to feel! Who drill you, diet you, treat you like cattle, use you as cannon fodder! Don't give yourselves to these unnatural men---machine men with machine minds and machine hearts! You are not machines! You are not cattle! You are men! You have a love of humanity in your hearts! You don't hate! Only the unloved hate; the unloved and the unnatural.*

*Soldiers! Don't fight for slavery! Fight for liberty! In the seventeenth chapter of St. Luke, it's written "the kingdom of*

*God is within man", not one man nor a group of men, but in all men! In you! You, the people, have the power, the power to create machines, the power to create happiness! You, the people, have the power to make this life free and beautiful, to make this life a wonderful adventure. Then in the name of democracy, let us use that power.*

*Let us all unite. Let us fight for a new world, a decent world that will give men a chance to work, that will give youth a future and old age a security. By the promise of these things, brutes have risen to power. But they lie! They do not fulfill their promise. They never will! Dictators free themselves but they enslave the people! Now let us fight to fulfill that promise! Let us fight to free the world! To do away with national barriers! To do away with greed, with hate and intolerance! Let us fight for a world of reason, a world where science and progress will lead to all men's happiness.*

*Soldiers, in the name of democracy, let us all unite!*

*Hanna, can you hear me? Wherever you are, look up Hanna! The clouds are lifting! The sun is breaking through! We are coming out of the darkness into the light! We are coming into a new world; a kind new world, where men will rise above their hate, their greed, and brutality. Look up, Hanna! The soul of man has been given wings and at last he is beginning to fly. He is flying into the rainbow. Into the light of hope! Into the future! The glorious future! That belongs to you, to me, and to all of us. Look up, Hanna! Look up!*

I find this speech one of the best I have ever heard! It perfectly reflects the way the people shall work. Cooperation and not confrontation is a key to success. If you have comments and remarks to do, we will be glad to publish them on the next issue.

Giuseppe Belardetti

## More information on



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