

**Contents:**

Sarah Raine on Transatlantic Defense .....	2
Javid Ahmad on Afghanistan .....	3
Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer on France .....	4
Joshua W. Walker on Turkey .....	4
Emiliano Alessandri on the Middle East and North Africa .....	5
Andrew Small on China .....	6
Dhruva Jaishankar on Global Partnerships .....	7

# What Next for NATO

## What Did We Learn in Chicago?

*Mark R. Jacobson, Senior Transatlantic Fellow*

If nothing else, this past weekend's gathering in Chicago of NATO Allies and partners demonstrated the type of political resolve and commitment that has been the core of the Alliance's ability to keep its members secure for over 60 years. While Afghanistan clearly dominated the issues at the summit, NATO endorsed key proposals on defense capabilities, the need to streamline and modernize in a time of budget constraints, and strengthening NATO's partnerships outside the 28-nation alliance. In short, there were no surprises.

In fact, despite the political turbulence that often makes headlines, populations remain steadfast in their support for their nations' membership in the Alliance. According to the findings of Transatlantic Trends surveys between 2002 and 2011, majorities in the United States and European Union agreed that the NATO alliance had been essential for their countries' security. Majorities also agreed that NATO must be prepared to act outside of Europe. They were also reluctant to cut defense spending, even as they supported reductions in overall government spending. Neither Europeans nor Americans were optimistic about the prospects of stability in post-intervention Libya, and solid

majorities in the EU and United States supported reducing troop levels in Afghanistan.

Even with all the challenges facing the Alliance today, however, it is important that NATO look to the future so it can anticipate and cope with the uncertainties of the security landscape. As Secretary General Rasmussen stated on the second day of the summit, NATO has been successful at keeping member nations secure because it continually reassess its strengths and weaknesses and focuses on "getting ready to face the next challenge." Indeed, while NATO has work to do to better synchronize and streamline its forces, if there is one issue that stands out as the Alliance looks ahead to a summit in 2014, it is the need to understand that future Alliance security challenges will most likely arise from outside of Europe, and that previous conceptualizations of "out of area" must be shed for the Alliance to remain relevant.

The pieces that follow reflect the challenges and opportunities for NATO as it looks ahead to 2014 and beyond. First, two pieces, by Sarah Raine and Javid Ahmad, address the "unfinished business" that NATO must address such as a commitment to sufficient

# Policy Brief

levels of defense spending by the European members of NATO and the need to resource a sustained training and advisory mission in Afghanistan. Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer asks what kind of ally France will be in the Alliance under Hollande's presidency and Josh Walker describes the increasing significance of Turkey and the decisive role they could play given instability in the Middle East. The final set of essays focuses on partnership and emerging challenges

for NATO. Emiliano Alessandri argues for the need to strengthen NATO's partnerships in the Mediterranean and Andrew Small writes about the need for NATO to think about developing relations with China. Finally, Dhruva Jaishankar reminds us that NATO must think about the "global" challenges presented by the maritime and cyber dimensions, as well as a need for NATO to consider a leading role with regards to space.

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## Escaping European Shortsightedness and U.S. Impatience

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*Sarah Raine, Non-resident Fellow*

NATO members meeting in Chicago faced a crowded agenda, but one item — while not formally featured — cast an important and ever-present shadow over the summit. More than one year after then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates publicly berated NATO's European members for their diminishing defense capabilities and commitments, observers in the United States and beyond are right to be wondering whether Europe got the message.

After a decade of underinvestment in European defense — with spending falling by more than €24 billion in the last three years alone — are Europe's NATO member states ready to see past the capability gaps so obviously exposed by their intervention in Libya? While Washington understands that its European allies are probably unable to spend more on defense, the question may be whether they are prepared to spend smarter, even if this means addressing sensitive issues such as national sovereignty. The 20 or so collaborative defense projects announced at Chicago under the Smart Defense initiative of NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen are just a start. As stand-alone announcements, they fall well short of the mark. With the notable exception of ballistic missile defense, these projects are really only consequential if they mark a shift in the mindset of European defense establishments and industries, bringing genuine political sponsorship to the pooling and sharing of resources.

Likewise, during discussions in Chicago on Afghanistan after 2014, concerns will remain about the contribution and role of European NATO states. The United States has made its expectations clear. The Afghan National Security Forces will require \$4.1 billion in financial support per year, of which \$1.3 billion must be met by non-U.S. NATO

members and their partners. But the math didn't add up in Chicago. Hopefully, the signals will be more positive for the donors' conference in Tokyo this July.

NATO's declarations at Chicago on subjects ranging from Afghanistan to the Middle East matter because they are made by a powerful and successful security alliance. Beyond Chicago, NATO's European members will need to demonstrate to the United States that they understand the role they are required to play in the future projection of NATO power. Meanwhile, the United States will need to do a better job at appreciating the contributions its European allies are already offering, not just on the provision of hard security capabilities but on issues such as crisis management and the support of security sector reform.

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It is sometimes said that NATO is in danger of becoming a victim of its own success. But the truth is that there is no shortage of work out there for the alliance. Instead, the real challenge for NATO is to avoid becoming a victim of European shortsightedness and U.S. impatience.

## Seeking Better Support for Afghanistan's Security Forces

*Javid Ahmad, Program Coordinator — Asia*

As NATO prepares to wind down its Afghan mission in 2014, the allies face the goal of transferring all combat operations across the country to Kabul while U.S. and NATO forces move into a support role. With the demanding timetable in mind, ensuring continued and sustained funding and training for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) — which includes the army, police, and special forces — is absolutely imperative. Having confronted the challenges of under-enrollment, ethnic disproportionality, illiteracy, and corruption, the ANSF has come a long way over the years, and will lead security efforts in 75 percent of the country in the next six months. The force is currently comprised of more than 330,000 trained soldiers, and will soon reach its peak size of 352,000. Yet many key challenges remain, not the least of which is the ANSF's financial sustainability post-2014 and Kabul's ability to take full control of Afghanistan's security.

At present, there is no functional plan in place that stipulates the size, structure, and cost of the ANSF over the long-term. The Afghan Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak recently announced that the ANSF's strength will be cut by roughly 120,000 starting in 2015 to make it more affordable. While natural attrition and a reduction of recruiting efforts will take care of some downsizing, the planned cutback may also mean putting trained Afghan soldiers into a dim job market where they could easily become vulnerable to recruitment by the Taliban and criminal networks. NATO and its Afghan partners must ensure that there is a proper alternative employment plan in place for those who are demobilized. Similarly, while Afghan Special Forces have recently stepped up to the plate, Afghanistan's post-transition security cannot be maintained by Special Forces alone. Their numbers remain small, and they still require support from international troops to be effective.

Financing the ANSF will also remain a challenge. Washington has focused on an arrangement to provide the ANSF about \$4.1 billion annually until at least 2024, a commitment recently reinforced by the signing of the U.S.-Afghan strategic partnership agreement. Britain and Germany have also pledged \$110 million and \$190 million, respectively,

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per year as have other Allies — a small step towards the \$1.31 billion required from Allies. The Afghan government itself will provide \$500 million and it has been forging bilateral strategic agreements with some NATO countries over the past months to further augment support. Though the price tag may seem high, training and financing ANSF costs much less than sustaining NATO troops on the ground. And while NATO's support remains invaluable, Chicago largely ignored encouraging and engaging major non-NATO allies such as Japan, Korea, and the Gulf States to shoulder some of the costs. However, the assurance portrayed through the Chicago Declaration that NATO will retain a presence beyond 2014 through a robust training mission in Afghanistan to train and advise ANSF is a welcoming sign. This new non-combat mission is a good venue to engage key non-NATO partners in burden-sharing responsibilities by integrating them into training missions in Afghanistan that will not only help strengthen ANSF but also give them a modicum of control in Afghanistan to safeguard the many hard-won years long achievements. NATO must also specify the names and responsibilities of all partner countries that will engage in the non-combat mission, and explain the actual framework for spending the \$4.1 billion.

As we move beyond Chicago, it will be crucial to relay the right narrative regarding NATO's future support of the ANSF for rallying public support for Afghanistan, not least because it will have implications for the future of the alliance. Like Libya, Afghanistan continues to be regarded as a key test for NATO's future.

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## Finding the Pragmatism behind Hollande's Rhetoric

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*Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer, Director — Paris Office*

Newly-elected French President François Hollande came to Chicago intending to challenge U.S. President Barack Obama and other European leaders over Afghanistan by reiterating his electoral pledge to withdraw of all French combat troops by the end of 2012. France has around 3,400 troops deployed in Afghanistan, making it the fifth biggest contingent. The French decision will inevitably have significant political, moral, and strategic implications, already expressed by the Taliban statement that other countries should follow the French lead and pull out their troops. But by specifying in recent days that only combat units would be withdrawn, Hollande has opened a window for negotiations on French troops staying to carry out their training missions. At the end of the day, his decision will hinge on the reassurances that the Obama administration will offer for post-2014.

Hollande's policy orientation exemplifies the traditional Gaullist-Mitterrandist ambiguous posture vis-à-vis the United States. A slightly more independent security relationship with both NATO and the United States will be accompanied by a desire to strengthen France's role in decision-making as well as the European common defense policy. But this is not exactly a radical shift. Sarkozy himself departed from U.S. positions on several important issues, including nuclear disarmament, Afghanistan, Israel-Palestine, and Libya, by initially resorting to an ad hoc contact group, sidelining NATO.

Yet pragmatism remains. Hollande recognized that NATO will continue to serve French national security interests and that he cannot depart completely from past French commitments in the Alliance. His objective of reassessing the French role in NATO comes just as its military presence and thus its influence within NATO has in fact increased

Vying for a stronger European voice should not come at the expense of solidarity with the transatlantic partners.

considerably, and France now holds a number of high-level positions in NATO's command structure.

Beyond the Chicago summit, the question for France and many other European countries is how to engage with a United States that is focused more on the rest of the world than with Europe. Indeed, French Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian has advocated greater French investment in European partnerships, arguing that the U.S. strategy towards Asia puts France in a leadership position in Europe. This can be seen as a response to Obama's new defense strategy, which called for burden-sharing and for Europe to assume more security responsibilities.

But Hollande seems to be going against the tide. His priority remains resolving the eurozone crisis, and Libya still casts a shadow over Europe's defense policies and the difficulties faced by France and Britain to build a strong coalition. With those realities in mind, NATO can be expected to continue to act as the core transatlantic security alliance in which France should continue to invest. NATO is an excellent indicator of the state of transatlantic relations, and the impact of the economic crisis on defense budgets should induce more unity and common strategic thinking. Vying for a stronger European voice should not come at the expense of solidarity with the transatlantic partners.

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## Taking Advantage of Ankara's Resurgence

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*Joshua W. Walker, Transatlantic Fellow*

Even more than NATO's ongoing military operations, the so-called Arab Awakenings and eurozone crisis have reshaped its strategic operating environment and the rela-

tive capabilities of its various members. But while most European member states are grappling with austerity measures and defense cuts, one actor has increased its

# Policy Brief

involvement and commitment: Turkey. The symbolism of NATO's first Muslim-majority nation is crucial in and of itself. In many regions, Turkish soldiers face considerably less hostility and opposition than forces from other countries. Turkish businesses, hospitals, and schools dot the Afghan landscape and are only set to grow through more public-private partnerships. And the largely untapped potential of Turkish private enterprise has yet to be leveraged on the scale of Ankara's impressive campaign in Somalia.

Eliminating redundancies is a key priority for NATO, but the fact that Turkey's European Union accession has stalled has directly affected attempts to integrate NATO and European Common Defense and Security commands. By thinking creatively about Turkey's new role, Western policymakers can further strengthen the transatlantic community through Ankara's newfound activism and ambitions. This may require recasting Turkey's growing regional aspirations in a transatlantic context rather than as Turkish nationalism or "neo-Ottomanism."

As individual militaries have formed the bedrock of the transatlantic military alliance, recognizing the extraordinary efforts of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) on behalf of NATO would also go a long way to reviving that institution and its domestic constituency. The TAF has always promoted itself as a defender of the West in Turkey and a guardian of the country's secular values. But ongoing trials

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against generals and continued tensions within Turkish society over the military's historical role mean that the TAF is now a spent political force. Yet it still has an important role to play, both domestically and internationally. By working with NATO pragmatically to transform itself into a modern 21<sup>st</sup> century professional peacetime security-producing institution, the TAF is in an excellent position to reclaim much of its popularity and support in Turkey. By redefining its role, NATO can help TAF alleviate the polarization in today's Turkish politics, to the benefit all parties involved.

As the Middle East's largest and Europe's fastest-growing economy, Turkey is uniquely situated to play a decisive role in the future evolution of NATO. At a time when Western leadership is being questioned, encouraging Turkey's emergence as a responsible transatlantic partner in regional stability has never been more necessary.

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## Building an "Atlantic Bridge" across the Mediterranean

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*Emiliano Alessandri, Transatlantic Fellow*

The Chicago Summit provided an opportunity to restate the goal of cooperative security through partnerships, including as part of NATO's evolving southern engagement. NATO allies committed to strengthening both the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) by consulting more regularly with their Arab partners on a broader range of issues. The current fragmentation of the Arab world, the Alliance's negative reputation among some populations, and competing priorities as NATO undertakes reform and faces budgetary challenges all hamper the emergence of NATO as a true "hub" for security in the wider Middle East and North Africa region. But through bilateral partnerships and regional dialogue,

NATO can explore in the coming months the architecture of a stronger "Atlantic bridge" across the Mediterranean.

Following the Arab Spring, several southern Mediterranean countries have embarked on a challenging process of democratic transition. This opens the prospect for expanding NATO's existing partnerships to cover assistance in security sector reform and civil-military relations. NATO will assist only if requested. But leaders on both sides of the Atlantic agree that civilian oversight and control of the militaries will be among the key benchmarks of any genuine attempt at democratization in the Arab world.

Meanwhile, the Arab Spring has been accompanied by strategic developments that have brought NATO and some

## Policy Brief

of its partners in North Africa and the Gulf closer together. With Egypt's new foreign policy orientation appearing dangerously revisionist, the Camp David order that guaranteed regional stability and Israel's security since the 1970s has been called into question. At the same time, the spread of democratic politics and crises such as Syria have dealt a blow to Iran's regional strategy. In this context, NATO's engagement with Morocco and Jordan on one hand, and with Gulf States on the other, has increased. NATO could use its strengthening relationship with dynamic players such as the UAE and Qatar (both of which have provided military assets to the Operation Unified Protector in Libya) to explore closer engagement with the Gulf Cooperation Council as a whole. The offer by the State of Kuwait to host an ICI Regional Centre seems to go in the direction of greater regional coordination as NATO's involvement deepens.

Partnerships with Gulf countries will continue to be tailored to the specific needs and profile of individual partners, but could also lead to common regional initiatives, perhaps involving also the relevant members of the MD. Cooperation on functional issues such as energy and maritime security would benefit from a multilateral approach and could complement the strategic dialogue on Iran and the cooperation that is being developed with some of the Gulf States in Afghanistan. If the necessary interest and guarantees were found, the NATO-Gulf dialogue could, over time, allow for more ambitious goals such as a common approach to non-proliferation, or even a southward extension of the missile defense system that is now being implemented in the Atlantic space. The strategic aspect of the Arab Spring, not the drive for democratization, would clearly provide the rationale for this expanding dimension of NATO's southern engagement.

The strategic aspect of the Arab Spring, not the drive for democratization, would clearly provide the rationale for the expanding dimension of NATO's southern engagement.

While new geometries of partnership shape up in the Gulf, it would be highly dangerous for Atlantic allies to leave a big piece of the North African mosaic unsettled. NATO's current disengagement from Libya after its successful military campaign is problematic as protracted instability is a distinct possibility given the divisions that characterize the post-Gaddafi era. The emergence of a failed state unable to control its vast territory, especially in the south, would embed instability in the North Africa region, making NATO's Mediterranean engagement both more necessary and difficult. In the coming months, NATO leaders should devote greater attention to internal developments there and should clearly convey the message that they will not let Libya fail. This renewed attention could go a long way towards prompting local leaders to coalesce around a common vision of the new Libyan state, without which no transition, let alone any future international peace-building effort, can be successful.

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## Seizing Opportunities with a Less Reserved Beijing

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*Andrew Small, Transatlantic Fellow*

China wasn't even close to making it on to either the agenda or the invite list for the NATO summit in Chicago. While China's growing power is profoundly reshaping the global strategic environment, NATO has taken on very little role in responding. The reasons for this are understandable. As a strategic threat, China is simply too big a challenge for NATO to take on, and years of fraught relations between the two sides have made partnership appear a difficult

prospect. But from Libya to Afghanistan, counter-piracy to energy security, the two sides are rubbing up against each other with greater frequency. And with Beijing lifting some of the last formal barriers to an expanded relationship, NATO could yet play a part in the crucial process of China's integration as a global military actor.

The legacy to the NATO-China relationship is still toxic. When U.S. and Chinese officials met in the aftermath of last

# Policy Brief

year's border incident that saw 25 Pakistani soldiers killed, Ma Xiaotian, deputy chief of China's general staff, could not resist harking back to the 1999 NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, jibing: "Were you using the wrong maps again?" NATO has long been seen by China through an ideological prism, and for many years serving Chinese military officers were barred from contact with NATO counterparts. Over the last decade, the attention paid to NATO in Beijing has corresponded largely to the degree of Chinese anxiety about the alliance's presence in China's periphery — Central Asia and Afghanistan — and the state of NATO's relationships with its regional rivals, most notably Japan.

Yet more recently, China has been showing increasing willingness to put aside its traditional antipathy. From the first baby steps, when Beijing sent its diplomats to occasional meetings at NATO headquarters, contacts have evolved into a regularized dialogue at the assistant secretary general level. More recently, military-to-military interactions have been stepped up. Early in 2012, the director general of the international military staff at NATO, Lt. Gen. Jürgen Bornemann, visited China, and the two sides agreed to hold annual military staff talks. Reciprocal visits have taken place in the Gulf of Aden between Chinese and NATO flagships. And at Beijing's initiative, some non-sensitive courses at NATO School and NATO Defense College were opened up to Chinese officers.

There are a number of reasons for the shift in China's stance. Even though Beijing still harbors residual suspicions about NATO, it has become less concerned that it is part of an encirclement or containment strategy. NATO operations in Afghanistan, Libya, and the Gulf of Aden have all been of substantial interest to China, yet its understanding of them has been limited by its self-imposed restrictions. China also sees value in establishing a regular military-military dialogue that has Chinese and U.S. participation but is

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less subject to political pressures than bilateral U.S.-China exchanges. And most importantly, as China's military acquires a global presence, the opportunities for learning from the advanced militaries of NATO offer substantial benefits, without the level of sensitivity inherent in bilateral exchanges.

For Europe and the United States, the change in Chinese attitudes provides an important opportunity. While it is roundly agreed that "integrating" China as a global security actor is a crucial task, finding a mechanism by which greater cooperation and trust-building can take place remains tricky. The efforts of individual countries, such as the U.K. or France, to upgrade military ties with China are liable to prompt misgivings from others that they are "going too far" or seeking to gain bilateral advantages. Using NATO gets round many of these problems.

At present, enthusiasm within the alliance for expending political energy on NATO-China relations is limited. Suggestions from Secretary General Rasmussen about exploring an enhanced dialogue with China have largely petered out, as first Libya and then defense budget cuts consumed attention. Yet an understandable focus on more pressing imperatives for the alliance should not obscure the long-term challenge of relations with the world's most important rising military power.

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## Engaging Rising Powers in the Maritime, Space, and Cyber Domains

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*Dhruva Jaishankar, Program Officer — Asia*

Nowhere is NATO more susceptible to caricature as a relic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century than in its outreach to non-NATO partners in securing the global commons. As the world's

most potent military alliance — despite recent budget cuts, its member states still account for some two-thirds of global military spending — NATO's willingness to collaborate

# Policy Brief

with rising powers on three particular security challenges of truly global import — space, cyber, and maritime security — has not always been readily apparent.

Defending the commons — a concept very much in line with the values of the Atlantic Charter — is, at its essence, as much an exercise in defense diplomacy as it is about defense preparedness. Coordination and dialogue with the likes of China, India, Brazil, South Africa, or Mexico in the space, cyber, and maritime domains ought to be considered integral. Although NATO has engaged the former Soviet Union, several Middle Eastern and North African countries, and traditional U.S. allies Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand through various partnerships and forums, the absence of systematic engagement with these key emerging powers on globally relevant security challenges is telling.

The cyber component has probably received the greatest attention following the 2007 attacks on Estonia and the establishment in Tallinn of a cyber defense center, although international participation has been found wanting. NATO leaders did, however, make explicit commitments to cyber security cooperation at both the Lisbon and Chicago summits, which included engagements with “relevant partner nations on a case-by-case basis.” The maritime domain also represents one potential success story, with NATO actively participating in anti-piracy operations in the western Indian Ocean. Its decision to extend its operation Ocean Shield off the Horn of Africa until 2014 is certainly a welcome step. But NATO is also operating in an increasingly crowded space featuring United States, European Union, China, India, and Russia. Coordination has occurred out of necessity — which has been useful in slowly and organically advancing habits of cooperation — but efforts against piracy remain piecemeal rather than truly collaborative.

Space, being the least regulated of the three collective security challenges, ought to be the realm with the greatest potential for NATO leadership. Unlike the high seas and cyberspace, space is at present only accessible to a handful of primary and second-tier space powers, many of whom are also NATO members (including the United States, France, Canada, and most members of the European Space Agency). But efforts at monitoring space are led by Russia and U.S. Strategic Command, while codifying the use of space has fallen to the European Union, whose efforts have not been well-received by Asia’s space-faring powers. The

## Space ought to be the realm with the greatest potential for NATO leadership.

wide-range of military and civilian applications of space — which include (but are not limited to) maritime domain awareness, navigation systems, communication networks, and intelligence gathering — also lend themselves to a natural leadership role for NATO.

NATO’s leaders, along with those of its member states, have often expressed contradictory views over the past two decades on the alliance’s priorities. Should NATO be content ensuring the peace and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region? Or should it define itself in terms of universal values and shared threats? The global commons lie at the overlap of both worldviews. In fact, these challenges illustrate exactly why threats to the security and well-being of Europe and North America cannot be viewed through a narrow regional lens. Identifying the defense of the global commons as a priority, and engaging key rising powers in attempting to secure them, may consequently be the only way for NATO to remain a credible player in international security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### About GMF

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is a non-partisan American public policy and grantmaking institution dedicated to promoting better understanding and cooperation between North America and Europe on transatlantic and global issues. GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working in the transatlantic sphere, by convening leaders and members of the policy and business communities, by contributing research and analysis on transatlantic topics, and by providing exchange opportunities to foster renewed commitment to the transatlantic relationship. In addition, GMF supports a number of initiatives to strengthen democracies. Founded in 1972 through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has seven offices in Europe: Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, Bucharest, and Warsaw. GMF also has smaller representations in Bratislava, Turin, and Stockholm.