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The German Marshall Fund  
of the United States

STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

# HOW UKRAINE CAN OPEN ITS DOOR TO NATO

Bruno Lété

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# Executive Summary

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Ukraine's top priority needs to be its domestic policy. Success at home will determine the rest, including strengthening Ukraine's partnership with NATO. To make a case that Kyiv is a reliable partner of the Alliance, it must first start to modernize all fields of government, military, and the private sector. Ukraine must continue to demonstrate to NATO, and itself, that it can carry out reform and fight corruption. If it cannot, Allies' political willingness to invest in the NATO-Ukraine partnership will decline.

To move forward on a common future with NATO, Ukraine should consider the following elements in its overall assessment:

- 1. Focus Ukraine's NATO messaging on achievements, not on expectations.** Ukraine's narrative inside the Alliance is built too narrowly around its expectations for NATO membership. Communicating about Ukraine's "successful transformation" since Euromaidan — rather than about NATO aspirations — will serve better to counter disinformation and negative perceptions about Ukraine, and will offer measurable and objective arguments to push NATO's door open.
- 2. Invest in better strategic communications (StratCom) at home and in public diplomacy abroad.** Ukraine is struggling to win the hearts and minds in NATO member states. Better coordinated government communications at home, along with more resources for public diplomacy, will translate into more understanding for Ukraine abroad. To support this objective, Ukraine should further build on the NATO-Ukraine Strategic Communications Partnership Roadmap and discuss with NATO a new trust fund for strategic communications. 2017 will mark 20 years of NATO-Ukraine relations, an important public milestone to leverage.
- 3. Think what Ukraine can do for NATO, not only what NATO can do for Ukraine.** Aspirant member states need to demonstrate their added value to NATO's collective security. Ukraine could share its capabilities for strategic airlifts by including the Antonov An-124 or An-225 aircraft in NATO operations; Kyiv could improve regional security by replicating the model of the Lithuanian–Polish–Ukrainian military brigade with other NATO allies, or support the idea of a standing maritime mission in the Black Sea. Ukraine could share its modern warfare expertise in fields such as the use of military drones in conflict areas, or conducting intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions in urban environments.
- 4. Develop a unique country profile for Ukraine with a center of expertise on hybrid warfare.** Such a center should be multinational and engage in three distinct activities. Firstly, it would develop analytical methods, concepts, and doctrine around hybrid warfare, and act as a repository for lessons learned and best practices. Secondly, it could offer education and training through regular courses and the dissemination of information. Thirdly, it should have an operational role by deploying experts to enhance practical actions at the operational, strategic, and political-military level when requested.

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5. **Put the modernization of Ukraine's military and defense sector on a fast track.** The Ukrainian security and defense sector must be modernized as planned by 2020. Three areas need immediate attention. First, the training and education of military staff needs to be linked to a comprehensive career plan and prospects for promotion. Second, NATO and Ukraine must evaluate the effectiveness of the five NATO Trust Funds, and address existing hurdles. Third, Ukraine's defense industrial base needs better connections with the European and North American defense industry.
6. **Develop more cooperative diplomacy with neighboring countries.** Ukraine is geographically positioned to become a hub of knowledge, practical expertise, and networks in the wider region. Kyiv can leverage cultural similarities with Belarus to provide intelligence on the country's domestic situation, and to push for liberal values. Liaise with NATO allies and partners surrounding the Black Sea Basin to face Russian escalation strategies, and consider developing a Black Sea defense cluster, like the BeNeLux or NorDefCo. Relations with Georgia — another aspirant NATO member — deserve more content and attention.

# 1 Introduction

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**A**s a core element of its mission to strengthen transatlantic cooperation, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is concerned about the future of the Atlantic security architecture. NATO remains an essential transatlantic link and force multiplier for the United States, Canada, Europe, and partner nations. Consequently, the future of NATO remains among the West's highest security priorities and a focal point of GMF's work.

The conflict in Ukraine has been a turning point for the European security landscape. The conflict not only poses a threat to the sovereignty of Ukraine, but also crystallizes an intensifying mistrust and dissonance between Russia and the West. These new security realities demand a significant response from NATO, and have encouraged the Alliance to start thinking more creatively about how it can help its most exposed partners to both respond to aggression and be more resilient.

In this spirit, GMF and the NATO Information and Documentation Centre in Kyiv created a high-level series of workshops to address the future of the NATO-Ukraine partnership. The meetings took stock of Ukraine's engagement with NATO headquarters and the member states, and discuss innovative and practical ways to strengthen Ukraine's profile as a reliable partner inside the Euroatlantic community. The key priority of the project was to invite U.S. and European practitioners and experts to Kyiv to engage in discussions with their Ukrainian counterparts. A total of three meetings were held between December 2015 and June 2016.

This publication draws heavily from these meetings and formulates a set of actionable recommendations for the NATO-Ukraine Partnership ahead of the Warsaw Summit in July 2016.

# 2

## Strategic Vulnerabilities in the NATO-Ukraine Partnership Before and Beyond the Warsaw Summit

The past two decades of strategic partnership between NATO and Ukraine has reached great heights and deep lows. Cooperation between NATO and Ukraine has grown closer since the 2014 Euromaidan Revolution, but the success and durability of the NATO-Ukraine partnership should not be taken for granted. Since NATO and Ukraine signed a Charter on a Distinctive Partnership, which established the NATO-Ukraine Commission in 1997, Kyiv and Brussels have had intermittent phases of steady rapprochement and active disengagement. Most often, international partnerships fail from the lack of interdependence, trust, commitment, or coordination between the parties. The success of a partnership will depend on how well the partners handle information, and, in particular, the degree to which they share knowledge and expertise and are able to translate it into common goals and practices. The NATO-Ukraine partnership today faces a mixture of challenges in each of these risk fields. Since the events in Crimea and the Donbas region, Brussels and Kyiv have adapted to many new circumstances in their security environment together. But to endure as partners, NATO and Ukraine still need to address a few vulnerabilities in their relationship.

### Ukraine's NATO Messaging Is Too Anchored on Expectations for Enlargement

Ukraine's NATO narrative focuses too much on "membership or nothing." Extremely high expectations for NATO integration have been a weak point in Ukraine's diplomacy. At the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit, NATO members pledged that Ukraine (and Georgia) would eventually join the organization, but current political conditions complicate Ukraine's bid to join the Alliance. In Europe, internal challenges such as the refugee crisis and the financial crisis have eroded ground for a cooperative approach in foreign policy. With its rebalance to Asia and its insistence that Europeans invest in their own security, Washington is demonstrating that it would like to pull back from proactively intervening in Europe's peripheral crises. Furthermore, Russia is stronger economically and militarily than in the 1990s and is willing to pay a greater cost to keep Ukraine away from NATO or the EU; sanctions seem not to have persuaded Russian President Vladimir Putin to loosen his grip, at least for now.

For NATO, this new geopolitical landscape means that after two decades of expeditionary war operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, or Libya, the Alliance is more refocused on Article V core business and the defense of the European hinterland. This makes the Alliance's political and military engagements beyond its own borders harder to define. Finally, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine may also be an obstacle to NATO membership; there is little appetite among NATO member states to engage in another conflict. Now more than ever before, no country will be invited to join NATO unless it is clear that a new membership unites the Alliance around shared interests and strengthens NATO's collective security system. As a result, Ukraine must balance its messaging and advance its aspiration to join NATO while also pursuing more pragmatic objectives through looking for new forms of cooperation under the NATO-Ukraine partnership umbrella.



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## Ukraine's Weak Institutions Fuel Mistrust on Both Sides of the Atlantic

Ukraine has made significant modernization steps since the Euromaidan protests, but corruption in public and private institutions is still rampant. Corruption in Ukraine has been covered by international media and risen to the top of international reform agendas at the IMF and in the EU, undermining international investment in the country and feeding domestic political instability. The government's anti-corruption drive has thus far not been able to address malfunctioning state systems or make reform programs more effective. Fragmented politics, lack of coordination between governments agencies, difficulties in streamlining and modernizing state institutions, and limited transparency are just a few of the consequences. Corruption also colors perceptions of Ukraine and feeds a sense of fatigue among the transatlantic diplomatic corps for the NATO-Ukraine partnership. Indeed, NATO has never made a secret of its view that it considers domestic reform and modernization — as demanded by the Maidan protesters — a key factor for Ukraine's accession to the Alliance. This position is deeply rooted in the sense that NATO is more than just a military organization; it is largely also an ideology of democracy, liberal market economy, and rule of law. As a result, the principal obstacle to NATO membership may well be found within Ukraine itself. Ukraine needs to prove not only to the international community, but foremost to itself, that the newly established reform and anticorruption laws are more than paper tigers. The government and parliament have an important role to play in this regard. Good progress has been made since 2014, but the country has yet to deliver on promises of major structural and political changes.

## Ukraine Needs More Strategic Communication Inside NATO Member States

In several NATO member states, Ukraine's public and official diplomacy is often fighting for attention amidst the refugee crisis, terrorism, and the ongoing struggles from the financial crisis. Kyiv also faces the challenge of a well-organized Russian counter-narrative. Ukraine has already seen setbacks in terms of support by governments and publics in Western capitals, including the recent negative outcome of a Dutch referendum on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. Therefore, Ukraine must invest in its strategic communications (StratCom) to gain influence at the national level of NATO member states. It should do so not only by investing in government-to-government or in parliament-to-parliament relations — the so called track I diplomacy — but also by including the right mix of track II (government to civil society) and track III diplomacy (civil society to civil society).

In particular, Ukraine's track II and track III diplomacy are still underdeveloped, even though these are essential tools to shape public opinions, perceptions, and attitudes. Kyiv needs to employ diplomatic and communication tools to secure more support from foreign populations and governments, especially in those countries where Ukraine's reputation is less than stellar. But Ukraine is not in an ideal position to do this. Its communication is too much centered on short-term objectives or immediate diplomatic needs and lacks a long-term exportable narrative of its own. As a result, it is unable to counter the



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narrative that others project on Ukraine. In addition, there is little coordination to harmonize messaging across government institutions. The newly created Ministry of Information Policy has yet to develop more effective governmental communications, public affairs policies, and processes to underpin and enable cross-government communications. It is also unclear whether plans to create an independent StratCom office to supervise government-wide communications will either complement or duplicate existing efforts. Finally, the current financing of government institutions that are central to strategic communications, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its representative missions abroad, is insufficient to develop the right mix of diplomatic and communication tools. If Ukraine's diplomacy is to win the hearts and minds inside NATO member states, it will need to find a way to fix these various challenges.

### **Allied Threat Perceptions Toward Russia May Affect the NATO-Ukraine Partnership**

For obvious reasons, Russia will continue to be considered a principal threat for European security. For NATO, the likely scenario is that Moscow will continue to fuel the crisis in Ukraine and Syria, and the frozen conflicts in Moldova and Georgia, in order to consolidate a somewhat predictable military build-up of army, air, and naval capabilities in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Caucasus, Eastern Europe, and the Arctic. Thus NATO will continue to face a conundrum vis-à-vis Russia. On one hand, the Alliance will need to offer a strong military response to the Kremlin's escalation strategy. On the other, it will also need to de-escalate tensions with Moscow at the political level in an attempt to halt worrying military trends.

The way out of this deadlock is through a more constructive dialogue within NATO, and between NATO and Russia, on what a new European security landscape should be. But in the absence of serious prospects for such dialogue, NATO and its allies may increasingly consider a transactional relationship with Russia that balances strategic competition in Eastern Europe with cooperation elsewhere, say in Iran or Afghanistan. The risk is that such a transactional relationship may result in trade-offs between Western interests and the security of Ukraine. NATO member states have rejected a return to business-as-usual with Moscow in the short term, but Allies' threat perceptions toward Russia are nonetheless still diverging — especially between those member states close to the Russian border who will continue to seek practical demonstrations of NATO's commitments in Eastern Europe, and those further from Russia who will be more concerned about the potential of provoking Russia. This gap is unlikely to affect the day-to-day implementation of practical defense cooperation programs with Kyiv, but may weaken transatlantic cohesion on more contentious political issues like NATO's open-door policy or member states' decision to export weapons to Ukraine.

### **No Consensus in NATO about Further Enlargement in Eastern Europe**

The war in Ukraine has become an example of NATO's dilemma with regard to Alliance enlargement in Eastern Europe. In the current security situation, the open-door policy seems to many member states an impossible promise to keep, at least in the short

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to medium-term. Even if an aspirant member would largely fulfill all legal conditionality and military technical criteria to join the Alliance, NATO enlargement in Eastern Europe seems to have become too much of a geopolitical inconvenience in regard to relations with Russia. Moreover, the prospect of granting countries like Georgia or Ukraine protection under Article V of the Washington Treaty lacks a strong base of support among populations in a number of NATO member states.

Consequently, rather than enlarging, NATO is increasingly maneuvering to develop a new generation of advanced partnerships in Eastern Europe, partnerships that tie countries like Ukraine or Georgia to the Euroatlantic family, but without the prospect of collective defense. And while NATO's partnership framework may offer many different incentives, it cannot replace the political potential of NATO's open-door policy, which has encouraged many nations in the past to push for modernization and reform. Placing the open-door policy back at the heart of allied policy would be a huge show of support for countries like Ukraine and project NATO's credibility and resolve beyond its borders.

# 3

## Must-Do's for Ukraine to Strengthen its NATO Partnership

Above all else, Ukraine's priority should be success in its domestic policy. Ukraine's NATO integration starts at home. To make the case that Kyiv is a reliable partner of the Alliance, reforms in all fields of government, military, and private sector are paramount. Ukraine must demonstrate to NATO that it is able to carry out reforms, or risk that the political willingness inside the Alliance to invest in the NATO-Ukraine partnership will decline. In this light, the fight against corruption is for NATO, and other international partners like the EU or the IMF, a major element to evaluate whether cooperation with Kyiv is working and desirable. Ukraine cannot be complacent and should not assume that ultimately NATO's commitment to the partnership will never change. Against this background, the following recommendations can help Ukraine to create an enduring partnership with NATO.

### Focus Ukraine's NATO Messaging on Achievements, Not Just on Expectations

Today Ukraine's messaging inside NATO HQ and member states is straightforward: "Ukraine is reforming its civil, defense, and security sector with the aim of joining NATO." To justify this narrative, Ukraine points to the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit where Ukraine was promised membership to the Alliance. But nearly a decade after the Bucharest Declaration, Ukraine's messaging seems to be at odds with the Allies' attitudes. Western public opinion is fairly negative about Ukraine's bid to join the Alliance, and allied leaders currently find the commitments made in Bucharest a difficult promise to keep.

There is a clear need for Ukraine to rethink its narrative. Current messaging is too focused on enlargement expectations and emotional arguments. Instead Ukraine needs to become better at objectively communicating abroad its successes at home. Images of a derailed non-confidence vote against former Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk in February 2016 received a lot of attention in Western media. But a crucial vote in June 2016 on constitutional changes that will enable key judicial reforms received almost no coverage. Ukraine needs to decide on the long-term story that can fit its diplomatic objectives that it wants to tell. One suitable story is the significant transformations that the country has gone through since Euromaidan in 2014. Communicating about "successful transformation" rather than NATO aspirations is indeed an overarching narrative that can serve Ukraine to counter disinformation and negative perceptions about the country. There are countless success stories that Ukraine can tell, from highlighting reforms in the prosecutor-general's office, to featuring the numerous young female leaders in key government positions, to better exposing Ukraine's contribution to NATO operations in Kosovo or Afghanistan. These stories can move public opinion, and they also offer a measurable and objective argument for Ukraine to push NATO's door open.

### Invest Greatly in Strategic Communications at Home, and in Public Diplomacy Abroad

To strengthen its partnership with NATO, Ukraine needs to win hearts and minds in the member states. Here the Russian challenge is significant. The Kremlin's assertive use of

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diverse media, the variety of target groups reached, and its generous funding dwarf Ukrainian attempts to get its own message across. Moreover, Ukraine has no clear narrative of its own, leaving anyone that wants to speak negatively about Ukraine unchallenged. After years of neglecting the importance of public diplomacy, Kyiv now has to wake up to the importance of TV stations, Twitter, and conferences in influencing the national interest.

As a first step, Ukraine needs to develop more coordinated, timely, and effective government communications at home. This would directly help to enhance Kyiv's voice abroad and translate into more international support and understanding of the new Ukraine that is being forged. To support this objective, Ukraine should further build on the NATO-Ukraine Strategic Communications Partnership Roadmap. Secondly, Kyiv should beef up efforts to conduct creative and year-round public diplomacy inside NATO countries. The newly created public diplomacy division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs needs to receive serious political reinforcement. And despite the country's economic struggles, it is also necessary to increase the communication budgets of Ukraine's diplomatic and trade missions abroad. The current financial means simply do not allow for support of a comprehensive strategy. But public diplomacy does not necessarily always need to come at a great financial cost. Ukrainian officials could, for instance, make better use of the European and North American think tank and policy scene. Only a handful of senior Ukrainian government representatives and parliamentarians take the time to regularly speak in public in Western capitals. A similar effort should be seen by military staff and senior to mid-ranking officials in public administrations.

Another cheap alternative is to provide small grants, or at least facilitate better funding, for important civil society initiatives like the Ukraine Crisis Media Centre or Hromadske TV, just to name a few. Such private projects are well-respected, have a reasonable reach among foreign audiences, and directly support the government's efforts at providing information about Ukraine abroad. The Ukrainian government should also engage more with the diaspora communities across Europe and the United States. These communities could play an important role in sponsoring cultural events in their country of residence and generate better understanding for Ukraine's identity. Finally, to support these efforts, Ukraine could engage with NATO on the creation of another trust fund for public diplomacy and strategic communications to help develop a sustainable system and capacity. In 2017, Ukraine will celebrate 20 years of active diplomatic relations with NATO, an important public milestone Kyiv can work toward.

### **Think what Ukraine can do for NATO, not only what NATO can do for Ukraine**

Aspirant member states need to demonstrate their added value to NATO's collective security system. Ukraine is no exception. But Kyiv's task is arguably even more daunting because there is no clear political consensus inside NATO whether or not to offer Ukraine membership. In absence of a short- to mid-term perspective to join the Alliance, Ukraine's best option is to think about new forms of cooperation with NATO where it can demonstrate its credibility and reliability. The question that Kyiv should ask is what can Ukraine

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offer to NATO, and what does it need from NATO to support these efforts? In the current context, NATO does not expect Ukraine to make significant contributions to the Alliance, so any endeavor that Ukraine can support unilaterally would win political capital for Kyiv among Allies.

There are a few areas where Ukraine can make a clear difference. First, Ukraine possesses serious muscle in strategic airlifting capabilities thanks to its fleet of Antonov An-124 and An-225 aircraft. NATO, in particular, and a number of European allies need more capacity in this domain. Second, Ukraine could think of exporting the model of the joint Lithuanian–Polish–Ukrainian military brigade to other allies on NATO’s eastern flank. Existing plans between Kyiv and the governments of Romania and Bulgaria to set up a similar joint military brigade by 2017 are a positive step. In addition, Kyiv could also explore how to contribute to Romania and Turkey’s idea of creating a NATO standing maritime mission in the Black Sea. Finally, the events in Crimea and the Donbas have given Ukraine a wealth of experience and expertise in a variety of modern warfare activities. Ukraine should share its best practices with NATO in fields such as Russian tactical military deployment, countering disinformation and propaganda, use of military drones in conflict areas, and conducting intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance against insurgents in urban environments.

#### **Develop Ukraine’s Image Around at Least One Specialization: Hybrid Warfare**

Ukraine is currently the only country in the world that is actively fighting a hybrid (and conventional) war against a major power. Ukraine has been directly exposed to aggressive information and propaganda campaigns; social media exploitation; cyber-attacks; creeping infiltration of special forces, militias, and weapons; economic embargoes and sabotage; political and business networks of influence; and the exploitation of minority grievances. Dealing with these new threats necessitates a different approach, and NATO has not yet identified complete answers to the role the Alliance could play to help member states and partners develop resilience against these threats. As NATO is returning back to the basics and reasserting traditional conventional defense capabilities, such as heavy armor, fighter aircraft, and frigates, Ukraine should share its experience to help the Alliance also stay in the game of 21<sup>st</sup> century threat response.

To do so, Ukraine could create a multinational center of expertise on hybrid warfare. Here again, Kyiv can consider the NATO-Ukraine StratCom Partnership Roadmap as a helpful tool to make first steps. Such a center would not only benefit the Alliance as a whole, but also create unique added value to Ukraine’s profile in the transatlantic community. The center could engage in three distinct activities. The first would be to develop analysis, concepts, and doctrine around hybrid warfare, and act as repository for lessons learned and best practices. Second, it could offer education and training through regular courses and seminars and disseminate the knowledge acquired to broader audiences. Third, the center could also have an operational role, deploying its experts to enhance practical actions when requested. Ideally this center would be multinational and host staff from

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various Euroatlantic countries, either through bilateral agreements with allied member states and partners or by pursuing formal NATO accreditation.

### **Put the Modernization of Ukraine's Military and Defense Sector on a Fast Track**

Ukraine has set itself an ambitious timeline to achieve the compatibility of its armed forces and defense sector with NATO structures by the end of 2020. Failing to achieve this goal would not only harm Ukraine's credibility in the Alliance, but also jeopardize its own national security. The principles of this modernization process are described in the Strategic Defense Bulletin, a roadmap published by the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense to reform its defense and security sector. But on some fronts, progress is going too slowly.

A first important need is to link military staff training and education to a comprehensive career plan. Training should be result-orientated and driven by retention and a career development system within the Ministry of Defense, which is currently not in place. Moreover, there should be better prospects for promotion in rank for those officers that benefit from courses at the NATO Defense College or other U.S. or EU military academies. Many Ukrainian service personnel have enjoyed excellent training abroad, but most do not make it to the decision-making level, and many choose to leave Ukraine's military structure due to the lack of opportunity for advancement.

Second, NATO and Ukraine must evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the five NATO Trust Funds that have been created to help Ukraine provide for its security. The purpose of the Trust Funds is to finance practical and operational cooperation between NATO and Ukraine, but administrative issues and excessive red tape have reportedly slowed down the implementation of projects. There are also problems with institutional memory when NATO lead nations change their officers in charge of implementing cooperation plans.

Finally, the modernization of Ukraine's armed forces is also dependent on the modernization of Ukraine's defense industrial base. More opportunities need to be created to connect Ukrainian defense companies with their European and North American counterparts, to forge joint ventures, and to exchange expertise and best practices. Independent platforms, like the freshly created Defense and Aerospace Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine could facilitate the first steps in this direction.

### **Ukraine Needs to Become a More Active Diplomatic Player in its Region**

Ukraine's diplomacy in its neighborhood needs to switch to a higher gear. Kyiv needs to develop long-term cooperative approaches with the surrounding countries. NATO, for obvious reasons, is concerned by developments in Eastern Europe and the Black Sea Basin, so Ukraine has tremendous potential to position itself inside the Alliance as a trusted hub of knowledge, practice, and networks in the wider region. On Ukraine's northern border, Belarus is likely to keep its strategic orientation toward Moscow, but the conflict in Ukraine, coupled with Russia's economic decline, encourages Minsk to maintain open channels of communication with the West. Ukraine could leverage its cultural,

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historical, and linguistic similarities with Belarus to provide intelligence on the country's domestic situation, and to push for liberal values such as human rights and the rule of law.

On Ukraine's southern border, the Black Sea region is increasingly becoming the theater for tense geopolitical competition. Kyiv has a direct interest in consulting with all NATO allies and partners surrounding the Black Sea Basin, and in working with Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, and Georgia to preserve stability and minimize the chance for military incidents with Russia. Can Ukraine, for instance, push for the creation of a Black Sea defense cluster, modeled on the BeNeLux or NorDefCo, to facilitate joint military training, exercise and acquisitions? In this light, relations with Georgia — another aspirant NATO member — deserve more content and attention. Kyiv and Tbilisi are in the same boat when it comes to countering the Russian threat and to advancing their bids to join NATO. The shared problems provide an opportunity to work together with Georgia to keep the enlargement process high up on the NATO agenda.

#### **Adapting for a Common Future**

Ukraine has changed since the 2014 Euromaidan revolution. It has taken great leaps forward in its modernization process, and for a country that is de facto at war, it is showing increasingly good signs of stability. Ukraine's relationship with NATO has also matured since 2014. But while the events in Ukraine may have brought the interests of Kyiv and Brussels on a converging path, both parties still need to adapt to a vision of a common future. Today, as in 1997, it is clear that the NATO-Ukraine Partnership may well once again be a key factor in constructing Europe's future security architecture, which creates an opportunity to strengthen the relations between Kyiv and the Alliance. But as Ukraine moves to build a stronger base for cooperation with NATO, it will also need to consider distinct but mutually reinforcing challenges. Indeed, Ukraine needs to address a daunting — but resolvable — puzzle of military strategy, international diplomacy, and political reform if it is to progress on the road toward NATO and Euroatlantic integration.



The image features a solid blue background with several horizontal white lines and dots. The dots are arranged in a pattern that suggests a globe or a network of points. There are two lines with four dots each, and two lines with three dots each, all positioned in the lower half of the page.

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