Written by Ambassador Gábor Iklódy
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Ambassador Gábor Iklódy, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges

The Atlantic Alliance is at a historical watershed. The financial crisis is affecting Allied defence budgets in unprecedented ways. Shrinking defence budgets are threatening to compromise our ability to shape the strategic environment in line with our interests and values. If we do not adopt new ways of doing business, we will risk losing our military edge. Given the many threats and challenges of a globalized world, we simply cannot afford to let this happen.

Luckily, there are ways and means to help maintain NATO's military competence. Enhancing the energy efficiency of our armed forces is one such area where major opportunities are waiting to be exploited. New energy-saving technologies, ranging from smart grids in deployable base camps to fuel cells and Light Emitting Diodes offer not only a reduction of fuel costs, but also enhance NATO's operational effectiveness and reduces the risk for soldiers who protect supplies. At the same time, employing energy-saving technologies and procedures helps demonstrating environmental awareness.

This special issue of the "Journal of Energy Security" provides a sample of what NATO and industry are capable of if they embrace energy efficiency as a strategic objective. The collection of articles demonstrates the enormous potential inherent in new energy-saving approaches and procedures. Above all, they demonstrate that the goals of saving money, enhancing our military effectiveness, and saving lives, are not mutually exclusive, but can be achieved together. If NATO acts in line with this logic, it can confidently meet the challenges of an age of austerity.