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NATO' s FUTURE OPERATIONS

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Editors' note

During the last two decades the North Atlantic Alliance has undertaken transformation in almost every segment of its existence. In order to adapt to the security challenges of the new millennium, NATO has broadened its mission, reformed its structures (both military and civilian), established new partnerships, and developed new tools to achieve its strategic goals. NATO operations launched in this period were a crucial driving force for the transformation for both the Alliance as a whole as well as its individual member states. Progressive application of the famous formula "out-of-area or out-of-business" led the Alliance to its most robust operation to date, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan. In addition to propelling modernization of participating Allies' armed forces, ISAF helped to build new partnerships on a global scale with countries like Australia, Japan, Georgia, and others which, out of various motivations, made significant contributions to the common effort.

ISAF's termination at the end of 2014 has coincided with the emergence of more geographically proximate new threats. The simultaneous crises in the Middle East and Ukraine have brought further radical changes in the security environment. The challenges they present will significantly shape

NATO´s further development, including the nature of operations which Allies will conduct in the future.

The ambition of this publication, jointly prepared by experts at the Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs (CENAA), Bratislava, and the George C. Marshall Center in Garmish-Partenkirchen is to offer fresh analytical perspectives on NATO´s way ahead. It provides a political and strategic framework for future operations, offers views from both "small" and "big" member states, and considers both the potential regions and partners with which NATO may be involved. We hope this publication will contribute to better understanding of the context for NATO´s future operations. Enjoy reading!

The editors

Political and Strategic Framework of Future Operations of NATO

Robert Ondrejcsák

This chapter's focus is on political and strategic factors influencing the future operations of the Alliance. Its ambition is to set up a framework which will determine NATO´s future operations, as well as consequences stemming from them. It is based on the precondition that military engagement and defense planning have to follow political and strategic developments and those two levels are inseparable. The main emphasis of the analysis will be on the following issues: the recent strategic-level developments in Eastern Europe and changes in domestic debates as well as security thinking influencing the foreign and security policies in key member states, especially the US as a leading power of the Alliance. The framework of the analysis is based on the thesis that the priority of member states in creation and shaping policies and actions of NATO take into consideration the mechanisms of the Alliance's decision-making. It means analyzing the drivers of changes based on the interests and visions of member states, which will be given priority consideration.

Changing strategic landscape in Europe – implications for NATOs operations in Europe

The key determining factors of European security architecture have significantly changed during 2014. We witnessed a strategic shift in Eastern part of Europe with overwhelming impact on the security of the whole continent. One could classify the basic drivers of this change into several mutually interlinked factors.

First, a clearly demonstrated will of Russian leadership to launch open military operations in Europe to achieve strategic-political objectives. Russian operations in Crimea and South Eastern Ukraine are second only to the 2008 Georgian-Russian war, but from European perspective Moscow conducted military actions across the main vector of Europe's strategic axis.

Second, Russia broke the taboo of territorial integrity of European states. While we already had a precedent of creation of quasi-entities in post-Soviet space, in Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the annexation of Crimea was Moscow's first attempt to openly re-write internationally recognized borders in Europe. For Central European members it is especially harmful, as Ukrainian independence and territorial integrity was a key factor of Central European strategic independence within one security complex.

Third, Russia's actions changed the military balance in the Black Sea region, Eastern and Central Europe by deployments of significant naval and air forces to Crimea, as well as future modernization and build-up plans for Russian armed forces. Because of those changes Russia achieved military-strategic dominance in the Black Sea region, and will be able to

overwhelm all regional NATO members' combined capabilities.[1] It also creates excellent power-projection possibilities for Russia not only in the wider Black Sea but also towards Central European member states. So far, the Russian military in regard to Central Europe was dependent on Kaliningrad with strong but limited potential, whereas now the whole South Eastern flank of the Alliance is in reach of conventional segment of the Russian military.[2]

These three key and mutually interlinked developments have a significant impact on the internal discussion of the Alliance. We can partially witness the renaissance of emphasis on territorial defence, as Central Europeans, especially Poles and Baltics, always argued.[3] The Alliance´s renewed attention to East and failure of the concept of "Russia as a strategic partner" will be one of the driving forces of NATO´s future development, perhaps transformation and defense planning. As a consequence, we are witnessing a solid but not too heavy, and most importantly accented, yet not permanent, military build-up. It includes a more robust air force presence in the Baltics where the Alliance is operationally engaged in 24/7 air patrols from the very beginning of Baltics' membership in 2004, as Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia lack independent fighter jet capabilities. The recent increase includes a deployment of additional six US F-15C Eagle from the United Kingdom to Lithuania (Šiauliai) to the original four. Also the second Baltic air base of Ämari in Estonia was engaged in Baltic airspace patrolling by Danish Air Force, as well as Polish Malbork base has hosted

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[1]   And in addition to almost completely blocking or threatening the remaining capabilities of the Ukrainian navy, as well as multiplying the Russian potential to project power into Southern Ukraine, including the blockade of Odessa, Ukraine´s most important connection to the outside world.

[2]   An excellent brief summary of the military consequences of the annexation of Crimea by Russia was given by OSW´s Andrzej Wilk."The military consequences of the annexation of Crimea." *OSW Analyses*, March 19, 2014, http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2014-03-19/military-consequences-annexation-crimea.

[3]   For detailed analysis see: Michta, Andrew A. "Polish hard power: Investing in the military as Europe cuts back." *American Enterprise Institute*, December 19, 2013, http://www.aei.org/outlook/polish-hard-power-investing-in-the-military-as-europe-cuts-back.

French Air Forces in May 2014. These developments could be perceived as significant for analyzing NATO´s future operations. If the strategic situation will not change significantly, the Baltic air defense and patrols will be one of few permanent operations of the Alliance, maintained on permanent basis. In addition to Baltic build-up and assurance-driven trainings with the participation of Allied troops, NATO increased its presence also in the Southern flank through a temporary deployment of Canadian and US Air Force units to Romania.

Even though, the most visible of NATO´s increased Eastern engagement is the strengthened air force presence in the Baltic countries, Poland and Romania, perhaps the most important are the improvements and expansion of defense and military infrastructure and development of contingency plans for worst-case scenarios in Central Europe. Needless to say, this area was underestimated during the last decade and half, despite the membership of first Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary, and later from 2004 on, the other countries of the region. The plans and related infrastructure will be of crucial importance for any Article V related operation in the region, but it is also important politically for Central European allies as it increases the military credibility of political assurances. Operations of territorial defense according to Article V became yet again at the center of focus in NATO strategic thinking as well as that of its member states. Of course, this focus enjoys different intensity, with Central European and Baltic states giving it 100 percent priority, and the US with its global military engagement only part of its attention.

In addition, this refocusing is supplemented by a relative increases in the limited defense budgets of Central European countries. Baltic countries, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia made political commitments in recent months to increase their defense budgets. Latvia and Lithuania have committed themselves to reach 2 percent of GDP for defense by 2020,

while Central Europeans declared a willingness to stop the decrease in spending in the first step and then to increase it to approximately 1.6 percent of GDP from 2016 to 2010 (there is some variation country to country (Croft 2014). While the commitments to increase military spending in the region of Central Europe tend to be very fragile and unstable, such proclamations demonstrate a change in security perception. Poland, in a category of its own, in the region with military spending at 1.95 of GDP, enjoys military expenditures guaranteed by law, which gives it superior regional military capabilities. What's more it is to reach 2 percent of GDP in 2016. Warsaw also launched a very ambitious defense modernization plan from 2012 to 2022. During that period about 41 billion USD will be invested into modernization (Michta 2014). The military "medium-sized power" of the region will invest into capabilities related to territorial defense, including helicopters, main battle tanks, and most exclusively into air and missile defense to counter Russian conventional capabilities in Kaliningrad and Belarus. This Polish modernization program very clearly demonstrates the changed paradigm of defense thinking in Central Europe. Rather than focus on expeditionary capabilities – a sine qua non of any modernization program during the last two decades – Poland is strongly focusing on territorial defense, including air force and anti-missile capabilities in order to be able to counter Russian ability to establish a no-fly zone over vast Polish and Baltic territories from Kaliningrad. In general, Russian build-up and assertiveness will reduce Central Europeans' willingness to engage in out-of-area operations. Due to limited budget, Central Europeans will also reduce capabilities for expeditionary operations, as they will invest their available (and limited) resources to capabilities necessary for territorial defense (air force, helicopters, armored vehicles, as well as robust build-up of "host-nation-support" infrastructure). Of course, a key challenge again is to invest the available resources properly. If they will modernize their armed forces according to plans or visions from the past, it will be yet another in a long list of modernization failures in the region.

Even if the modernization plans are perceived as a technical rather than a strategic level issue, under the current changes of the security environment, they have a strong influence on future operations and demonstrate the way of thinking of the allies with regard to what kind of operations they are planning at the Alliance level.

Besides Central European and Baltic states, the most affected member state is Germany. When analyzing Central and Eastern European position in NATO and future operations of the Alliance we have to take into account Germany´s central role in this regard. Criticized by the allies for its reluctance and engagement far below its potential, Berlin has recently started to emphasize its willingness to be more active in the Alliance´s framework. At the Munich Security Conference, the German president, Joachim Gauck declared his country´s willingness to move towards a more strategic engagement (Gauck 2014). However, the current development in Eastern Europe and the collapse of German concept of Russia as a cooperating power and part of "economic Europe" could potentially cause a review of German security policy. It will affect also its willingness to participate in operations abroad and place more focus on territorial defense. However Berlin´s perspective is still different to Central European´s as Germans still do not perceive Russia as a direct and imminent military threat.

On the other hand, while accepting the depth of strategic changes in Eastern Europe, as well as Central European concerns, there is no room to overestimate the long-term impact on United States' global strategy. While for NATO it meant the renaissance of discussion on territorial defense, as well as particular changes in military planning, for the USA it is true only in part, taking into consideration America´s privileged position within NATO and American ability to shape the overall paradigm of the Alliance. Washington, while accepting the strategic threat caused by the Russian

operation, still does not perceive it as crucial for its defense posture. It will not lead to any reversal in historic trends or shift of US strategic attention and military redeployment towards Asia-Pacific. It would be a mistake to overestimate the hierarchy of Russian assertiveness in the eyes of American political elites. The American military downsizing in Europe is still a reality and could be reversed only in case of large-scale Russian invasion towards the West, which is still low in probability. The appearance of American forces in the Baltics, Poland and Romania and deployment of some naval forces to the Black Sea does not mean that the USA will strengthen its overall European military presence. The USA will redeploy some forces within Europe but will not increase the overall presence. The American reactions will be more political in nature, by ensuring Baltic and Central European allies of American commitments to their defense and demonstrating that the USA is still "a European power." In the words of Ivo Daadler, former US Ambassador to NATO, president Obama "wants to send the signal that these three Baltic states are as central and important to the way we look at European security and defense as any other NATO member, that there's no difference between Estonia or Great Britain when it comes to the security of Estonia or Great Britain" (Hirschfeld Davis 2014).

Shift in American domestic and strategic debate – implications for NATOs operations in the Middle East

In the United States there are two crucial political developments influencing the Alliance, a domestic one and a strategic-global one.

The domestic one is associated with the significantly decreased will of the American society as well as political elite to engage in operations abroad, more broadly to be engaged in world politics. The approval rate of the most recent large-scale operations in Afghanistan in 2001 was about 90

percent, while in Iraq in March of 2003 it was 76 percent, while the current military engagement against ISIS in the Middle East is lower, around 60 percent, despite the fact that it is much limited in scale, ambitions as well as deployed forces. According to Gallup Institute "Americans' 60% approval for U.S. military action against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria, …, is slightly below their average 68% approval for 10 other U.S. military operations Gallup has asked about…. Americans have been a bit less supportive of recent military actions after prolonged engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq" (Jones 2014). According to the same source, the support for direct engagement of land forces, "boots on the ground" is much lower. It shows the declining general trend of public support for military engagement abroad, while limited air strikes are partially acceptable in contrary of long-term military operations. According to survey of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs the number of Americans supportive towards active role in world affairs is declining as well, being at the level of 61 percent, the lowest point in post-Cold-War period, 38 percent say that the US has to stay out of world affairs, which is the lowest support since 1947 (Smeltz 2014). It has several roots, from the economic crisis which traditionally turns attention towards domestic affairs, to "fatigue" of American society from long-term military engagements abroad (Iraq, Afghanistan) during the last decade and half. Moreover, the current US president has constructed his "foreign policy image" on refusing the first Iraq war, then on the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan, which also influenced the public opinion against long-term military operations abroad (Ondrejcsák 2009).

As a result, if the current trends will not by changed by "strategic black swan" it is difficult to imagine the US engaged in another large-scale long-term operation[4] abroad with significant participation of land forces. The political elite in Washington is reluctant even to engage limited "boots on

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[4]   Operation which engages several large army formations with ten-thousand troops, deployed and sustained for several years in the theatre of operation.

the ground" in the Middle East or elsewhere and prefers air campaigns – see planned but at the last minute cancelled operation against Syria in 2013 or Libyan air campaign in 2011 – not to mention more substantial engagement.

This shift is declared also in crucial American strategic document of the current leadership, the Defense Strategic Guidelines from 2012, which defines the current American "strategic ars poetica:" "U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations" (US Department of Defense 2012). By declining US ambition "to shape the World" NATO also becomes less "interventionist." Together with events in Eastern Europe all these factors create a synergy effect of more defensive Alliance oriented to its own defense rather than long-term engagement in distant regions.

Of course this changes the nature of the whole Alliance significantly. One could predict that even in case of the current collapse of Iraqi and Syrian statehood and ISIS/ISIL gaining ground in the Middle East the US and NATO will stay away from massive land force deployment. Even though it is described as the "greatest national security threat" since the terrorist attacks in September 11, 2001 to the security of the United States and Allies, the current American leadership will not find the necessary political will to address it by land forces operation and will limit the engagement only to air campaign (Vanden Brook 2014). Perhaps the American approach will slightly change after the presidential elections in 2016 but one cannot expect earthquake-like changes, simply because of the domestic atmosphere.

The current developments and approach in the Middle East will define the basic framework of NATO´s operations and engagement in the region for years to come. As a most important future consequence, NATO will limit its operational engagement in the Middle East to defensive measures.

Offensive operations – in limited scale – will be conducted by the USA and potential "coalition of the willing," also with participation of several European NATO allies, such as France and the United Kingdom, as well as regional partners like the United Arab Emirates (already with experience from the Libyan operation) or Jordan. Some other European allies will be more reluctant to act, as Germany is being bounded by economic issues in Europe and also by developments in Eastern Europe claiming primary focus of German security policy and political elites. Some other Allies, traditionally familiar with participation in US-led operations, especially Central Europeans, will also limit their participation to political support. First, they lack the necessary air force assets to participate, with the rare exemption of Poland; second, they will exclusively focus on countering Russian strategic advantages in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. It will consume their resources and "strategic attention."

As a consequence, NATO in the Middle East will focus on more traditional territorial defense measures and political demonstration that it will back its members' security, with special attention paid to Turkey. As a most prominent example how to predict Alliance's engagement, one can analyze the NATO´s involvement in Turkey´s defense, during the peak of Syrian crisis in 2013 (NATO 2013). In late 2012 NATO members decided to launch an operation in order to strengthen Turkey´s defense as well as to demonstrate the organization's will to protect its members. The decision was followed by deployment in early 2013 of anti-air missile capability of Patriot missiles. The deployment was realized by the Netherlands, Germany and the United States for defense and deterrence purposes. One could predict, as with continuing destabilization of the Middle East, the Alliance will be engaged in similar operations on request of the Turkish government. Defense of Turkey and deterrence of potential adversaries will be the key operational activity of NATO as a whole in the Middle East for the foreseeable future.

Other regions will be on the scope of NATO's agenda to a much lesser extent. As Sub-Saharan Africa is becoming an increasingly important region for European security it will affect the Alliance, as well, but only marginally, as Sub-Saharan Africa never played a central role in NATO´s political or military considerations, and one could predict that it will be completely left to Europeans, especially under French leadership. As witnessed in the case of operation Serval in Mali, in 2013-2014, NATO-allies, operating not under NATO umbrella, but on bilateral basis, will provide full political and limited logistical support, transport capabilities, air-to-air-refueling, and in the case of the US and UK, also intelligence sharing.[5]

Besides analyzing political circumstances and geographical determinants of NATO´s future operations, it is also important to underline that the above mentioned developments will reshape the nature of Alliance's operations. Besides military engagement, the operations will be broadened by non-military actions, such as assistance in reforms, transformation of armed forces, defense planning, education or security sector reform in general. It will be applied especially in cases when NATO´s engagement is limited because of internal or external factors. Case of Libya is an example where NATO will not launch land force operations because of the domestic situation and unwillingness on the part of the American public to see "boots on the ground." Furthermore, Alliance's presence is focusing on several crucial areas, as border control, security sector reform, etc.

In case of Ukraine, the external factors prevail, especially the strong Russian factor which prevents key Allies reaching agreement on providing hardware-support. As a consequence, NATO will be engaged in activities like rehabilitation of injured troops, cyber defense, logistics, and command and control and communications (NATO 2014). Both cases underline the Alliance´s widening scope of actions, as one could foresee for the future.

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[5]   For more detailed information see Carr, David. "Operation SERVAL: Operational Analysis of the 2013 French Intervention in Mali." Air Power Development Centre - Podcasts, June 26, 2013, http://apdcpodcasts.blogspot.hu/

Changes of the US Grand Strategy – general implications for NATO

One of the crucial strategic developments which will have a decisive impact on NATO is the American reprioritization or rebalancing towards Asia-Pacific.[6] Any American "rebalance" towards that region will automatically reduce importance of Europe and NATO for the US, by its nature.

Alliance, "tailor-made" for actions in broader European and Trans-Atlantic theatre has limited possibilities to be engaged in the Asia-Pacific, including, the two militarily most capable, France and the United Kingdom.

Operation ISAF in Afghanistan was the very outer geographical and political limit which Europeans were able and willing to go in terms of political and military engagement outside of the continent. It means that the new strategic priority of the USA will not geographically and politically match the European possibilities. European states even don't have ambitions to be present strategically in Asia-Pacific. If there is any discussion about the Pacific in "political Europe" it is limited to economic ties with rapidly growing Asian economies. Asia-Pacific simply doesn't reach the threshold of strategic calculations, and the attention of Europeans.

It will have serious consequences for the Alliance and its operations, even more serious than the domestic political considerations analyzed above. By redeploying American assets and political attention to the Pacific and East Asia the Europeans will find themselves in a situation when they have to count with both Eastern Europe and Mediterranean basin without having attracted American priority interests. In case of the Southern Flank it

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[6]   For detailed analysis see: Ondrejcsák, Róbert. 2012. The United State´s Strategic Shift Towards the Pacific – Continuity and Change, In: Majer, Marian – Ondrejcsák, Róbert – Tarasovič, Vladimír (eds.): Panorama of global security environment 2012. Bratislava: CENAA, pp. 25-41.

will cause that if NATO will launch any military operation there it will be more on the shoulders of its European allies, as we witnessed in the case of Libya. On the other hand the limited American engagement will automatically determine the level of military ambitions of NATO, simply because of limited European capabilities. NATO will be able to launch limited air campaign and Special Forces operations, but one could exclude even middle-scale land force operations. "Leading from behind" and providing "enablers" can secure limited success but cannot back strategic level ambitions, and operations, of course. In concrete terms it means that NATO will conduct Libya-like operations where there is no need to engage strategic level forces. Moreover, where military bases are available in relative geographical proximity and logistics is not very demanding for power-projection purposes. On the other hand, we cannot expect operations as "potential-Syria-like" (as it was planned in early 2013) against more advanced air-defense capabilities without stronger American engagement. The most exclusive demonstration of strategic reality was the "confusion" over air campaign against Syria in 2013. Until the USA was demonstrating its political will to act, France was ready to take action too. But when Washington withdrew its political will to launch the operation, Paris, even with the most capable European military (together with the UK) in terms of power projection, immediately found herself in strange position without real possibility to act alone or lead any coalition able to generate the necessary level of military capabilities (Gordon 2014).

Besides the consequences for leadership in the Mediterranean and limits for NATO´s operations size, the next crucial question is NATO´s engagement with Asian-Pacific allies. What will be the nature of collaboration with so-called "global partners" Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea, each of them provided significant support to NATO´s ISAF mission, especially Australia with large-scale military involvement (Australian Government 2014). By downsizing NATO´s presence in Afghanistan

and particularly by terminating ISAF mission by the end of 2014 there are numerous questions arising. What will be the contribution of Asian-Pacific partners to future NATO operations? There are two simultaneous potential developments. First, the level of partnership could decrease because of NATO´s turning back towards territorial defense in Europe. Second, their importance could rise because of NATO´s most important member´s, the US, rebalancing towards Asia-Pacific. One of the potential developments could be a more robust partnership with the USA, and as a consequence, also with NATO, but because of the above mentioned factors it will be more formal or based more on bilateral cooperation with the United States.

Conclusion

Key political and strategic trends determining the future of NATO are as follows: the changing strategic situation in Eastern Europe, which in-cludes a dramatically modified nature of relationship to Russia; dynamics of domestic debate in the United States as well as other key member states and rising unwillingness to commit themselves to long-term large-scale operation; strategic shift of the United States towards Asia-Pacific. These trends will mark NATO´s future, its mission, policies, as well as opera-tions conducted by the Allies.

The most important consequences for future operations are the following: Territorial defense-driven operations will gain in importance, especially for Eastern members, but in general, too. The Alliance will develop its logistics and host nation support infrastructure in Central Europe and the Baltics to be able to counter increased Russian presence and potential ac-tions. It will also maintain permanent operation of air defense of the Bal-tics, and in case of escalation of conflict in the Black Sea, also in Romania. On the other hand it is still very much dependent on the sensitivity of American strategists in terms of threat perception. It means that the US

will redeploy some forces within Europe towards the East, but will not increase its overall European military presence. In American strategic consideration, Europe is still a secondary theatre to Asia-Pacific and it will stay so unless "strategic black swan" will occur.

In the Middle East especially, the Alliance as an organization will limit its engagement to defense of Turkey and deterrence of potential adversaries, by case-by-case deployments of defensive capabilities (e.g. Patriot missiles). In regions and countries where there is lack of political will for engagement and local or regional strategic context is unfavorable to NATO´s military presence, the Alliance will deploy advisory or assistance missions, as we are seeing at the time being in Ukraine or Libya.

Under current circumstances it is illusory to expect any large-scale long-term non-Article V operations out-of-Europe which would last for years and see the deployment of several tens of thousands troops. Any new involvement of NATO outside of Europe will be more political and assistance-providing rather than military. Several European members will be engaged but on a bilateral basis – in the Middle East under American leadership or in sub-Saharan Africa under French or formally under the aegis of EU led by France. In the Mediterranean, NATO will conduct defensive maritime border control operations, or limited air campaigns under American leadership or by applying "leadership-from-behind" approach by providing key US "enablers" to European allies. Under current circumstances there is no chance for ISAF-like engagement, because of lack of political will and strategic framework. The Alliance is becoming more "introverted" rather than "transitional" in distant regions.

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Future NATO Operations – Views from the United States

Matthew Rhodes[7]

As with other Allies, U.S. views of future NATO operations continue to evolve. Another near-term ISAF-scale deployment is highly unlikely. However, alongside the more-discussed pivot or rebalance toward Asia, the second-term Obama administration has promoted a "transatlantic renaissance." Defense-related aspects would include smaller-scale partner training, special operations work, and other cooperation to address emerging security challenges. Politically fragile parts of Africa and the Near East have presented the leading areas for such efforts, but heightened tensions with Russia over Ukraine are reprioritizing collective defense in Europe.

Regional focus aside, caution is in order. Talk of "renaissance" could be taken to imply U.S.-European relations have been stuck in a Dark Age. That would go too far, but the extent to which present initiatives lead to fu-

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[7]   The views presented in this chapter are solely the personal opinions of the author.

ture operations will be determined less by demand (which appears ample) than supply of resources and commitment from both sides. Given competing challenges, these factors will both reflect and affect the overall strength of Euroatlantic ties.

NATO's "Age of Operations"

America's 2010 National Security Strategy celebrates the "relationship with European allies [as] the cornerstone for U.S. engagement with the world," (White House, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2010, 41) but historical attitudes have been ambivalent. Nineteenth century "American exceptionalism" "contrasted the simple virtues of [its] Republic with the subtle and complex qualities (some said corruptions) of Europe" (Fromkin 1970, 688). Into early 1948, the Truman administration resisted British proposals for joining a European defense pact out of fear this would perpetuate a disproportionate burden for the continent's security (Wallace 2009, 95-99). Later the Cold War's end resurrected isolationist arguments for disbanding alliances and recalling troops overseas.[8]

Within that context, in 1993 Senator Richard Lugar warned that NATO would go "out of area or out of business." Even as U.S. forces in Europe dropped to a fourth of their Cold War peak, successive Presidential administrations responded to that challenge by backing Alliance enlargement, an array of formal partnerships, and multiple military operations. In all of these respects, American breadth of scope has exceeded the more restricted regionalism of most members in Europe.

American rationales for these measures have been closely intertwined. Regarding potentially risky operations, officials have highlighted NATO's

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[8]   See for example Eugene Gholz et al, "Come Home America: A Strategy of Restraint in the Face of Temptation," *International Security*, Spring 1997.

function as a "consensus engine" (Clark 2001, 14) that confers important advantages over "ad hoc coalitions" in terms of diplomatic legitimacy, common doctrine, and burden sharing (Daalder and Stavridis 2012, 2-7). Likewise, along with promoting democratic stability, structured interaction with aspirants and partners extends trust and interoperability to additional countries that may join Alliance-led missions. Indeed, involvement in deployments became a de facto expectation of states seeking close ties or membership.

On the other hand, drawbacks have offset some of these benefits. Alliance decision-making can lessen military efficiency through lost time and compromises on targets and tactics that outweigh operational contributions. Only a small fraction of European forces are deployable, and even those suffer from shortfalls in airlift, smart weapons, and intelligence. The accession of mostly small newer Allies "water[ed]-down [NATO's] military capabilities" (Michta 2006, 17) and sometimes required others' jets to police their airspace. From perspectives that emphasize such limitations, NATO brings less value as a formal structure than as a flexible "toolbox" of supplemental partners for lower-intensity needs.

Operations in Afghanistan vividly illustrate these mixed assessments. The September 2001 terrorist attacks in Washington and New York triggered NATO's first pair of Article 5 operations, Eagle Assist, which transferred Alliance AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) planes to U.S. airspace control through spring 2002, and Active Endeavor, which organized ongoing naval patrols in the Mediterranean Sea. However, negative views of NATO procedures in the Balkan missions led the George W. Bush administration to abjure an Alliance role in the initial intervention against the Taliban regime. Presaging later friction over Iraq, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld insisted that "the mission determines the coalition" rather than the reverse (Remarks to media 2011, Sept. 23). The

administration backed NATO's assumption of command of the follow-on International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) stabilization mission in August 2003, while maintaining separate U.S. counter-terror operations until 2006. Significant contributions to ISAF by non-NATO countries such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea led to adoption of the category "Partners Across the Globe."

As the parallel American-led mission in Iraq wound down, in 2009 the new Obama administration shifted priority to Afghanistan. American forces there tripled to 100,000 by the end of following year. Other Allies added another 7000 troops and endorsed an extended counter-insurgency strategy for ISAF at NATO's November 2010 Lisbon summit.

These were notable achievements for a body of 28 members that entailed real sacrifice and advanced interoperability. However, the commitments fell short of Obama's campaign aspiration to "strengthen alliances by asking allies to do more"[9]. Some Allies' troop increases were temporary and offset by others' withdrawal. Persistent national caveats for many countries' forces produced the exaggerated quip that ISAF stood for "I Saw Americans Fight." Together with divergent approaches toward the economic crisis and other major issues, the lack of more forthcoming support disappointed the administration's hopes that Obama's popularity with European publics would bring stronger backing from governments.

NATO Operations After ISAF

In addition to the updated ISAF strategy, the Lisbon summit adopted a new Strategic Concept. The document recommitted the Alliance to the core missions of collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security. Across NATO as a whole, debate has since focused on how, when,

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[9]   Speech at Reagan Building, Washington, D.C., July 15, 2008

and where to act within these areas. For the United States specifically, discussion has considered how, when, and where action with NATO Allies supports its own evolving security outlook.

A consensus point of departure is avoiding another ISAF. Three months after Lisbon, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told West Point military cadets that any successor "who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia…should 'have his head examined"[10]. In line with that sentiment, the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance released under Secretary Leon Panetta emphasized that "U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations" (italics in original). Instead, the document stressed the need to "rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region" while focusing on tasks such as partner capacity building, irregular warfare, and humanitarian relief as well as homeland defense and deterrence.

Officials stress the difficulty of predicting details of NATO involvement in such efforts. Residual support missions are foreseen to continue in Afghanistan through post-ISAF Operation Resolute Support (pending Afghan approval of enabling security treaties) as well as in the Balkans via KFOR (Kosovo Force) and NATO Headquarters Sarajevo. However, the overall geography of past operations has been widely dispersed, including post-Hurricane Katrina assistance and the earlier AWACS mission in the United States itself.

A NATO Europe "pivot with" America to the Pacific appears unrealistic. To be sure, most Partners Across the Globe come from this region. However, significant military capacity building, let alone deterring or responding to armed conflicts, lies beyond the reach and interest of most European states. In the words of Slovak Ambassador to NATO Tomas Valasek, "[n]

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[10]   Speech at the United States Military Academy, Feb. 25, 2011

ever before…were [NATO] allies of so little use for the kinds of scenarios that most occupy America's defense analysts" (Valasek 2012). At most, Europe can lend diplomatic support and relieve U.S. commitments in closer places (Binnedijk 2012).

That leaves the Mediterranean littoral into sub-Saharan Africa as the most likely area for operations by NATO as a whole or by the U.S. and individual NATO Allies. Influential observers have called for a NATO "Southern Strategy" (Larrabee and Wilson 2014)[11] against the convergent threats of uncontrolled migration, criminal trafficking, terrorist metastasis, and breakdown of order across the region. On an official level, SACEUR U.S. General Philip Breedlove has likewise highlighted capacity for potential force projection with Allies into "the Levant, the east Med, [and] northern Africa" as "absolutely key to the future" (Claudette 2013).

Engagement in this direction would of course not be entirely new. Several Allies were colonial powers in these regions. In addition to other attention to the Middle East, the U.S. Department of Defense has run counter-terror and training missions around the Horn of Africa from a base in Djibouti since 2002 and established a separate Africa Command in 2008. Despite the differences over intervention, NATO Training Mission Iraq instructed military and police forces there from 2004 to 2011. The Alliance has also provided transport and training to Africa Union peacekeepers in countries such as Sudan and Somalia since 2005 and conducted anti-piracy patrols in the Red Sea under Operation Ocean Shield since 2008; both efforts complement parallel work involving NATO members by the European Union, which recently started another mission in the Central African Republic. Assessing the depth of problems in such places, a consulting group concluded that "Western militaries will continue to play an increasingly larger role in internal African issues" (Soufan Group 2013). [12]

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[11]   See also Michael O'Hanlon, "Strengthen Stability in Africa," Brookings Institution, Jan. 23, 2014.

[12]   The author thanks the late Nick Pratt for bringing this piece to his attention.

Most visibly, NATO's largest new action since Lisbon, Operation Unified Protector (OUP), took place in and around Libya. With U.S. backing, in late March 2011 the Alliance assumed command of UN-authorized efforts to protect civilians from reprisals by the regime of Muammar Qaddafi during an armed uprising. After six months of airstrikes and naval blockade, the Qaddafi regime collapsed. The country's new leaders later requested NATO help in security sector reform. Top officials including U.S. Ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder and SACEUR Admiral James Stavridis praised the mission as a "model intervention" in which Britain, France, and the Arab League assumed much of the diplomatic and military initiative and which achieved its aims without NATO casualties or major financial cost (Daalder and Stavridis 2012, 2-7).

More critical views have challenged the Libyan case's rationale and drawn cautionary conclusions from its persistent post-intervention anarchy and the spillover of weapons and fighters into nearby Mali, where the U.S. would lend further transport and intelligence support to 5000 French troops deployed against an extremist insurgency in early 2012 (Kuperman 2013, 105-136). Moreover, though famously characterized as "leading from behind, half of the Allies played no military role and the operation relied on U.S. destruction of Libyan air defenses as well as provision of three-quarters of intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and aerial refueling (Daalder and Stavridis 2012, 6).

Syria has meanwhile presented another focus for actual and proposed NATO moves. In early 2013 the United States, Germany, and the Netherlands deployed Patriot anti-missile batteries to Turkey as protection against spillover from the conflict in Syria. At the height of debate over a military response to President Bashar Al-Assad's regime's use of chemical weapons, former SACEUR Admiral James Stavridis urged "NATO action" beginning with "punitive strikes"(Stavridis 2013). A Russian-sponsored UN agreement to destroy Syria's stockpile defused those discussions, but

NATO has subsequently been involved in securing the weapons' transit at sea.

Finally to Syria's south, in early 2014 Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas revived a proposal for NATO troops to assure security under an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement.

Renaissance or Retreat

Further developments for NATO in any of these directions will occur within the context of Euroatlantic relations writ large. The start of President Obama's second term in 2013 brought fresh talk of intensified American focus on Europe, sparked in part by key cabinet appointments. New Secretary of Defense Charles Hagel had been serving as President of the U.S. Atlantic Council, the country's leading NGO on NATO and European affairs. Hagel's counterpart Secretary of State John Kerry is another former Senator who spent much of his youth on the Continent as a diplomat's child and speaks both German and French. (When Kerry ran for President in 2004 Republican critics charged that he even "looks French.")

Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland, a former ambassador to NATO, introduced the term "transatlantic renaissance" in a speech at the U.S. Atlantic Council in November. Both Hagel and Kerry repeated the phrase in a joint appearance at the Munich Security Conference the following February. As described by Nuland, this renewal should entail "a new burst of energy, confidence, innovation, and generosity" in shared U.S.-European leadership on global challenges"[13]. Vice-President Joe Biden has also argued that the initiative's centerpiece, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), would also

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[13]   "Toward a Transatlantic Renaissance: Ensuring Our Shared Future." speech Nov. 13, 2013

benefit NATO by "spur[ring] growth that helps both sides of the Atlantic continue to modernise and invest in the alliance" (Biden 2014).

Obstacles for TTIP itself aside, American observers in and out of government see increased financial and political commitment to shared defense as essential for European Allies to retain even "toolbox" status. European defense budgets have shrunk by more than $50 billion since 2008. U.S. spending is now nearly triple other Allies' total, and only three other Allies (Estonia, Greece and the United Kingdom) also meet the agreed target of two percent of GDP for defense. In June 2011 Robert Gates famously warned that such trends were politically unsustainable and could lead NATO to a "dim if not dismal future"[14]). Two years later outgoing Ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder again lamented that "European Allies are hollowing out their militaries, jettisoning capabilities, and failing to spend their existing budgets wisely" at Carnegie Europe in Brussels in June 2013. Rather than building renewed defense capacity with Europe, U.S. planners feel confronted with post-ISAF atrophy mitigation.

Allies' situations vary but generally follow this basic trend. Intelligence sharing and overall relations remain closest with Great Britain. However, major announced force cuts, Parliament's no-vote on potential strikes against Syria, and the distractions of referenda on Scottish independence and EU exit led retired U.S. Marine General James Mattis (former head of Allied Command Transformation) to liken Anglo-American military cooperation to the "tail-end of a comet" (Luce 2014). On the other hand, France's readiness to use force, especially within its historical areas of interest in Africa, have reversed Iraq-era stereotypes of the country as hopelessly Venutian. Admiral Stavridis and Leo Michel have proposed trilateral special relations among France, Britain, and America, (Foreig Policy 2014) but internal political and economic problems could eventu-

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[14]   "The Security and Defense Agenda (Future of NATO" speech in Brussels, June 10, 2011

ally curtail the country's recent wave of deployments. Germany retains the greatest capacity to increase commitments, and speeches by President Joachim Gauck and other top officials at the 2014 Munich Security Conference signaled movement toward a more strategic "culture of engagement." However these followed farewell remarks resistant to new deployments a few weeks earlier by outgoing Defense Minister Thomas de Maiziere and are only slowly being reflected in actual security policy. Revelations about data gathering by the U.S. National Security Agency (including from Chancellor Angela Merkel's cell phone) have also cast a shadow over German-U.S. relations. A few of the Central European Allies committed capable special forces to ISAF. The largest of them, Poland, has maintained relatively robust defense outlays but rebuffed requests for fighter jets during OUP and deemphasized expeditionary capabilities in its 2012-2022 modernization plan.

Meanwhile, the United States itself has scaled back its military presence. The post-9/11 surge in defense spending has begun receding. The pivot to Asia since late 2011 has meant adjustments such as shifting from a 50/50 distribution of naval assets in the Atlantic and Pacific toward 60/40 in favor of the latter as well as drawing down to just two army brigade combat teams in Europe. Federal budget sequestration in 2013 forced cancellation of nearly half of Army training events with Allies and partners on the continent (Tilghman 2013). Opposition within Congress to proposed airstrikes against Syria reflected declining public support for activist foreign policy; for the first time in half a century of polling, in late 2013 a majority of respondents agreed that "the U.S. should mind its own business" in international affairs according to Pew's America's Place in the World 2013. Against this background, Russia's invasion and annexation of Crimea in early 2014 shocked the post-Cold War order in Europe. As part of a pattern of pressure against other countries along its borders, Russia's actions present a long-term security challenge.

The impact on NATO remains uncertain. To be sure, the developments have reconfirmed the Alliance's relevance and could be dramatic enough to halt or partly reverse declining defense spending within Europe. Latvia and Lithuania have pledged to reach NATO's two percent benchmark, but not until 2020. Moreover, though many capabilities are fungible, heightened anxiety will naturally shift concern to territorial defense (including twenty-first century extensions such as cyber security) and could recast external operations as diversions.

For the United States, events have not reversed the growing significance of the Asia-Pacific or the pressures on its own defense budget. However, they have placed the strategic importance of Europe in new light, including due to the need to demonstrate commitment and staying-power in the eyes of allies and partners in Asia. The United States has taken steps to reassure others of its Article 5 commitment by reinforcing NATO's Baltic air policing, shifting a squadron of F-16s to Poland, and deploying AWACS planes over Poland and Romania. It is planning additional rotational training and reevaluating longer term force structure plans.

Still, the U.S. would like to see other Allies share greater responsibility in these areas as well as remain at least selectively prepared for focused missions elsewhere. Specifically regarding Ukraine, European economic measures will be key. Together with successes in trade talks, energy, and other areas, positive outcomes here would put substance into talk of renewal. In contrast, worst-case scenarios in which the transatlantic community proved unable to sustain credible, unified responses either to developments in Ukraine or to challenges elsewhere would deepen skepticism of NATO's value.

Conclusion

As seen from America, ISAF's approaching termination and transition already presented an important "inflection point" for NATO. Russia's moves against Ukraine have reinforced that conclusion even as they have transformed its context. Europe's defense has moved back to the top of NATO's agenda, but need for crisis management and capacity building to Europe's south still remains. Stepped up commitments to the former without abandonment of the latter would best meet U.S. hopes for NATO's future.

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Future NATO Operations – View
from a Small Member State

Ľubomír Bulík

Future direction of NATO operations and required capabilities for its effective command is a very complex topic. To add to this complexity, a view from a small member state can take a number of perspectives. The whole spectrum of operations, either under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty as an Alliance operation of collective defense or outside Article 5 as a part of crisis management of NATO, which could be carried out by NATO in the future is only one of the approaches to analyze the participation of smaller member countries in NATO. A national ambition to participate in an operation outside Article 5 can be diametrically different for its members, and especially small countries can have a different role in particular types of operations within the collective level of ambition of NATO. This role can then reflect the national level of ambition, so if a small member state wants to participate in an operation, there are different demands on the development of military or other capabilities. What are

the factors that influence the military capabilities of the Slovak Republic will be the question posed by this article.

Security environment

When thinking about NATO future operations we should start from the analyses of future threats, look at the lessons learned from the previous operations and try to foresee behavior of particular states and other actors in international relations including the Alliance itself (Eichler 2006, 27-28). It is also important to see the main global trends. In the area of security and defense this for example includes the shift from regional solutions of security threats to global security management, which is accompanied by development of relatively small but agile, fully professional, digitalized armed forces instead of massive armies, by letting go of hierarchical structures and building up network structures. It is also accompanied by significantly higher involvement of non-state actors, more powerful media and other trends that show us ever more complex security environment (Eichler 2006, 35-36).

Conflicts, where the international society is involved, developed in the last years mostly in strategically far geographic regions with different social and cultural environment (Eichler 2006, 20-27). It does not mean that conflicts occur only there and Ukraine is a good example of that. Rising complexity of operations and differences among them will be a test not only for effective solutions, including getting the budget for the development of needed capabilities, but also for flexibility of decision and planning process. In today's conflicts, the goal is not the crush the enemy in traditional warfare but to create conditions for post-conflict reconstruction of the country, stable political system and getting the country back on track, which gives new challenges to the military operations (Ivančík 2012, 18-25). Armed enemies will be hard to distinguish from civilian population,

for whom we are trying to build a safe and stable environment. It can be an enemy that does not have capabilities of modern armed forces but is using asymmetrical warfare who can effectively reach his goals.

Knowledge from current NATO operations confirms that effectiveness of military force is limited and is not sufficient in solving current and future complex crisis situations. New needs call for development and implementation of qualitatively higher approach of the military and civilian component to crisis management. Characteristic feature of this cooperation should be a holistic approach to set the tasks, goals and expectations of individual actors involved in solving the crisis situation and solicit their coordinated cooperation.

After operations in Iraq, shaky allied operation in Libya or by judging situation in Afghanistan, there is a period to come where NATO is not likely to have an ambition to take lead in long term stabilization operation outside Article 5 in the near future, not only due to the aftermaths of the global financial crisis but also due to the fact that the current operations did not reach the expected level of stabilization and do not have a clear winner.

It is almost impossible to create a stable security environment for longer term and therefore it is possible to agree with a thesis that the only certainty which we can count on in the near future is the instability and unpredictability of the changes ahead. Unstable security environment is one of the factors that will be influencing the military capabilities as well as the ideas about future NATO operations.

Requirements for military capabilities

Given its main role, which is collective defense of all members of the Alliance as well as ambition to contribute to global security management

in reaction to changing security environment, NATO has to have suffi-
cient military capability for realization of its goals in both of the areas.
Meanwhile at the Lisbon summit the Alliance named the security threats
and defined its vision of reaction to them in a strategic conception and at
the last summit in Chicago they defined requests for military capability
(NATO FORCES 2020) and methods of how to reach them (NATO 2012).

From the perspective of NATO future operation we stand in front of major
problem how to define correctly the role of the military power, based on
which the creation of demands needed for development of military capa-
bilities is to be formulated as a part of a complex approach to the future
operation. It is also needed to define the roles of the other actors anew,
develop their capacities and search for new ways of mutual interaction in
the interest of reaching the final effect.

NATO will have to transform its armed forces so they will be able to de-
fend its territory against any kind of direct military threats and congruently
effectively work against new threats which are more functional in nature
rather than geographical. Alliance will have to build new capabilities in
reaction to these threats and at the same time regain the ability to conduct
multinational joint operations with high intensity of fighting which has
been cooled down in reaction to long-term engagement in large-scale sta-
bilization operations.

When it comes to the basic requirements for military capabilities up front
are the ability of adaptation, understanding of local conditions and overall
operational interoperability between coalition partners, not only in area of
communication and information sharing (NATO 2012). It will be excep-
tionally important in the area where population has complicated structure
and relationships while the decision about the use of military power needs
sensible evaluation of the situation from the perspective of side effects and
quick materialization of expected results.

The final consequence mainly for the small member states, including Slovakia, will be the ever growing gap between spectrum and quality of the requested military capabilities and shrinking possibilities to acquire them on national level. Countries will be forced to approach the choice of the range of their participation and to reevaluate their ambitions. And all this in the environment where the entry position for qualitative level of individual capabilities will be always rising. In other words, while for example armed forces will not be able to reach the requested level of capabilities they will not be able to join the individual operations.

Defense expenditures and modernization

Stability of financial resources and adequate requests for modernization are decisive factors which will continue to influence fundamentally the overall capability of armies to adequately react to current and future threats and needs of future NATO operations.

Quest for answers to eliminate the future threats and experiences gained through participation of the armed forces in combat operations must be the core for the creation of legitimate requirements for their modernization and should be accepted at the strategic level of state decision making. The whole spectrum of tasks in which the armed forces take part directs their modernization efforts to the ability of being interoperable with partners in NATO as well as to the requests which are inevitable to reach the national goals connected to the security and defense of the interests of the Slovak Republic (MOSR 2013, 76-97).

Growing demands for military capabilities and limited funds to do acquire and maintain them are solved by many small countries through the effort to use the help of strong countries and the membership in international institutions, while the NATO collective defense is often stressed. On the

other hand the Article 3 of the Washington treaty which calls on the member states to build their own defense capacities is not applied sufficiently. An example of this is also the negative development of the defense budget in Slovakia.

If during the accession process to NATO two percent of the GDP were guaranteed as expenditures for defense by the highest legislative body, National Council of the Slovak Republic, in the last ten years the defense budget was declining to the current level of one percent of the GDP (World Bank 2014) while the prediction in this area is not optimistic at all. Effort of every state should be to secure all of its functions, that means securing the defense as well and as a part of it should be an effort to modernize armed forces so that they could fulfill their roles steaming from the national laws and international commitments.

Military expenditures as share of GDP
Slovak Republic

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
% of GDP	1,5	1,3	1,1	1,1	1
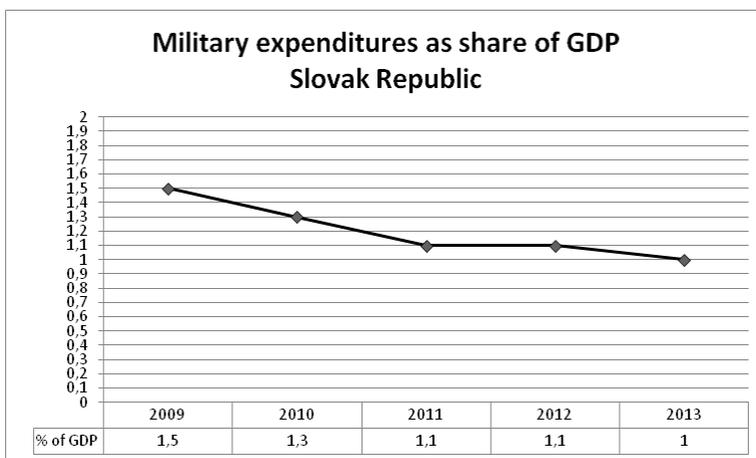
Source: World Bank 2014

The reality where there is more states in NATO that do not give two percent of GDP to the defense (World Bank 2014) than those who do, should not be misused as an apology for neglecting the modernization of their

own armed forces. Despite that many of the countries not allocating the two percent did modernize their armed forces. One example is the Czech Republic which has realized modernization and acquisition of new technology also with reduced amount of dedicated financial resources.

According to the last official evaluation, the situation of the Slovak armed forces is also very complicated and without stable finances which should be step by step increased, a lot of the capabilities will be unsustainable (MOSR 2013). On the side of the defense expenditures, the development in this area in the recent years has taught people not to trust the stability of the allocated financial resources in the given year leading to big problems in long-, mid and short- term planning as well as in acquisition of commodities and services (Sopóci 2013). It was said many times that we were no table to modernize a single whole system in the armed forces in a way that it would be functional.

It is clear that the armies that insufficiently caught up to these trends before the economic crisis and did not start to modernize will have big problems to catch the train that has left the station. It is not possible to rely on the strong countries, which will not substitute capabilities the likes of transport aircrafts, surveillance systems and intelligence systems for the protection of troops from missiles, artillery fire and other components which have proved important in Afghanistan.

On the other hand we should exercise caution when it comes to modernization and be sure that everything that will be delivered to the armed forces will be used effectively. One example could be the thoughts on the modernization of the MiG-29 aircrafts. Acquisition of new aircrafts should always be done with the ambition to take part in international operation, and this holds true also with other expensive systems. Technical equipment should not be procured for storages but should be used to reach

higher level of capabilities (SME 2011; SME 2014). At the same time the inappropriate requests or requests created under pressure of the defense industry or politicians where quality and costs are not matched with tasks should be prevented. Many of them are for a variety of reason not realized or the acquired products are incomplete, of lower quality or in different numbers than needed.

Putting the interests of the defense industry in front of the politically declared interests is also one of the reasons why there is so little development in the international cooperation in the defense industry with the goal to effectively use the ever shrinking financial resources while providing the requested capabilities for their future purpose.

It is obvious that it will be very hard to keep a balance between current and future tasks, capabilities (interoperability and compatibility) and financial resources. Because of that one of the solutions might be a political agreement (law) agreed by a wide spectrum of actors that should guarantee stability of resources for defense in the long- as well as mid-term.

Undoubtedly by the procurement of needed, technologically advanced hardware for small armed forces the financial effectivity is hurt by small orders. Use of initiatives like Smart Defense and Pooling and Sharing and other multinational and bilateral projects is seen as a sensible approach to the development of capabilities of the armed forces and to reduction of costs. This is a reason why we should use all the available possibilities in NATO, EU, V4 or at bilateral level (Euractive 2012).

Big potential should be seen in common projects in the area of education, training, logistics and healthcare as well as in specialization, where the centers of excellence could be an example.

Personnel

There is no doubt that the personnel is one of the key factors with essential influence on the success of future operations at all levels, from the political leaders through the training of the military leaders and other military personnel including civilian employees of the ministries of defense.

For the personnel to act effectively in current and future security environment and to effectively use the battle equipment, technical equipment and material in multinational joint operations, the mechanism of recruitment, education, training and sustainment of personnel has to be reevaluated, qualities of personnel will need to be significantly upgraded with ability of "mental" and operational interoperability to fulfil mission in joint multinational operations. In other words already at recruitment, the Alliance's DNA needs to be inserted in the personnel.

On the other hand every country has its own interests and therefore, based on the experiences from the membership in the Alliance, there will be sensible promotion of individual national interests in future operations for which diplomatic, informational, economic, military and other tools will be used. Effort of every small country should be to enforce their interests through well prepared personnel which will be the strongest contribution and at the same time competition within NATO. Conditions for this were already formulated by the secretary general Rasmussen at the beginning of his term when he proposed that deployment and rotations in international positions should be based on quality disregarding the nationality in the first place. This way, a factor of competition would be introduced to the work of the Alliance together with individual motivation and national ambitions with the goal to secure the highest possible quality in every position within NATO.

The real call is to adopt carefully thought-out system of personal management (MOSR 2013, 98-105). In the realm of the Slovak Republic it should comprehensively deal with several insufficiencies of the current system, like the imbalance of motivation for service at home and abroad, where every position abroad very financially lucrative, often leading to a situation where most of those who were sent abroad cannot find their peace back home and their only motivation is another deployment. It also includes negligence towards issues of mobilization and replenishment of experienced personnel. This problem is caused mainly by the departure of experienced soldiers for retirement and resulting lack of information about how other armies deal with these issues and problems of day to day business connected with the financial crisis, which is pushing these issues to the background. Last but not least, there is also a problem of personnel composition at various levels of the command chain. The known order of the "apprentice - journeyman – master" seems to cease to be interesting and the personnel that is being carried on the waves of changing political influence (for example 14 ministers of defense during its twenty years of existence), is not providing the necessary continuity, which is important for the effective use of ever smaller financial resources to realize the requirements of the armed forces. It is also visible that the system of education on the level of politics needs to be created. Political parties should have interest in preparing qualified people in the area of security and defense.

The ideal situation is a development of an environment where stability and continuity will be present, motivation will keep people interested in the service in the armed forces and at the same time it should serve as a stabilizing factor on the morale and military discipline. To reach a higher level of professionalism it is necessary to create a value-oriented culture where soldiers represent the highest standards of integrity, ethics, physical abilities and devotion to the service to the nation. This is a way how to build highly motivated professional forces where at the forefront are leaders that

represent the strength and character of the best professional soldiers and where the motivation to serve their nation is based on professional pride, loyalty to the constitution, political leaders as well as to the armed forces (for simplification, to find a balance between mercenaries and knights).

Training

Training is the basic way to fully use the potential of the personnel and the material and prepare them in the form of effective military capability. Training is not only indispensable form of preparation for real operations but also, in addition to the primary experiences from operations, serves as the highest possible form of development of the combat potential of the armed forces. The main premise of successful training is a high quality education of personnel for acquiring the required know-how. Therefore, the education of civil and military personnel should focus on mapping the security situation, strategic communication, future threats, conflicts and missions, development of expert potential and security of networks and information systems. Leaders should be oriented towards the development and functioning of systems, management of education and command of personnel, management of finances and other economic, legal and social issues.

Because the long term engagement in what is the largest allied operation to date is being significantly reduced and is approaching its end, NATO will look for a substitution or in other words a means to sustain the operational readiness in the platform of exercises. The goal is to keep at least the level of interoperability which was reached in Afghanistan and to reacquire the lost abilities in command of intensive full spectrum operations (Economist 2013). Of course in today's world it is not possible to exclude the possibility that if the situation will ask for it the allies will agree on new operation outside Article 5. The implementation of the Connected Forces Initiative,

that means sustaining the operational readiness of the allied forces through exercises, will be given priority though. It goes without saying that the Washington treaty with the Article 5 still holds true. Preparation for possible high intensity operation was, and definitely will be, the core task of every member army.

At the NATO Chicago summit in May 2012 the heads of states and governments agreed to the implementation of the CFI as a means and a part of the allied efforts to reach the target of NATO Forces 2020 – deployable, interoperable and sustainable units and capabilities, ready, trained and commanded in a manner that will fulfill the ambition of NATO and be able to operate together or with the partner countries in any kind of environment (NATO 2012). CFI is an initiative which complements the Smart Defense project, mobilizes the resources of the Alliance in a way that supports the ability of allies to act together in really interconnected manner, as was said by the NATO secretary general Rasmussen.

In correspondence with the end of the ISAF mission CFI offers philosophy, focus and mechanism through which the military readiness and operational maturity of NATO will be sustained and developed in times of financial crisis and underfinanced defense budgets of member countries. On the one hand the main postulates of the CFI are series of activities in education and training, including training directed at NRF and effectiveness in use of technology. On the other hand there is the broader intent of this initiative, whereas it is also directed at activation of basic needs for communication, training and reaching the agreed norms of the Alliance. CFI offers not only alternative to operational deployment of the last decade to the allies but is also a long term sustainability form for interoperable allied capacity building at the very beginning, not only at the end of their training, as an international extension to the training as was the case until now. Coherent approach to education and training offers basis for the

basic individual and team development with ability to face complex situations (NATO 2012).

A combination of commands and units, command structure and force structure of NATO and their use in challenging environment will give space for deployment and incorporation of modern targeted technology for support of operations and training. Connecting national education and training and activities of NATO across the widest range possible will highlight the interoperability and common standards. Ambition of the CFO is to join allied forces at practical and intellectual level, increase and sustain their level of interoperability, join activities of NATO with activities of partner countries and other actors in operations as a part of complex approach in accord with the strategic conception and agreed decisions and procedures (Mizera and Macko 2013).

Throughout the entire history of independent Slovakia training was regarded as a key area to which the resolute focus was given by the command of the armed forces. Therefore, from the perspective of Slovakia the new era of training should not come as anything unusual.

The current situation at least in the area of fully professionalized armed forces in Slovakia is that combat oriented training (train as if you would fight for real) is realized only by a part of the units. Mainly those that are selected for the rotation in standing operations of crisis management, fulfillment of international obligations in NRF of EB or for the protection of the airspace (Prápor výcviku PS OSSR 2014).

It is quite common that for the fulfilment of international obligations one unit is put together at the expense of other units contributing with not only personnel but mainly with material and technical equipment. This means that other units – meaning most of them – fulfil only limited training tasks

at the level of basic combat skills or recurrent training, which is oriented at keeping the professional soldiers occupied, but such limited training is not sufficient for their role. A paradox in this situation is that expensive modernization of training facilities is not efficiently used by the armed forces because there is no money to send and sustain units at the training facilities as well as for ammunition. Partial solution here is offered at the international level where for example among the V4 a database of training facilities for their common use was created, so the states will not create the same kind of training facilities if they can use them together (Samson 2011, 25-27). There are other problems that add up, as for example the aging of personnel which is felt mostly by specialists or gradual loss of motivation not only among the soldiers but also among those who would like to join the forces.

Preparation of personnel forms a chapter of its own in the area of training. The center of gravity in the training of professional armies lies in the petty officers and their daily routines with teams. Long term problems in dealing with training persist also at the level of platoon and company commanders, mainly at the beginning of their military carrier. This is the reason why there should be strengthening of the petty officer positions and their guidance towards training of individuals and small units. Experience has shown that every soldier has to master a whole range of basic combat skills and just after that is he/she effective in training any further and harmonize trainings of crews, groups, teams, units and departments at home as well as at the international level.

This principle was always applied in the armed forces in Slovakia which caused problems when bigger units needed to be harmonized. Routine way of training from the days when the army was based on conscript soldiers, which was cyclical, makes it hard to move towards new quality based on professionalism of every soldier with a real possibility to be tested in real combat mission.

New requirements for modern armed forces should be based on the following:

- High quality training and preparation of the personnel oriented at knowledge, flexibility and professionalism
- Modern forms and methods of command and control based on interdisciplinary and scientific research which calls for use of modern information technologies to acquire, asses, process, store and transmit the information
- Education based on lifelong learning, virtual learning and self education
- Organization which will use modern information technologies and project management and structure
- Doctrines which will be based on comprehensive approach to the use of available forces and influence based on operation command
- Material equipment which will gradually introduce the process of dematerialization (the amount of material should not burden the final decision but space should be left for the really important information) network connections and digitalization (MOSR 2013, 98-105).

Civil control of the armed forces

One of the main attributes of democratic states is the civil control of the armed forces. Since the adoption of the approach of the civil control at the Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, the minister is always a civil person and civilian organization is developed also throughout the whole ministry. This does not have to pose a problem if high level of professionalism is sustained and the continuity and stability of resources with the goal of improvement of capabilities of the armed forces and the whole defense system is ensured (Tarasovič 2008).

Through laws and regulations the real power went to the minister of defense and civil servants from the ministry whereas the soldiers remained only the operators of what is given to them (MOSR 2008). Frequent changes in the political leadership and with it also most of the civil servants with the decisive powers does not only influence the quality of the command of the defense but also has negative effects on the management of resources, human as well as financial and material resources and on the continuity of the fulfillment of international and expert requirements for the development of defense. In addition, examples from practice point towards one more problem which is the delineation of the level where the positions at the ministries should be political and where they should be staffed by career personnel.

Naturally, there is also a certain level of responsibility of the generality and other ranks in the armed forces. The general staff should have to have the ability to objectively asses the situation and prepare understandable and manageable orders and other necessary information. Last but not least it has to be ready to effectively (but not thoughtlessly) fulfill the orders and regulations. These features together with the unity and identity of the officers of the general staff will contribute to higher effectiveness of the command and control systems and achievement of the adopted goals.

It is evident that the current state of affairs is more and more divergent from the stated needs and therefore it will be highly important to ensure that the armed forces have that kind of structure and relationships with the political entity which will enable to produce and anticipate autonomous military thinking about the situation and the needs to secure the defense of the country with the vision to the distant future and not instant, short term interest. From what have been said, it is clear that the current situation in the relationship politician – solider is mainly a problem of political culture which will need to be addressed by the political parties as well as political

leaders and the military community. To achieve this end the education and training of both of the communities will need to be adequately tailored.

Strategic communication

State of perception of threats and security is another factor that we may include in the conditions which will influence the capabilities of the armed forces which will further influence the future NATO operations.

Experiences of solving problems in security and defense in some of the small states but also in the Alliance show that strategic communication, that means communication of leaders with the public, as a part of raising support for the fulfillment of national and international security tasks is insufficient even given the standing campaign (Reding, Weed and Ghez 2010; Global Research 2012). For example in the Slovak Republic the armed forces enjoys the highest level of trust from the citizens of all of the institutions but on the other hand this trust is not sufficiently turned into a common support and social appreciation.

The illusory feeling of individual safety supported by the notion that peace is permanent, tendentiously presented guarantee of our security within NATO without our active contribution, insufficient solutions to the problems of modernization of the armed forces, scandals in the area of procurement and misuse of public funds together with real problems of states for example in healthcare, education, social issues and other factors are significantly contributing to the distrust, even apathy of the masses to participate (support) solutions of defense and security questions. This is having and will continue to have an effect on the perception of the future NATO operations. One thing that is overly clear is that without the deployment of the armed forces mainly in combat missions it will be harder and harder to reason for raise or sustainment of the defense budgets.

Mutual relations and trust in the Alliance

While current allied experiences from NATO operations but also operations of the international coalitions under the lead of the US in Afghanistan and Persian Gulf show usefulness of the contributions of the small states, they also uncovered few weak points which caused friction between participants. Every nation brings their own diplomatic, information, military, economic (DIME) and other tools and interests which need to be taken under consideration in a multinational project. But these do not always support the fulfilment of the common operational goals set forth for the international commander.

A long term problem in the Alliance is a different state of the armed forces of individual member states as well as of the whole defense and security systems. Development of a broader international collaboration is also restricted by the fact that not only the politicians but also experts are evaluating the conditions of the potential partner(s) and if he has nothing to offer to the common benefit, the collaboration is put into question. These realities are perceived when the international projects are created. An example of this in NATO is the expected much intensified collaboration between Slovakia and the Czech Republic or until now, only a declaratory cooperation in the area of defense industry and common military projects. And this despite the longstanding existence of a cooperation grouping of the Central European states − the Visegrad 4.

The facts presented above are often discussed also at the international level mainly as a consequence of insufficient solutions to these problems at the national level which need to be addressed in a way that delivers benefits which outweigh the costs in the fulfillment of common goals within the coalition. The lack of trust and solidarity will influence the mutual relations in the coalition, which may also be another factor of instability of

the Alliance with consequences for the state in terms of capabilities of its armed forces and for the future of NATO operations.

Conclusion

It is now clear that the major call for NATO will be a common and suitable definition of future tasks to retain its military strength, making it possible to set expectations for the development of the needed military capabilities as a part of a comprehensive approach. The small NATO member countries have the same mission as the whole NATO when the level of national ambition in individual types of operations is considered. Limited possibilities mainly in the small states (economic and political influence, regional standing, military strength and other) should be amplified through active and trustworthy presence of these states in international organizations with the interest to keep their distinct national identity and profile in NATO.

There is no doubt that the collective defense offers incomparably more effective security guarantees for their own security and security in coalitions. Ability of NATO to reach a balance between threats and capabilities to counter them and to produce the expected quality of personnel for management of its functions will depend on individual members. It is understandable that advanced democratic countries have an ambition to build their security more on proactive than reactive measures. At the forefront are conflict prevention, crisis management and preparation for future operations. Possible major turn in the course of NATO operations is expected after the end of the ISAF mission in 2015, leading to a significant shift in the primary usability of the armed forces, mainly in small countries. Their militaries will no longer be preparing rotations for combat operation or be a part of preparations of new combat contribution on a daily basis.

Capabilities are needed as a reaction to unexpected situation and are defining modern armed forces which will be able to fulfill the tasks in future NATO operations. The main attributes have to be: agility, versatility, deployability, expeditionarity, improved capabilities of survival and destroyment, sustainability, mobility and interoperability.

In the conditions of small states the trend of the last decade shows that without primary presence of the armed forces in combat operations, questions about the need of the armed forces, their mission, modernization, or orientation towards the domestic crisis management all the way to debates about the change of their essence from currently fully professional to other form will come up more and more. Political leaders have to be in tune with the military leadership in this respect. Their role is to be ready anytime to make valid arguments, presented in qualified manner for the need for development of armed forces and their modernization in accordance with NATO expectations for compatibility and interoperability as well as for solutions of other problems of the security and defense systems.

The willingness to address these issues constructively and in the long term means that in a short period of time calls for a change in the way of thinking and formation of political so they can face the dynamics and complexity of the ever- changing, unstable security environment. It is important to accept threats to security as a part of healthy development of security systems and develop defenses through armed forces as a way of constant search for way to adapt to the changing conditions through creation of the proscribed capabilities of the armed forces and other actors for the future NATO operations.

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Future NATO Operations and Involving Partners

Robert Mathers[15]

This chapter will examine the context in which NATO conducts its future operations with non-member partners, and will examine the possibilities of enhancing cooperation with potential partners both before and during future operations. It is important to note the current framework on which NATO builds partnerships outside of the alliance, but even more pressing is the need to establish these partnerships today and in the future. By first looking at NATO's partnership policies in a grand framework, we can relate to recent experiences and the gaps between policy and actual implementation. Then, we should look at a holistic and vertical communication framework that allows for maximum flexibility and utility from the chambers of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) then proceed to the tactical planning discussions on the ground in the midst of ongoing operations.

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[15]   The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author only and do not reflect official positions of the Marshall Center, the US Government or the Department of Defense.

Since it is highly probable that the next major NATO operation will take place outside of the immediate periphery of NATO's borders, it follows that an extended and extemporaneous partnering and logistics structure will be required. The NATO Strategic Concept states that: "Crises and conflicts beyond NATO's borders can pose a direct threat to the security of Alliance territory and populations." and that "NATO will therefore engage, where possible and when necessary." (NATO 2010, para. 20) And although one would be hard-pressed to find a more remote and difficult place to conduct sustained military operations than in Afghanistan, we should be wary of forgetting the valuable lessons NATO has learned from that experience. An illustrative anecdote of NATO logistical operations in support of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) from Afghanistan may provide some perspective:[16]

The staff officer's solution was simple, at least it seemed so. "We should just mark the items as ISAF/NATO supplies and ship them through our normal Pakistan route." The timeframe was in early 2012; the location – Kabul, Afghanistan. And this officer's simple solution might have had dire consequences for the entire ISAF operation, not only to logistics. The problem stemmed not from the fact that the items in question were not needed in Afghanistan. They indeed were, as the dozens of light trucks, ambulances, medical supplies and clothes to be shipped were specifically requested by the Afghan government for its hospitals in the Kabul region. The problem stemmed from the fact that the supplies were from India, and the Indian government, who at that time had recently signed a security cooperation agreement with the Afghan government, was unable to ship supplies through Pakistan. What would have happened had the Pakistani government discovered the proposed scheme to ship Indian items through its territory under NATO auspices is almost too disturbing to contemplate.

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16   Based on first-hand observations by the author, 2012.

The ISAF supply route from Karachi, through the Khyber Pass and on-ward to Kabul had at the time only recently reopened after a NATO air-strike killed several Pakistani troops months earlier. The Pakistani's had subsequently refused to allow NATO to use that route to support its ISAF operations for several months, but now that the route had finally reopened.

Nevertheless, the Indians were still unable to go through Pakistan, even for shipping items like non-lethal supplies. As a result of this, the Indians were forced to ship the items from Mumbai by sea to Bandar Abbas, Iran. Then the items had to begin an overland route through Iran into Afghanistan and Herat, and then eventually their destination in Kabul. Since Indian aid packages were approved based on total costs including shipping, the Iranian route effectively halved the amount of Indian material aid Afghanistan was receiving. Upon learning this, the Afghan defense officials appealed to ISAF logisticians to perhaps use the existing ISAF supply route through Pakistan and include the Indian aid shipments in the ISAF logistics chain. Hence, to the young ISAF staff officer, the solution did initially seem simple.

Another reason for the mere simplicity of the problem was explained at the time by the Indian government representatives themselves. The fact was that the Republic of India had no formal cooperation framework with NATO – no standing committees or agreements – with which NATO and ISAF planners could operate. And thus spawned the question: why did NATO, the most successful alliance in history and operating in this region for over a decade, have no formal agreements with the most influential regional actors in the area – namely, India, China and even Iran? Why, indeed. The one major regional player affecting the ISAF operation with which NATO had a formal relationship was Russia. And although Russian participation in logistical support for ISAF operations via the Northern Distribution Network, or NDN was vital (especially after the Pakistani

route was closed), it only provided a partial picture of the operational environment. The fact of the matter was that these peripheral nations were vital to abet the achievement of NATO's long-term goals for Afghanistan (after the ISAF mandate ended), yet their strategic and tactical concerns and operations were only known to the handful of bilateral interlocutors with whom they wished to speak. Such as system is inherently inefficient and the lessons of these inhibited relationships can be used to unlock tangible benefits for future operations. However, practical application is needed within NATO's existing partnering efforts.

The 'when' and 'where' of any future NATO future operation are speculative and therefore beyond the scope of this work. Nevertheless, based on recent NATO experiences in Afghanistan, Libya and to a lesser extent, Mali, there are some assumptions that can safely be made about any future NATO operation that involves non-NATO partners.

- The resources required to maintain and/or sustain a protracted military operation will exceed the latent or on-hand capabilities that current Alliance members are willing to commit.

- The post-military success of deployments or operations that occur outside the periphery of NATO will be considered to be of vital national interest to a non-NATO member; that nation may or may not have a standing partnership framework in place with NATO.

Within the New Strategic Concept and the New Partnership Policy

As far back as London Declaration of 1990, NATO recognized the need for building partnerships, and in 1999 the Allies determined that partnership was one of the 5 fundamental security tasks (NATO 1999, para 10).

However, the problem with this notion is that there are different objectives, different members, different programs, different resources – and different degrees of success. But what is clear is that partnerships are essential for NATO, and a partnership is useful, on many levels, to the partners themselves. Beyond the immediate prestige of being partnered with the world's foremost military alliance, having an active partnership or participation with NATO unlocks a host of tangible benefits, to include: access to proven tactics, techniques and procedures, shared information products, and professional development for cadres.

The 2010 NATO Strategic Concept contained some important language that indicates NATO's re-energized emphasis on partnering. Specifically, it stated the increased importance of partnering as a "key element in Co-operative Security" and a core security task, as well as contributing to crisis management and collective defense (Operation Active Endeavor is an example of this). Most promising (for the purposes of this study), was the desire to be more coherent and focused and to use tools across spectrum of partnerships. And what's more NATO is open partnerships to "any nations that share our interest in peaceful international relations" and open to consultations with any partner countries on security issue of common concern. A conciliatory yet important note was where NATO was hoping to enhance partners' roles in "shaping strategy and decisions." This sentiment was echoed in the 2012 Chicago Summit declaration, opening for interaction with other international organizations, with the intent to "enhance and develop new ones with interested countries and organizations." The Chicago Summit's details merit more clarification in order to place today's NATO partnering issues in context.

Chicago and Aftermath

The May 2012 NATO Summit and Chicago devoted a significant amount of effort to partnerships, and contained detailed references in a variety of

contexts, to include a focus on Middle East and with specific references to topics like missile defense. Following up on the 2010 Concept language, NATO recognized the political, operational and financial contributions of 13 partners[17] and also solicited their ideas. These acts came on the heels of Operation Unified Protector, which at the time set a new standard for consultation and cooperation with partners.

Building on the heels of the 2004 Istanbul Cooperation Initiative from the Summit that year, Chicago increased the focus to include joint training and exercises to build and/or maintain interoperability, the establishment of liaison offices and appointment of designated representatives. Furthermore, NATO delegates promised to hold more regular consultations with partners, and stated their willingness to support partners with security sector reform, defense modernization, capacity development and civil-military relations programs. Getting to more concrete measures and gestures, NATO welcomed Kuwait's offer to host a regional center, stood ready to welcome Libya as partner if interested and formally welcomed Mongolia as a partner.

A part of the Chicago Summit Declaration was the language needed to strike a balance between collective security and expeditionary capability. An important part of this balance was the commitment to a continued focus on out-of-area operations, that is, with dealing with treats wherever they may arise. The continuing emphasis on crisis management and the increased emphasis on conflict prevention are also noteworthy. The Declaration cited Libya as an example which "showed once more that the Alliance can quickly and effectively conduct complex operations in support of the broader international community." (NATO 2012) In addition to ensuring that NATO has the capabilities they require to perform its core tasks of which crisis management is the 2nd, they also agreed to a Con-

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17   Australia, Austria, Finland, Georgia, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Morocco, New Zealand, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland and UAE.

nected Forces Initiative to ensure that allied force "remain well connected through expanded education, training and exercises.

Despite these promising steps, there remains an acute need for a forum that affords the foreign ministries of any nations affected by NATO operations (or any nations which NATO wants to affect) the opportunity to communicate with NATO's strategic and operational planners. And while at the strategic level, national representatives can articulate their concerns with NATO's leadership, this communication channel must be replicated at the operational (i.e., deployed HQ) level and open to bilateral input. This is where the real effectiveness of NATO's partners is felt, for it is the partners who "provide troops, bases, over flight rights, intelligence, expertise…" (Shea 2011, 28) and added political weight that can greatly affect the efficacy of any NATO operation.

This position was stated by the NATO Secretary General at Chicago, when he articulated the goal of NATO as "the hub of a network of global security partnerships," a vision underlined by U.S. National Security Adviser. (Slaughter 2012, 3) Indeed, the Chicago Summit re-affirmed the goal of cooperative security through partnerships, including southern engagement (across the Mediterranean and into Africa.) (Alessandri 2012, 5) But to make this possible, NATO would need to leverage the bilateral security partnerships of each NATO ally. The goal would be to put all these together and a dense web of intersecting partnerships emerges, with NATO at the center. Finally, at the Chicago Summit "NATO endorsed key proposals on defense capabilities, the need to streamline and modernize … and strengthening NATO's partnerships outside the 28-nation alliance" (Jacobson 2012, 2).

Putting the Policy into Practice

Again, an anecdote from ISAF is illustrative. In 2012 the United States and NATO were busily creating proposals for the post-2014/ISAF structure of the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) – the Army and Police. A wide-ranging effort was underway to canvass both NATO members and donor nations for their likely commitments for supporting the ANSF once the ISAF mandate had ended. The commitments, which would later be formalized in Chicago and Tokyo, would then form the basis of staff estimates on how much other nations would contribute. Obtaining semi-firm estimates from NATO members, ISAF coalition members and donors was one challenge, but the far greater challenge lay in establishing the level of both ongoing and future commitment of non-ISAF partners. In particular, the large, influential neighbors of Afghanistan – India, China, Iran and the aforementioned Russia – all had large national interests at stake in Afghanistan's fate post-2014. Yet these nations, again save Russia, having no formal agreement on partnership with NATO, were unable to officially and accurately portray their levels of present and/or future assistance to NATO efforts to support the ANSF. Hence such correspondence was left to informal diplomatic circles and personal discussions at the staff officer level.

Yet where were these discussions to take place? Non-ISAF partners could not easily gain access to the planning centers of the coalition in Kabul[18]. At the diplomatic level, so much effort was at the time being put to maintaining the coalition itself that there was little enthusiasm to look beyond the established parameters. The task at hand was to plan for the 3-5 year timeframe within the known entities of existing relationships and partners. Indeed, a combination of a short-term outlook (exacerbated by strategic planners' short tours in Kabul) and a general lack of interest left a vacuum

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[18]   One exception was India. What had started in 2011 as individual meetings by embassy personnel, by mid-2012 the Indian government was sending official MoD delegations from New Dehli to meet with HQs in Kabul.

of information for all of the parties involved: ISAF, NATO and their respective governments. While individual ISAF coalition members and reputable think-tanks mused on the long-term strategic prospects for Afghanistan in their respective embassies and capitals, side-bar conversations with non-ISAF members were simultaneously occurring, albeit on a bilateral basis. But these conversations were being conducted by mid-grade staff and Embassy officials. Although these practitioners are vital to the successful execution of any cooperative endeavor, would it not make more sense to have these discussions within a formalized communication channel?

Coalition Building and Coalition Maintenance

Turning to the planning and operational facets of future NATO operations, one could say the framework for building these communications channels already exists. Having stated that, some preliminary explanation of the current method for NATO operational force generation is required. Within the HQ at Joint Forces Command – Brunnsum is the Force Generation Cell, a small detachment of mid-grade staff officers whose responsibility is to allocate the contributions by NATO and any coalition members for employment in operations. This cell determines and disseminates NATO force requirements via a semi-annual Force Generation Conference, where each nation pledges its forces against requirements in a massive, comprehensive document – the Combined Joint Statement of Requirements, or CJSOR. The CJSOR is like a 'menu' of forces needed, from battlegroups to fighter aircraft to medics. When a NATO member or partner is needed to fulfill a particular requirement, for example, a capability that does not exist within NATO nations themselves, a letter from the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe is sent to that nation specifically requesting the capability – often citing the specific CJSOR line item(s). It is then, at the aforementioned Force Generation Conference, when each nation

pledges its commitments via their respective National Military Representative (NMR) in Brussels.

The particular facets and considerations for a nation to pledge forces against a NATO requirement are exceedingly complex. Aside from the 'peer pressure' from fellow allies, a decision to commit forces may have factored in the specific tactical geographic area, proximity or co-location with a specific ally, and most importantly, specific limitations on the employment of the forces themselves. The specific agreement between the pledging nation, be they NATO or non-NATO, is stated in a Transfer of Authority, or TOA. This document, normally signed by the NMR, states the terms under which NATO will 'borrow' and employ the lent force, as each nation always retains full command of their respective national forces. (NATO Glossary, 12-14) It is within this TOA, however, that a NATO member or partner specifies the operational limitations, also known as caveats, under which their forces will operate. The dialogue about and general disdain for operational caveats, especially those in ISAF, are widely known. However, the best ways to limit, remove or better yet, prevent caveats from limiting NATOs' effectiveness can be realized, but only if a comprehensive, active and informed communications framework exists all the way from national capitals to NATO HQs and ultimately down to the deployed operational force. Even here, at the deployed NATO component level, a precedent has been set in ISAF that may serve as a template for coordinating allies' efforts, managing nation-specific concerns and even seeking out and recruiting new collation partners.

CSTC-A, NTM-A and International Security Cooperation

The NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan was the successor (or NATO infusion) to the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A), which was established in May 2002 by renaming the U.S. Of-

fice of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan, to Office of Security Coopera-tion - Afghanistan. In April 2006, - that entity became CSTC-A, retaining the dual Army/Police mission that had previously existed. (Afghan News) In 2009 at the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit, NATO made the decision to ex-pand ISAF operations to include training the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). In November of that year, the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) was activated with Lieutenant General William Caldwell IV as its first commander.(NTM-A) Thus, what had begun as a US-led initiative in CSTC-A, transformed into the NATO-led one in NTM-A[19]. (See chart) This organization was a direct subordinate com-mand to ISAF HQ.
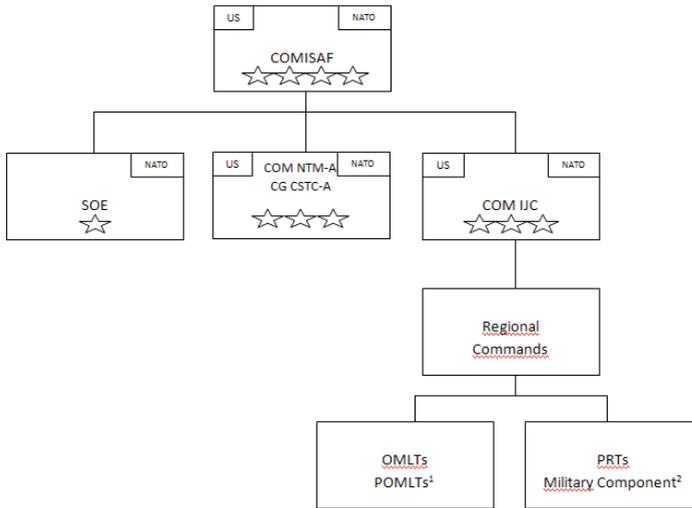
(1) Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) and Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (POMLTs)
(2) The civilian component of a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRTs) is run by the ISAF nation leading the PRT

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[19]   The commander of NTM-A, a NATO billet, was also "dual-hatted" as the commander of CSTC-A, a US-led entity. This delineation came into play occasionally when the commander was speaking about such topics as equipping Afghan security forces or training Afghan governmental ministry personnel – both of which were outside of the NTM-A mandate. Since the name changed over time but the primary mission did not, the term NTM-A/CSTC-A will be used together to avoid confusion.

We use the example of NTM-A/CSTC-A here for several reasons. The NTM-A/CSTC-A structure was an operation-within-an operation, thus had the luxury of being able to draw upon the best practices of current alliance and ISAF members. Though it was a US-led operation, CSTC-A already had a multinational component due to the numerous allies joining in the effort (under the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom, not ISAF). But most importantly, the peculiar missions being fulfilled by CSTC-A's trainers necessitated careful and appropriate placement of personnel with the appropriate prerequisites. For example, a mission to train Afghan gendarmerie might best be done by the developed police training institutions with proven capacity such as France or Italy. However, the specific location of the training facility, tasks to be trained, etc. all necessitated careful dialogue with each contributor to assure both appropriateness and mission success.

The way in which NTM-A's coalition (and its CSTC-A predecessor) was envisioned, assembled and organized is an illustrative and valuable lesson in how future coalitions can best maximize their members' value.[20] Being a smaller, subsidiary element of the larger ISAF mission, NTM-A's staff members were able to effectively "move under the radar" in many instances. The elements involved did not immediately evoke strong, visceral responses from national governments due to the fact that the mission was a training one, not a combat one. Indeed, the non-combat nature of the mission was an attractive feature for many contributors, many of whom over time began adding to their trainer contingents as they simultaneously decreased their respective ISAF Joint Command (IJC), or combat forces. That is not so say that the NTM-A/CSTC-A missions were "safer" per se, although that may have been a commonly held perception. Nevertheless, the specificity of the NTM-A/CSTC-A mission, requiring specific training

[20]   Information is personal knowledge based on the authors previous assignment at Headquarters, NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan / Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan from 2011-2012.

abilities to meet defined requirements, necessitated the creation of internal mechanisms that did the 'marketing' and 'recruitment' in addition to assuaging nation-specific concerns.

Within CSTC-A/NTM-A was a specific organization that fulfilled the delicate roles of dealing with NATO members, coalition partners (and potential partners) – the Deputy Commander for International Security Cooperation, or DCOM-ISC. A one-star (usually Polish) general held the DCOM-ISC billet, and his staff consisted of specially trained and selected officers whose mission within DCOM-ISC and CSTC-A/NTM-A included the following:

- Ensure the trainer requirements for NTM-A/CSTC-A were met by coalition members
- Maintain close coordination with HQ, JFC-Brunnsum to ensure CJ-SOR requirements were met and to be aware of shortfalls/changes
- If needed, solicit for additional or new requirements from existing coalition members
- Solicit for donations of funds or required material from current or potential donors
- Maintain communication with coalition members and inform them of changes to requirements; resolve and/or ameliorate issues regarding caveats
- Continuously search for new or potential coalition members; match capability versus requirements and craft targeted communications to new or potential coalition members so as to gain their approval to provide resources
- Keep the Commander, NTM-A/CSTC-A appraised of evolving or potential areas of concern with regard to existing, new or potential coalition members.

- It was these last two items that formed the most valuable portion of NTM-A/CSTC-A's role as a model for future coalition operations. The original mission of DCOM-ISC was simply to "build the coalition." That meant going to partners, both NATO and non-NATO, and via the formal command and communication channels let current and potential partners know how they could best support the NTM-A/CSTC-A mission. Particularly after 2009 and the creation of NTM-A, the list of requirements was directly driven by the CJSOR. Thus DCOM-ISC could look at the CJSOR, and based on multiple factors such the specific operational region, known caveats, the political atmosphere, etc, make a targeted "pitch" to that nation to fill a requirement or shortfall.

This ability to identify a potential fit for a shortfall became especially valuable when specific NTM-A/CSTC-A CJSOR requirements were beyond the capacity of the traditional NATO contributors. In Afghanistan, a 2009 decision to field the Afghan Air Force with the Soviet-era Mi-17 helicopter and train its pilots in its operation led DCOM-ISC to scramble for trainers, since the NATO countries currently fielding that equipment were unable to meet the demand for qualified trainers. Thus DCOM-ISC reached out to such nations as Mongolia and Ukraine (already ISAF coalition members) as well as El Salvador and Bangladesh with appeals for trainers (the former being a successful effort), since those nations fielded that equipment. The manner in which DCOM-ISC reached out to potential coalition members or partners is an illustrative point, since in many cases potential nations had no formal communications with NATO. Being a dual US/NATO command, NTM-A/CSTC-A was able to go through U.S. Embassies in respective capitals to reach out to the national leadership of a designated potential partner. A useful communication channel, but it was and is inherently misbalanced since it relied on the preponderance of U.S. personnel in DCOM-ISC (often using U.S.-only classified systems) to communicate directly with their counterparts in Embassies around the world. The NTM-

A/CSTC-A message could then be directly and immediately carried to the national leadership of a potential partner via the U.S. Embassy staff (sometimes delivered in talking points by the Ambassador him/herself). Ideal in function, but imperfect, as will be examined in the next segment.

A Peerless Entity

The structure and mandate of DCOM-ISC within NTM-A/CSTC-A was unique and without precedent. A major factor it its efficacy (especially after 2009) was the fact that being a Deputy Commander, the DCOM-ISC answered directly to the Commander of NTM-A/CSTC-A and was not relegated to a supporting staff role.[21] This allowed the Commander to have direct and informed input when dealing with current and future partners in order to solicit continued or additional support. One might argue that using the existing robust communications channel of one NATO member (here, the U.S.) to promote NATO interests is both prudent and in accordance with the New Partnership Policy. While indeed effective, it did present a problem at times when the DCOM-ISC staff got "too far ahead" of the NATO staffs in researching, targeting, lobbying for and appealing to governments. Another shortcoming was imbalance. The official voice of DCOM-ISC, oftenmanifested in letters and emails from the NTM-A commander himself to the Minister of Defense of Chief of Defense of a nation, tended to be in synch with U.S. and Polish goals (due to the DCOM-ISC manning structure) but not fully harmonized with the majority of NATO. Both of these shortcomings stemmed from the fact that there was neither a DCOM-ISC counterpart at ISAF nor any NATO headquarters. While these entities had a small staff section (or in the case of Brunnsum, the Force Generation

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[21]   In early 2012, DCOM-ISC was initially placed in supporting staff, then disbanded altogether. The stated reason was that since the coalition was built and we were henceforth downsizing, such a cell was no longer needed. The subsequent lack of communications between NTM-A/CSTC-A with NATO members and partners in coordinating drawdown and Afghan transfer plans resulted in considerable frustration among coalition partners in 2012.

Cell) to coordinate CJSOR shortfalls, they had neither the mandate nor the capacity to conduct detailed country analysis or targeted strategic communication. Such a capacity, which DCOM-ISC possessed due to the skills of its staff, needs to be shared all along NATO's vertical command structure, but ultimately it must begin at NATO HQ and the NAC. A Partnering branch of the Operations and Planning Committee needs to be the origin of NATO's coalition-building and maintenance initiatives, and they would then have tasking authority, or TACOM (in NATO command terms) over the DCOM-ISC-"like" entities in subordinate NATO HQs. This would ensure NATO's strategic messaging was fully synchronized across all levels of command, while simultaneously providing a bottom-up feedback channel to allow NATO's senior leadership to receive assessments from the field on such matters as caveats or dissatisfaction with tactical issues.

While dealing with current partners' issues is one value of such a framework, the real value lay in the ability to adapt swiftly and appropriately - that is, in accordance with all levels of NATO command - to developments that occur outside the framework of established partnering structures. Again, a return to early 2012 in ISAF can provide a good example.

The aforementioned security cooperation agreement between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and India in late 2011 brought with it a host of concerns among planners at ISAF. Not the least of which was the fact that India was already providing and increasing assistance to the ANSF. One subordinate NTM-A/CSTC-A senior officer went so far as to begin negotiations with the representatives of the Indian government to begin planning for how India could augment and/or supplement his sector of the assistance mission. When questioned about the policy or authorization from NATO HQ behind the discussions, he replied that he was acting as a representative of his own nation, not NATO. The dilemma posed by this awkward situation necessitated a series of questions by

NTM-A/CSTC-A staff to ISAF HQ (and the Senior Civilian Representative therein), NATO HQ and the U.S. Embassies in Kabul and New Delhi in search of a clear policy toward this potential partnership, but no policy was forthcoming for over 6 months. Likewise, in the days before the Chicago Summit, getting assistance estimates from influential non-ISAF (but very post-ISAF) stakeholders with whom NATO had no official relationship like China and Iran was difficult at best.

Both these and the India dilemmas could have been quickly resolved by having a clear line of communications between NATO HQ in Brussels to its subordinate element in ISAF, which in turn was linked in to the diplomatic corps of stakeholders as well as ISAF and NATO planners. Such an entity would be relatively easy to create and operate, and the example of DCOM-ISC provides a template with which NATO can do so for future operations. Similarly, this International Engagement Cell, as the particular section within DCOM-ISC was called, could maintain the databases for all existing caveats and requirements, while also providing both NATO's field commands and NATO HQ with well-researched recommendations on best approaches to incorporating more partners, if needed. Coalition building alone is but one function, as eager potential partners must be evaluated on their political and tactical value to any coalition. As one senior ISAF officer referred to incorporating new member nations, "the juice must be worth the squeeze." Indeed, any future NATO operation must carefully evaluate its current framework of existing and potential partnerships, so that the alliance can ensure its employed forces have the right amount of "juice."

Conclusion – NATO Engagement and Forward Diplomacy

The success of the DCOM-ISC model in proactive coalition building

within the NTM-A/CSTC-A mission serves as an example of flexible, tailored coalition management. Having a networked and dedicated staff of mission-focused experts at each level of NATO hierarchy would allow for the deliberate application of NATO's New Partnership Policy. By maintaining an active communication network during both peacetime and forward-deployed operations, an International Engagement Cell at each level of NATO's command structures would provide valuable inputs to NATO's leadership by being the focal point for both current and future partners' concerns. In addition, potential partners would know with whom they would need to discuss issues related to possible interaction or even participation with NATO. Since the circles of negotiation and operational/tactical discussion are most effective at the operational/tactical level, NATO's leadership in effect would be creating its own "attaché corps." A well-versed and well-connected staff of trained NATO officers would be able to provide the NATO leadership with multilateral and sound operational advice, which would, in turn allow the Alliance to be attuned to its relative effectiveness in the eyes of its non-Alliance peers. By leveraging the needs of NATO as well as the needs of partners (and capitalizing on the areas where they overlap), NATO would be positioning itself to maintain its preeminence of world security guarantors.

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Future NATO operations – possibilities of EU involvement

Ralf Roloff[22]

Introduction: NATO and EU - unique and essential partners

The Chicago Summit declaration in Lisbon 2010 emphasized the particular role of the European Union as a strategic partner for the alliance in international crisis management. The European Union echoed the importance of NATO as strategic partner in international crisis management at the EU Summit dedicated to Security and Defense in December 2013. Indeed both organizations are key players in international crisis management. Both organizations have developed comprehensive approaches to international crisis management trying to cover the entire conflict cycle from early warning, conflict prevention to international crisis management

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[22]   The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author only and do not reflect official positions of the Marshall Center, the US government or the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany

- even with robust measures - to post conflict measures, reconstruction and stabilization to peace building efforts. The European Union has undertaken many efforts to set up a working crisis management system and it has achieved a lot of progress since the Lisbon Treaty has entered into force. The European External Action Service (EEAS) is now the home of all relevant crisis management elements of the European Union. The European Union is capable and able to act comprehensively to address occurring international crisis in the EU´s neighborhood and in the neighborhood of the neighborhood. The EU´s well received strength is in civilian crisis management and its international footprint - having launched over 20 missions and operations since the inception of the Common Security and Defence Policy in 1999- is clearly in the civil or civil-military crisis management. For NATO thus the EU should be indeed a "unique and essential partner" (NATO Strategic Concept 2010) in international crisis management.

NATO and EU are sharing common political values, 22 European countries are members of both organizations. They are providing both organizations with their single set of forces.

They are undergoing similar efforts to build sustainable capabilities within NATO and EU under the projects of "smart defence" and "pooling and sharing" to provide both organizations with the necessary military and civilian capabilities. They maintain political dialogue and many dialogues on the working level.

NATO and EU have worked side by side in theatres of operations in Afghanistan, off the coast at the Horn of Africa and in Kosovo. The EU has taken over from NATO operations in Macedonia in 2003 and later in Bosnia and Herzegowina by using the strategic partnership mechanism of the so-called Berlin Plus agreement. In practical terms both organizations have gained a lot of experience in coordinating and complementing their

operational engagements.

The EU has emphasized the "importance of strong, coherent and mutually reinforcing EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management, in particular in areas where both operate side by side" and the Council "encourages further implementation of practical steps for effective EU cooperation with NATO while keeping with the overall objective of building a true organization-to-organization relationship" (Council of the European Union 2013, 7).

Reading carefully the EU document shows that the strategic partnership is not in the good shape it should and could be. The statement of the Council of the European Union is telltale: "keeping with the overall objective of building a true organization - to - organization relationship" actually means there is no true relationship yet. This reflects the characterization of EU-NATO relations as "frozen conflict" or as "frustrating". Indeed the EU-NATO relationship is still underperforming due to several obstacles which have identified since many years but nevertheless haven´t had solved yet and I would argue are not going to be solved in the foreseeable future.

At least there are three major issues that build stumbling stones or even "walls" (Henna Hopia 2013) for further EU-NATO cooperation: 1. The Turkish –Cyprus problem as the most prominent problem; 2. the inter institutional problems between EU and NATO in terms of defining their particular role in the international security environment; 3. The EU internal discussion about EU´s role in the international security environment. These three problems are reinforcing each other since many years and they are blocking any further meaningful progress in EU-NATO relations. Any discussion about a possible involvement of EU in NATO operations therefore needs to start with an analysis of the current state of EU-NATO relations.

I will start by discussing the current state of EU-NATO relationship and identifying three key obstacles for cooperation: 1. the unsolved Cyprus-Turkish issue; 2. the unsolved EU-NATO division of labour issue; 3. the unsolved issue about the EU´s Security and Defence Policy. In a second section I will discuss possibilities for EU involvement in NATO operations and crisis management and vice versa that may derive from recent developments within the EU. Finally I will conclude by drawing conclusions on the likelihood of future EU-NATO cooperation.

EU-NATO relations: from stalemate to cooperation?

It could have been a great success story. At the St. Malo Summit France and the UK in 1998 had overcome long lasting obstacles for any remarkable improvement in Security and Defence Policy within the framework of the European Union by finding a common position between the most transatlantic oriented EU member and the most focused country on EU autonomy in security and defence matters. The result was the establishment of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) which was created at the Cologne Summit of the EU in 1999. From the beginning the United States have had reservations towards the European project. Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State during that time phrased the concerns in the formula of the "3D´s": no duplication, no discrimination, no decoupling". The European Security and Defence Policy project should be complementary to NATO not a competitor. To make this complementary happen EU and NATO worked hard from the very beginning to establish a formalized mechanism of cooperation. The mechanism that finally was implemented in 2003 is called Berlin Plus Agreement. Berlin Plus frames the conditions under which the European Union can use NATO assets for crisis management. With this formalized relationship the strategic cooperation between EU and NATO has been established. This meant that only states with respective security agreements could be invited to participate in a dialogue

with NATO. The agreement didn´t find a final agreement on the division of labor between EU and NATO, it kept this question creatively open. The question of the "right of first refusal" of NATO in crisis management as well was not answered giving thus room for different interpretations. This well formulated diplomatic compromise has been challenged by the reality of the conflict between the longstanding NATO member Turkey and the EU member Cyprus that has joined the EU in 2004. With the exception of the EU Mission in Macedonia "Concordia" and the EU operation "Althea" in Bosnia and Herzegowina the Berlin Plus mechanism has never been used. Turkey blocked all formal discussions between NATO and EU in the presence of Cyprus and Malta on any matter of "strategic cooperation" and it refused the sharing of NATO security information with both countries. The Turkish Veto has been countered by Cyprus which has objected all formal discussion between the EU and NATO except Berlin Plus operations when Cyprus and Malta are not present. This double veto has blocked all formal cooperation between EU and NATO.

In practice both organizations tried to circumvent the formal blocking by using informal channels on the political level on a case by case basis and not very frequently. Informal meetings opened the opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest. Nevertheless this tool is not sustainable. Some member states have argued that some issues are too important to be discussed informally and on a low working level – France has taken this position and articulated it prominently within both organizations. Stephanie Hofmann and Christopher Reynolds conclude that "(t)his results in a vicious circle: at times, Cyprus and Turkey block formal meetings; at others, France the informal meetings" (Stephanie Hofmann / Christopher Reynolds 2007, 4).

The Turkish-Cyprus issue culminated during the EU presidency of Cyprus in the second half of 2012 when Turkey blocked all cooperation between NATO and EU (Henna Hopia 2013, 32).

As long as there is no solution in the Turkish – Cyprus conflict formal relations between EU-NATO will remain more than difficult. Many analysts are correctly recommending that addressing the Turkish – Cyprus conflict are key to solve the stalemate of EU –NATO relations. The issue is everything but easy and will take time and proactive efforts – the issue of security arrangements and lifting the double veto seem to be two easier problems within the context of a very complex Turkish – Cyprus conflict over a divided island in the Mediterranean. Decoupling the security issues in the context of NATO and EU from the overall Turkish-Cyprus conflict could be a promising approach. Turkey has a particular interest in many EU-NATO cooperation issues from mission to capabilities - as it is one of the most active and engaged third partner in CSDP missions.

EU-NATO cooperation has to deal with a second unsolved issue – the issue of the division of labor between EU and NATO. The understanding of complementary, synergy, avoiding duplication and pursuing a comprehensive approach in crisis management as it has been layed out in the EU-Councils conclusions from November 2013 (Council of the European Union 2013, 7) shows in the direction of finding a clear division of labor by using the comparative advantages of both institutions. Afghanistan, Kosovo and off the coast of Somalia are test beds for future cooperation where the European Union is providing the civilian elements and military elements too and NATO is providing the military ones. The issue is more complex and is very much related not only to the question of comparative advantages of each institution in international crisis management but to the identity and the vision of the role of each institution in international crisis management.

Since 1999 the European Union has established very high ambitions. The military and the civilian headline goals as well as the battle group concept are indicating the EU´s claim to be able to perform all Petersberg Tasks

of the Lisbon Treaty which cover the entire range of a conflict cycle from early warning via crisis management to post conflict stabilization, reconstruction and reconciliation. The Petersberg Tasks and the several headline goals are the expression of the EU´s ambition to act independently from NATO as a security provider. Within the EU and its member states this approach has been highly contested and in particular the development of the military and civilian capabilities to perform accordingly has been a constant struggle among the member states. The recent financial crisis and budget cuts in the defence sector opened a new round in the debate about the level of ambition, the level of cooperation and the level of capabilities needed. The debate has shifted from the question of increasing the EUs autonomy from NATO assets towards stronger cooperation, avoiding duplication and finding synergies between EU and NATO. This pragmatic approach is very promising but it requires a stronger coordination and cooperation between EU and NATO in capability development to achieve the envisaged synergies and complementarity. But still the official EU documents are referring to all this new developments "with due respect to the decision-making autonomy of the EU and NATO(…)" (Council of the European Union 2013, 6). NATO officially mentions that strong EU capabilities will mean strengthen NATO´s capabilities too. NATO Secretary General Rasmussen therefore asked the EU Heads of government and state to "(…) work closely together in developing military capabilities and industrial standards. In coordinating our approaches to maritime and cyber security. And in training, exercises and defence capacity building for partners that need our support. We must be smarter together" (Anders Fogh Rasmussen 2013). Both institutions are recognizing the need for cooperation and are working in this direction with proposals but they are as well clear about the limits of such a possible cooperation where it touches the respective autonomy of EU or NATO and the institutional differences in decision making and procedures.

The third unsolved issue that leads to irritations in the EU-NATO coop-eration is the internal discussion within the EU about the role of the EU´s Common and Security Policy. The expectation – capability gap within CSDP is growing, the institutional set up of CSDP within the European External Action Service is gaining momentum by having all necessary cri-sis management tools under one roof – except forces, which are owned by the member states.

In the runoff towards the European Council in December 2013 the discus-sion moved away from the EU´s role as a fully-fledged security provider who will have its role in international crisis management towards a de-bate about coordination and building islands of cooperation to develop capabilities. This has shifted the debate from a top down approach to a bottom up approach. The question now is not any longer how the EU and its member states will fulfill the commitments layed down in the several levels of ambition but what ambitions can the EU or will the EU fulfill with the affordable capabilities. NATO Secretary General Rasmussen has caught the debate within the EU correctly by stating that there is no soft power without hard power.

The stalemate in the EU-NATO relations has not fully overcome yet but there are positive developments in two main areas of concern: the ques-tion of EU-NATO division of labour and the question of EU´s internal understanding of its particular role in international security. The issue of the Turkish-Cyprus conflict will remain a stumbling stone and even worse a show stopper for any formal EU-NATO cooperation as long as there is no progress in the Turkish-Cyprus conflict or no chance of decoupling the EU-NATO cooperation issues from the overall Turkish-Cyprus issue.

EU involvement in NATO operations: rethinking the comprehensive approach?

The involvement of EU in NATO operations at first glance seems to be a very odd question neglecting the decade of debates about the division of labor among both institutions. The EU has been praised to be the security provider with a special footprint in the civil-military and especially the civilian component of crisis management. The EU itself has developed a comprehensive approach on crisis management where it relies mostly on the great potential of the overall EU institutions in particular the EU Commission offices that are dealing with all civilian aspects of a conflict. The military component is the weaker part in its portfolio. NATO could be involved in EU efforts of international crisis management providing the military hard ware. Nevertheless the EU certainly could provide NATO efforts by providing all civilian and civil-military elements in operations. The issue of what, when and how the EU can support or being involved in NATO operations is a much more practical issue and very much related with a common understanding of a comprehensive approach towards international crisis management.

Taking this approach seriously and applying it to EU-NATO cooperation will offer a slightly different perspective what both institutions can achieve and it can certainly help to find ways of circumventing the difficulties described in the former section in the EU-NATO relationship.

Leo Michel recently argued that "NATO and EU likely will be joined at the hip in facing a range of future challenges and operations. The practical result of these overlapping interests is that neither organization can afford to fail, or afford to see the other fail. Hence, the NATO-EU relationship should ensure transparency, avoid contradictions in their respective approaches and, more positively, develop new capabilities and bring `added

value` to conflict prevention and crisis management" (Leo Michel 2013, 267).

What kind of new capabilities to conflict prevention and crisis management could be developed between EU and NATO that could make a difference? The key aspect is much more communication and exchange of information than cooperation and inter-institutional arrangements. The discussions on the strategic level how EU and NATO should interact and what kind of division of labor they should pursue are not very helpful because they immediately will end in a stalemate. The debate weather NATO lines of communications should be used for an increased dialogue between the US and its European Allies ore stronger US-EU relations is misleading. As a matter of fact both organizations as well as the transatlantic partners should take a much more pragmatic approach towards conflict prevention and crisis management. More pragmatic means: more use of informal channels of communication on all levels. This will certainly increase the understanding of the crisis planning process in EU and NATO and it will facilitate the decision-making process in both institutions. The comprehensive approach to crisis management that is at the heart of both institutions may help to develop a working system of informal and working level cooperation. To assure complementarity and synergy, avoiding duplications of efforts - or even worse – contradictions, both organizations need to find pragmatic ways of sharing information and discussing their intentions in a particular crisis management. This does not mean that formal mechanisms need to be introduced – informal exchange of information and including the other institution in the own institutions crisis planning process is important. In fact many of the obstacles that have been described and that block a true organizational cooperation are undermined by informal dialogues, by working level communication, by case-by-case cooperation and even through bilateral agreements between the EU and NATO-countries concerning the participation of Non EU NATO countries

in EU missions and operations. The United States for example have signed such an agreement with the EU in 2011. US civilians are participating in the EU´s operation EULEX in Kosovo (Leo Michel 2013, 264). The same goes for other non EU -NATO members as Norway, Turkey and Canada that have participated in EU missions and operations.

"Work in partnerships" is one of the eight imperatives of the EU´s recently published and long awaited comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises: "When developing EU position and responses, engage with and take full account of the role of other international actors: the United Nations, international and regional organizations, strategic partners, International Financial Institutions." (European Commission / High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 2013, 12). Establishing a working system of coordination, cooperation and communication is thus very important. Again, such a system can best be established by using informal channels and working channels. Leo Michel has identified five "baskets" of EU-NATO cooperation: 1. Formal NATO-EU cooperation; 2. Informal channels; 3. Staff-to-staff interaction; 4. On the ground cooperation; 5. NATO and EU cooperation with third parties (Leo Michel 2013, 262-264). Within this differentiated set of cooperation the possibilities for improvement are obviously in all fields except the formal NATO-EU cooperation. Michel proposes an expansion of informal consultation that will include the national representatives to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the Political and Security Committee (PSC) as well as NATO´s and EU´s senior civilian and military leaders. Such informal consultations can facilitate discussions about appropriate measures. They are helpful to prepare better informed decisions within NATO and EU. To make it clear – this is not interfering in one another´s decision making process, it is just about being better informed to take better decisions.

On the staff to staff level the network could be developed further. There are already liaison offices established in SHAPE and in the EU Military Staff. This should be complemented by creating liaison offices at the EDA (European Defence Agency) and at NATO´s Allied Command Transformation (ACT) to help facilitate the processes in capability development. As the EU Commission is more and more involve in a comprehensive approach in crisis management NATO should consider to establish staff-to-staff relations with the particular Commission offices. (Leo Michel 2013, 263). The European Union has established a set of crisis management directorates that integrate civil and military elements to respond comprehensively to a crisis. . A kind of clearing house has been created by the EU which is called the "Directorate of Crisis Response and Operational Coordination". NATO should consider establishing working contacts between these EU bodies and its own international staff.

In December 2013 a high-level conference on managing complex international crises took place in Brussels. The aim of the conference was to establish a global network of crisis rooms. This initiative describes a third field of closer informal cooperation between NATO and EU. The cooperation with third parties is an ever growing field in international crisis management. EU and NATO are working side by side already in many international crises. By creating a global network for international or global crisis response EU and NATO can interact in a larger framework and draw on their experience from operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo and at the Horn of Africa. The development of an international community planning mechanism as it is discussed seems very ambitious but could built a international forum for crisis coordination. As international crises are becoming even more complex the crisis management procedures from prevention to post conflict management are getting more complex too. The commitment towards a comprehensive approach of NATO and EU will help both institutions to develop the necessary tools of a working

"informal" consultation and cooperation network. In so far all attempts to establish networks for a better international coordination where both institutions are involved could be helpful to improve their bilateral relations as well. It will certainly help to improve the understanding of the different "cultures of cooperation" between NATO and EU. With such a pragmatic approach by establishing a working system of informal consultations across the entire range of the conflict cycle the stalemates on the strategic and political level could be circumvented. A key element in the establishment of such a working system are the member states of both institutions and their political will to separate the overall political questions from the pragmatic questions of a functioning international and regional crisis management that requires more coordination from EU and NATO, not less.

Conclusion: Rethinking EU – NATO crisis management

EU-NATO relations are still confronted with three main problems that are hardly to be solved in the near future. The Turkish-Cyprus conflict is the most prominent and obvious obstacle. As long as the partners of both countries in EU and NATO are not able to find a solution to overcome the double veto in EU-NATO relations the only way to improve the relationship is below the level of the so called "strategic cooperation". The second best solution sometimes has a lot of positive implications that the best solution will not offer. EU and NATO are forced to reconsider any possibility to circumvent the stalemate of their formal cooperation. This has required both institutions and their member states to think about in terms of networks and informal consultations. Obviously there are limits to informal consultations. France, before it has rejoined the military integration in NATO in 2008, rejected informal consultation by mentioning that the issues at stake were too important to be treated in informal meetings only. But France has changed that attitude since. Nevertheless, increasing the level of informal consultations and the level of staff-to-staff cooperation

will certainly help to improve the understanding of the diverse "cultures of cooperation" in both institutions. It will certainly improve the transparency and help to come to better informed decisions in both institutions. With the increase of informal consultations the US will have a smarter tool to find a way out of the old and odd discussion of which forum for political dialogue fits best US interests and reflects its power in Europe: NATO or EU-US relations? Having informal channels at hand to coordinate within the framework of both institutions the discussion will lose a lot of momentum in practical terms.

The second unsolved problem about the particular role of both institutions in the international environment will lose as well some momentum. With an improved informal coordination and a better understanding of how international crisis can be approached the aspect of an inter – institutional competition will diminish. It may not disappear but it will not be that important. In particular a common effort of a coordinated process of capability development can lead to a rethinking of the division of labor debate. Having a certain flexibility of using NATO assets, EU assets and combining them on a case-by-case basis accordingly will strengthen both international organizations in the international environment. In terms of military capabilities the discussion needs to be reshaped in terms of the political will of member states of EU and NATO to provide both institutions with the necessary capabilities – it requires an even stronger coordination between member states, NATO and EU on capability development and planning. Each member state has only one single set of forces and therefore a coordinated effort is prerogative. That is why NATO Secretary General Rasmussen welcomed at the occasion of the EU Council meeting in December 2013 the EU´s decision to strengthen its capabilities and in particular its defense market and industry.

The third unsolved issue in EU-NATO relations is the ongoing debate within the EU about its international role. A "soft power" without hard power has no power, that´s how NATO Secretary General Rasmussen has warned the EU to continue its efforts of capability building instead of refocusing on the civilian aspects of its Common Security and Defense Policy or in other words on the "soft power" aspect only. Since the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty the European External Action Service has established an impressive set of directorates, offices and desks that are concerned with the entire conflict cycle. These efforts need to be backed by civilian and military means and capabilities which the EU cannot provide on its own. The EU relies on its member states. The question what role the EU internationally should and could play thus finally can only be answered in the 28 capitals of the EU members. The "soft power" and the well established structure of a comprehensive crisis management need to be backed up by national civilian and military capabilities. The pooling and sharing initiative as well as the ongoing discussion around the permanent structured cooperation, the establishment of islands of cooperation are concepts to find suitable solutions to provide the EU with the necessary tools. It is counterproductive to put the emphasis in CSDP on the cooperation on capabilities only. The capabilities are only one element, important and indispensible, but just one element in a comprehensive set of elements and instruments to conflict and crisis management. It is necessary to bring back the debate on capabilities under the roof of the comprehensive approach debate again.

Establishing a working "informal" system of cooperation and consultation among EU and NATO may increase the strength of both institutions. Rethinking international crisis management with a comprehensive approach offers the chance for international cooperation and for establishing international networks of crisis management structures. It may help to put EU-NATO relations much more into a global context instead of a purely trans-

atlantic one. Looking through that global leans may open new perspectives on EU-NATO relations and may help both institutions to overcome the frustrations of an inter-institutional blocking. Both aspects – thinking in global networks and establishing working informal consultation networks may help to pave the way for a "true cooperation between EU and NATO". But again, this depends mostly on the political will of all member states of both institutions. Political will thus is the key for improved EU-NATO cooperation. The concepts are available and both institutions are prepared to make the cooperation work. As often in EU-NATO relations in the past it's again the call of the capitals.

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NATO's Map of Future Conflicts

Jean-Loup Samaan[23]

In the last two decades, NATO underwent a substantial revamping of its missions and commitments with implications not only at functional level but at geographic one as well. Back in the nineties, following the end of the Cold War, the logic was that NATO had to expand its scope if it did not want to become irrelevant. This was summed up by the famous motto "out of area or out of business". Accordingly, the rational for the Alliance's missions shifted from the Cold War's idea of "collective defense" to the one of "collective security". What followed was an impressive, if not bewildering, series of enlargements to the Eastern shores of Europe and of military interventions in locations far away from NATO's traditional core area: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Libya. All along, this translated bureaucratically with the growth of NATO's diplomatic activities that are best known through the development of partnerships such as the Partnership for Peace (1994), the Mediterranean Dialogue (1994) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (2004).

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Now, as we tend to look forward to the scenarios that could lead NATO to intervene in future conflicts, NATO finds itself at crossroads. A decade of military intervention in Afghanistan has left the Alliance in a state of strategic fatigue and several member countries of the organisation expressed apprehension on the scope of international commitments and partnerships that could prove costly on the long haul. In fact, looking back at the legacy of the last two decades, strategists now fear that the logic of the nineties may engender political weariness and the phenomenon of mission creep. This led some to sum up this vicious circle with the expression "out of business because of out of business" [see Herd, 2004]. Taking into account this widespread sentiment of reluctance over future military interventions in remote places far away from NATO territories, it is a real challenge to evaluate the likely areas where in the not so distant future, the Alliance could be involved in a future conflict.

Conventional wisdom would indeed argue that budget crunches in Europe, US willingness to "lead from behind" and the current financial reform within NATO structures themselves prevent any ambitious military operation in the near future. Nevertheless, such mindset is not the one that can drive forward-looking strategic thinking. The central question should not be if and where NATO is likely to intervene in future conflicts but under what conditions would the organisation find itself in a position to act decisively?

In that perspective, this article offers a hypothetical look at the world security challenges that could emerge around the world in the coming years and that could involve a NATO intervention. Obviously such intellectual exercise does not claim to be scientific divination but rather a modest attempt to venture on the current trends in the international arena and the ways they could impact NATO policy and military planning. We start therefore by looking at the two regions that could be the scene of politi-

cal turmoil and potentially conflicts that would trigger a NATO response: Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Then we also discuss three areas of limited relevance for NATO planning: Asia, Africa and Latin America.

What future for NATO-Russia relations?

A discussion of NATO and future conflicts has naturally to start with a discussion of NATO relations with Russia. Although the bilateral relation improved since the suspension of talks following the Russia-Georgia war in 2008, a lot of unresolved disputes remains. The question of Russia's energy policy vis-à-vis Eastern European countries is likely to define the relation between these NATO members and Russia, although there are some hopes that the non-conventional gas discovery in Europe might decrease the reliance on Russian energy. The potential rapprochement between NATO and Georgia is also a question that may trigger new tensions as the core issues between Russia and Georgia have not been solved since the 2008 conflict. Additionally, the deployment of NATO missile defense systems in Europe is still seen as a threat by Moscow.

However, as of today for NATO, the idea of a resurrecting Russian imperialism threatening specifically Eastern Europe remains farfetched and the analogy with the war against Georgia in August 2008 should be used cautiously. As Stephen Larrabee explained, "the Russian invasion (of Georgia) does not herald a new period of aggressive Russian expansion. Moscow's goals are limited and largely defensive. Russia wants the West to accept, de facto if not de jure, that the post-Soviet space is part of a Russian sphere of influence and that Russia has, as President Medvedev emphasized shortly after the invasion, "privileged interests" in certain regions" (Larrabee 2010, 37). A scenario of Russian territorial conquest in the Baltic region, although not totally unconceivable, induces so many a priori variables (a shift in Moscow's internal affairs, a contested area of

sovereignty that is not claimed by a party) that we consider it implausible. Russia might move into an uncertain direction and raise concerns from Eastern Europe countries. But based on objective evaluations of its capacities, Moscow is first and foremost fighting to stay the course. Throughout the 1990s the country struggled to reverse economic decline, develop a stable political system and find a place for itself within the international order.

Moreover, the Russian military has greatly suffered from the fall of the USSR: most procurement and equipment modernisation programmes ended abruptly in 1988-1989. The period of 1991-1999 was characterised by stagnation and decline: no serious attempts at defense reform were undertaken; low pay and poor professional advancement prospects forced many experienced officers to quit; training standards slipped; draft evasion, crime and corruption became rife and a number of fatal accidents caused by outdated equipment and low training standards rose sharply.

Operational effectiveness, while improving, is still relatively low. The increased spending has yet to make a major impact on training, and the concern - borne out in Chechnya - is that soldiers will lack the technical skills to make full use of new equipment. Although the Russians still structure their armed forces around potential major land wars in Asia or Europe - the latter being regarded as more likely - they are increasingly accepting that their immediate challenges will revolve around small-scale, local and often counter-insurgency operations and creating units able to rise to these challenges.

Quicksand in the Middle East?

The future of the Middle East strategic environment is likely to depend on three key issues: the Syrian civil war, the Iranian nuclear enterprise, and the new Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Two years after the starting of the revolts against the regime of Bashar al Assad, no clear end seems in sight inside Syria. For the last 24 months, the Syrian crisis has triggered a bewildering array of critical challenges for the Middle East and the international community. The way Syria is playing a catalyzer for international power plays have even led some observers to call it the first "world local war" (Caracciolo Limes 2013). Moreover, the prevailing conviction in the Western Medias and policy circles that Bashar Al Assad's regime was doomed proved ill-informed.

At first, NATO did not contemplate any role in the crisis and its representatives remained extremely cautious in their public statements. However this position became unbearable as one of NATO members, namely Turkey, found itself directly involved in the crisis. Until the summer of 2011, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu tried and failed to initiate a diplomatic dialogue with Assad. After reaching a deadlock, the Turkish government decided to suspend all relations with Syria. Ankara also decided to support the rebellion that started to organize itself and its operations from southern Turkey.

Officially Turkey requested the deployment of six Patriot batteries in November following multiple incidents at its borders with Syria, such as the shelling by Syrian forces of Turkish town of Akcakale on October 3rd that led to the death of five civilians and retaliation by Turkish artillery. As of today, these Patriot batteries may prove to play the exact role they were designed for: to act as a stabilizer at Turkey's borders with Syria and moreover as a mean to contain the Syrian war from NATO's territories. They impose explicit red lines that seem to be well understood by Bashar al Assad and as so, they deescalated the brewing conflict between Turkey and Syria.

However the future military developments in Syria might challenge the NATO calculus. Syria is not undergoing a violent transition from one regime to another: the country is enduring a process of total disintegration of its State structures. Planners for a post-Assad Syria are no longer eying at the potential successors of Assad but at the bewildering landscape of non-state actors that fight each other over the conquest of what will be eventually left of the Syrian State. For more than two years, neither the regime nor the rebels seemed able to achieve military victory and hold the territory, resulting in a wide fragmentation of the country. On one side, the Syrian regime and its regional allies – Iran and Hezbollah – are more and more backing and training proxies like the Shabihas and Jaish al Cha'bi. On the other side, radical Islamic rebel groups are progressively outstripping the "mainstream" opposition. In a nutshell, this development reflects a daunting reality for Syria's future which is the rise of militia warfare.

What does this mean for NATO's policy vis-à-vis the Syrian conflict? So far, the effectiveness of the Atlantic Alliance's posture relied on the ability to convey its message to Syrian authorities but this implicitly assumes that these authorities are in charge and still have the control over their arsenal. But the fragmentation of the country, the vanishing of the State as the ultimate security player and the subsequent privatisation of the conflict challenge this very assumption. For sure, a non-State threat would not render the systems deployed in Turkey irrelevant: they would still be effective at defending the country. But their deterrence effect may decrease. In that context a not-so-unlikely scenario would be clashes between militias that degenerate into factions targeting sites in South-Eastern Turkey that they believed to be military camps of the Syrian rebels. Although the Patriot batteries could defend the area – but not entirely – Turkey and NATO would face a crucial challenge on the appropriate answer, in particular if the militia responsible is considered to have ties with Iran and the remnants of Assad's regime.

To prevent this type of contingency in a post-Assad Syria, the key factor will be the strengthening of a central authority in Damascus – whether friendly or not to the Western interests – that would mitigate the risks of militia warfare. But NATO is not suited for that nor should it be. It is only through the common understanding of the stakeholders, both inside and outside of Syria, that preserving the State infrastructures of the country in the post-Assad phase is in their own interest that scenarios like the one mentioned here will be prevented from happening. At the end of the day this also reminds of one reality: despite all the rumours of drumbeat, NATO's role on the Syrian issue remains and is likely to remain very limited.

With regards to the second issue, if Iran was to become a nuclear-armed country, the Middle East would face a situation where at least two local actors and five external powers have a nuclear deterrent capability (Iran, Israel and France, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States), several could be poised to invest into their own arsenal (Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey) and small States (Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, United Arab Emirates) would look for reinforced guarantees, multilaterally from NATO and bilaterally from Western powers.

The common belief that a country would never dare to use nuclear weapons on the battlefield creates what scholars call a "stability-instability paradox". The paradox states that, because States are rational actors, there is a low likelihood that conventional war will escalate to the nuclear level, hence the notion of strategic or nuclear stability. But then, the improbability of an escalation beyond the nuclear threshold reduces the danger for the aggressor of launching a conventional war. Precisely because this lowers the potential costs of conventional conflict, it also makes the outbreak of such violence more likely, creating a state of instability at the convention or subconventional level (Jervis 1989, 19-23). As a result, nuclear weapons could provide Iran with decisive leverage for non-nuclear initiatives.

Therefore, the paradox of thinking about a nuclear-armed Iran is that it has less to do with thinking about nuclear warfare per se than with anticipating the potential increase of asymmetric conflict supporting Tehran's interests in the region: a new Israel-Hizbullah war in Lebanon or a naval confrontation in the Persian Gulf over islands such as Tomb islands and Abu Musa seized by Iran in 1971 and still claimed by the United Arab Emirates.

The Iranian nuclear issue encapsulates all the critical issues related to NATO's posture toward the Middle East region. It challenges the grammar of military escalation in the Middle East and could generate a chain reaction in the region. In other words, the Iranian conundrum question the very raison d'être of NATO as a security provider, a nuclear alliance and a diplomatic actor.

The last issue regarding the Middle East security environment is the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians as talks resumed in July 2013. Consequently the question of NATO as a peacekeeping force supporting the process resurfaced in the media. The idea goes back to 2000 when the Clinton Parameters recommended the deployment of an International force to "monitor the implementation of the agreement between both sides" (Clinton 2000). Along these lines, observers assumed that NATO would be the designated force and began debating its relevance. The argument elicited lukewarm reactions among the transatlantic allies who feared such mission could turn into a protracted quagmire. Their caution led former NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in 2009 to articulate three fundamental preconditions before deciding on an alliance contribution. These so-called three big ifs are a comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians; requests by both parties for NATO to help them with the implementation of their agreement; and UN endorsement of NATO's involvement. Since then, NATO officials, in their exchanges with Middle Eastern partners, have been constantly referencing

these three conditions to avoid misunderstandings and false expectations about any possible alliance engagement in the region. Leaving aside NATO's legitimate policy of restraint and the probability of the three big ifs being met, the discussion on the alliance's potential for a supporting role may evolve in coming years.

During the last decade, NATO has built strong ties at the military-to-military level with Middle Eastern partners under the auspices of the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. It regularly conducts joint exercises and consultations on defense reform, training and capacity building with its counterparts in Cairo, Amman and Tel Aviv. It is largely ignored, but while the peace process was stalled, Arab and Israeli officials continued to gather for NATO Middle Eastern cooperation courses.

Without doubt, the strong ties between NATO and the Arab and Israeli militaries would be extremely valuable if an international force were to be established. If, however, one puts aside the three big ifs and starts thinking about a NATO deployment in the Palestinian territories to ensure the security provisions of an agreement, several unknowns remain. The first is the relationship between NATO and Palestinian security forces. This might be the most important unknown, as this relationship would determine the compliance of the Palestinian Authority, or its replacement government, and moreover, would define the attitude of competing factions in Gaza or the West Bank vis-à-vis implementation of the peace. The relationship would also be a key parameter for Israeli acceptance of future security arrangements.

In 2004, NATO declared that it did not exclude "future participation, subject to the North Atlantic Council's approval, of the Palestinian Authority in cooperation under the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Coop-

eration Initiative"(NATO 2012). Nevertheless, this situation did not materialize, and any future NATO involvement in the Palestinian territories will depend on confidence-building measures between allied troops and Palestinian security forces. On this point, leverage could be provided by the close ties between NATO and the Jordanian military, which for years has trained Palestinian security forces.

Another issue is the scope of a NATO deployment in the Palestinian territories. As with any multinational operation, the numbers matter and are a topic of contention. In 2010, NATO expert Florence Gaub assessed that a NATO contingent in Palestine "would need forces ranging from 43,700 to 76,000 men, including the police forces, of these between 16,100 and 28,000 would patrol Gaza, and between 27,600 and 48,000 the West Bank." (Gaub 2010, 11). Using the cases of Bosnia and Kosovo by way of comparison, Gaub provides a sobering appraisal of the operational demands for such a mission.

Bearing in mind the 2014 drawdown from Afghanistan and the drastic cuts in the military expenditures by the allies, European governments are unlikely to rush toward such an ambitious deployment. One solution could be an ad-hoc division of labour, as recently suggested by former US ambassador to NATO Robert Hunter: "NATO countries would agree to provide the former (troops) and the West and hopefully rich Arab countries would provide the latter (money)"(Hunter 2013).

Hunter's idea might have looked far-fetched a few years ago, but cooperation between NATO and several Arab militaries during Operation Unified Protector in Libya may serve as a template. Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan provided substantial assets during the NATO air campaign that could be emulated in the Israeli-Palestinian context. This cooperation could be developed through bilateral channels or via a NATO–Arab

League partnership and would be an opportunity to revive the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 and help mitigate anxieties among NATO countries regarding the financial burden of such a mission.

These ideas may yet seem premature as the three big ifs are yet to be met. In addition, given the intricacies of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, such a scenario cannot be treated casually, and decision makers in Washington and Brussels remain mindful that the risk of failure or mission creep remains high. This, however, is also the reason why an in-depth discussion about the feasibility of a NATO deployment is desirable.

Overall, the evolution of these three key issues may impact NATO security interests and reflects how the Middle East is likely to remain for the near future one of the areas of highest concern for the Alliance.

NATO and Asian Power Plays: A Limited Role

It is now commonplace to assert that Asia will become the center of gravity of world politics in coming years. The rise of China alters the global distribution of economic and military power. In recent years, China's neighbouring countries witnessed a significant evolution with regards the assertiveness of Chinese power. Specifically, Beijing has been using its nascent maritime power as a tool of compellence and intimidation vis-à-vis countries with which territorial disputes still exist (Vietnam, Japan, Philippines). This is one of the main reasons why the US government under the presidency of Barack Obama announced it would pivot to Asia. This was emphasized by US officials in numerous instances. In 2011, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton wrote in Foreign Policy:

"The Asia-Pacific has become a key driver of global politics. Stretching from the Indian subcontinent to the western shores of the Americas, the re-

gion spans two oceans -- the Pacific and the Indian -- that are increasingly linked by shipping and strategy. It boasts almost half the world's population. It includes many of the key engines of the global economy, as well as the largest emitters of greenhouse gases. It is home to several of our key allies and important emerging powers like China, India, and Indonesia" (Clinton 2011).

The US pivot toward Asia takes multiple forms. At diplomatic level, the US government is engaged in a process of enhancement of bilateral dialogues with close allies (Japan, South Korea, and Australia) and reinforcement of US visibility in multilateral fora such as ASEAN summits or the Pacific Island Forum. Furthermore, at economical level, the State Department is engaged into in-depth negotiations over the establishment of the ambitious Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership, a free trade agreement that noticeably excludes China.

The Sino-American latent competition is no more obvious than in the military field. Even before the Obama administration had proclaimed its Asian pivot, the US military had been reshuffling its global posture in a way that prioritized the Pacific area via its forward bases in South Korea, Japan, Australia and Guam Island. The Chinese Navy represents the obvious upcoming challenge to US primacy over the maritime commons. Several scenarios have been published over the last years to shed light on the growing capabilities of China that could deter an American intervention in case of a conflict over Taiwan (Krepinevich 2009; Kraska 2010). In these scenarios of a near future, the US Navy could not interfere in the South China Sea without risking an aircraft carrier being in the range of Chinese cruise missiles or seeing US submarines outnumbered by Chinese ones. These narratives are based on a net assessment of the procurement trends in the People's Liberation Army of China: advanced air defense, anti-ship ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, anti-satellite systems, electronic warfare

and so forth. This arsenal could consequently paralyze the US fleet in the Pacific and especially its base in the Japanese Island of Okinawa. More importantly, it could raise the political and financial costs of an American naval show of force in the context of a conflict over Taiwan (Bruzdzinski 2004, 317). In that perspective, it is, technically, a solid estimate of China's naval build-up. But conclusions on Chinese intentions are less convincing.

The common belief that China is becoming or will become a sea power is not entirely obvious. True, there is an emerging consensus among experts on China and its naval history that Beijing aims at becoming a naval power with a global reach (Holmes and Yoshihara 2008). But first, this long-term trend will be eventually challenged by a short-term issue which remains the status of Taiwan. Second, Chinese sea power will face two close rivals (apart from the US Navy): the Japanese and the Indians. Third, one has to remain cautious concerning the much-discussed "string of pearls" China is supposedly establishing that could challenge India in its area of close interests. The "string of pearls" covers a series of military and economic nodes from the South China Sea through the Strait of Malacca, across the Indian Ocean, and on to the Arabian Gulf (with facilities and ports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh among others). But first and foremost, the rationale behind the "string of pearls" would be to secure China's access to raw materials in Africa and the Middle East. Again, the discussion is more grounded in speculation than in reality. Additionally, Chinese officials are very much aware of their vulnerable energy sea lanes, what they refer to as their "Malacca Dilemma". As a matter of fact, China is seeking to reduce its dependence on seaborne oil shipments through diversification of supply routes with pipelines projects with Kazakhstan, Russia, Myanmar and possibly Pakistan.

In that perspective, what could be NATO's role in Asia if a conflict was to occur there? Although some NATO members – prominently the US but

also the UK and France – maintain a military presence in Asia, NATO itself is not directly committed to the security challenges of the region. In July 2012, NATO Secretary General Rasmussen admitted that "NATO needs to better understand China and define areas where the two can work together to guarantee peace and stability" (Rasmussen 2012).

In the last years NATO developed relations with Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia in the field of military cooperation. These ties were primarily born out of the initiative of "partners across the globe" after the September 2001 terror attacks on the United States. At the NATO Summit in Riga in 2006, some Allies within the organisation tried to institutionalize these relations through the framework of a "global partnership forum" but it was opposed by other countries inside NATO that considered that the relationship should be limited to practical cooperation. Since then, NATO's engagement in Asia has been pretty modest.

By far, the NATO-led ISAF operation has been the biggest platform for the cooperation between the Atlantic Alliance and its Asian partners. According to observers, of all the countries in the region, Australia is the one with the most advanced relationship with NATO (Schreer 2012). Specifically, cooperation improved following simultaneous deployments of Australian and NATO forces back in the nineties in Bosnia and Herzegovina and then Afghanistan. In June 2012, both parties signed a Joint Political Declaration. This document starts by stating that the bilateral relationship is "based on the values we share" (NATO 2012) and paves the way to further cooperation. Since then Australia gave his representative based in Brussels the rank of Ambassador to NATO.

Japan was not a troop contributor to ISAF but its relations with NATO started a long time ago, right after the end of the Cold War. In 1993, a high level political dialogue was initiated and in following years, the re-

lation grew bigger. In the early 2000s former NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer visited Japan twice while Prime Minister Abe addressed the North Atlantic Council in 2007.

Finally, relations with South Korea started in 2005 when then Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon addressed the NAC. Since then Seoul established a Tailored Cooperation Programme. All in all, these bilateral engagements do not constitute a NATO Asian policy by itself. European NATO members remain far less concerned than the US regarding the security developments in the region and the rise of China as a military power. Additionally it is unlikely to see the US asking NATO to contribute there. The irrelevance of NATO in North East Asia is not only political but also operational: to matter in this regional competition, the Alliance would need the ability to project power capabilities (naval and aerial assets) that it crucially lacks. It is indeed hard to conceive a NATO intervention if a conflict was to occur in the Taiwan Strait or in the South China Sea.

In the meantime, because of its decade of operation in Afghanistan, NATO has been directly in the middle of the South Asia puzzle. Even though NATO's presence in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of its forces in 2014 is likely to be remote, the South Asian security complex that includes Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, will matter for NATO's security interests. It is hard to evaluate the stability of the Afghan government beyond the date of NATO's withdrawal. Moreover, there is a danger that following the departure of the Atlantic Alliance the country will grow (again) as a vacuum that would leave it the center of power plays between India and Pakistan. In 2012, India ranked as Afghanistan's fifth largest bilateral donor. There are rising concerns that following the 2014 departure of NATO forces, Afghanistan's economy will fall as a result of the coming drop in Western aid and military spending that had sustained the growth of the country until now.

Like the United States, NATO's approach toward the South Asian region seems prone to rely on India rather than Pakistan as a partner. For the last decade, NATO-Pakistan relations were marked by recurrent tensions and permanent suspicion on both sides vis-à-vis the long-term strategy of the other part. On 26 November 2011 NATO forces retaliating against Afghan Taliban opened fire on check posts along the Afghan-Pakistani border, killing 24 Pakistani soldiers. NATO-Pakistan contacts were then frozen till May of 2012. The civil-military imbalance in Islamabad remains worrisome and economic prospects for the country are pessimistic. With the removal of military forces from Afghanistan, the delicate balance that the Atlantic Alliance had maintained vis-à-vis India and Pakistan is therefore likely to evolve in a more explicit rapprochement with Delhi. However, relations with the Indian authorities remained till today extremely modest. Military cooperation is limited and the institutionalization of ties is unlikely as Delhi maintains its traditional policy of non-alignment.

But even in the case of a new conflict – whether limited or not – in South Asia, it remains unclear the role that could be conferred to NATO. The stability of the region will surely continue to influence NATO's security interests but given the little appetite for a new wide intervention such as the one in Afghanistan, the Alliance is likely to maintain a position of restraint even though it should keep monitoring potential flashpoints.

The limitations of NATO's role in Africa and Latin America

The African continent matters for NATO for two primary reasons. The first is the enduring presence of terrorist cells such Al Qaeda or Al Chabab that regularly target Western interests (tourist sites, foreign companies). This was epitomized recently by the collapse of the State of Mali in late 2012 and the rise of Islamic militancies in the northern part of the country.

This triggered the French military intervention in early 2013. The bloody attacks in Kenya's Nairobi Mall in September 2013 that left 72 dead is another reminder of the unresolved issue of terrorism in the region.

The second security challenge in Africa with implications for NATO is the piracy phenomenon along the shores of the continent. Over the last three years, military decision makers have been confronted to an unexpected rise of piracy activities, mostly in the Gulf of Aden, because of the collapse of Somalia (Stevenson 2010). A growing number of Somali pirates (estimated to exceed 1 000), enabled by the absence of the rule of law in Somalia, have staged increasingly frequent and brazen attacks on commercial vessels transporting vital cargo such as oil, food and weapons in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. In just one year (2008), insurance costs to ship cargo through the Gulf of Aden soared from $ 900 to US$ 9 000. This had tremendous economic implications considering that more than 16 000 ships per year transit through the area (representing 12 percent of global maritime trade and 30 percent of world crude oil shipments). This clear and immediate threat to international security led to multiple responses, from NATO, the USA, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Turkey, Russia and the European Union.

In both cases, piracy and terrorism, one of the rootcauses appears to be the strength of statehood in Africa, and more specifically the ability of authorities to contain such criminal activities. As in other places, there is little appetite today for any NATO military intervention in Africa and it was clearly demonstrated by the relative silence of the Alliance during the French operation in Mali. Therefore, its role is likely to be limited to training initiatives through its cooperation with the African Union (AU). In fact, NATO's relation with the AU has been on the rise in recent years. Since 2005, at the request of the AU, the Alliance has been providing support for the AU missions and capacity building: provision of airlift for the

AU Mission in Sudan, strategic airlift, sealift and subject matter expertise for the AU Mission in Somalia, assessments of the operational readiness of the African Standby Force brigades (Smith-Windsor 2012, 18).

To conclude our overview of future conflicts, there have been growing speculations over a NATO involvement in Latin America. In particular, Colombia's Defense Minister Juan Carlos Pinzon visited the Headquarters in Brussels in July 2013 and signed a cooperation agreement with the Atlantic Alliance. The document authorizes exchange of intelligence information between Bogota and Brussels but the most significant element of the announcement was probably the statement by Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos who declared that the agreement was to be seen as the first step of "a process of rapprochement and cooperation, with an eye toward also joining" NATO (Benitez 2011).

Santos' statement stirred a significant controversy with Brazilian and Ecuadorian Minister of Defense expressing both their "concerns" over the NATO-Colombia initiative. Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua went as far as to condemn the agreement with Bolivian President Evo Morales asking the Union of South American Nations to convene an emergency meeting to discuss the matter. It was then followed by cautious clarification from Colombian authorities which argued that this cooperative initiative did not intend to open discussions on Colombian membership in the alliance.

One could argue that technically Colombia did not even meet the geographic qualifications for NATO membership as it is "open to states in the North Atlantic area". But beyond that, the episode reflects the extreme sensitivity in Latin America over a role for NATO in the region. Although some limited areas of cooperation such as maritime security exist, the organization is unlikely to build ties there the way it has done so in the Middle East or even in Asia. This also relates to the nature of the security

architecture in Latin America. As explained by David Mares, "since the wars of independence in the nineteenth century, Latin America's security context has essentially been a competitive one, in which deterrence and militarized bargaining have predominated among states that viewed each other as rivals rather than partners" (Mares 2012, 18). This obviously does not ease the cooperation with external multilateral organizations. In addition, the traditional US reluctance to see any outside actor to play a role in its historical backyard renders doubtful any discussion within NATO on an increased involvement of the Alliance in Latin America.

In that perspective, a comprehensive look at the map of future conflicts and potential interventions for NATO leads us to the conclusion that aside of unexpected contingencies, the Alliance is likely to remain involved in areas where its security interests are directly at stake. As showed in our research, these are the Eastern borders with Russia and the Middle East. Still, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, one should not see this academic exercise as divination but rather as the projection of current trends. The value of forecasting is heuristic, it helps framing the discussion among experts but it should not be taken at face-value. As demonstrated by the NATO operations this last decade either in Afghanistan or Libya, the future geography of the Alliance might evolve in yet unexpected ways.

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ABOUT CENAA

Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs (CENAA) is an independent non-governmental organization dealing with foreign policy and security. We pursue a range of projects, including research, events and publications with partners from Slovakia and abroad. Other important activities include transition projects with the countries and regions not only neighbouring the EU and NATO.

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Our key activities are divided into four programmes: **Transatlantic Security Programme, Transition Programme, Emerging Threats Programme, Publications and Education.**

The main aim of the Transatlantic Security Programme is to contribute to the development of new concepts, solutions or ideas in the area of Transatlantic Security, NATO Partnership and Enlargement Policy.

Our Transition Programme champions the successful transition, stability and sustainable development in all regions and countries where we are present with our projects (South Caucasus, Ukraine, East and Southeast Europe, Afghanistan and Tunisia) in capacity-building, institutional development, education and training.

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important challenges, in the field of cyber security and right-wing extrem-ist movements.

Publication Programme includes topical publications related to CENAAs activities as well as our flagship project Panorama of the global security environment which engages Central European security and foreign policy community in a strategic level discussion on security in world. We also publish brief policy analyses on current issues in the foreign affairs and security called Policy Papers.

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